

= 1904 FA Cup Final =

The 1904 FA Cup Final was a football match between Bolton Wanderers and Manchester City on 23 April 1904 at Crystal Palace 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 32nd Cup final , and the tenth at Crystal Palace .

Each team progressed through four rounds to reach the final . Manchester City were a First Division team chasing a league and cup double ; Bolton Wanderers were a mid @-@ table Second Division team . Consequently , most observers anticipated a Manchester City win . In a close match featuring strong defensive play , Manchester City won 1 ? 0 . The goal , scored by Billy Meredith , was disputed by those with Bolton sympathies , who believed Meredith to be offside . The victory gave Manchester City their first major honour .

= = Build @-@ up = =

The final was held at Crystal Palace , the tenth final played at the venue . Neither club had previously won the competition . Bolton reached the final in 1894 , but were beaten comfortably by Notts County , losing 4 ? 1 at Goodison Park despite a strong performance by goalkeeper John Sutcliffe .

In their passage to the final Manchester City faced opposition from the top division in all but one round . Second Division Woolwich Arsenal , City 's opponents in the second round , were the exception . Sunderland were defeated 3 ? 2 at Hyde Road in the first round , and the visit to Arsenal yielded a 2 ? 0 win . A club record crowd of 30 @,@ 022 watched the quarter @-@ final against Middlesbrough , but a 0 ? 0 draw meant a replay at Ayresome Park was required , which City won 3 ? 1 to set up a semi @-@ final against The Wednesday . Two goals from Turnbull and one from Meredith gave City a 3 ? 0 win at Goodison Park .

Bolton 's cup run started slowly , with a replay required to overcome non @-@ league Reading . A 4 ? 1 victory over Southampton secured a quarter @-@ final berth at Sheffield United . As a Second Division team with a poor away record , Wanderers were clear underdogs in the quarter @-@ final , particularly in view of Sheffield United 's strong home form . Nevertheless , Bolton prevailed 2 ? 0 courtesy of goals by Sam Marsh and Billy Yenson . At this point Marsh had scored in every round of the competition . A 1 ? 0 defeat of Derby County in the semi @-@ final took Bolton to the final .

Though Lancashire was a football stronghold in the early years of the professional game , providing a large proportion of Football League teams , the cup final had never been contested between two Lancashire clubs until the 1904 final . 30 @,@ 000 supporters from the region travelled to London , sparking press reports of records for North @-@ South rail travel . Lacking alternative accommodation , several thousand slept on the platforms at Euston and St Pancras . A jovial atmosphere built up , with the Manchester Industrial Boys Band playing Hiawatha . However , in London itself , the match received less attention than a final featuring a southern team would have done . Tickets in an uncovered stand cost 5s .

Prior to the match the teams both stayed in the suburb of West Norwood , within walking distance of Crystal Palace . Manchester City arrived on 21 April , and were joined the following day by the Bolton Wanderers , who had spent the earlier part of the week at a training camp in Norbreck , near Blackpool . London 's Morning Leader described the relaxed nature of the Manchester City players , commenting that " they might have been a tug of war eleven out for a holiday " .

The majority of observers , including the Times correspondent , expected a win for Manchester City , as they had performed strongly over the League season , lying second in the First Division on the day of the final , whereas Bolton were a mid @-@ table Second Division side whose most talented forward , Boyd , was sidelined through injury . Manchester City had one injury worry , Billy Holmes , who had missed the previous league match after sustaining an injury against Nottingham Forest . George Livingstone , initially a doubt , was passed fit well in advance . When the final line @-@ ups were announced , both teams had one change from the semi @-@ finals . For Bolton , Boyd was replaced by Clifford , who had not played in any of the previous rounds , and Archie Freebairn

switched to Boyd 's usual flank " with a view to coping with Meredith " . For Manchester City , Sam Ashworth replaced Holmes . Both teams played 2 ? 3 ? 5 , the standard formation of the period .

= = Match = =

The match took place in good weather , with the crowd approximately 62 @, @ 000 . Dignitaries present included Prime Minister Arthur Balfour , Colonial Secretary Alfred Lyttelton , Postmaster General Lord Stanley and Lord Kinnaird . Also in attendance were cricketers WG Grace , GL Jessop and CB Fry , plus several members of the Australian cricket team . Manchester City entered the field of play first , led by captain Billy Meredith , with the Bolton team emerging shortly after . Manchester City won the toss , and elected to play towards the southern end of the ground in the first half , with the wind at their backs . The opening exchanges were fairly even , the Athletic News reporting that " For some time there was little to choose between the rivals " , but that " Manchester were the more systematic and scientific " .

Twenty minutes into the game , a pass to the right wing by George Livingstone eluded Bolton 's Archie Freebairn , and reached Meredith , who dribbled beyond Bob Struthers for a run on goal . He shot to goalkeeper Davies ' left , scoring the opening goal . Reporters with Bolton sympathies , such as ex @-@ Bolton secretary JJ Bentley , claimed the goal to be offside , though the Bolton players made no appeal to the referee . The goal led to one over @-@ exuberant Manchester City supporter invading the pitch , and subsequently being escorted away by police , though in contrast to the modern image of the football hooligan , the Sporting Chronicle reported that the man was then allowed back onto the terraces , as the police had been impressed by the level of devotion that he had demonstrated .

Bolton had the majority of possession in the second half , aside from a ten @-@ minute spell , but the performance of the Manchester City defence limited Bolton 's goalscoring opportunities . The Manchester Evening News singled out Herbert Burgess for particular praise in this respect , writing that City had " considerable reason to be thankful to their left @-@ back , Burgess ... the famous International played a game which has rarely been surpassed " . The Bolton Evening News took a rather different view , claiming that physical play by Burgess provoked the ire of the crowd . Bolton 's adoption of " kick and rush " tactics resulted in a spell of pressure , but to no avail . Bolton 's best chance came in the final five minutes , a shot by White which " missed by inches " . The match finished 1 ? 0 , giving Manchester City their first major honour .

= = Match details = =

= = Post @-@ match = =

Manchester City captain Meredith received the trophy from the serving prime minister , Arthur Balfour , a patron of the club . Alfred Lyttelton then made a speech praising the efforts of the two teams . Lyttelton , a former footballer himself , compared the play in the final with the match he played for the England team against Scotland in 1877 . Noting that " the game is a good deal changed " , he emphasised how the final had demonstrated the importance of teamwork , in contrast to his day when " each man played for himself " .

While most of those in attendance behaved well , with few reports of disturbances , later in the day several young men " with provincial accents " appeared at a west London police court charged with drunken disorder . Due to " offence caused by ' scrimmage ' " , they were issued with fines averaging 10s .

Manchester City did not return directly to Manchester , but instead went to Liverpool , as the club 's final league fixture was scheduled for Monday afternoon at Everton . At this point Manchester City were still in contention for the league title . However , a 1 ? 0 defeat at Goodison Park eliminated City from the title race and confirmed The Wednesday as champions . The team arrived in Manchester in that evening , and travelled to the Town Hall to commence a victory parade . From

the Town Hall , the parade travelled to Ardwick Conservative Club , via Deansgate , Market Street and Ardwick Green . The number of people lining the route was five times as many as had attended a recent visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales .