



# Birmingham Senior Challenge Cup 1897-98

**Winner:** Walsall  
**Runner-up:** Wolverhampton Wanderers  
**No. of entries:** 24

Most ties took place during the week.

Loughborough were knocked out in round 1 by Aston Villa, whilst the Fosse were awarded a bye.

Wrockwardine after conceding home advantage for an unknown fee, were slaughtered 11-0 by Walsall. A day before, Walsall beat Blackpool 6-0 in a Second Division encounter.

Kidderminster withdrew from the competition rather than face Burton Wanderers.

It took three attempts to settle the tie between Burslem and WBA, with the latter eventually emerging victorious. Due to fixture congestion WBA retired, giving Burton Wanderers a place in the semi-finals without kicking a ball. Meanwhile Aston Villa who were on a run of 4 consecutive defeats shared 6 goals with Burton Wanderers, but went into the semi-finals after winning the replay 6-2.

The semi-finals produced clear cut winners, Wolves surprising beating Aston Villa by 5-0 with Walsall winning by 4 goals against Burton Wanderers

The final was staged at Aston Villa's new ground, built on the site of the former Aston Lower Ground, and officially at least, not yet known as Villa Park. Wretched weather reduced the attendance. Walsall adopted a shot on sight approach which proved successful and against all expectations they retained the trophy.

## QUALIFYING COMPETITION

### Round 1

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
2.10.1897	Berwick Rangers	1	1	Market Drayton	Severn Terrace.
2.10.1897	Brierley Hill Alliance	3 aet	1	Wellington Town	Cottage Street, Brierley Hill. c. 1,000 spectators
2.10.1897	Kidderminster Harriers	2	1	Singers	Aggborough. 800 spectators.
2.10.1897	Newport	3	2	Wellington St George's	
2.10.1897	Stourbridge	4	1	Ironbridge	Amblecote. 1,750 spectators
2.10.1897	Worcester Rovers	5	0	Halesowen	Thorneloe
2.10.1897	Wrockwardine Wood	W		Hereford	Hereford scratched.

### Round 1 Replay

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
16.10.1897	Berwick	1 aet	0	Market Drayton	Severn Terrace.

### Round 2

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
16.10.1897	Stourbridge	1	0	Brierley Hill Alliance	Amblecote. 4,000 spectators.

23.1.1897	Wrockwardine Wood	W		Berwick Rangers	Berwick scratched.
	Worcester Rovers		W	Newport	Worcester scratched

### Round 3

Date	Home	Away		Match Details	
13.11.1897	Newport	1	2	Kidderminster Harriers	
13.11.1897	Wrockwardine Wood	1	0	Stourbridge	The Trench. 300 spectators.

Exemptions to the Proper Competition: Aston Villa. Burslem Port Vale, Burton Swifts, Burton Wanderers, Leicester Fosse, Loughborough, Small Heath, Walsall, West Bromwich Albion, Wolverhampton Wanderers.

### COMPETITION PROPER

#### Round 1

Date	Home	Away		Match Details	
13.12.1897	Aston Villa Harvey (2) John Cowan (2) AN Other	5 (3)	1 (0)	Loughborough AN Other	At Aston. Heavy turf. 2,000 spectators
13.12.1897	Burslem Port Vale	0	0	West Bromwich Albion	
13.12.1897	Burton Wanderers	W		Kidderminster Harriers	Kidderminster scratched.
28.12.1897	Walsall	11 (5)	0 (0)	Wrockwardine Wood	2,000 spectators.

Button Swifts, Small Heath, Leicester Fosse and Wolverhampton Wanderers, byes

#### R1 Replay

Date	Home	Away		Match Details	
17.1.1898	West Bromwich Albion	0	0	Burslem Port Vale	

#### R1 2<sup>nd</sup> Replay

Date	Home	Away		Match Details	
17.1.1898	West Bromwich Albion	2	1	Burslem Port Vale	

#### Round 2

Date	Home	Away		Match Details	
31.1.1898	Burton Swifts	3	3	Aston Villa	At Burton. 3,000 spectators. Burton refused to play extra time, as ordered by the referee.
17.1.1898	Leicester Fosse Fairbairn	1 (0)	3 (0)	Wolverhampton Wanderers Tonks (2) Miller	Filbert-street. Second time the two clubs had ever met. Foggy - some doubt when the game started that it would be played to a finish.
17.1.1898	Walsall	2	1	Small Heath	
17.1.1898	West Bromwich Albion		W	Burton Wanderers	West Bromwich retired from the competition

