

FINAL FLING FOILS LUTON

Blackpool 1, Luton 1. By HARRY PETERSON

WHAT a finish! What a dramatic finale to a grim struggle as Luton, a goal ahead and the last seconds of injury-lost time ticking away, struggled to hold on to their lead.

So let's recall that final added minute when all seemed over except the victory celebrations—when Blackpool were fighting hard for an equaliser yet rarely making much impression on the strong Luton defence.

It was the Blackpool Tower to a Luton hat that Town were booked for the semi-finals as Stanley Matthews wandered into the middle, collected the ball from Dave Durie and tried to find Ray Charnley with a through pass.

The Luton supporters breathed again as Ken Hawkes intercepted, but their hearts dropped as the full-back, instead of clearing upfield, turned and attempted a back pass to goalkeeper Ron Baynham.

For Town fans even worse was to follow, for Charnley anticipated the move, nipped in smartly and got his right foot to the ball as Baynham rushed out of goal.

Slowly the ball rolled goalwards—gently it trickled into the net just inside a post . . . and Blackpool were saved just 20 seconds—according to the referee's watch—from the final whistle.

There wasn't even time to kick the ball upfield to start the game. It couldn't have been closer, but it was tough on Luton who had the edge for most of the game, particularly in attack.

But though Luton were on top rarely did they create clear-cut openings. And the game seemed to be petering out to a goalless draw when six minutes from the end Billy Bingham found Bob Morton on the right wing.

The winger moved into the middle, met the centre-forward's inch-perfect cross and headed goalwards. George Farm had the ball covered but a slight deflection by team-mate Peter Hauser saw the header spin away under the 'keeper's body into the net.

Lucky for sure, yet Blackpool couldn't have complained had they not grabbed that last-minute equaliser.

No weak link

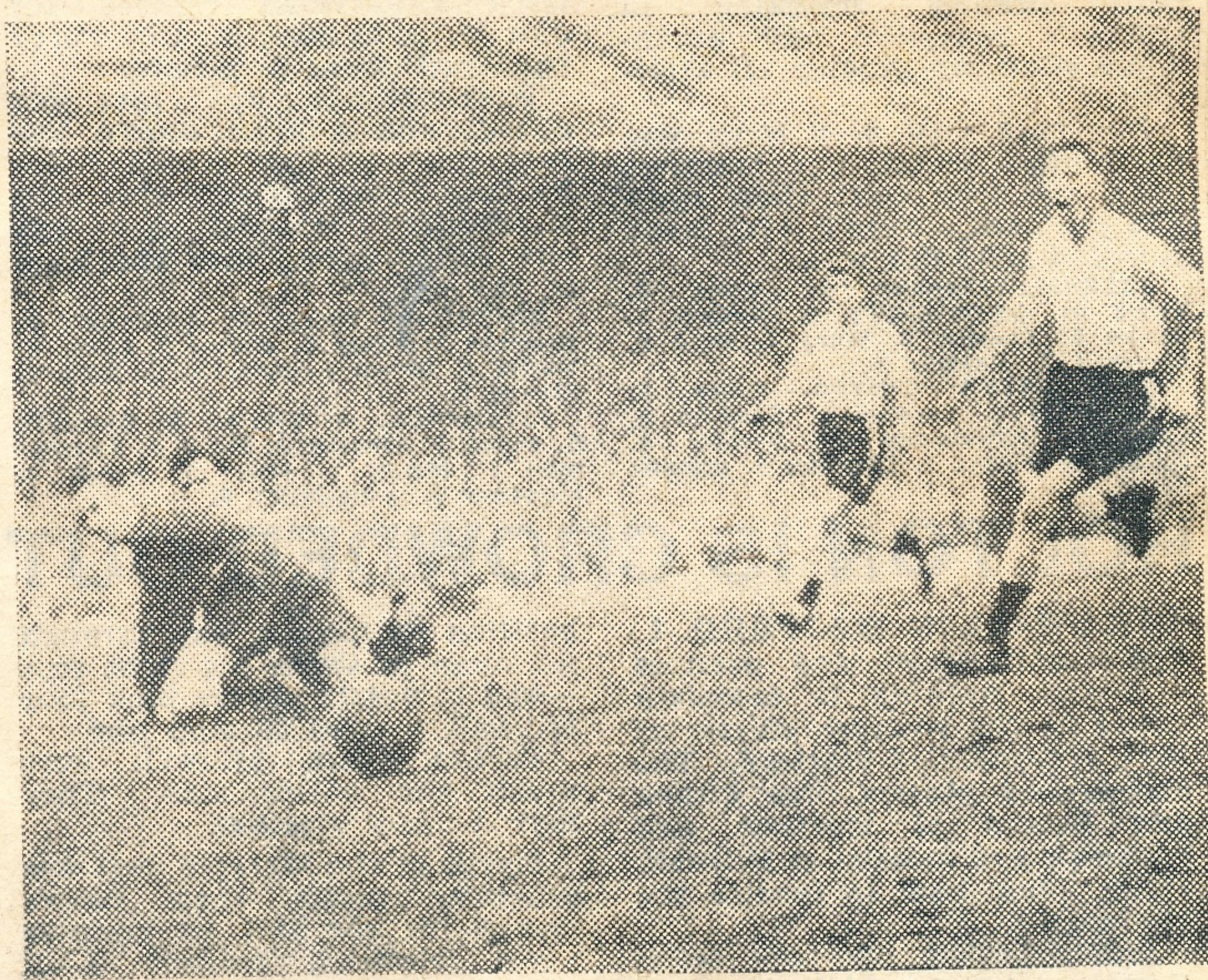
There wasn't a weak link in the Luton side. Baynham was safe. Full-back Brendan McNally and Hawkes tackled well. Sid Owen was a tower of strength at centre-half and wing-halves John Groves—the man of the match—and Dave Pacey never let Jackie Mudie or Dave Durie escape their tenacious grip.

In attack Bingham was the star with Morton and George Cummins close behind. Allan Brown and Tony Gregory also had their bright moments, but faded in the second half when Gregory had the miss of the match when he blazed high and wide with only Farm to beat.

BLACKPOOL.—Farm 8; Armfield 8, Garrett 6; ★HOWSER 9, Gratrix 8, Kelly 7; Matthews 8, Mudie 6, Charnley 7, Durie 5, Perry 6.

LUTON TOWN.—Baynham 8; McNally 8, Hawkes 7; ★GROVES 9, Owen 8, Pacey 8; Bingham 8, Brown 6, Morton 7, Cummins 7, Gregory 7.

Referee: K. Howley (Middlesbrough) 8.



● Luton skipper Sid Owen's face tells the story. Dave Charnley, half-hidden by 'keeper Ron Baynham, has hooked the ball on its way—and there's nobody near enough to stop Blackpool's sensational last-kick equaliser.