

CLASSIC MATCH



Leeds United 1 Arsenal 0

League Cup Final
Saturday March 2, 1968 3.30pm Wembley Stadium
Goal Cooper (18) **Attendance** 97,887
Referee LJ Hamer (Horwich, Lancashire)

Arsenal (4-4-2): Furnell, Storey, McNab, McLintock, Ure, Simpson, Radford, Jenkins (Neill), Graham, Sammels, Armstrong.

In the spirit of LLL magazine, JON HOWE takes a retro look at some of our most memorable moments.



We are off and running! Tell your mum you'll be home late. After 49 barren years of thankless toil, Leeds United have finally won a major trophy! We're no longer the bridesmaids, no longer the bottlers choking when the smell of glory is wafting around the nostrils. It might be the lesser of the three domestic trophies, but when you've known nothing but mediocrity and misfortune you will take anything.

Hardly a great spectacle, though? In truth this was not only a dour contest, but also one peppered with fraught and niggly exchanges between two clubs with a growing distaste for each other. Neutral observers were calling it the "worst final ever", but in our shoes we had to erase the painful memories of the 1965 FA Cup final defeat and other near-misses since. This was a chance we couldn't let go.

So how did the Don approach this tactically? With customary caution despite the return of a number of injured absentees. Revie gambled on a half-fit Brian Greenhoff and Johnny Giles, who was

struggling with a cold. With Mick Jones cup-tied, Paul Madeley – the Swiss Army knife of the football world – was lumped in up-front and did a manful job, although in essence, this was a day when defences were far superior.

And Leeds took an early lead? Once this happened it effectively killed the game as a pageant of open and exhilarating football, instead it became a case of Leeds singularly containing the opposition and holding onto their precious lead. But ask any Leeds fan if they care one jot for the cup final being an extravaganza of attacking sparkle and they'll show you our previously empty trophy cabinet. The trenches mentality that we adopted once we took the lead will do nothing to improve our surly and functional northern image with the national press, but that will be forgotten when people look back at the history books.

Didn't Terry Cooper dream about scoring the winning goal? For three consecutive nights prior to the final, apparently – and



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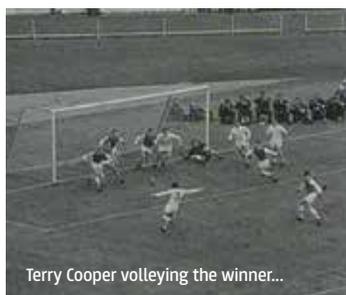
Victory in our third major final courtesy of number 3 Terry Cooper.



Managers Don Revie and Bertie Mee (far right) lead their teams out at Wembley.



A free-for-all in the Leeds box.



Terry Cooper volleying the winner...



...and celebrating at the final whistle.

this dream literally came true on 18 minutes. Leeds had forced the early pace and the second of two quick corners saw Eddie Gray flight a dangerous centre into the goalmouth. Arsenal's keeper Furnell was under a heavy challenge from both Madeley and Jack Charlton, but it was George Graham who headed the ball clear. However, it fell neatly to left-back "TC" on the edge of the box who volleyed it expertly into the roof of the net. Arsenal protested about a foul on Furnell, but the ref signaled a goal and Leeds had an invaluable lead.

The goal rattled Arsenal, didn't it? If by "rattled" you mean the bottom lip came out and they wanted to take their bat and ball home to mummy, then yes. They felt the goal should have been disallowed and took out their frustration on Leeds players in

a series of petulant fouls. Charlton and Hunter of course, not averse to involving themselves in the more physical side of the game, lapped this up. Shortly before half-time Frank McIntock bundled over Gary Sprake as he collected a cross, and a free-for-all erupted involving pretty much everyone you would expect. Ill-feeling was rife and FA representatives were no doubt trying to distract the VIPs in the Royal Box with an early plateful of half-time sausage rolls.

Second half any better? No, Leeds barely added to their one attempt on goal, and although Arsenal dominated possession they didn't threaten much either. Leeds' granite-like back-four soaked up Arsenal's toothless pressure and Sprake plucked crosses out of the air like a frog collecting flies on a lily pad. He

turned a Radford shot around the post late on, but by the end it wasn't only the Leeds fans desperate for the final whistle, pretty much everyone had seen enough.

How were the Leeds fans?

Outnumbered but ecstatic. A truly historic day for the club and with the league, FA Cup and Inter-Cities Fairs Cup still there for the taking, who knows where this team can go?

Best Leeds player? All the back-four were immense, but Cooper deserves his name in lights.

In a nutshell? Now watch us go!

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