

= 1923 FA Cup Final =

The 1923 FA Cup Final was an association football match between Bolton Wanderers and West Ham United on 28 April 1923 at the original Wembley Stadium in London . The showpiece match of English football 's primary cup competition , the Football Association Challenge Cup (better known as the FA Cup) , it was the first football match to be played at Wembley Stadium . King George V was in attendance to present the trophy to the winning team .

Each team had progressed through five rounds to reach the final . Bolton Wanderers won 1 ? 0 in every round from the third onwards , and David Jack scored the lone goal each time . West Ham United faced opposition from the Second Division or lower in each round , the first time this had occurred since the introduction of multiple divisions in the Football League . West Ham took three attempts to defeat Southampton in the fourth round but then easily defeated Derby County in the semi @-@ final , scoring five goals .

The final was preceded by chaotic scenes as vast crowds surged into the stadium , far exceeding its official capacity of approximately 125 @,@ 000 . A crowd estimated at up to 300 @,@ 000 gained entrance and the terraces overflowed , with the result that spectators found their way into the area around the pitch and even onto the playing area itself . Mounted policemen , including one on a light @-@ coloured horse which became the defining image of the day , had to be brought in to clear the crowds from the pitch and allow the match to take place . The match began 45 minutes late as crowds stood around the perimeter of the pitch . Although West Ham started strongly , Bolton proved the dominant team for most of the match and won 2 ? 0 . David Jack scored a goal two minutes after the start of the match and Jack Smith added a controversial second goal during the second half . The pre @-@ match events prompted discussion in the House of Commons and led to the introduction of safety measures for future finals . The match is often referred to as the " White Horse Final " and is commemorated by the White Horse Bridge at the new Wembley Stadium .

= = Route to the final = =

Bolton Wanderers and West Ham United were playing in the First Division and Second Division respectively , and both entered the competition at the first round stage , under the tournament format in place at the time . Bolton had appeared in the final twice before , in 1894 and 1904 , but West Ham , who had only joined The Football League in 1919 , had never previously progressed further than the quarter finals . In the first round , Bolton defeated Norwich City of the Third Division South , in the process recording the club 's first away win in the competition since a second round victory over Manchester City in the 1904 ? 05 season . After a home win over Leeds United in the second round , Bolton faced one of the First Division 's top teams , Huddersfield Town , in the third round . The initial match at Huddersfield 's Leeds Road ground ended in a draw , necessitating a replay which Bolton won 1 ? 0 . In the fourth round Bolton defeated Charlton Athletic by a single goal , and in the semi @-@ final beat Sheffield United by the same score in a match played at Old Trafford , home of Manchester United . Although ticket prices were considered to be extremely high , a crowd of 72 @,@ 000 attended the match , a new record for an FA Cup semi @-@ final . In every match from the third round onwards , Bolton 's single goal was scored by David Jack , which gave him a reputation for having single @-@ handedly steered his team into the final .

In contrast to Bolton 's defensive style , West Ham 's cup run was characterised by fast @-@ moving , attacking play , which won them many admirers . The London @-@ based club began the competition away to fellow Second Division team Hull City and won 3 ? 2 . In the second round they were held to a draw by Brighton & Hove Albion of the Third Division South , but won the replay 1 ? 0 at home . The " Hammers " defeated another Third Division South team , Plymouth Argyle , in the third round , but found the fourth round tough going against Southampton . The first match at West Ham 's home , the Boleyn Ground , ended in a 1 ? 1 draw , as did the replay at The Dell in Southampton . A second replay was held at Villa Park in Birmingham , home of Aston Villa , and finally produced a winner , as West Ham won 1 ? 0 with a goal from Billy Brown . The goal came in the 70th minute , with a " clever free kick " past the " startled " Herbert Lock in the Saints ' goal . In

the semi @-@ finals , West Ham took on Derby County at Stamford Bridge , home of Chelsea , and won 5 ? 2 . Brown scored two more goals and Billy Moore also scored twice . All five of the teams that West Ham defeated on their way to Wembley played in the Second Division or lower . This made West Ham the first team since the introduction of multiple divisions in The Football League to reach the FA Cup final without facing opposition from the top division .

= = Build @-@ up = =

The match was the first event of any kind to take place at Wembley Stadium , which had not been due to open until 1924 but was completed ahead of schedule . After sub @-@ capacity crowds had attended the first three finals after the First World War at Stamford Bridge , The Football Association (The FA) was unconvinced that the match could fill the large capacity of the new stadium and undertook a major advertising campaign , for fans to attend . Despite these fears , the new national stadium , which had been advertised as the greatest venue of its kind and had an unprecedented capacity of 125 @,@ 000 , proved to be a great lure and drew a large number of casual observers . The fact that a London @-@ based team was competing meant that many football fans from all parts of the city chose to attend . The morning newspapers on the day of the match reported that around 5 @,@ 000 fans were travelling from Bolton and that they were expected to be joined by " at least 115 @,@ 000 enthusiasts from London and other parts of the country " . The easy accessibility of the stadium by public transport and the fine weather were also factors which contributed to the enormous crowd .

The gates were opened at 11 : 30 am as advertised , three and a half hours before the match was due to begin , and until 1 : 00 pm the flow of people into the stadium was orderly . By 1 : 00 pm , however , a vast number of people were pouring into the stadium , and after an inspection by the stadium authorities , the decision was made to close the gates at 1 : 45 pm . Spectator William Rose said later that Olympic Way was " seething with people " and that " the nearer I got to the stadium the worse it got , by the time I got there the turnstiles had been closed " . Although the information was relayed to various railway stations , thousands of people continued to arrive and mass outside the gates . Organisation within the stadium was poor , and in his report on the match the correspondent for the Daily Mail described the stewarding as " useless " and stated that officials in and around the stadium " seemed to know nothing " . Fans were not directed to any specific area , and the tiers in the lower half of the stadium filled up much faster than those higher up . As the crowds outside the stadium continued to grow , local police stations were mobilised , but by the time officers arrived the crowd was too large for them to take any effective form of action . At 2 : 15 pm , the crowds outside the stadium rushed at the barriers and forced their way in . Spectators in the lower tiers had to climb the fences to escape the crush and overflowed onto the pitch itself . Spectator Terry Hickey said later that " To put it mildly , the whole thing was a bloody shambles " . The crowd was officially reported as 126 @,@ 047 , but estimates of the actual number of fans in attendance range from 150 @,@ 000 to over 300 @,@ 000 . The FA refunded 10 % of the total gate money to fans who had pre @-@ purchased tickets but were unable to reach their assigned seats . The roads around the stadium were blocked and the Bolton players were forced to abandon their coach a mile from the stadium and make their way through the crowds . The Times stated that at one point it seemed impossible that the match would ever be able to start , but that when King George V arrived , the mood of the crowd changed . After enthusiastically singing " God Save The King " , the crowd began to assist the authorities in clearing the playing area .

Eventually mounted policemen were brought in to try to clear the crowds from the pitch , including PC George Scorey , who was mounted on a horse named " Billie " (some sources spell the name " Billy ") . PC Scorey had not actually been on duty that day but answered a call for emergency assistance as the throng of spectators in the stadium grew . Billie the horse was actually grey , but appeared white in the primitive black and white newsreel footage of the era . Contrary to what is sometimes claimed , other horses were also involved , but the " white " horse , as the most visible in the news footage , became the defining image of the day . Officials later stated that the match would never have been able to start without the actions of PC Scorey . When asked about his actions in an

interview with the BBC some years later , Scorey said :

As my horse picked his way onto the field , I saw nothing but a sea of heads . I thought , " We can 't do it . It 's impossible . " But I happened to see an opening near one of the goals and the horse was very good ? easing them back with his nose and tail until we got a goal @-@ line cleared . I told them in front to join hands and heave and they went back step by step until we reached the line . Then they sat down and we went on like that ... it was mainly due to the horse . Perhaps because he was white he commanded more attention . But more than that , he seemed to understand what was required of him . The other helpful thing was the good nature of the crowd .

Eventually the police , assisted by appeals from the players for the crowd to calm , were able to manoeuvre the spectators to just beyond the touchline , and the game began approximately 45 minutes late , while fans stood around the perimeter of the pitch .

= = Match = =

= = = Summary = = =

Both teams employed the 2 @-@ 3 @-@ 5 formation typical of the era : two full @-@ backs , three half @-@ backs , comprising one centre @-@ half and two wing @-@ halves , and five forwards , comprising two outside @-@ forwards , two inside @-@ forwards and a centre @-@ forward . West Ham 's game plan initially centred on the two fast @-@ moving outside @-@ forwards Dick Richards and Jimmy Ruffell , but Bolton set out from the start to keep the two players contained , rushing at them whenever they got the ball . After just two minutes West Ham half @-@ back Jack Tresadern became entangled in the crowd after taking a throw @-@ in and was unable to return to the pitch immediately . This gave Bolton 's David Jack the opportunity to shoot for goal . His shot beat West Ham goalkeeper Ted Hufton to give Bolton the lead , and hit a spectator who was standing pressed against the goal net , knocking him unconscious . Three minutes later Vic Watson received the ball a few yards in front of the Bolton goal but his shot flew over the crossbar . Eleven minutes into the game the crowd surged forward once again and a large number of fans encroached onto the pitch , leading to the suspension of play while the mounted police again cleared the playing area . A number of fans required first aid from members of the British Red Cross while the players looked on and awaited the resumption of play . Policemen patrolled the perimeter of the pitch to keep it clear for the linesmen , after play was resumed .

