

Cup Ties



*How the first BFA Challenge Cup helped change
the face of Bermudian football forever*

MAURICE F. HANKEY

50th Anniversary Commemorative Publication



The Cup that cheers - the original BFA Cup, now retired after 50 years.

Cup Ties

How the first BFA Challenge Cup 1955-56
changed the face of Bermudian football forever

By Maurice F. Hankey

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On the cover:

Victorious BAA skipper George Sousa is held aloft by teammates with the trophy after beating Southampton Rangers 3-1 in the first BFA Cup Final, played at Prospect Garrison Recreational Field on Sunday, 18 March, 1956.

Photo by Ed Kelly

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Keith Dunstan also provided some very interesting pictures from his collection, as did George Sousa and Eldon Raynor. I trust that all these 'new' images have been appropriately attributed, and the participants correctly identified, because they greatly help to 'set the scene' of soccer in Bermuda in 1955-56.

Maurice F. Hankey

Preface

The Development of Soccer in Bermuda is the title of Chapter 7 of Jon Beard's dissertation in Sociology of Sports and Sports Management, written to complete his Master's Degree at Leicester University in March 1995. This Extract is available, on request, from the Reference Department at the National Library. It represents a most informative account of the developmental years of the game of football in Bermuda. Covering more than a century, it provides a highly recommended source for anyone seriously interested in the historical and cultural aspects of the way in which soccer impacted so positively on the social consciousness of Bermudians during the era of segregation. The following summary of a portion of Jon Beard's impressive work (closely following the original text but only exact when quoted and with added references to the BFL) will help to serve as an introduction to the initial BFA Challenge Cup Competition in 1955 :

In the early 20th Century, if black and white footballers inter-mingled in games this was mainly due to the influence and the authority of the British military, who were either stationed here or visiting. These so-called Service teams — who were generally the strongest on the Island — threatened in 1928 to withdraw from playing local soccer sides “until the game was properly organised, there being no governing body in Bermuda to resolve too many disputes” (*The Royal Gazette*, 27 October 1928). This resulted in an affiliation of ten local white teams — together with the Service Clubs — who collectively established the Bermuda Football Association. This organisation was subsequently recognised by the English Football Association as the governing authority for soccer in Bermuda. The initial and subsequent BFA Committees/Executive comprised a totally white membership.

In 1929, the BFA formed a League — but it was only for white teams. Some time later, a BFA Knock-out Competition was organised, again only for white clubs - a situation that continued for many years. Although a Bermuda Football League was established by black clubs in 1936 (through the efforts of a number of prominent black Bermudians headed by James Richards — see Don Burgess' article 'Football trailblazers', in the *Bermuda Sun*

series Bermuda's Athletes of the Century 1998-99) there was no formal relationship with the (white) BFA and real change only came about in the early 1940s, when there was an influx of British military personnel during the Second World War. This resulted in a number of white officers being seconded to black units — and black soccer teams, such as the Bermuda Militia, often turning out with a white captain !

Also, in 1944, after too many long years of playing on school and/or under-sized fields and with scant recognition and/or respect for their abilities, the black clubs formalised their own earlier association and the second, but now properly constituted, Bermuda Football League (BFL) came into being. Four years later, and following internal disagreements, the white clubs separated from the BFA and in 1948 established the Bermuda Football Combination (BFC). Most critically, however, both 'new' Leagues recognised the authority of the BFA and became affiliates, eventually placing representatives on BFA Committees. The first BFL blacks to be elected/appointed to the BFA were Dr V O'Donnell King and Reuben Alias, each of whom made very significant contributions to the future work and progress of the Association. Soon to join them (at various times) were Dudley Eve (Secretary of the BFL), Wilfred Pearman, Wilfred Richardson, Alfred Simmons and Henry Simons, amongst others. The principal outcome of these involvements was that "blacks (then) began to have a direct say in the development of soccer in Bermuda". White members of the BFA in that era included John Plowman, Francis Gosling, Wor. L M Minty, Harry Bridges, Douglas Cartwright, John Rosewarne, Harold Evans and Joseph Ferreira, the BFA Secretary for a number of years.

* * *

These advances in black-white relationships occurred in soccer over a period of many decades, both on the field and in administration, and should be recognized as incremental steps towards a more unified society. Racial integration in Bermuda during the mid 20th century was far more apparent in sports than it was in the community at large, and in this regard, soccer in the 1950s produced a number of important 'firsts', including :

On 2 December 1954, the white BAA side played their first-ever game against a black team when they entertained Southampton Rangers. From then onwards, a series of 'night-floodlit-friendlies' between the BAA and BFL clubs became a regular feature of the local soccer programme.

Another small step was taken in 1955, when the BFA sanctioned an in-coming tour by Germantown CC — a soccer team from the Philadelphia area. This occasion was auspicious in that it resulted in the first selection of a team comprised of black and white players to represent the BFA in a fixture against an overseas side. Just a few months later, the BFA hosted a second tour when the English FA Under 23 squad arrived to play two games while en route to Trinidad. In every respect (other than the match results which were heavily in favour of the English) this visit was a great success, particularly as the two BFA XIs were integrated

teams whose members represented both the BFL and the BFC as well as Bermuda.

“Then further integration occurred in December 1955 when for the first time BFC and BFL teams played against each other in the BFA Cup competition. This integration of black teams into what was previously an all-white competition reflected the slight swing in the power balance towards the blacks in society in general” (Jon Beard)

* * *

When one recalls the public attitudes and behaviours that were current during segregation, the sociological aspects of the 1955-56 BFA Challenge Cup Competition quite naturally add a significant historical and cultural element. Unsurprisingly, the largest crowds attending BFA Cup matches were for those games featuring black v white teams. These crowds were also black and white, but there were no restrictions (as in local hotels, theatres/cinemas, clubs, restaurants etc) as to whether black spectators could be admitted, or where they could sit, stand or move.

This, then, is the background to the environment in which the first integrated BFA Challenge Cup Competition was played. My purpose has been to accurately document the course of this tournament on the basis that there would be no Final unless there had been prior games/rounds. More specifically, though, it is to ensure that the BFA will now have a record of their earliest involvements in local soccer, given that all previous files from this period were inadvertently destroyed.

Although the 50th playing of the BFA's Challenge Cup Final was appropriately celebrated, it is my belief that every match in the original competition should be recognised as being worthy of commemoration. Collectively, they constituted *an event* that brought social integration much nearer and, in effect, could be regarded as a precursor to the 1959 Theatre Boycott that resulted in legislated desegregation.

While I only arrived in Bermuda in early September 1955, I have been privileged to live here for the past 50 years and have personal experience of the events that have been recorded ... being a member of the BAA team that won the first-ever BFA Challenge Cup competition.

Notwithstanding such 'extra-curricular' issues, it is my hope that the following account, and especially the photographs, will provide an informative, interesting and enjoyable time-capsule — most particularly for the elderly readers more familiar with the 1950s and obviously those who were associated, in any way, with this inaugural Championship.

*Maurice F. Hankey
Bermuda, April 2006*

chapter one

It was a very good year

The Bermuda Football Association might today (in 2006) reflect, both proudly and happily, on the year 1955 as being a catalyst for change — for this is when the BFA first became more purposefully, and clearly more actively, involved in the local soccer scene. Until this time, and although accepted locally and internationally as the governing body for the sport of football in Bermuda, the Association had previously done little more than grant sanction to their members who wished to organise either incoming or outgoing tours, or had settled disputes on regulations/laws when problems arose from matches played in their affiliated leagues. However, early January 1955 saw the visit to Bermuda of the Germantown CC soccer team (from the Philadelphia area) which included “a number of noted players who had been on Olympic sides and seen international competition. (It) was also recommended as a good football side with plenty of experienced members” (*The Royal Gazette*, 6 January 1955).

The playing schedule for this three match series, with all fixtures to be played at Prospect, included a game for the visitors against the BFL on 9 January 1955 — when “they were well beaten by a score of 3-1”. A few days later, the BFC won 2-1 “in a hard-played match in unpleasant conditions”. Given these two losses, it could be said that the tourists arrived here somewhat unprepared — perhaps explaining the remark of an official who noted that his team “had never played before an audience of more than 400, and were surprised by the fact that close to 3,000 spectators” came out to watch them (*The Royal Gazette*, 13 January 1955). Their visit, though, was unique in that it concluded with a fixture against a BFA XI — the first team to be selected from affiliates that included black members.

* * *

In their efforts to overview an initial squad of more than 20 possible choices, the BFA had planned two trial matches, though only one was able to be completed. Nevertheless, the eleven footballers selected from this group comprised the first-ever integrated team to represent



Formal photograph of the first-ever integrated BFA XI prior to their match against Germantown CC at Prospect. Standing (left to right): Dr V O'D King (BFA), A Harker, R Simmons, E Allen, R. Madeiros, W Mayne, D. Cartwright (BFA), Reuben Alias (BFA). Seated (left to right): H. Wilson, E Russell, R Mallory, H.E. Governor Sir Alexander Hood, V Philpott, F Phillips, R Nash.

Left, the Governor, Sir Alexander Hood, being introduced to the members of the above team by the BFA captain Ralph Mallory. Also pictured are Dr V O'D King, and referee Winfield Swan.

Photos by Ed Kelly

the BFA (and unofficially Bermuda) in a soccer match against an overseas side. This now historic BFA XI — reported in *The Royal Gazette* of 11 January 55 as “the first all-Bermuda football team” — comprised (and listed in playing positions that were current in 1955) :

E. Allen (Prospect – BFC), goalkeeper
 R. Simmons (Pembroke Juniors – BFL), right back
 R. Madeiros (Sandys Boat Club – BFC), left back
 A. Harker (Police – BFC), right half
 W. Mayne (BAA – BFC), centre half
 R. Mallory (Pembroke Juniors – BFL), left half

R. Nash (BAA – BFC), outside right
 F. Phillips (Prospect – BFC), inside right
 V. Philpott (Somerset Eagles – BFL), centre forward
 E. Russell (Key West Rangers – BFL), inside left
 H. Wilson (Pembroke Juniors – BFL), outside left

The BFA's initial Representative XI met the Germantown CC soccer team at Prospect on 16 January 1955, after both teams had been presented to the Governor of Bermuda, Sir Alexander Hood and an official party including BFA principal officers the Hon L.M. Minty and Dr V O'D King. Combining a mix of BFL and BFC players,



Vivian Philpott scoring the BFA XI's first goal against Germantown CC at Prospect on 16 January 1955. Other BFA players (in white shorts) are Dick Nash (left background) and 'Townsey' Russell (far right) who scored the BFA's second goal.

Photo by Ed Kelly

the local side enjoyed a two goal lead at the interval - through Vivian Philpott and Earl Russell - but allowed two Germantown strikes late in the game which ended in a 2-2 draw. It was reported that Germantown "deservedly wiped-out the arrears in their best display (in Bermuda), before around 2,500 spectators".

* * *

Four months later, the BFA hosted a tour by the English FA Under 23 squad. Two matches were arranged against what was now being called a Bermuda XI. Both games were to be played at Prospect — on Thursday 12 May at 4.00 p.m. and on Saturday 14 May at 5.30 p.m. The BFA Secretary, Douglas Cartwright, explained that the unusual kick-off times had been agreed "in order to suit the convenience of the community". Whatever the rationale, these late starts certainly suited the visitors rather more than the locals. Commenting on the first match, *The Royal Gazette* headlined with "Bermuda XI Obliterated by the FA's Super Soccer Show" (13 May 1955), while *The Bermuda Recorder* of 14 May 1955 led with "Bermuda Swamped 11-1", adding later that "Earl Russell scored Bermuda's goal with a quiet lob". The result in the second fixture was 14-1 for the English, who actually scored all 15 — Bermuda's lone tally being due to an own-goal. The hero of this game, and obviously the most active member of the local side, was goalkeeper Lennie Pedro whose performance merited accolades. In fact, *The Royal Gazette* of 16 May 1955 thought that "Little Lennie Faced FA Almost Single-Handed".

As distinct from Germantown, whose players were multi-national but represented a club from America, any designated 'English FA Under 23 XI' was a truly national team. In their two games against the BFA, these Englishmen were representing their country. Being professionals — well trained, organised and disciplined — they compromised neither their



The first of the two BFA XIs to meet the English FA Under 23s during May, 1955. Standing (left to right) - W Pearman (BFA) L Swain (Manager), R Simmons, R Madeiros, F Raynor, H Whitehead, W Mayne, R Bernard (BFA), D Eve (BFA). Seated (left to right) - E Madeiros, F Griffiths, R Mallory (Captain), V Philpott, E Russell, M Simmons.

Photo by Bruno Brown



The English FA fielded two quite different sides on their 1955 tour. The team above featured Bobby Robson (seated front row, second from right), Bedford Jezzard (left of Robson) and Sid Owen (left of Jezzard) Photo by Bruno Brown and courtesy of Keith Dunstan, who was fortunate in having all the players personally autograph his original print.

standards nor their attitude towards winning (even though competing against amateurs).

Because of the distances to be travelled throughout their Bermuda-Trinidad tour, the English FA group included 18 footballers of really high quality. This allowed frequent matches to be scheduled with just a few days break. Amongst their players were a number who were later selected for full international honours, and two who featured prominently in the Bermuda fixtures and

were already senior internationals - Bedford Jezzard (who had 'a tremendous shot') and Sid Owen (captain and centre-half). However, the two members of the English touring party in 1955 who became more lasting famous through football were Bobby Robson (now Sir Bobby and renowned as a coach/manager) and Jimmy Hill (whose soccer career blossomed into TV presentations, and who was well-regarded as a commentator/analyst).

Although the English FA teams playing here could be correctly described as 'International', the local sides were simply representing the Bermuda leagues/clubs affiliated with the BFA and, as with Germantown, every match they played was a 'friendly' and could never be officially recognised as an 'international'.

The visit of the English FA squad in May 1955 was extremely popular. The attendance at their final match was 'around 6,000 spectators', but a more remarkable feature was the large number of Bermudians who watched their training sessions at Prospect. These were considered to be as interesting and as attractive (in terms of skills practice, tactics and set-piece drills) as could be seen when watching the team compete. Moreover, they performed in training at a much higher level than the standard of soccer seen locally in regular league matches. The tour was an unqualified success and a huge achievement for the Bermuda Football Association.

And there was more to come



Eldon Madeiros (BFA) shaping to shoot against the English FA Under 23 XI. This action is around the northern goal at Prospect and shows the eastern bank well-filled for this particular match.

Photo by Bermuda Sports



Lennie Pedro was the goal-keeping hero of the second BFA-England Under 23s (mis)match. Although his side lost 14-1, Lennie was accorded Man-of-the-Match recognition and (in modern times) would have been substituted due to 'exhaustion' well before the game's conclusion. Note the heavy leather ball used at the time - even heavier and painful to head when waterlogged!

Photo by Bruno Brown

chapter two

The BFA Cup: the Preliminaries

The Bermuda Football Association introduced the BFA Challenge Cup Competition in November 1955. At that time, racial segregation was the way of life in Bermuda, and local soccer at senior level was played under the auspices of the Bermuda Football League (for black clubs) and the Bermuda Football Combination (for white clubs). Although teams from these distinctly separate organisations occasionally played each other in friendly matches — and there was an annual BFL v BFC representative game — it was not until late 1955 that black and white clubs were given an opportunity to play against each other, competitively, for the distinction of winning a new and notably prestigious trophy: the BFA Cup.

* * *

Prior to the early 1950s, and as described by Wanderer of the *Bermuda Sports* magazine (December 1955), football in Bermuda was conditioned “by prejudice and misunderstanding between the BFL and the BFC who were in complete ignorance of each other’s aims”. Then the BFA was re-energised when the BFL and the BFC representatives began to work together towards fulfilling “their objectives to control, foster and guide soccer in Bermuda. Within two short years the BFA created the beginning of an understanding between the two leagues and moved steadily to a complete merger of interests. It was realised that teams with players of two colours could play a rousing, competitive game in the best sporting manner and end it with a mutual respect for each other”.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Stabilizer of *The Bermuda Recorder* (3 December 1955) who noted that the BFA Challenge Cup “marks a forward step for local sport. It will bring racially divided leagues together on a common ground without the many petty differences which (to date) have beset sports in the Colony”.



Left, goalmouth action during a BFL league game between Key West Rangers and Pembroke Juniors at the Sports Arena in the 55-56 season. Shown (left to right) are Fred Raynor (Key West), Austin 'Cheesey' Hughes (Juniors) and Ronald 'Froggie' Simmons (Key West).

Photo by Bruno Brown

Right, BFL league match between Wellington Rovers and Pembroke Juniors, played at the Garrison Field, St George, on 29 January 1956. Pembroke won 5-3 and took over the lead in the BFL 'A' Division while consigning Wellington to third place. Players identified (left to right) – McDonald Swan (PJ), Floyd Thomson (WR), Sinclair Reid (WR), Ralph Mallory (PJ) and Eddie Wright (WR).



Photo by Ed Kelly

In November 1955, the BFA issued a detailed outline (28 clauses) of the Rules for its first-ever Challenge Cup Competition. Included were such minor administrative items as: any senior affiliate/member club of the BFA could enter; the required fee was one pound sterling; (entry) applications had to be received by 23 November. It was also confirmed that the First Round of this new competition would be played on 4 December 1955, the Second Round on 15 January 1956 and the Third Round on 5 February 1956. Dates and venues for the semi-finals and the final were to be decided later.

Nineteen clubs entered — 12 from the BFL and 7 from the BFC — all with the intention of winning a Cup that local commentators had immediately referred to as “the richest prize for island footballers” and “the symbol of island-wide soccer supremacy”.

The First Round draw was held on 24 November 1955 at 12.30 pm at the Hamilton Armoury on Reid Street. This ceremony (which could now be regarded as a distinctly historical occasion) was attended by the following BFA Executive Committee members — Dudley Eve, Reuben Alias, Francis Gosling, Wilfred Pearman and Joseph Ferreira (the BFA Secretary).

chapter three

The First Round

Nineteen teams entered the 1955-56 BFA Challenge Cup Competition, with Bermuda Football League clubs predominant. These were:

Bermuda Militia
Devonshire Lions Sports Club
Dock Hill Rangers
Happy Valley Sports Club
Key West Rangers
Paget Bombardiers
Pembroke Juniors
Somerset Eagles
Southampton Rangers
Wellington Rovers
West End Rovers
Wolves Football Club

Representing the Bermuda Football Combination were:

Bermuda Athletic Association (BAA)
National Sports Club
Pembroke Panthers
Police Recreation Club
Prospect Command
Sandys Boat Club
St George's Dinghy & Sports Club

Discussions regarding the likely champion invariably included the names of Pembroke Juniors, Key West Rangers and Wellington Rovers. In late November 1955, these three Clubs held the top positions in the BFL 'A' Division where they had been similarly placed throughout the past two seasons. The BAA and Sandys Boat Club were generally regarded as the strongest sides in the Combination.

As the Challenge Cup was (and is) a knock-out competition, it was necessary to reduce the 19 entrants to 16 in order to facilitate the numerical requirements of each draw. So, on 24 November 1955, just six teams were drawn against each other. These matches would provide 3 winners to join the remaining 13 teams — all of whom received byes — for the Second Round.

The very first draw for the very First Round in the BFA's very first Challenge Cup Competition resulted in the following schedule, to be played on 4 December 1955:

Paget Bombardiers (BFL) v Somerset Eagles (BFL)
Pembroke Panthers (BFC) v Prospect (BFC)
Wellington Rovers (BFL) v Pembroke Juniors (BFL)

Although there was no inter-league match-up, by far the most attractive pairing was the Rovers-Juniors game, especially as a recent clash between these sides had ended in controversy when the referee had felt compelled to abandon play.

* * *

Only three fixtures constituted the First Round of the 1955-56 Challenge Cup Competition, but each match was close and exciting with a total of 23 goals being scored:

Paget Bombardiers	4	Somerset Eagles	6
Pembroke Panthers	5	Prospect Command	4
Wellington Rovers	2	Pembroke Juniors	2

Because of their Club rivalry as contenders for the BFL leadership, the Rovers-Juniors match at Garrison Field, St George, was the highlight of the Round. It had additional significance as it was the second game in a series of four between these Clubs — two in the BFL and two in the BFA Cup — in a period of but a few weeks, which included the Christmas and New Year festivities!

This sequence started with a BFL league fixture on 20th November that was abandoned when “an angry crowd swarmed the field to protest a penalty awarded to Juniors during the closing minutes of the game”. The referee, Easton Thomas, who was “assaulted and abused ... immediately called off the game” (*The Bermuda Recorder*, 23 November 1955).

On submission of a report to the BFA (the controlling authority for all football in Bermuda) the match was ordered to be replayed at a time and date decided by the BFL. Additionally, officials and players of Wellington Rovers were reprimanded — perhaps a surprisingly light punishment in view of the fact that, when the game was abandoned, Rovers were leading 3-2 and it was their supporters who invaded the field.

It could thus have been expected that similar disturbances would occur at the next meeting of these sides, but (as reported in *The Bermuda Recorder*, 7 December 1955) ... “following a contentious game on the same field a fortnight ago that ended amid riotous scenes, Sunday’s game went off in the most sporting manner. Neither fans nor players displayed any of the ‘feeling’ that was so evident the last time the teams met”. *The Royal Gazette* of 5 December 1955 noted that “the game was a thriller from start to finish .. the teams received vociferous support from the spectators but despite the tremendous pressure that both teams and their supporters were under, there were no incidences of bad sportsmanship either on or off the field”.

Being tied at the end of 90 minutes, the match went into overtime. Unfortunately, play could only continue for some six minutes when darkness set in and the game had to be suspended. Thus, and while a major and most welcome outcome was in the attitude and behaviour of the players and their supporters, it meant that yet another replay was needed to decide which Club — Rovers or Juniors — would advance to the Second Round of the BFA Cup.

This fixture was arranged for 18 December 1955 when ... “although the match played before 1,000 spectators was in doubt all the way, the Rovers edged Juniors by a score of 2-1. Maxwell Burgess and Fred Trott got the goals for Wellington whilst Elmo Black accounted for the lone Juniors’ tally” (*The Royal Gazette*, 19 December 1955).

The Rovers thus entered the Second Round of the BFA Cup, along with companion First Round winners — the Somerset Eagles and the Pembroke Panthers. They were joined by thirteen other Clubs who had benefited from non-competitive byes — also known as ‘the luck of the draw’.

The only consolation for the Juniors came in a BFL match on 29 January 1956. Again a replay, and the last of an extremely competitive series of four games against each other within but a few weeks, Pembroke defeated Wellington 5-3 to take over first place in the BFL ‘A’ Division. This loss dropped the Rovers to third in the League table below Key West. Although both latter teams were still in the BFA Cup, one of the early favourites to win this new Competition — Pembroke Juniors — had been eliminated.

* * *

The draw for the Second Round of the BFA Cup 1955-56 was then made, producing the following schedule of games to be played on 15 January 1956:

Wellington Rovers v BAA , 3.00 pm at Prospect Garrison Field
Pembroke Panthers v Key West Rangers, 3.00 pm at Cox's Hill Field
Wolves F C v Dock Hill Rangers, 1.00 pm at Bermuda Sports Arena
Happy Valley v Devonshire Lions, 3.00 pm at Bermuda Sports Arena
Bermuda Militia v Nationals, 1.00 pm at White Hill Field
Southampton Rangers v West End Rovers, 3.00 pm at White Hill Field
St George's D & S Club v Police, 3.00 pm at Garrison Field, St George
Sandys Boat Club v Somerset Eagles, 3.00 pm at Somerset Cricket Club

These eight fixtures were to be played at six locations. Two double-headers were allocated to the Sports Arena and to White Hill and there were also secondary games at Cox's Hill and St George's (in the Junior League KO). Thus two matches were played on the same field immediately after each other on the same afternoon — a regular feature of football in Bermuda in the 1950s (and indeed at present) due very simply to lack of space. Wear and tear on the playing surface and its consequent effect on the quality of the soccer then played, plus the imposition of a sand-covered concrete cricket strip in the centre circle of most pitches, had to be accepted as an unfortunate but integral part of the local game.

A peculiarity of the draw was that Wellington Rovers (BFL) were picked as the home team against BAA (BFC) but were required to play at Prospect — a field with which they were barely familiar as it was used primarily for BFC and not BFL matches. According to *The Royal Gazette* (23 December 1955), the rationale for this anomaly was that St George's D&S Club had already been drawn at 'home' against Police and "rather than play two very good games at the Garrison field, it was decided to switch the second game to Prospect where better facilities for accommodating spectators, and for collecting a gate, were more available".

This statement illustrates a certain dichotomy in football in Bermuda in the 1950s. A significant number of Club teams — both black and white — would share the same 'home' field as a matter of necessity, as did Wellington and St George's with the Garrison Field.

A second distinction was in the ownership of the fields on which soccer and other sports were played, a high proportion of which were the property either of Crown Lands and/or the Government of Bermuda. These would be administered and maintained by the then Departments of Education and/or Public Works. At such fields, general access was normally free and only at securely enclosed grounds could a 'gate' be taken.

Using the BFC as an example, Sandys Boat Club — whose members enjoyed a well-appointed clubhouse for their sailing and social activities — used Boaz Island, Port Royal School and Somerset CC at different times as their 'home' field. By contrast, the BAA played every 'home game' on their own ground at Serpentine Road. They also provided changing-rooms, with a cold shower, in the basement of the groundsman's cottage — not a particularly attractive amenity by modern standards, but it was as good as anything else available in local soccer during the 1955-56 season. And the field was enclosed and an entry fee could be charged!

chapter four

Between rounds: the Yale Tour

There was a period of four weeks between the conclusion of the First Round of the 1955-56 Challenge Cup Competition and the date for playing the Second Round matches on 15 January 1956. The 16 teams still involved in the tournament included 10 from the BFL and 6 from the BFC, all of whom remained active in completing their respective league commitments during this time frame. And at least four of these Clubs kept match-fit by playing against Yale University's Soccer XI which visited Bermuda from 26 December 1955 to 6 January 1956.

This tour was organised by the Bermuda Football Combination, sanctioned by the BFA and hosted by the BAA. It was unique in being the first occasion when a soccer team representing an American University played a series of games in Bermuda against local Clubs. Amongst these were Key West Rangers and Wellington Rovers of the BFL and Sandys Boat Club and BAA of the BFC. On the basis of their performances and results in both regular league competition and occasional friendlies, these four teams were generally regarded, together with Pembroke Juniors, as the strongest sides in Bermuda. But unlike the Juniors, all four had moved on to the Second Round of the BFA Challenge Cup.

* * *

Yale brought a squad of 17 first-team players, all students, to allow for limited substitutions. At that time, and under the Laws of the game, replacements were not permitted in competitive football, either amateur or professional. But this tour was basically an 'amicable arrangement' and it was sensible to accept that many more than eleven players would be needed to undertake an overseas tour and to compete well in a schedule which initially proposed five fixtures within eight days.

The Yale University Soccer XI arrived in Bermuda with a very respectable record for their current season. They had played 12 games with 9 won, 1 drawn and 2 lost, and had

scored 32 goals with only 10 against. They also presented an imposing physical challenge, “averaging per player a height of 6ft 1in, a weight of 173lbs and being just over 22 years old .. they will be among the biggest (and fittest) footballers ever seen here” (*The Royal Gazette*, 20 December 1955). Included in their squad were a Jamaican, Mike Cooke, and Festus Adabonojo from Nigeria — each a skilled ball-player and consistent goalscorer. The latter possibly further distinguished himself by becoming the first Nigerian to play competitive football in Bermuda.

The original schedule of games, all to be played at the BAA field, was amended on two occasions — once due to the withdrawal of HMS Kenya through unavailability, and another to accommodate a rest day. Ultimately, Yale would meet Sandys Boat Club (under lights) on 27 December 1955, Key West Rangers on 29 December 1955, Wellington Rovers on 1 January 1956, and their tour hosts BAA (under lights) on 2 January 1956. They were thus called upon to face four of the top Club teams in Bermuda — Key West were then leading the BFL ‘A’ Division with Wellington third, while BAA headed the BFC First Division with Sandys in third place.

Far from being overawed, however, the University students were impressive in their first outing when they won 4-2 over Sandys. “Playing before some 1,500 spectators, Yale displayed a sound defence and an (attractive) attacking game spearheaded by Jamaican Mike Cooke”. A rather cautious summary noted that “their victory, however, was more the result of an adequate soccer side defeating a poorly organised one” (*The Royal Gazette*, 28 December 1955).

A much stronger test would come in Yale’s next fixture, about which “it was the general consensus of opinion, shared by the experts, that Key West will completely overpower the touring team” (*The Royal Gazette*, 28 December 1955) — perhaps a somewhat unkind comment in view of the result. This was 5-3 for the Rangers, whose Calvin Symonds produced a man of the match performance, scoring “four times for his team. He was always cool and dangerous as much with the ball at his feet or on his head as he was with his passes”. For Yale, there was considerable consolation in that “their Nigerian centre-forward Adabonojo, played a much better game than he did against Sandys Boat Club” and netted all three of their goals. (*The Bermuda Recorder*, 31 December 1955)

On New Year’s Day, the Yale-Wellington Rovers match was “witnessed by 2,500 fans”. Unfortunately, rain squalls persisted throughout much of the match and “turned the pitch into a slippery slide making ball control difficult”. Yale mastered these conditions far more effectively than Wellington and achieved a “brilliant victory, subduing Rovers 4-0”. (*The Royal Gazette*, 4 January 1956). Both Adabonojo and Cooke, who each scored a goal, were very influential in Yale’s winning performance.

The final fixture of the tour, Yale v BAA, was a match of fluctuating fortunes. Yale had the better of the first-half, with Cooke prominently industrious, but failed to convert a number of scoring opportunities due mainly to “the staunch defence of George Sousa, Billy

Mayne and Vivian Siddle”. After the interval, however, BAA changed their team formation and, becoming more positive, “opened the scoring within six minutes, added another in four minutes and then 20 minutes later put in the clincher”. (*The Royal Gazette*, 4 January 1956). Yale threatened very little in the second half and BAA won 3-0, with David Thorne, Wyman DeSilva and Ray Constable each claiming a goal.

Thus “the Yale Soccer Club finished their soccer tour of Bermuda — the first ever attempted by an American university — with an even record. They won two matches and lost two (but scored more goals than they conceded, actually 11 to 10). When it came to pleasing the thousands of fans who braved chill winds and drenching rain to watch them perform, they gave a good display of football and left the audience with a wish to see them again” (*The Royal Gazette*, 4 January 1956). Surely as good an assessment as any amateur soccer team visiting Bermuda could wish for.

Yale’s visit also provided welcome preparation — by way of individually hard-fought games — for the four local opponents who were soon to participate in the Second Round of the BFA Challenge Cup Competition.

