DIVISION TWO CRUNCH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brmingham	36	19	8	9	51	32	46
Chelsea	37	21	4	12	59	49	46
Luton	37	15	14	8	61	41	44
Leicester	36	16	12	8	50	35	44
Sundrlnd	35	17	9	9	55	37	43
QPR	37	16	10	11	65	46	42
Newcastle	37	15	12	10	48	40	42
West Hm	34	17	5	12	45	35	39

"We would have settled for a point before the game but when you lose that vital extra point it doesn't stop you being sick in the stomach."

JIM SMITH, Birmingham manager.

Burke's bubble burster

Steve Burke...stunner

CLOUGH CASTAWAY CORKS UP BLUES CHAMPAGNE CELEBRATION

By Steve Curry

BIRMINGHAM were about to squeeze the cork from the first bottle of celebration champagne when Steve Burke intruded like a punk at a posh people's party.

The 91st minute intervention by Brian Clough's teenage castaway enabled QPR to hold a tenuous interest in the Second Division promotion puzzle.

But, after the 1—1 draw between Rangers and City in Shepherds Bush, my overwhelming—feeling is that City's champagne thirst will so on be quenched.

The beads of sweat bursting from the balding brow of Brum manager Jim Smith are testimonoy to the tension of this emotion-draining dog fight.

Tension

But I believe that City will win their home clash against West Ham today to smooth the way to a merited First Division return.

Smith admitted: "We would have gladly settled for a point here before the game but, when you lose that vital extra point in injury time, it doesn't stop you being sick in the stomach.

"I'm still confident we can do it but until the statistics prove we are there the tension is terrific."

A 35-yard shot from Kevin Dillon in the 36th minute which caught Chris Woods day-dreaming had given Birmingham the advantage and they were playing confident possession football of the quality necessary to sustain a place in more elite company.

Burke struck home his second decisive goal in four days, forcing Tommy Docherty to admit: "I thought it would all be decided by Easter Tuesday.

"Now it wouldn't surprise me if it goes to the last day of the season. All we can do is go from game to game because we have ground to make up."

WOLVES HIT BY RICHARDS INJURY

WOLVES striker John Richards, injured in the 2—1 Molineux defeat by SPURS, looks certain to be out for the rest of the season.

Richards, with 14 goals this season, badly tore ligaments in his left ankle in a tackle with Steve Perryman.

The injury came only a few minutes after he had reduced the arrears for Wolves with a 38th-minute header.

Richards' absence will upset Wolves. Although they have already qualified for Europe with their League Cup success, manager John Barnwell has made it clear he is going all out to finish as high as possible in the League.

"The loss of Richards is a blow but I intended making changes for the rest of the Easter games," said Barnwell.

On the defeat by Spurs, Barnwell said: "We lost the game in midfield. Spurs were a lot sharper than us. We were sluggish at the back."

Chris Jones shot Spurs ahead in the 10th minute and Tony Galvin again demonstrated their deadly finishing with another super shot after 32 minutes.

DIVISION ONE CRUNCH

Take a tip from Jim

By ALAN THOMPSON

MR and Mrs J Greenhoff went out for a quiet meal on Saturday evening to celebrate "not winning, not scoring—but just being fit enough to play.".

MANCHESTER UNITED'S self-appointed Scourge of the Scousers—he scored against LIVERPOOL in Saturday's table-topping clash, last season's FA Cup semi-final and the Wembley final of 1977—returned for his first full game for almost a year to breathe a little bit of life into the championship.

Trouble

And today through the courtesy of this space, and after United's 2—1 victory, he offers helpful hints to others on how to beat the present—and presumptive—champions.

"You have to work your way through the midfield first, but if you have two or three forwards prepared to dart about around the 18-yard line, sometimes seemingly—with little to gain, you can put them in trouble.

"I suppose they're not used to it," he added with a laugh. "They are hard to beat and they are a great team. I don't know that our win has made a great deal of difference to the title.

"That is still in Liverpool's hands—they have to lose it before we can even think about winning it, but I remember that happening to Leeds when Arsenal did the double."