#### Round 2 Replay

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
9.2.1898	Aston Villa	6	2	Burton Swifts	

### Semi-Finals

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
19.2.1898	Aston Villa	0	5	Wolverhampton Wanderers Miller (2) Beale AN Other	10,000 spectators
19.2.1898	Walsall Devey (2) AN Others	4	0	Burton Wanderers	Fine weather. 3,000 spectators

### Final

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
26.3.1898	Wolverhampton Wanderers	0 (0)	3 (1)	Walsall Aston (2) Griffin	Villa Park, Birmingham. c.3,000 spectators. Miserable weather.

### Match Reports

A selection of published match reports.

BURSLEM PORT VALE V. WEST BROMWICH ALBION.—Played at Cobridge on heavy ground, before 2,000 spectators. In the first half a claim by the Albions for a goal was disallowed, and in the second half neither team got through.

ASTON VILLA V. LOUGHBOROUGH.—Played at Aston on soft ground. The Villa had the same team as won on Saturday, and outplayed their visitors. They scored three times in the first half and twice in the second, whilst Pegg got one goal for Loughborough. The Villa were far and away too good for their opponents. There were 2,000 persons present.

WOOLWICH ARSENAL V. RUSHDEN.—At Woolwich. Result: Arsenal, 3 goals; Rushden, 1 goal.

*South Wales Daily News - 14 December 1897*

# FOOTBALL.

## ASSOCIATION.

### BIRMINGHAM SENIOR CUP.

#### FOSSE v. WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS.

Having escaped the first round by means of a bye, Fosse were in the second round of the Birmingham Charity Cup Competition called upon to play the Wolverhampton Wanderers. The date "carded" was January 24th, but both clubs found it to their advantage to bring the match forward a week in order that it should not interfere with the training for the more important English cup tie on the 29th of the current month. The present was one of the very rare occasions on which Fosse were able to claim choice of ground in a district cup tie, and for visitors they had a team to whom they were almost entire strangers. The Wolves had only once previously played against Fosse, and that was the winding-up match of the season 1893-4, when, at Leicester, the then Midland Leaguers suffered defeat by two goals to none. The present was the third time Fosse had entered the competition for the Birmingham trophy, and the record was one of which they could not boast, seeing that the two matches played prior to to-day had ended in defeats by Burton Swifts (2-1) on January 20th, 1896, and Walsall (3-3) on December 7th of the same year. The record of the two clubs in their respective divisions of the League bore some similarity, and the match, with representative teams in the field, was expected to be a keen and good one. The players and officials were as follows:

Fosse: Saer, goal; Walker and Swift, backs; Ball, Brown, and Jones, half-backs; Freebairn, King, McLeod, McMillan, and Dorrell, forwards.

Wolverhampton Wanderers: Baddaley, goal; Eccles and Blackett, backs; Nurse, Owen, and Fleming, half-backs; Tonks, Wood, Beats, Smith, and Miller, forwards.

The referee was Mr. J. C. Tillotson, and the linesmen Messrs. S. Black and Wilson.

When the game was commenced the atmosphere was foggy, and there seemed some doubt as to whether the game would be played to a finish. Fosse won the toss, and, in the presence of about a thousand people, Beats kicked off from the town end. The opening play was even, and the Fosse forwards were preparing for a run down, when a foul was given against McMillan, and the Fosse end became the scene of operations. From here, however, McMillan and King brought relief to half way, and a foul by Smith on Brown gained them a further advantage, but it was only momentarily, another free kick, this time against the Fosse, sending them back, but Dorrell, smartly tricking Nurse, ran well to the corner before putting across a splendid centre, and McMillan, getting possession just in front of goal, had a deserving shot charged down by Blackett. The Wolves made the next effort, but it was spoiled by off-side against Beats, and a foul on Ball once more put the Wanderers on the defensive. A smart shot was sent into goal by Ball, and well saved by Baddaley, and King, with a long shot, played the ball a yard or two wide. At the other end a kick from Beats also went off, and Baddaley was again called upon at the instance of McLeod, who followed up a long kick from Swift. McLeod tried hard to beat the opposing defence, but on the ball going out to Freebairn, he slipped in shooting, and his shot was very wide of the mark. The Fosse were still having the best of the exchanges, and, with a light and lively ball, the game went on at a fast pace. A nasty shot from McMillan was stopped by Eccles, and then Beats got away with a fast run down the middle of the ground. He passed across to Tonks, who centred well, but the danger was averted on the opposite side of the goal by Ball. The game went on in interesting fashion, and was full of good open field movements. Baddaley stopped a low shot from McLeod in the corner of the goal, and a diversion was caused when Brown, in attempting to stop the Wolves' forwards, caught the ball in his arms, and ran with it in Rugby fashion. A free kick was, of course, given, and Saer twice had to save, the second time being at the expense of a corner. From the flag-kick, the home forwards came straight away, and a period of hard fighting round the Wolves' goal ensued. Capital fast football was displayed by both teams, but the visitors' defence was particularly good, although McLeod forced a