A date with destiny

It is interesting to note a coincidence with regard to days and dates. Senior and competitive soccer in Bermuda is regularly played on Sundays and such was the case in the 1955-56 season. Every day/month of the BFA Challenge Cup matches reported in these pages (but obviously not the year) fell on similar dates in 2005-06.

For example, the rounds of 4 December 1955, 15 January 1956 and 5 February 1956 were all played on Sundays, and these same days/months during the current season were also Sundays. It was not until March 2006 that the 1956 playing dates (for the last two games in that Challenge Cup) did not correspond with a Sunday. This was due to 1956 being a leap year with an extra day on 29 February — which was not true for 2006.

The question may thus be asked — will

such a coincidence again occur fifty years from now when the 100th Anniversary of the BFA Challenge Cup will be recognised?

If so — and the year 2056 will be a leap year as was 1956 — should not the BFA seriously consider scheduling their most prestigious competition to be played on the same days/months as the original 1955-56 KO Cup? At the very least, the First Round draw in the 2055-56 Competition — which will constitute the BFA’s most memorable and celebratory season — must surely be held on 24 November, the date of this same function in 1955.

Such an occasion would appropriately commemorate the commencement of the centennial of an extra-special event in Bermuda’s sporting and cultural history — the Bermuda Football Association Challenge Cup Competition.

chapter five

The Second Round

The *Royal Gazette* of 14 January 1956 headed its soccer column with ‘INTER-LEAGUE GAMES PROVIDE INTEREST’, continuing with : “The second round of the Bermuda Football Association Knockout Cup Competition will be played tomorrow afternoon (after which) there should be eight teams advanced into the quarter-final round and eight teams licking their wounds and wondering why they made the mistakes they did which knocked them out of the competition. While any of the eight matches should provide football fans with a good afternoon’s enjoyment, interest will centre around the inter-league matches. Perhaps the closest-watched game will be between the BAA and the Wellington Rovers who are using the Prospect field, with Pembroke Panthers v Key West Rangers at Cox’s Hill attracting considerable attention as well”.

The Bermuda Recorder of 14 January 1956 also listed the BFA Cup Sunday Schedule and noted that the Wellington v BAA match “should be well worth watching” with all other games “no less interesting”. However, neither newspaper was prepared to predict the likely results of these eight fixtures, possibly because the final outcome of closely-contested games can often depend on “mistakes” as much as on good, constructive football.

* * *

It was somewhat surprising that there had been no published reaction to a BFA decision requiring the Wellington-BAA fixture to be played at Prospect. This inevitably put the Rovers — as the supposed ‘home’ team — at a disadvantage. The two sides involved, now Cup rivals, had met in previous friendly games (at the BAA field and under lights) with the BAA emerging from each contest as winners. Further, and during a recent Holiday tour by Yale University, Wellington had lost to the visitors 4-0 while the BAA had secured a 3-0 victory. It could then be assumed that the BAA had developed a strong sense of confidence in their ability to achieve well against the Rovers. Given these factors, the BAA certainly seemed to have more in their favour than did Wellington — especially as this Cup tie was to take

place at Prospect rather than at the Garrison Field in St George.

The Panthers (BFC) v Key West (BFL) game was scheduled for Cox's Hill where the pitch was very unwelcoming to visiting teams, being small and uneven and touchy-feely (in that it was extremely difficult for players to avoid being too close to either an opponent, a spectator or an unyielding playing surface). While the Panthers always performed well at 'home' and knocked-in goals very regularly, they tended to be generous in defence and usually conceded almost as many as they scored. With Calvin 'Bummy' Symonds and Earl 'Townsey' Russell starring in their forward line, Key West would obviously be very competitive opponents in a prospectively crowd-pleasing match.

The other inter-league fixtures featured Bermuda Militia (BFL) v Nationals (BFC) at White Hill and Sandys Boat Club (BFC) v Somerset Eagles (BFL) at Somerset CC. These games offered the additional spice of being 'local derbies', as were the final four matches in the BFA Cup Second Round with Wolves v Dock Hill, Happy Valley v Devonshire Lions (both at the Sports Arena), St George's D&S Club v Police at the Garrison Field in St George, and Southampton Rangers v West End Rovers at White Hill.

* * *

Played on Sunday 15 January 1956, these eight Second Round matches produced 43 goals — and one upset. The latter occurred at the Sports Arena where "Happy Valley handed the Devonshire Lions a surprising 7-2 trouncing". The Valley were bottom of the BFL 'A' Division with a negatively perfect record — they were still to either win or draw any league match ! However, on this occasion they produced their "best effort of the season (because) Tucker, whose accurate left foot earned him four goals, led his team-mates to a one-sided decision over the out-gunned Devonshire Lions" (*The Royal Gazette*, 16 January 1956). In an earlier fixture at the same venue, Dock Hill defeated Wolves by a score of 5-2. Despite rain, wind and generally disagreeable conditions throughout, the four BFL sides were able to provide the crowd with a goal-filled and entertaining afternoon of typical Cup/knock-out soccer.

At White Hill field, in a second BFA double-header, there were comfortable wins for Southampton Rangers (BFL) over West End Rovers (BFL) 3-1, and for the National Sports Club (BFC) who defeated Bermuda Militia (BFL) 4-2. Another inter-league clash took place at Somerset CC — in a western derby — where Sandys Boat Club (BFC) scored four goals without reply against Somerset Eagles (BFL).

The only low-scoring match of the Second Round was played at the Garrison Field in St George and involved two BFC teams, with Police losing 1-0 to St George's D&S Club in a game that seemed to attract very little by way of interest or comment.

In contrast, the two remaining fixtures — both inter-league contests — generated considerable discussion and support, with perhaps the pairing of Wellington and BAA at



Wellington Rovers v BAA at Prospect in the Second Round of the BFA Cup on 15 January 1956. BAA goalie, Vivian Siddle, is shown holding a shot with George Sousa and Billy Mayne covering in defence. Attacking for Wellington are Maxwell 'Joe' Burgess (middle) and Eddie Wright. It is interesting to note that Wellington played in their 'home' colours, with quartered shirts, as they were deemed to be the 'home' side for this fixture.

Photo by Ed Kelly

Prospect the more eagerly awaited. Reporting on this game, *The Royal Gazette* (16 January 1956) reflected that "after having things pretty well their own way in the first half, at the end of which the score was 2-0 in BAA's favour, they scored again after the intermission and it appeared as if BAA would have a shut-out victory over one of the strongest teams in the Bermuda Football League. (Then) suddenly the Rovers began to spark and scored two goals in five minutes just short of full time, (with) the action being fast and furious as BAA staved off a second half Rovers rally to eke out a 3-2 victory".

Meanwhile, at Cox's Hill, the Pembroke Panthers (BFC) and the Key West Rangers (BFL) were fairly well-matched for much of the earlier part of the game. The half-time score was 2-1 for Key West, but Panthers were "pressing hard after the interval and came close on a number of occasions until a penalty for handling was awarded against them. This was the turning point in the match" (*The Royal Gazette*, 16 January 1956). Calvin 'Bummy' Symonds converted, and added a further goal to complete a hat-trick - by which time the Panthers "had lost their steam". Key West won 5-2, leaving a dejected Graham Tavares with the satisfaction of scoring both Panther's goals. The Bermuda Recorder (18 Jan 1956) headlined its report with "Symonds brilliant in Key West win".

These results ensured that four teams from the League and four from the Combination had advanced to the Third Round of the BFA Challenge Cup Competition.

chapter six

The Quarter-Finals

The eight remaining teams in the 1955-56 BFA Cup comprised four from the League and four from the Combination, and there was obvious potential that the draw for the Quarter-finals (a more appropriate title than Third Round) would include four inter-league fixtures. Perhaps disappointingly, the actual draw resulted in two inter-league matches and two games between 'own league' clubs. The schedule for these Quarter-final matches was as follows, with all games to be played on 5 February 1956.

BAA (BFC) v St George's D&S Club (BFC) at BAA

Happy Valley (BFL) v Key West Rangers (BFL) at Prospect

National Sports Club (BFC) v Southampton Rangers (BFL) at Cox's Hill

Sandys Boat Club (BFC) v Dock Hill Rangers (BFL) at White Hill

With regard to predictions, or probable results, there were not too many variables to complicate any rational choice. In the 'own-league' encounters, Key West had been alternately top or second of the BFL 'A' Division throughout the season, whereas Happy Valley had maintained a fixed spot in bottom place in the same league during the same period. Having gained a bye in the BFA Cup First Round, Valley's first win in any 55-56 competition came at the expense of Devonshire Lions in the Second Round of the Cup. Their prospects for continuing on to the BFA semi-finals seemed less than hopeful — but they had already achieved one upset and another was certainly not impossible. Such is the essence of knockout competitions.

The BAA-St George's game was rather indeterminate. BAA were heading the BFC First Division and St George's had moved between second and fourth in the table, their performances often a reflection of the availability of their better players for the important fixtures. Despite the fact that matches between these two sides were invariably hard-fought,

BAA had won all previous contests during the 1955-56 season — additionally, they were playing this Cup tie ‘at home’.

The two inter-league encounters could be quite properly be regarded as representative of all knock-out tournaments. Clubs that had never before played each other were now required to prove themselves in a one-off situation with very limited opportunities for a second chance. However, in one of these pairings, Sandys Boat Club seemed to be a much stronger and more experienced team than Dock Hill, who were fourth in the BFL ‘B’ (Second) Division while Sandys were consistently in the top two or three of the BFC First Division.

The result of the fourth game of the Quarter-Finals would have been the most difficult to predict as both protagonists — Nationals (BFC) and Southampton (BFL) — were mid-table in their respective First and ‘A’ Divisions and both were very capable of performing well-above-average when the occasion demanded.

Whatever rational choices may have been made in pre-selecting the likely winners, it has to be recognised that cup knockout competitions enable the under-rated clubs to pursue their ‘dreams of glory’, with results often bearing little relationship to sensible expectations.

* * *

“With the completion of the 3rd round of the BFA Challenge Cup Competition yesterday, two teams from the Combination and two from the League entered the semi-finals for the first ever open knock-out trophy. The BAA and Sandys of the BFC and Southampton Rangers and Key West of the BFL emerged with clear-cut victories after games played in brilliant sunshine which drew big crowds of spectators” (*The Mid-Ocean News*, 6 February 1956).