If Liverpool do not shake themselves out of their present lethargy that could conceivably happen. On the heavily-watered Old Trafford pitch, they were one yard slower both on the feet and in the mind than when at their sharpest, finely-honed peak.

Hurst's buffer

By John Davies

GEOFF HURST reckons Chelsea can afford to lose to promotion rivals Luton at Stamford Bridge today and still go up.

"We'll go flat out against Luton but our recent sequence of wins has provided us with a buffer against error," Hurst said after the 1—0 defeat against LEICESTER at Filbert Street.

"Don't forget that some of the top teams like QPR, Birmingham, West Ham, Sunderland and Newcastle will be cancelling each other out with games against each other over the holiday."

No less confident was Leicester boss Jock Wallace, who faced Chelsea with only three defenders in his back line.

"I've used that formation in European games in Scotland and I had an idea it would trouble Chelsea."

Hurst was philosophical about the performance: "I don't care whether we finish top, second or third, as long as we go up."

When hundreds of fans spilled onto the touchline after Larry May scored the vital goal in the second half Wallace jumped off the bench to supervise police operations during a five minute hold up.

"I would have lifted everyone back on the terraces myself if I'd had to," snarled the big Scot. "There's no way I wanted the game abandoned at that stage."

Replay

GRAY DAY AGAIN FOR HAMMERS

LIGHTNING never strikes twice in the same place . . . unless the thunderbolt happens to be called Nigel Gray.

The luckless ORIENT defender clipped WEST HAM'S opening goal in their 2—0 win past his own goalkeeper to repeat the own goal he headed for Hammers in the Fourth Round cup-tie between the clubs earlier in the season.

It could be that Gray's shin and forehead will become sacred relics if West Ham win promotion or beat Everton in next week's Cup semi-final.

Because, without the deflection he applied to Alan Devonshire's 70th minute cross, West Ham looked as if they could play until next Easter without scoring.

Once Hammers had Gray's first goal behind them, they looked far more convincing and five minutes later Trevor Brooking added a second.

Mullery: Stop feud

ALAN MULLERY has called a truce between feuding CRYSTAL PALACE and BRIGHTON writes Colin Bateman.

After the 1—1 draw at Selhurst Park, the Brighton boss condemned players' comments and the Press build-up to this latest Eagles-Seagulls battle.

"Some of the remarks made were reckless. It gets fans going as well as the players. We are rivals but we never go out to kick Palace—we never go out to kick anyone.

"Let's have no more of these comments."

Danger!

PORTSMOUTH, front runners all season in the Fourth Division promotion battle, are in danger of missing the prize. HEREFORD goalkeeper Tommy Hughes denied Pompey a point with an outstanding display in the goalless draw at Fratton Park.

COLCHESTER chief Bobby Roberts, with promotion from the Third Division on his mind, was pleased with his club's fight back that earned a 2—2 draw at GILLINGHAM.

"Even if we don't go up we are giving ourselves a good launching pad for next season," said Roberts.

Pleat's men on target

LUTON'S 1—0 win over Watford gave them a flying start towards manager David Pleat's target of five points over Easter.

And they had more good news from the treatment room yesterday, as leading scorer David Moss should be fit enough to play against Chelsea today.

Moss, with 23 goals to his name this season, limped off with an Achilles tendon injury against Watford.

But manager Pleat said yesterday: "He's still a little sore, although we are hopeful he will make it."

Goalden!

DUTCHMEN Arnold Muhren and Frans Thijssen have won fame during IPSWICH's march towards a UEFA Cup place next season, writes PHILIP OSBORN.

But the midfield goal ration has been dominated by John Wark, whose first hat-trick in the 6—2 defeat of NORWICH brought his season's tally to 15.

The two facts are linked, says the 22-year-old Scottish international: "I am enjoying my best season for goals and I am sure the publicity that Arnold and Frans have been getting has helped opponents forget me."

THE WEEKEND SPORT IN SHORT

SATURDAY SOCCER

DIVISION I: Arsenal 1 Southampton 1—Aston Villa 3 Nottm F 2—Bristol C 0 West Brom 0—C Palace 1 Brighton 1—Derby 2 Leeds 0—Everton 3 Bolton 1—Ipswich 4 Norwich 2—Man Utd 2 Liverpool 1—Middlesbro 1 Coventry 2—Stoke 0 Man City 0—Wolves 1 Tottenham 2.

