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Sunderland V Birmingham

19th March 1956

Soccer fans from the North-East and the Midlands kept a semi-final date at Sheffield - to cheer their team to Wembley.

A Wearside roar for Sunderland (in their familiar stripes) ; a team of shining stars hoping to carry on where Newcastle left off.

And Birmingham cheers for the "Blues" - the team whose great cup run has been based on team-work and determination.

A combined roar from 65,000 fans - and Birmingham kick off - determined to repeat that 1931 ~~winning semi-final~~ triumph...over these same rivals. Last year, Sunderland knew the disappointment of semi-final defeat. Now, their talented forwards were striving to find the way to goal and their second Wembley final.

<sup>BUT</sup> After ten minutes, Birmingham took the lead; ~~then~~ Brown centred and Kinsey forced it home.

Sunderland came storming back into the fray - with Shackleton inspiring his talented team-mates. During this period - it was all Sunderland - and only the ~~sustained~~ brilliance of Gill Merrick, in goal, kept them out.

But all-out attack leaves dangerous gaps - and that's how Brown laid on goal number two - for Astall.

Two goals down - But Sunderland were not beaten. And how they fought!

Yet, with every man ~~quite~~ inspired by Gill Merrick - Birmingham weathered the fierce North-Eastern blast.

Then, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ - Brown rounded off a great day with a solo goal. So City won three-nil and Birmingham fans are hoping that a new name will be engraved on the F.A. CUP.