In summarising the four matches, and commenting on the game played at White Hill, *The Royal Gazette* of 6 February 1956 noted that “with two goals scored by ‘Chummy’ Flood — one of which was a penalty — and a fine header by Rob Redding, Sandys Boat Club defeated their Dock Hill opponents 3-1. Right winger ‘Chalky’ Thomas scored the only goal for Dock Hill. Neither side played attractive soccer — for the most part the game was of a drab kick-and-rush style with not much direction to the kicking and plenty of robust rushing — except in the closing minutes of the match when (it suddenly) came to life and sparkled”.

At Cox’s Hill, “the Southampton Rangers ousted the National Sports Club by building up a 2-1 lead at half-time and increasing their goal margin with two more goals by the end of the game. Yuni Sousa started the scoring with a goal for Nationals — the only one they were to claim throughout the entire dreary game. George Dwyer and George Ray for Southampton put their team ahead, and after the interval, Joynes scored Rangers’ third and Jones added the final tally”. A comprehensive 4-1 win for Southampton, but an apparently disappointing and uninspiring game with neither team performing above-average.

The third fixture of the round saw “BAA down St George’s 4-0” at the BAA field. “Dominating all phases of play, the BAA scored once in the first half, and three times in the second. The final tally might have been much higher had the winning team capitalised on a number of opportunities. BAA’s high-scoring centre-forward, David Thorne, notched the first of the day, with Chris Triantopoulos, Ray Constable and ‘Blacky’ Lewis each scoring after half-time”. *The Mid-Ocean News* (6 February 1956) reported that “St George’s traditional cup match ‘charm’ deserted them, and BAA generally had the run of play. Had it not been for some excellent saves by Fred Luther in the St George’s goal, they would have scored considerably more than four times”.

The fourth quarter-final took place at Cox’s Hill where “Key West Rangers triumphed over Happy Valley 5-2, with Cal Symonds scoring his team’s first three goals, his opening one being a solo effort shortly after the game started. A few minutes later, Cal went through again for his second”. However, Happy Valley pulled one back when the Rangers’ goalkeeper “failed to cut out a cross from the right wing and Stephens put in their first goal”, leaving the half-time score at 2-1. “Right from the kick-off of the second-half, Symonds hit a grounder from about 30 yards to score his third goal” and Ming got the fourth. Tucker, who scored 4 goals in Happy Valley’s previous Cup win, then “scored from a goal-mouth scramble before Townsey Russell got the fifth (for Key West) with a long shot from about 35 yards out” (*The Royal Gazette*, 6 February 1956).

Although none of the above four quarter-finals could have been described as ‘outstanding’ games of soccer, their results now left the alternatives of either ONE all-BFL semi-final and ONE all-BFC pairing, or TWO inter-league matches — the latter obviously the more appealing prospect.

The Garrison field at Prospect was used in this Competition for four fixtures, but never by its ‘home’ team, Prospect Command, who were drawn away to Pembroke Panthers and eliminated 5-4 in the First Round. Subsequently, the BFA chose Prospect to host the Wellington Rovers-BAA pairing in the Second Round (to facilitate the playing of the St George’s-Police game at the Garrison Field, St George’s — which happened to be Wellington’s home ground). Next was a quarter-final match between Happy Valley and Key West Rangers, followed by the BAA-Key West semi-final and then the concluding game featuring BAA and Southampton. In the 1955-56 season, Prospect obviously proved to be a welcoming venue for the BAA, who won every match they played there in the BFA Challenge Cup — on each occasion defeating a very strong BFL opponent.



Key West Rangers v Wellington Rovers in a BFL match played at the Sports Arena on 22 January 1956. Action following a corner for Wellington, with players (from left to right) identified as Eddie Wright (WR), Fred Raynor (KW), Sinclair Reid (WR), Ivan Darrell (WR) and Lionel Swainson (KW). *Photo by Ed Kelly*

In 1955, the BAA offered not only a full-size pitch and changing rooms but also overhead lights for night activities, and very importantly, spectator comfort by way

of numerous bleachers. These latter bench sets had been imported by the local US bases to encourage support at the American Football games that were played at the BAA in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Being easily portable, they were also used at other locations for special events. Moreover, they were regular and popular features at the BAA where they were happily welcomed by thousands of spectators whenever there was either a representative match, a visiting team (like Yale University) or particularly an inter-league night game under the lights featuring the BAA against a team from the BFL. Nevertheless, except when the field was being used for training or competitive purposes (in a variety of sports), nothing else was available there to encourage or attract even BAA members to visit – there were no premises on the property to accommodate any type of social activity. The same could probably be said of the vast majority of soccer ‘grounds’ in the 1950s.

Just as the US bases left behind certain assets that benefited sport in Bermuda, so did the British Forces who were stationed here. Garrisoned at Dockyard, St George and

Fields and facilities in the Fifties

Prospect, the inhabitants of these military units not only brought their own sporting interests to Bermuda (principally soccer and cricket) but also provided the means to play and enjoy these activities. Each 'camp' established a number of recreational areas, some of which comprised stretches of wide and openly clear ground around the perimeters. A number of such spaces later became the playing fields now known as Moresby Plain, Boaz Island, and the Garrison fields at St George and Prospect. These are all with us today, in very much the same state as in 1955-56, although the original meadow at Prospect has since been converted into our current 'carpet' at the National Sports Centre.

Soccer fields that are now gone, and will soon doubtless be forgotten, include the Sports Arena and Cox's Hill. The former, across St John's Road from the Berkeley Institute and commonly known as 'The Box', was walled in on the south by Cemetery Road and was home to many of the best soccer games played locally. At this location, top BFL clubs Pembroke Juniors and Key West Rangers invariably attracted huge crowds for their league matches in the early and mid-1950s, particularly when they were competing against each other. Although it could never be recognised as a stadium, the aptly named Arena can still be seen at its original site. Nowadays, it is the home of poles and equipment for BELCO who acquired the property in an exchange with Government (an exercise that provided a section of the land where the 'new' Berkeley Institute is being built).

Cox's Hill was more often referred to as either Casuarina Park or 'Frank Buck's field'. Frank's correct name was Frank Pedro and he was the patriarch of the Pembroke Panthers FC. Frank made sure that the grass was cut, the pitch was properly prepared and marked, the match and practice balls were inflated, and the playing kit laundered. He also offered the use of his home for a changing room and Clubhouse - a true friend of football. Unfortunately, his field is no longer available for soccer games. Although still on Pitts Bay Road, it is presently covered by the BGA warehouse !

Many other soccer fields from the fifties have similarly 'bowed to progress'. And those that have survived are apparently in no better condition than they were in 1956. In a *Mid-Ocean News* article (30 December 2005), Kyle Hunter recorded the following responses when asking soccer luminaries for their 'hopes' for local football in the new year :

President of the BFA, Larry Mussenden – "I want our clubs to come together and see where they are regarding their facilities .. I want them to work to improve things like playing surfaces .. also we need improvements in our changing rooms so that the clubs can be the pride of their respective communities". Paul Scope (Assistant Coach BFA National team) – "The dressing rooms and facilities are a disgrace".

Similar comments were expressed a half-century ago, with *The Bermuda Recorder* noting that "the White Hill ground looks beat up and in need of repair" (15 February 1956). As the French would say - "plus ça change, plus c'est la même" - the more things change, the more they stay the same. Even over 50 years.

chapter seven

The Semi-Finals

In reporting the results of the quarter-finals of the BFA Challenge Cup 1955-56, and prior to the subsequent semi-finals draw, *The Royal Gazette* of 31 January 1956 recognised that “BAA and Key West are currently the favourites to reach the final round, provided they are not drawn against each other”.

This comment undoubtedly reflected the opinion/expectations of the local soccer community. Both teams were in leading positions in their respective leagues and had certainly performed well enough in their previous BFA Cup games — they were already considered to be worthy finalists.

Thus, on the evening of 11 February 1956 when the draw for the semi-finals was made, the outcome may have seemed initially disappointing. In effect, though, it produced pairings which promised very competitive matches between four clubs from two separate Leagues:

Sandys BC (BFC) v Southampton Rangers (BFL) on Sunday 26 February at BAA Field
BAA (BFC) v Key West Rangers (BFL) on Sunday 4 March at Prospect Field

These fixtures were to be held one week apart in order to encourage larger crowds. And to assist in this regard, there were no other (senior) soccer fixtures scheduled for these two dates. The semi-finals were also allocated to neutral grounds.

Although the hoped-for final was now to be played as a preliminary, this did not discount the fact that the draw had set up an intriguing scenario wherein it was possible to end the very first BFA Challenge Cup Competition with an all-BFL final, an all-BFC final or an inter-league final. Such considerations were perhaps irrelevant, as the only realistic outcome was that the first side to be declared a finalist would be the winner of the Sandys-Southampton game.

FIRST SEMI-FINAL
SANDYS BOAT CLUB V SOUTHAMPTON RANGERS
SUNDAY, 26 FEBRUARY AT BAA FIELD

These two teams had not before met competitively, but Sandys' record throughout their BFC season was perhaps rather better than Southampton's in the BFL. This fixture was also to be played on a BFC ground with which Sandys were more familiar. On the other hand, Southampton would not necessarily be uncomfortable at Serpentine Road as they had been the very first BFL side to play there when the 'floodlights' were switched-on and the programme of night-time friendlies — BAA against a BFL team — was introduced early in December 1954. They had again played there during the current season. Choosing a winner of this tie was difficult, and the best prediction was that it was likely to be a very close and exciting game. Both Clubs were in a position to field perhaps their strongest sides, and the following players were selected :

Southampton Rangers – B Robinson; R Todd, W Easton; E Raynor, G Ingham, S Easton; D Simons, H Joynes, G Ray, G Dyer, R Simons.

Sandys Boat Club – C Renaud; D Jenkins, R Redding; L Pengelly, R Madeiros, W Henderson; D Mason, E Madeiros, F Wall, J Campbell, C Flood.

Southampton Rangers claimed the distinction of becoming the first team to reach the final round of the initial BFA Knock-out Cup Competition when they defeated Sandys Boat Club 4-3 on 26 February 1956. This game was described by *The Royal Gazette* (27 February 1956) as “a thrilling one from start to finish” with Southampton deserving winners “by dint of some good football, excellent spirit and fine physical conditioning”.