DIVISION II: Burnley 0 Shrewsbury 0—Leicester 1 Chelsea 0—Luton 1 Watford 0—Notts Co 0 Charlton 0—Oldham 1 Cambridge 1—Preston 0 Wrexham 0—Q.P.R. 1 Birmingham 1—Sunderland 1 Newcastle 0—Swansea 2 Bristol Rov 0—West Ham 2 Orient 0.

DIVISION III.—Barnsley 0 Grimsby 1—Bury 1 Rotherham 0—Carlisle 0 Chesterfield 2—Chester 1 Brentford 1—Exeter 4 Swindon 1—Gillingham 2 Colchester 2—Hull 3 Blackpool 1—Mansfield 0 Blackburn 1—Millwall 2 Wimbledon 2—Oxford 1 Southend 0—Reading 1 Plymouth 0—Sheff Utd 1 Sheff Wed 1.

DIVISION IV.—Bournemouth 3 Aldershot 1—Bradford C 3 Darlington 0—Doncaster 1 Walsall 1—Huddersfield 5 Halifax 0—Lincoln 0 Rochdale 0—Newport 3 Torquay 0—Portsmouth 0 Hereford 0—Scunthorpe 1 Port Vale 0—Tranmere 2 Crewe 0—Wigan 2 Peterborough 1—York 2 Hartlepool 1.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE.—Premier Div: Celtic 1 Aberdeen 2—Dundee 1 Rangers 4—Kilmarnock 0 Morton 2—Partick T 2 Dundee Utd 2—St Mirren 2 Hibs 0.

Division I: Airdrie 0 Hearts 1—Ayr Utd 1 Dumbarton 1—Ayr 2 St Johnstone 2—Berwick 1 Stirling Alb 1—Clydebank 0 Raith Rov 3—Dunfermline 0 Hamilton 0—Motherwell 3 Clyde 0.

Division II: Albion 2 Stranraer 2—Cowdenbeath 0 Forfar 1—East Fife 1 Alloa 0—Falkirk 0 Brechin 0—Montrose 2 E Stirling 1—Queen of South 0 Meadowbank 2—Queen's Pk 1 Stenhousemuir 1.

EUROPEAN SOCCER

ITALY.—Ascoli 1 Perugia 0—Catanzaro 0 Torino 0—Fiorentina 3 Roma 1—Inter Milan 3 Cagliari 2—Juventus 2 Avellino 0—Lazio 0 Bologna 1—Napoli 2 Pescara 0—Udinese 2 Milan 1.

WEST GERMANY.—Cup: Borussia Dortmund 3 Stuttgart 1—Hamburg 1 Cologne 4—Schalke 04 3 Bayreuth 1—Offenbach 2—Fortuna Dusseldorf 5.

League: Hamburg 6 Hertha 0.

MOTOR RACING

BRANDS HATCH.—Dunlop Star of Tomorrow Formula Ford 1600cc championship (51 laps): T Lee-Davey (Chiltern FF79 Minilite) 21-15min, 1; P Rowell (Leyland RP24 Minilite), 2; M L Baker (Van Diemen RF80 Aurigal), 3. Fastest lap: K Gillen, 91.44. Shaw-Hensall 5 Challenge Race (10 laps, Grand Prix circuit).—Martin Powell 73.92, 1; R Hall, 2; K Newland-Hodges, 3. Fastest lap: Powell 75.33.

EASTER CHAMPIONSHIP (Donington).—Motoring News Grand Touring Championship Over 1500cc (12 laps): M Hill (Phoenix Chevrolet) 15min 20.3sec, 91.23mph. Fastest Lap: N Ellis (Cowrote Elan) 1-14.1, 95.09. Up to 1500cc: P Baldwin (Marshall Minli) 16-38.60, 84.72. Fastest Lap: Baldwin 1-19.4, 86.74. Mini 850 Challenge (10 laps): R Grady 16-37.1, 70.07. Fastest Lap: R Finlay 1-30.9, 72.72.