corner off Blackett, King also putting in some deserving work. At the opposite end Miller made a sad mess of what appeared to be a fair opening, his shot going into an adjacent field, and by gradual stages Fosse gained a footing in the Wolves' ground, but they did not long remain there. Generally speaking, comparatively little had been done up to now in the way of shooting, the back play of either side being fairly equal to the forward work. End to end play was the order for some time, and long kicking by the backs formed the conspicuous feature, while the half-back work was very sound. A free kick from a foul on Freebairn led to Swift putting in a stinging shot at goal from half way, Eccles heading out, and as the Fosse left was working an opening, Dorrell, taking his pass from McMillan, was given off-side. After a period of uneventful play, Fosse were driven back by means of a free kick, and an exciting passage took place near the Fosse goal, the ball being crossed over in dangerous fashion to Miller before it was eventually cleared. Twice Dorrell got away along the left, and centres from that quarter followed each time, King very nearly diverting the second one with a dash into goal. Next it was the turn of the Fosse to be pressed, and what appeared to be an almost certain goal from Smith was saved in the nick of time by Walker, who was slightly hurt. From now up to half-time the game was confined to midfield, and was without special feature, the interval arriving with

#### NO SCORE.

After a short interval the second half was commenced with a remarkably strong burst by the Fosse, who ran down quickly, and a beautiful centre from the left went eventually to King, who, in his anxiety to get through, shot over the goal. The locals made another burst, the end of which was that McLeod put a grand shot straight at Baddaley, who threw away just as McMillan charged him, and this was followed by a hot rush on the part of Miller and Smith, the former of whom centred to Beats, and while the Fosse backs were engaged in robbing that player, the ball went out to Tonks, who shot it over their heads into the net, the first point thus coming to the Wolves. The Fosse now redoubled their efforts to score, and plucky attempts were made by McLeod and Dorrell. The former found the attentions of Blackett too much for him, while the left winger, taking a pass from Walker, ran to the corner and shot splendidly into goal, this effort being spoiled through Freebairn fouling the

goal-keeper. Shots from King and Ball went wide, and from a free kick in favour of the Fosse the ball went into the net without being played by a second man. Following a short visit to the Fosse end, the locals bore down again, McLeod and Dorrell again being well to the fore, and a couple of corners came in quick succession, King very narrowly missing a goal from the second. Twice the efforts of the Wolves to break through were nullified, first by off-side against Miller, and next by a foul, and after Fosse had paid a brief visit to their opponents' quarters, and tried in vain to break through a stone wall defence, the Wanderers came away again, and, finding Ball rather slow, Miller took advantage of an opening to shoot a grand goal in a manner which gave Saer no possible chance of saving, the ball coming at a great rate in an oblique direction. The Wolves by now seemed to be getting the measure of the Fosse, whose forward work was now less energetic and reliable. McLeod made one determined attempt on the left wing, but his centre was cleared without difficulty, and a corner was forced by the home right, but this likewise was of no value. One of the best efforts of the day next came from Freebairn, whose shot from the right went by the left side of the goal, where Baddaley effected a splendid save, falling in the act of stopping the ball, and turning it aside for a corner. Some pretty runs were put in by the Wanderers' forwards, the three inside men working together in beautiful fashion, whilst some awkward centres came from Miller. For pushing in the back, King had a free kick granted against the Fosse, and at one time their goal was in considerable danger thereby, for Saer had to save, and the return resulted in a corner off Swift. From another corner the home custodian again fisted away in splendid style, and from mid-field McLeod and King contributed a straight run as far as the Wanderers' goal, but in the end they ran the ball over the line. Yet another corner came to the visitors, and, accurately placed by Tonks, yielded a third goal to the Wolves, being neatly headed through from the crush of men standing close in front. Running out to clear a long kick, Saer very nearly missed the ball altogether, but luckily his mistake was not an expensive one. Towards the finish the play of the Fosse forwards became a little more settled, and McMillan gave a useful pass forward to Dorrell, who ran well before centring, and the ball was gathered well on the other side by Freebairn, who scored with a fast shot close in. Just after this some clever play on the Wolves' right gave Beats an opening, but his shot almost grazed the cross-bar