In the first half, Sandys had the advantage of a strong wind and, following early end-to-end exchanges, took the lead after 11 minutes. Freddie Wall was put through the middle and scored off a rebound after his first shot struck the upright. Within a further 18 minutes, however, Southampton had equalised via “George Ray who rendered invaluable service to the Rangers throughout the match ... in a sudden, sharp attack Ray let drive with a grounder that beat goalie Renaud all ends up”.

Both defences were under pressure for the remainder of the half, with Redding and Ray Madeiros exceptional for Sandys and W Easton and G Ingham outstanding for the Rangers. Then, and just before the interval, an accurate cross from Don Mason — enjoying “an excellent game on the right wing, when he was not being crashed to the ground” — found Campbell whose shot put Sandys ahead 2-1.

At the start of the second half, and with the wind now in their favour, Southampton “went out after goals and left-winger Roddy Simons curled a hot one in from the left wing that shattered against the upright”. Just a few moments later, though, Rangers were level

thanks to Eldon Raynor's "lob from mid-field that twisted and turned in the wind. It came down like a bullet, eluded the frantic grasps of Renaud to dip under the bar and into the net".

"Sandys stormed back looking for the leading goal", with Flood and Wall prominent, the latter once more hitting a post with the goalkeeper beaten. "Finally after 22 minutes of the second half, Sandys went one-up for the third time. A corner was forced by Mason who took the kick. Campbell made full use of it, heading in what appeared to be the winning goal".

But this was not to be. Five minutes on and Southampton won a corner. "It was taken by left-winger Simons and from out of nowhere up rose Ray and headed the ball down past Renaud for the equaliser". Shortly afterwards, Southampton earned another corner ... "taken again by Simons, this time the ball was kept about shoulder-high. Again, out of a solid mass of players, Ray's head materialized and the ball sped past Renaud for the winner" (the above synopsis based on *The Royal Gazette* account of 27 February 1956).

The Bermuda Recorder's column on 29 February 1956 was somewhat more prosaic. Reporting a half-time score of 2-1 for Sandys but an eventual win for Southampton at 4-3, it also noted that towards the end of the match "Ray headed two beauties, both from corner kicks". Although both newspapers rightly regaled his heading ability, they omitted to mention the fact that, having scored with a well-placed shot early in the first half, George Ray had actually completed a game-winning hat-trick!

A delightful story ran in *The Royal Gazette* of 16 January 1956 which noted that "Sandys Boat Club had defeated Somerset Eagles 4-0 in the (BFA) second round at Somerset CC — but it was a member of the Somerset Eagles who received a cup for his efforts". Apparently, and earlier that weekend, "Somerset entertained officials of the Sandys Boat Club for cocktails and at this time Sandys presented Somerset CC with a set of nets for their goals". Then, and perhaps in the hope that a Sandys player might be the recipient, "Mr Wm. Henderson, secretary of the football section of Sandys BC, donated a cup to be awarded to the player scoring the first goal in these (new) nets". However, "this cup went to Morrissey, Eagles left back, who in trying to clear the ball put it into his own goal". Despite their 4-0 win, it must have been a somewhat disappointing afternoon's play for Sandys as they only scored twice in their donated nets — the fourth goal being "from a grounder (which) was blown in by the wind".

SECOND SEMI-FINAL BAA v KEY WEST RANGERS SUNDAY, 4 MARCH AT PROSPECT FIELD

Key West Rangers of the League and the BAA of the Combination had been drawn

together in the second semi-final of the 1955-56 BFA Challenge Cup Competition. Both teams were in leading positions in their respective First Divisions and had been considered “firm favourites from the start of the tournament. Unfortunately they (had to) clash in the semi-final — instead of in the final as was hoped” (*Bermuda Sports*, April 1956).

BAA and Key West were in different leagues and had never before met in a seriously competitive match, although they had played each other in night-time friendlies on a number of occasions. These latter games always took place under floodlights at the BAA field, giving the home side a considerable advantage as their players were not only familiar with the ground and general conditions at Serpentine Road but also with performing under ‘the lights’. Stabilizer of *The Bermuda Recorder* (7 January 1956) reflected on these circumstances when suggesting that “it would look better if BAA played some friendly matches against coloured teams away from home. It is only a question of time before other clubs realise they are getting the worst of the deal”. While this ‘deal’ may well have included financial considerations with regard to sharing gate receipts, these games also provided the opportunity for BAA to re-inforce their experience/confidence as well as to develop a winning mentality ‘against coloured teams’. In fact, the home side very rarely lost or drew any of these floodlight friendlies — one important exception being the result of a recent encounter with their semi-final opponents.

* * *

Early in the season BAA had beaten Key West 3-1, but in the ‘return’ fixture in late December 1955, lost to the Rangers 2-1, reportedly ‘on a bitterly cold night in a game that was closely fought with plenty of body contact and good combination football on occasion’. Calvin ‘Bummy’ Symonds scored twice for the Rangers in another match-winning performance.

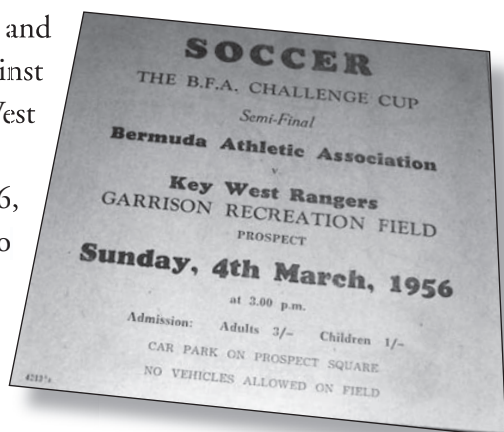
Not long returned from his professional involvement in British football with Rochdale, Symonds had previously recorded two hat-tricks in BFA Cup competition — against the Pembroke Panthers in the Second Round and then Happy Valley in the Quarters — and had scored four times against Yale University in a year-end tour match. With Symonds in this type of form, supported by the talents of Earl ‘Townsey’ Russell in the attack and a no-nonsense defence shepherded by ‘Froggie’ Simmons, Cal White and captain El Smith, the Rangers and their supporters had no reason to doubt the team’s ability to win, not just their next game, but eventually the newly introduced Challenge Cup.

The BAA, however, were completing a remarkably successful year and had been described in the *Bermuda Sports* magazine (April 1956) as “the dominant team in white competition”. Their reputation was one of playing positive and attractive football with an emphasis on teamwork, and of being especially strong during the last 15 minutes of any game. Additionally, and in this particular tournament, they had eliminated a highly-regarded contender in Wellington Rovers of the BFL.

Given a similar number of BFA Cup appearances, BAA had notched seven goals with

just two against, while Key West had scored ten and conceded four. Comparing successful results against the same opposition — Yale University — Key West had defeated them 5-3 and BAA had won 4-0.

In its pre-game edition on 3 March 1956, *The Bermuda Recorder* offered no prediction as to a winner but anticipated a “thrilling match ... BAA and Key West are two of the best teams in Bermuda ... both will be at full strength and prepared for a stiff game from start to finish”.



Team selections were confirmed as follows:

Key West Rangers — Raynor; R Simmons, Dears; Trott, Smith, White; Burns, Russell, Symonds, Wainwright, L Simmons.

BAA — Siddle; Sousa, Lewis; Lopes, Mayne, Constable; Hankey, Triantopoulos, Thorne, Lancaster, DeSilva.

* * *

The Bermuda Recorder of 7 March 1956 headlined its coverage of this semi-final with “BAA Whip Key West ... Make Final On 2-1 Win ... Record Crowd Saw Game”. The sports columns of *The Royal Gazette* of 5 March 1956 led with “Thorne Scores Both Of Winner’s Tallies”. By combining and summarising the match reports from these two sources, the following account of this important fixture can be produced:

“The game started off at a terrific clip, and with the wind in their favour, BAA applied early pressure and managed to get the ball into the Key West net through Triantopoulos - only to be ruled out for off-side. But after 37 minutes, Wyman DeSilva put Thorne through and the centre-forward had the honour of scoring the first goal. Right from the kick-off, though, the ball went to Townsey Russell, who took it through on his own, and blasted it into the back of the net — the crowd went wild with this display of power. However, it was the BAA who tallied next. Within two minutes, Lopes put up a lob ... the ball took a nasty bounce, eluded goalie Raynor and gave Thorne the opportunity to put it into the open goal.

The first half had closed with a 2-1 score and neither side was able to improve on that situation. Then, within the last eight minutes of the contest, there was a tense moment when Cal Symonds missed a penalty (awarded for a handling offence). He slammed the ball straight at Siddle who stopped it but couldn’t hold the shot. It rebounded from his grasp but he still reached the ball before Symonds, and cleared it out ... the spectators broke onto the field to congratulate the goalie on a spectacular save. Through this fine piece of goalkeeping, Key West were prevented from taking the game into extra-time and BAA, playing their hearts out, kept the Rangers scoreless for the few remaining minutes.



Key West goalkeeper, Fred Raynor, collects the ball just outside the southern goal at Prospect during the BFA semi-final against the BAA. Chris Triantopoulous (BAA) is 'grounded' and Cal White (KW) is running back to cover.

Photo by Ed Kelly

Sharing the spotlight for BAA were Vivian Siddle and David Thorne, while George Sousa — captain and right-back — was foremost with a stellar exhibition of stubborn defence. Alongside him, at centre-half, Billy Mayne also turned in a fine job of work. Outstanding for the Rangers was their goalie Fred Raynor who turned in a magnificent performance. He was kept busier than Siddle and it was fortunate for Key West that he was in excellent form, otherwise BAA would have tallied a few more goals.

The large crowd enjoyed ninety minutes of good football and, on the run of play, they were well satisfied with the result. A feature of the match was the three goal tally inside of five minutes, after which both sides tightened up (on defence). BAA were the more aggressive side and although Key West were very much in the game, they just didn't put enough fight into their play. The entire BAA side went out on the field with desire to win. The Rangers, on the other hand, were woefully lacking in that spirit to 'get stuck in'. They had exceptional talent on their team but certainly did not make the most of it".

