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SEMI-FINALS

BIRMINGHAM DRAW WITH BLACKPOOL AT MANCHESTER

The captains toss at Maine Road, the Blackpool Duck waves encouragement and the full-house is up on its toes as Blackpool kick off against Birmingham. The Blues put Manchester United out of the Cup so it's no walk-over for Stanley Matthews and his Merry 'Ms' - Madie and Mortensen. But here's a lovely move. Matthews centres. Back comes the ball. He's tackled. A sudden spurt and he's past. Over goes a pass for Mortensen and it's - no, Merrick saves and clears.

Now Birmingham are on the attack. But Farn saves. It's no one-sided match but centre of interest as usual is the Matthews-Mortensen combination. Each time the ball's worked out to the right-wing danger looms. And here it comes. Mortensen to Matthews and it's Stanley in a duel with left-back Green. He beats Green and lobs in front of the Birmingham goal. Merrick intercepts, colliding with Mortensen, and clears. Hullo, Mortensen is hurt - it looks pretty bad, as he drops to the ground.

He injured an arm but resumed later. Stanley's never played in a Cup Final yet. Maybe that's why he's trying so hard. Green's stood up to it well but he's beaten again. Birmingham too have been pressing without getting anywhere. With the two defences standing so firm there's no surprise when the match ends in a goal-less draw. But if it's a disappointment for Stanley and his colleagues, it's one more feather in Birmingham's cap.

NEWCASTLE DRAW WITH WOLVERHAMPTON

At Sheffield Wednesday's ground, Hillsborough, it's a packed excited crowd and there's lots for the ambulance men to do before Newcastle - in stripes - kick off. The last time the Wolves played a semi-final here they went on to win the Cup in 1949. And here they're on the attack. Mullen picks up a pass and he's on his way. Cowell tackles but Mullen beats him and runs on.

Mullen's beaten him again and passes to Wright. The Wolves captain lobs towards the goal. Swinburne's breasted the ball and he shoots ... and it's in the net! But as the jubilant Wolves cheer Swinburne they see the ref. pointing for a free kick. No goal! Tough luck for the Wolves, and a lucky escape for Newcastle.

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Now Newcastle are away. Milburne chases a pass from Crows; he beats Williams and nets - but the whistle's gone for offside to even things up, and at halftime it's all square with no goals. Second half. Mitchell, the left-winger from Third Lanark, dribbles past Short and centres but centre-half Shorthouse intercepts and sends Hancock away. It's champagne football, this, in spite of the slippery ground and the crowd's getting its mussy's worth. Hancock again. He gets the better of a Newcastle defender and runs on to send over a centre. This looks dangerous for Newcastle.

But the ball is cleared and play switches to the other end. And so it goes from end to end but there's no scoring and a draw is a fitting end to a grand game.