

'I should be whipped' cries sad Hawkes

By BOB PENNINGTON: Blackpool 1 Luton Town 1



HAVE you ever suffered that nightmare where your winning line on the pools comes up—to find you've forgotten to post the coupon? If so, you have some slight idea how Luton left-back Ken Hawkes feels this morning.

"If only . . . if only . . . IF ONLY" were the words hammering in his brain last night and all the night before.

The sequence of a grotesque Soccer drama that will become a tragedy unless Luton win Wednesday's replay.

Luton, rightly leading by an 84th-minute header by Billy Bingham, are exactly 20 seconds away from their first-ever semi-final.

The ball rolls to Hawkes, standing clear near the edge of his penalty area.

He can kick it in the crowd. Luton will have won. He can kick it anywhere.

Instead, he turns slowly, deliberately, incredibly and tries to pass back to goalkeeper Ron Baynham.

Baynham roars in helpless despair as Blackpool leader Ray Charnley pounces and steers the ball past him, against a post, and over the line.

Referee Ken Howley, of Middlesbrough, blows his whistle as the near-demented men of Luton hold their heads and beat their chests in despair.

Blackpool are still in the Cup—by the last kick of the extra seconds added on for injuries to Luton players.

Hawkes totters to the dressing-room groaning: "I should be whipped, I should be whipped."

Syd Owen, centre half, skipper and next manager of Luton, thunders: "Not another word from anyone. Forget it. We're still in, d'you hear, we're still in."

Mitchell proud

Farmer Percy Mitchell, Luton's chairman, comes out of the silence and sorrow to put it all in perspective for everyone, especially Hawkes:—

"I'm proud of them all. To get a replay here is marvellous. Hawkes? Ah, I've never seen anyone play Stanley Matthews better."

"He can't move in there in his bath. He's just dumb with misery. But bless the lad's heart—it would be a pleasure to be his valet."

Luton will be in the semi-final if they have the mental strength to forget—and forgive. Yet there is much that should still be remembered and honoured.

The genius of fighting George Cummins and brilliant Bingham with Luton's attack masterly in the first half . . . the heroic glory of Owen as Luton defended superbly in Blackpool's 20-minute barrage of desperation after half-time.

Blackpool.—Farm; Armfield, Garrett; Hauser, Gratrix, Kelly (H); Matthews, Mudie, Charnley, Durie, Perry.

Luton Town.—Baynham; McNally, Hawkes; Groves, Owen, Pacey; Bingham, Brown, Morton, Cummins, Gregory.