In present-day language, it would seem that the BAA 'wanted it more'. This was what enabled them to win on 4 March 1956 and thus join Southampton Rangers in the Final of the first BFA Challenge Cup Competition.

chapter eight

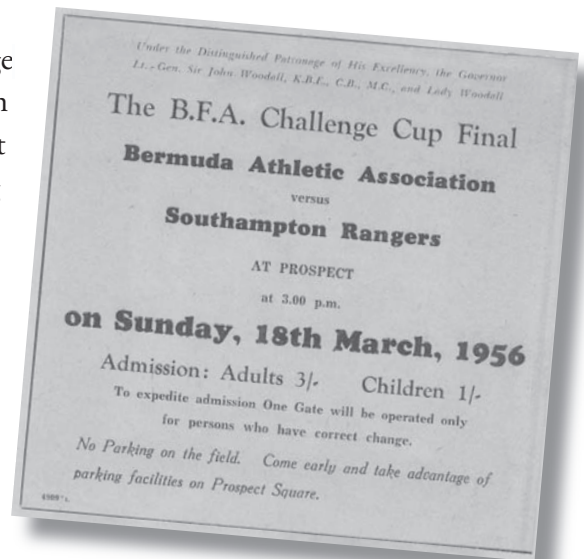
The Final

The Final of the very first BFA Challenge Cup Competition was to be played on Sunday, 18 March 1956 at the Prospect Garrison Recreational Field. Its over-riding attraction was that it brought together a black team from the Bermuda Football League (Southampton Rangers) against a white team from the Bermuda Football Combination (BAA) in a winner-take-all confrontation.

Evaluating the past performance of the finalists was one means of projecting the potential Champion of this inaugural competition, but a comparison of prior results of both teams would seem to give neither team an obvious edge.

Although BAA had eliminated two of the very best BFL sides — Wellington Rovers and Key West Rangers — Southampton had also disposed of two prominent BFC clubs in the Nationals and Sandys BC. Each side had played three games to reach the Final, and had accumulated an identical goals for/against differential of six — the Rangers being 11-5 and the BAA 9-3. Such analysis could indicate that the BAA had the stronger defence and Southampton a more potent attack. In fact, in George Ray, the Rangers had one of the highest individual scorers so far in the competition with 5 goals, including a hat-trick against Sandys. On the other hand, and on average, the BAA had only given up one goal per game and their nine in total had been fairly well shared — with David Thorne and Chris Triantopolous being most consistently on target.

Although general fitness probably would not be a major consideration (the age of the players on both teams averaged out at just under 23 years) an interesting feature of their



preparations was the involvement of two Scotsmen who were key figures in the training/coaching of these sides. At Southampton was George Tulloch, with David 'Jock' Stewart at BAA. The latter had come to Bermuda with the British Army, and then joined the local Police Force before moving on to become a Director at Butterfield and Company. As a footballer, he was a strong physical presence in the BAA sides of the early 1950s, and still turned out in senior competition.

George Tulloch was perhaps less of a player than Stewart but after offering his services to the Rangers as a trainer/coach in the early 1950s, he proved to be a shrewd tactician. In particular, he was a theorist who studied the opposition's strengths and weaknesses and prepared detailed plans to enable his team to respond positively to any adverse in-match circumstances.

Both men emphasised the value of disciplined training, skills practice and teamwork, with beach running an important element of the conditioning process. In this regard, Eldon Raynor recalls having to complete 70 laps of Horseshoe Bay before Tulloch was satisfied with his effort, and Ray Constable of the BAA has similar memories of Stewart's training sessions. Regrettably, George Tulloch left Bermuda before the date of the Final and was not at Prospect to support his team throughout the concluding game.



* * *

The BFA Cup Final of 1956 was not the ultimate highlight of the local soccer season as there were still League fixtures to be completed. In this context, Southampton were comfortably upper-mid table in the BFL 'A' Division while BAA were very close contenders for the BFC First Division title. The BAA also had access to significant playing resources, with two teams competing in the BFC First Division (BAA Greens and BAA Whites), two senior teams in the BFC Second Division and five junior sides — all in action during any one week in regularly scheduled competition.

The Bermuda Recorder (7 March 1956) offered the following opinion on the inaugural BFA Cup Final: "Both the Southampton Rangers and BAA are worthy finalists. They had to move aside some good opposition before they made the grade to the last tilt". This same column also suggested that the BAA "should be considered the favourites ... if they play as well as they did against Key West".



Lined-up to greet the Governor before the BFA Cup final, Southampton Rangers fielded (from left to right) George Dyer, Stuart Easton, George Ray, Gladwyn Ingham, Eugene Robinson, Roddy Simons, Eldon Raynor, Howie Joynes, William Easton, Beau Robinson and Ray Todd (Captain). Team colours : Blue and white.

Photo by Ed Kelly



The BAA finalists (from left to right) David Thorne, Maurice Hankey, Stanley Lewis, Arthur Lopes, Harry Lancaster, Ray Constable, Wyman Desilva, Billy Mayne, Chris Triantopoulou, Vivian Siddie and George Sousa (Captain). Team colours – Green and White.

Photo by Ed Kelly

Both teams were at full strength:

BAA — V Siddle; G Sousa (Capt), S Lewis; A Lopes, W Mayne, R Constable; M Hankey, C Triantopolous, D Thorne, H Lancaster, W DeSilva

Southampton Rangers — B Robinson; R Todd (Capt), W Easton; G Ingham, E Raynor, S Easton; E Robinson, G Dyer, G Ray, H Joynes, R Simons

Officiating were J Ferreira (referee) assisted by linesmen E Postlewaite and W Swan.

THE BFA CUP FINAL 1955-56

BAA v SOUTHAMPTON RANGERS

SUNDAY, 18 MARCH 1956 AT PROSPECT FIELD

“The Bermuda Athletic Association took possession of the first Bermuda Football Association Challenge Cup in the history of the Colony after defeating Southampton Rangers 3-1 in the final played at Prospect before an estimated 4,000 soccer fans in almost perfect weather conditions.”

“BFA Chairman, Mr L M Minty, introduced His Excellency The Governor Sir John Woodall to the players of both teams before the kick-off. The Governor also presented the handsome new trophy to BAA captain George Sousa at the conclusion of the match, which though producing no sparkling football, proved to be much less one-sided than many had forecast. In fact, the West End club, despite its defeat, dominated the first half and the early part of the second. Southampton turned out to be worthy finalists, and George Tulloch would have been justified in feeling some degree of pride in the strides made this season by the players he spent so much time in coaching” (*The Mid Ocean News*, 19 March 1956).

* * *

At the start of the game, BAA defended the southern goal and (merging comments from the above-noted *Mid Ocean News* with *The Royal Gazette* report of 19 March 56) ... “play ran from end to end and within five minutes two corners had been forced by each side. Southampton showed more initiative than their opponents, but after 21 minutes BAA went ahead with a goal scored by Triantopolous. This resulted from a penalty awarded against Rangers’ goalie (Beau Robinson) for impeding a player not in possession of the ball - he had pushed David Thorne aside. For the remainder of the half neither team was able to generate a serious offensive threat, and at intermission BAA led 1-0.”

“The second half opened with an all-out attack by the Rangers, who abandoned their over-tricky passing manoeuvres, and kept the crowd in an uproar for 12 minutes which culminated with the tying goal. Roddie Simons brought the largest cheer of the day from the crowd when he left-footed a curving drive into the upper right corner of the BAA net. For the next ten minutes Southampton had the run of play until Thorne, with a neat turn and



The victorious BAA team line up with officials after receiving the BFA Challenge Cup. Kneeling front row (left to right) Hankey, Triantopoulous, Thorne, Sousa (Captain), Lancaster, DeSilva. Back row (l to r) E Postlewaite and W Swan (linesmen), Hinson Cooper (BAA Vice President), D 'Jock' Stewart (Coach/Manager), R Nash (reserve), Lopes, Mayne, Siddle, Lewis, Constable, Francis Gosling (BAA President) and Joe Ferreira (referee).

Photo by Ed Kelly

half-volley following a looping pass from Ray Constable, beat Robinson with an excellent shot. He gained an ovation from the crowd and a 2-1 lead for his side. BAA then got a new lease of life while the Rangers — tiring from their tremendous earlier pace — seemed to become despondent and lost much of their fire. BAA pressed continually and within ten minutes Thorne cashed in on a pass from Wyman DeSilva and scored his second goal to ensure victory for his side. Despite their detractors, Jock Stewart and his boys could thus point with pardonable pride to a unique achievement in winning the very first BFA Cup, which really meant one thing — that they were the Island's best".

In its summary of the match, *The Bermuda Recorder* (21 March 1956) noted that "BAA is the first name to be engraved on the beautiful BFA Cup which may now become the grand prize in Bermuda football .. BAA were the better team as far as finishing was concerned .. David Thorne was the hero for BAA, scoring both goals for his team in the second half".

Contrastingly, the most comprehensive and analytical account of this particular match, and of local soccer generally at that time, is to be found in the *Bermuda Sports* magazine of April 1956. Anyone seriously interested in football in Bermuda in the mid-1950s should ask to see a copy in the Reference Department of the National Library.



Pictured left is BAA Captain, George Sousa, becoming the first recipient of the BFA Challenge Cup which is presented by His Excellency the Governor, Lt.- Gen. Sir John Woodall.

Above, His Excellency hands over the plinth of the Cup to BAA vice-captain Ray Constable. BFA officers Francis Gosling and Dudley Eve can be seen in the background.

Photos by Ed Kelly

ACTION IN B.F.A. CUP FINAL

David Thorne, who scored twice as B.A.A. downed Southampton 3-1 in the B.F.A. Cup final at Prospect yesterday, fires what would have been his third goal into the net with the Rangers' goalie, Beau Robinson (plain jersey) out of position. However the referee, Joe Ferreira, ruled the play offside and the hard-working Thorne lost his "hat trick."

Cup Final coverage
in The Royal Gazette
(above) and Bermuda
Sports (right).

A section of the large crowd watching the B.F.A. final is seen at top; centre, the B.A.A. team lined up for presentation before the match started; bottom left, B.A.A. goalkeeper Siddle gasps as he stops a shot; right, B.A.A.'s third goal entering the net.