Soon after play restarted , West Ham 's Dick Richards eluded two Bolton defenders and shot for goal . Bolton goalkeeper Dick Pym fumbled the ball but managed to kick it clear before it crossed the goal @-@ line . Bolton continued to dominate the match , and were only prevented from scoring again by a strong performance from West Ham full @-@ back Billy Henderson . When West Ham attacked , however , Bolton were able to quickly switch to a strongly defensive formation , as players changed positions to form a line of five half @-@ backs . This stifled West Ham 's attacking style of play and ensured that the Bolton goal was not seriously threatened , and the score remained 1 ? 0 to Bolton until half @-@ time . Due to the crowds that surrounded the pitch , the players were unable to reach the dressing @-@ rooms and instead remained on the pitch for five minutes before starting the second half .

West Ham began the second half as the stronger team , and Vic Watson received the ball in a good goalscoring position but mis @-@ hit his shot . Eight minutes into the second half , Bolton added a second goal in controversial circumstances . Outside @-@ forward Ted Vizard played the ball into a central position and Jack Smith hit the ball past Hufton . West Ham 's players claimed that the ball had not entered the goal but rebounded into play from the goalpost , but referee D. H. Asson overruled them , stating that in his view the ball had entered the goal but then rebounded off a spectator . West Ham also claimed that Bolton had received an unfair advantage , as a Bolton fan at pitchside had kicked the ball towards Vizard , but Asson disregarded these claims as well and confirmed Bolton 's second goal . At this point the crowd began to sense that Bolton would emerge victorious and many began heading towards the exits . Neither team had any more serious chances

to score , and the remainder of the match was largely a stalemate with little inspired play . Late in the game , West Ham captain George Kay attempted to persuade Asson to abandon the match , but Bolton captain Joe Smith reportedly replied " We 're doing fine , ref , we 'll play until dark to finish the match if necessary " . The score remained 2 ? 0 to Bolton until the final whistle . The King presented the FA Cup trophy to Joe Smith and then left the stadium to cheers from the crowd . West Ham trainer Charlie Paynter attributed his team 's defeat to the damage the pitch had suffered before kick @-@ off , saying " It was that white horse thumping its big feet into the pitch that made it hopeless . Our wingers were tumbling all over the place , tripping up in great ruts and holes " .

= = = Details = = =

= = Aftermath = =

Although around 900 spectators were treated for slight injuries , only 22 were taken to hospital and ten of those were quickly discharged . Two policemen were also injured during the match . The chaotic scenes at the match prompted discussion in the House of Commons , where Home Secretary William Bridgeman paid tribute to the actions of the police and the general behaviour of the crowd . During the debate Oswald Mosley was chastised by the Speaker of the House for characterising the fans present at the stadium as hooligans . Bridgeman was asked to consider opening a public inquiry , but ultimately concluded that the police had dealt successfully with the incident , and that he was happy for the stadium authorities and the police to decide on a plan to prevent similar events from happening again .

A committee examined the stadium a month after the match , and made several recommendations to the stadium authorities . Their proposals included the replacement of the turnstiles with more up @-@ to @-@ date models , the erection of extra gates and railings , and the division of the terraces into self @-@ contained sections , each with its own entrance . In addition , the pre @-@ purchasing of tickets was made compulsory for all future finals , eliminating the possibility that excessive numbers of fans would arrive in the hope of being able to pay at the turnstile . The gross gate money for the match was £ 27 @,@ 776 . After the deduction of the stadium authorities ' costs , the Football Association and each of the two clubs took £ 6 @,@ 365 , although the refunds to fans unable to reach their assigned seats were deducted from the FA 's share .

After the match the players and officials attended a dinner at which former Prime Minister David Lloyd George proposed the toast . The Bolton players returned home by train and were greeted at Moses Gate railway station by the chairman of Farnworth District Council before going on to a reception hosted by the Mayor . The club presented each of the victorious players with a gold watch . The players from both teams received gold commemorative medals . In 2005 the medal presented to West Ham 's George Kay was sold at auction for £ 4 @,@ 560 , and tickets and programmes from the match have also been star lots at auctions .

= = = Legacy = = =

The image of Billie the white horse remains famous within English football lore , and the match is often referred to as " The White Horse Final " . Billie 's rider , George Scorey , was rewarded by the Football Association with free tickets to subsequent finals , but he had no interest in football and chose not to attend .

In 2005 , a public poll chose that the new footbridge near the rebuilt Wembley Stadium would be named the White Horse Bridge . The executive director of the London Development Agency , which organised the poll , stated that the choice of name was appropriate given that the bridge , like the horse , would improve safety for fans at Wembley . Scottish newspaper the Daily Record claimed that fans of the national team of Scotland had voted in large numbers so as to prevent a former England player or manager being honoured , and also because " White Horse " is also the name of a brand of whisky . In 2007 a play drawn from the reactions of a group of Bolton residents to the

events of the final was staged at the Octagon Theatre , Bolton .