as it passed over, and a cross shot by Miller also was a few inches too high. A centre from the last-named player rose by the side of the net, and Baddaley next came out to deal with a good shot from McMillan. The later stages of the play went in favour of the Fosse, but they failed to make much impression on the Wolves' goal, and when the whistle went the latter's forwards were preparing for another concerted attack, but Mr. Tillotson finished the game just when they were in a fair position for shooting, the final score reading —

**WOLVES, three goals**  
**FOSSE, one goal**

**WEST BROMWICH ALBION v BURSLEM PORT VALE.**

**FIRST ROUND.—RE-PLAYED.**

At West Bromwich, before fifteen hundred spectators, the home team, kicking down hill in the first half, had the best of matters, but failed to score, and the visitors made several well-directed charges with no better result. In the last half the game was well contested on both sides. The visitors refused to play extra time.

Result

**ALBION, none**  
**BURSLEM, none**

*Leicester Daily Post - Tuesday 18 January 1898*

**†BIRMINGHAM SENIOR CUP.**

**FINAL TIE.**

**WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS v. WALSHALL.**

The meeting of these clubs at Aston Lower Grounds, Birmingham, last Saturday, created an immense amount of excitement in the Black Country, and, despite the inclement condition of the weather, a large number of strangers journeyed to the Midland metropolis. The attendance would number 6,000. Both teams were at full strength. Walsall won by three goals to nothing. Referee, Mr. A. Pennington. Teams:—

**WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS.**—Baddaley (goal), Eccles and Bluckett (backs), Griffiths Owen and Fleming (half-backs), Chadman, Wood, Beate, Miller, and Smith.

**WALSALL.**—Hawkins (goal), Peers and C. L. Aston (backs), Wilks, Jenkins, and Targart (half-backs), Holmes, J. Aston, Griffin, Johnson, and Devey.

**PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE CUP.**

- 1877.—Wednesbury Old Athletic beat Stafford-road, 3—2.
- 1878.—Shrewsbury Town beat Wednesbury Strrollers, 2—1.
- 1879.—Wednesbury Old Athletic beat Stafford-road, 3—2.
- 1880.—Aston Villa beat Saltley College, 3—1.
- 1881.—Walsall Swifts beat Aston Villa, 1—0.
- 1882.—Aston Villa beat Wednesbury Old Athletic, 2—1.
- 1883.—Aston Villa beat Wednesbury Old Athletic, 3—2.
- 1884.—Aston Villa beat Walsall Swifts, 4—0.
- 1885.—West Bromwich Albion beat Walsall Swifts, 1—0.
- 1887.—Long Eaton Rangers beat West Bromwich Albion, 1—0.
- 1888.—Aston Villa beat West Bromwich Albion, 3—2.
- 1889.—Aston Villa beat Wolverhampton Wanderers, 3—1.
- 1890.—Aston Villa beat West Bromwich Albion, 2—0.
- 1891.—Aston Villa beat Wednesbury Old Athletic, 3—0.
- 1892.—Wolverhampton Wanderers beat West Bromwich Albion, 5—2.
- 1893.—Wolverhampton Wanderers beat Aston Villa, 3—1.
- 1894.—Wolverhampton Wanderers drew with West Bromwich Albion, 3—3, and held the cup jointly.
- 1895.—West Bromwich Albion beat Aston Villa, 1—0.
- 1896.—Aston Villa beat Sheffield United, 3—0.
- 1897.—Walsall beat Wolverhampton Wanderers, 2—1.

*Sporting Life - 28 March 1898*