Ed Kelly photos

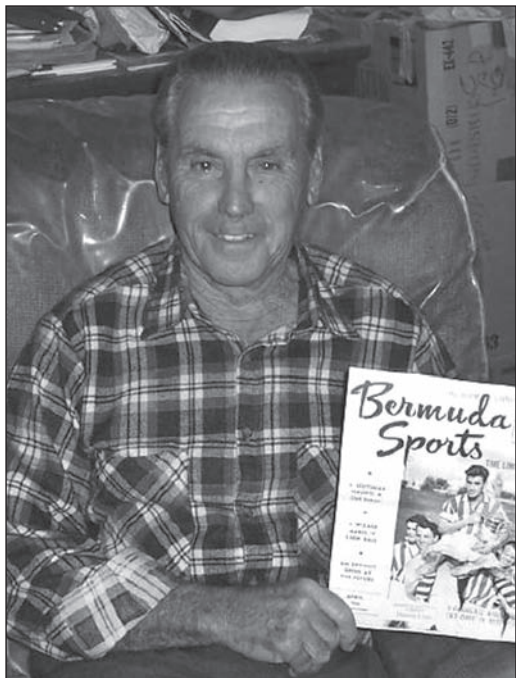


Above are photos of a medal awarded to the match winners of the first BFA Challenge Cup Final. One side shows the arms of Bermuda and the name of the issuing authority (the Bermuda Football Association) whilst the obverse confirms the name and the year/season of the tournament. Only 12 such 'silver' medals were passed on to the BAA players to recognise their BFA Championship win in 1955-56. Southampton Rangers received

a similar number of 'bronze' medals but with the words "RUNNERS-UP" engraved under the date. The Cup medals now awarded by the BFA (above) are larger and generically stylised, with the 50th Anniversary commemoratives simply engraved "FA CUP 2006".



The procedure of presenting Cup Final medals to both winners and losers was omitted in 1956, simply because these items had not yet arrived in Bermuda. In the ceremony at the end of the match, the BAA were able to celebrate their win by collecting and displaying a pristinely new and very handsome trophy. But the Southampton players left Prospect with nothing to show for their efforts both in the Final and for their prior accomplishments. Eventually, the 'missing' medals were received by the BFA and forwarded to the two Clubs. But there were no formal presentations, by either the BAA, the Rangers or the BFA, to officially recognise the achievements of the players who had earned them.



MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS: George Sousa (BAA captain) and Eldon Raynor (Southampton mid-fielder) are always happy to display their memorabilia and discuss the 1955-56 BFA Cup Competition - even 50 years after they had played against each other in the Final.

Bummy led goalscorers in first BFA Cup

Whenver a new — but then continuing — competition is introduced, the winning performances of those participating on the first occasion establish standards rather than records. Thus, and statistically, the best results from the 1955-56 BFA Challenge Cup are just a measure of achievement that provide a base for future comparison and analysis. So, what were the best figures in this inaugural tournament?

Winning in soccer is all about scoring goals, and the leading scorers in the inaugural 1955-56 competition were:

T. Tucker (Happy Valley) — 5 goals in 2 games. Average per game 2.5.

Calvin Symonds (Key West Rangers) — 6 goals in 3 games. Average per game 2.

David Thorne (BAA) — 5 goals in 3

games. Average per game 1.7

George Ray (Southampton Rangers) — 4 goals in 4 games. Average per game 1.

A surprising analysis, but this is what focused statistical evaluation can do. The above summary ignores the fact that 'Bummy' Symonds recorded two hat-tricks and was the top scorer overall. George Ray also had a match-winning hat-trick, and David Thorne scored four goals in the last two games, which were critical in determining the Championship. Actually, he netted three times in the Final, with the third disallowed due to another team member being adjudged 'off-side'. Throughout this Competition, Thorne played in only three games but scored in every one.

Synopsis of the BFA Challenge Cup, 1955-56

- The inaugural BFA Challenge Cup Competition attracted entries from all 19 member Clubs of the Association, with 12 from the Bermuda Football League and 7 from the Bermuda Football Combination. For the very first time, black and white teams were to meet in serious competition for a new and very prestigious trophy.
- The early favourites to win were the (black) BFL sides Pembroke Juniors, Key West Rangers and Wellington Rovers while the BAA and Sandys Boat Club were the top sides in the (white) BFC.
- The First Round was played on 4 December 1955, and involved only three fixtures, one resulting in a replay. This eliminated Pembroke Juniors who lost to Wellington Rovers – thus dropping a preferred team out of contention ... one of the attractions and uncertainties of knockout competitions.
- The Second Round, played under disagreeable weather conditions on 15 January 1956, produced 43 goals and one surprise – when Happy Valley who had not won or drawn a game all season trounced Devonshire Lions 7-2. It also featured four inter-league games, the most important of which was BAA v Wellington This was won by BAA 3-2 ... and another favourite had gone.
- * The Quarter-final Round of four matches was played on 5 February 1956, with no upsets being recorded. However, the draw for the semi-finals then paired BAA with Key West — which most football followers had hoped to see as the Final.
- BAA won this semi on 4 March 1956 in a somewhat disappointing game, while one week earlier Southampton Rangers defeated Sandys Boat Club in a ‘thriller’, thanks to two dramatically-late goals.
- The Final, played on 18 March 1956 at Prospect, saw BAA triumph 3-1 over the Rangers in a match that could have gone either way until the last 15 minutes or so.
- In total, 19 BFA Cup matches were played and 103 goals were scored at an average of well over 5 goals per game ... there were obviously many exciting and crowd-pleasing performances. Unfortunately, of the 19 Clubs that provided this entertainment in 1955-56, twelve are no longer in existence or do not now support a competitive senior soccer team.

FIRST ROUND

Paget Bombardiers 4, Somerset Eagles 6
Pembroke Panthers 5, Prospect Command 4
Wellington Rovers 2, Pembroke Juniors 2

FIRST ROUND REPLAY

Pembroke Juniors 1, Wellington Rovers 2

SECOND ROUND

Wellington Rovers 2, BAA 3
Pembroke Panthers 2, Key West Rangers 5
Wolves FC 2, Dock Hill Rangers 5
Happy Valley 7, Devonshire Lions 2
Bermuda Militia 2, Nationals 4
Southampton Rangers 3, West End Rovers 1
St George's D & S Club 1, Police 0
Sandys Boat Club 4, Somerset Eagles 0

QUARTER-FINALS

BAA 4, St George's D&S Club 0
Happy Valley 2, Key West Rangers 5
National SC 1, Southampton Rangers 4
Sandys Boat Club 3, Dock Hill Rangers 1

SEMI-FINALS

Southampton Rangers 4, Sandys Boat Club 3
BAA 2, Key West Rangers 1

FINAL

BAA 3, Southampton Rangers 1

Fifty years of BFA Challenge Cup winners, 1956-2006

1955-56	BAA	3-1	Southampton Rangers
1956-57	PHC Zebras	4-3	Pembroke Juniors
1957-58	Wellington Rovers	4-2	BAA
1958-59	Dock Hill Rangers	3-1	Devonshire Lions
1959-60	PHC Zebras	5-3	Dock Hill Rangers
1960-61	PHC Zebras	2-1	Young Men's SC
1961-62	PHC Zebras	4-3	West End Rovers
1962-63	YMSC	3-1	Pembroke Juniors
1963-64	YMSC	3-1	Dock Hill Rangers
1964-65	YMSC	3-1	Dock Hill Rangers
1965-66	Casuals	2-1	North Village
1966-67	PHC Zebras	3-2	Devonshire Colts
1967-68	Somerset Trojans	3-2	Devonshire Colts
1968-69	Somerset Trojans	6-0	Southampton Rangers
1969-70	Somerset Trojans	3-1	Academicals
1970-71	PHC Zebras	1-0	Devonshire Colts
1971-72	Somerset Trojans	4-1	PHC Zebras
(after 0-0* and 2-2* draws)			
1972-73	Devonshire Colts	2-1	PHC Zebras
(after 2-2* draw)			
1973-74	Devonshire Colts	3-0	Warwick WC
1974-75	PHC Zebras	3-1	Somerset Trojans
1975-76	Somerset Trojans	2-1	Devonshire Colts
1976-77	Somerset Trojans	3-1	Southampton Rangers
1977-78	North Village	3-1	PHC Zebras
1978-79	Somerset Trojans	4-0	Devonshire Cougars
1979-80	PHC Zebras	4-1	Warwick WC
1980-81	Vasco da Gama	3-1	Somerset Trojans
1981-82	Vasco da Gama	3-1	PHC Zebras
1982-83	North Village	2-1	Vasco da Gama
1983-84	Southampton Rgrs	2-0	Devonshire Colts
(after 1-1* draw)			
1984-85	Hotels International	2-1	PHC Zebras
1985-86	North Village	2-0	Vasco da Gama
1986-87	Dandy Town	1-0	PHC Zebras
(after 2-2* draw)			
1987-88	Somerset Trojans	2-1	Devonshire Colts
(after 0-0* draw)			
1988-89	North Village	2-1	PHC Zebras
1989-90	Somerset Trojans	2-0	Dandy Town



The trophies await winners North Village at the 2006 BFA Cup final at the National Sports Centre. The original BFA Cup, right, battered after years of enthusiastic celebrations, has been retired and is kept in the BFA offices. Winners are presented with a new trophy, centre, and get to keep a replica, left.

1990-91	Boulevard Blazers	2-0	PHC Zebras
(after 1-1* draw)			
1991-92	PHC Zebras	2-1	Dandy Town
1992-93	Boulevard Blazers	4-1	Devonshire Colts
1993-94	Vasco da Gama	2-1	Dandy Town
1994-95	Vasco da Gama	2-0	Devonshire Cougars
1995-96	Boulevard Blazers	2-1	Southampton Rangers
1996-97	Boulevard Blazers	3-2*	Wolves
1997-98	Vasco da Gama	2-1*	Devonshire Colts
1998-99	Devonshire Colts	1-0*	Dandy Town
1999-00	North Village	2-1*	Devonshire Colts
2000-01	Devonshire Colts	3-1	North Village
2001-02	North Village	3-0	Dandy Town
2002-03	North Village	5-1	Prospect
2003-04	Dandy Town	2-1*	Devonshire Cougars
(after 3-3* draw)			
2004-05	North Village	2-0	Hamilton Parish
2005-06	North Village	4-1"	Dandy Town

*** after extra time**



The triumphant Bermuda Athletic Association team with the BFA Challenge Cup after beating Southampton Rangers 3-1 at Prospect in the first-ever final on 18 March 1956.

Photo by Ed Kelly

A season of change

The 1955-56 Bermuda football season was when the sport changed forever. Until then black and white clubs had competed in separate leagues and competitions. That season, the first racially-integrated teams represented the Bermuda Football Association against visiting sides from the US and England and clubs from the black Bermuda Football League and the white Bermuda Football Combination competed against each other for the first time in a new tournament — the BFA Challenge Cup.

This is the story of that first competition. But it is not just a story of epic Cup Ties and legendary players like Calvin (Bummy) Symonds, Earl (Townsey) Russell and David Thorne but the forming of social and racial ties that helped in building a new Bermuda.

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