

WEMBLEY, more than any other world stadium, provides a setting which finds out the basic truth about teams or players.

And the harshest truth to emerge from Saturday's League Cup Final is that a very ordinary Aston Villa team never needed to rise above muddling mediocrity to be distinctly . superior to Norwich.

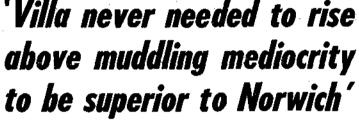
They didn't have to play anything more than reasonable Second Division football to take the trophy by one goal to nil.

At times both sides looked as out of place as provincial repertory players on a West End stage-because Wem bley, as well as rewarding skills, also magnifies miståkes.

The temptation exists to claim that Norwich's greatest mistake was turning up in the first place.

They never looked like keep-ing any of the brash, bright pre-match promises of their manager, John Bond.

It is difficult to feel sorry, however, for a man who pro-moted, for instance, the theory that his winger Johnny Miller could be a potential match-winner. On the day, Miller couldn't even keep his corner kicks in play. Ted MacDougall, hailed by Bond as one of the surest finishers in football, managed the meagre, miserable total of one accurate shot at goal—and that was one more than his striking partner, Phil Boyer. Both men are supposed to be international class. So the excuse that nothing came through from the midfield to them loses much of its validity. Neither did any effective foraging. Neither made any great use of the acres of space.



To Villa's great credit they at least improved steadily if with boring slowness, to a second-half situation of complete control.

They at least produced a few players who came close to mea-suring up to We mbley's demanding standards. Ian Ross, busy as an ant at the heart of their defence. was always quick to seal any avenues leading to goal. Frank Carrodus and Chico Hamilton in midfield kept play moving forward with a shuttle service of supply. Up front the wispy Brian

Little's performance made me wish a man-of-the-match award were a feature of this occasion. This quick youngster, brave. beautifully balanced, crammed with skill and displaying a refreshing zest for action, would have been the outstanding candidate for the neutrals as well as the committed. For most neutrals the feeling when Ray Graydon's goal finally won it for Villa ten minutes from the end was. bluntly, one of relief that we wouldn't have to live through another fortnight of promises, and, worse, another replay.





embracing match-winner Ray Graydon.

JOHN BOND in a grim mood after the game.

as Wilson's boys roar in

his athletes won English

I DID SO WANT SOME STYLE, MOANS BOND Miller was a calculated risk — and it didn't come off. "Machin aggravated

NORWICH were more upset by the way they lost, than the result itself, writes Nigel Clarke.

One player told me: "We were pathetic, it was embarrassing."

We've done it !- Aston Villa manager Ron Saunders shows his delight at victory by Pictures: MONTE FRESCO

Manager John Bond said: "Villa beat us fair and square. We gave a poor performance.

Risk

"I did so want to put on the style. That's what hurt, more than losing. "Playing both Mel Machin and Johnny

Goalkeeper Kevin Goalkeeper Kevin Keelan, who turned Ray. Graydon's penalty against the post, said: "Just how close I was to saving the shot com-pletely will haunt me for the rest of my life. "When Graydon got

"Machin aggravated his thigh injury with the first kick of the game and I don't know how long he'll be out."

"When Graydon got the rebound and scored, it was the worst moment of my football career.

TON-UP PAKISTANI SPARKS OFF RIOT

From MIRROR CRICKET REPORTER in Karachi players from the RIOTING fans held up his

pitch play for two and a half hours during the Second Test between Pakistan and the West Indies here

The trouble erupted with Pakistan on 394 for eight in their first inn-ings midway through the second session of the day

are emptier. Attendances soccer? are dropping. Many clubs are worried by serious financial trouble. The outlook for the future of

KILL SOCCI The stands and terraces hope is there for British Read the facts, and

the theories, in the March issue of Reader's Digest. It's packed with exciting,

WASTEFUL WALES GET A ROASTING

From JOE HUMPHREYS in Toulouse

COACH Les Pearce slammed Wales after a poor start to Rugby League's new five-nations tournament here yesterday. He lashed half-backs Peter Banner and David Watkins for not making more use of the ball and blasted the forwards for not backing each other

up.

ATHLETICS **Double triumph**

By FRANK TAYLOR HARRY WILSON, one of the country's top coaches, had a winning double at Luton on Saturday, when two of

	it's on sale at your local newsagent now	But he had hothing but praise for Dick Evans, the Swinton hooker. "He was simply marvellous," said Pearce. "It was a pity we threw a way the big advantage he gave us by some stupid mistakes. "If France had had the same amount of possession, they would have had a hatful of points." Wales led 7-6 at half	France 14 pts Wales 7 time thanks to a Kei Coslett penalty and a Frank Wilson try which Coslett converted, But Coslett missed two kicks in the second half and France recovered to clinch victory, scoring six points in the last three minutes.	cross-country titles. Tony Simmons took the nine-mile senior event in 46 minutes 24 seconds from Bernie Ford, who was second in 46 minute 52 seconds. Then Steve Ovett won the junior event over six miles in 32 minutes 6 seconds from Peter Kennedy, who was second in 32 minutes 41 seconds.	Police baton-charged and used tear-gas to disperse the rioters who invaded the pitch after Pakistani Wasim Raja had reached his century. As running battles broke out between police and sections of the 60,000 crowd West Indian skipper Clive Lloyd led	Only another haif hours play was possible Twenty policemen and sixty spectators are understood to have been injured in the riot-but no players. Wasim's century. Which included 10 fours and a six, took him five hours. At the close he was 107 not out. PAKISTAN First innings: 405-8 (Maild Khan 106, Wash Raja 107 a.o., Wash Bari \$3).
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