SPEEDWAY

EASTER TRIANGLE.—Mildenhall 45 (Bales 11, Baldwin 11, Bates 10) Rye House 33 (Garrad 7) Peterborough 30 (Hones 11).

CAUNTLET COLD CUP.—Eastbourne 46 (Nismi 14, Kennett 12) Poole 38 (Prinsloo 10).

SWIMMING

COCA-COLA NATIONAL SHORT COURSE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Salford).—Men's 400m freestyle: S Poulter (Wigan) 3m 52.42s, 1; S Lewington (Coventry), 2; C Dale (Beckenham), 3. Men's 100m breaststroke: D Goodhew (Beckenham) 2-16.88 (British rec), 1; S Pratt (Beckenham) 2; L Atkinson (Cardiff) 3.

Women's 100m freestyle: J Croft (Wigan) 57.70, 1; H Turk (Leic) 2; S Davies (Kelly-Wimpey) 3.

Women's 100m breaststroke: M Kelly (Beckenham) 1m 26.13s (British record), 1; G Stanley (Manchester), 2; K Jones (Pontypool), 3.

CYCLING

TOUR OF BELGIUM.—First Stage (Antwerp-Ypres, 105 miles): R De Vlaeminck (Belg) 4hr 22min 23sec, 1; F Moser (It), 2; E De Wilde (Belg), 3. British: P Sherwen, 10, all same time as winner.

ISLINGTON (1-day).—Stage 1 (70 miles).—C Stevens (Beeston), 2-29-23, 1; J Whitchurch (Magnasport), 2; C McCartney (Oxford), 3. General classification: 115 miles, C Stevens and J Whitchurch, 4-21-5 (equal).

TIME TRIALS

ANTELOPE RT-FIRCROFT EASTER (50mi).—G Moore (Bristol), 2-3-, 1; J Foole (Bromsgrove City), 2; S Wallington (GC Sports), 3.

CHARLOTTEVILLE CC (50 miles).—C Pugh (Dn'ty), 1-55-33, 1; A Jones (Bristol South), 2; N Wilcox (Bcr), 3. Team: Ferrybridge-Camberley, 6-27-11.

LEICESTERSHIRE (30mi).—W Lunn (Coalville-Steer), 1-39-47, 1; G Newbold (Leics RC-KNW), 2; N Booth (Coalville-Steer), 3. Team: Coalville-Steer, 5-7-27.

FESTIVAL (25mi).—J Oakes (Redouin CC-Bullet), 57-54, 1; P Woodman (CC Orpington-Bird), 2; D Bottington (CC Orpington-Bird), 3. Team: CC Orpington-Bird, 3-2-17.

THANET (25mi).—P Howard (Woolwich), 1-2-30, 1; M Evans (Wilmore), 2; R Stimpson (Wrekin Extel), 3. Team: Thanet, 2-14-45.

ESSEX ROADS (2-up) (25mi).—P Wells/R Stirling (Edgware-Revox), 56-48, 1; T Bright/J Turvin (Chilmer), 2; R Foottit/Wally/R Ward (Unity-Hirecomping), 3.

...AND THE REST OF TODAY'S SOCCER FIXTURES

ASSOCIATION

(K.O. 3 p.m. unless stated)

SOUTHERN LEAGUE: South: Addlestone v Billingham Anderson v Gosport—Dorchester v Salisbury—Dover v Canterbury—Dunstable v Crawley—Fareham T v Hounslow—Margate v Hastings—Poole v Basingstoke (2.30).

SOUTHERN LEAGUE: MIDLAND.—Bedford v Bridgnorth—Bromsgrove v Wellingborough—Corby v Bedworth—Evesham v Banbury—Gloucester v Merthyr T—Minehead v Taunton—Stourbridge v Cheltenham (11.0).

BERGER ISTHMIAN LGE.—Prem D: Carshalton v Oxford C—Harlow v Worthing—Tilbury v Tooting—Walthamstow Ave v Slough.

MILK SENIOR CUP.—Final: Stains v Enfield (Wealdstone FC).

ICLIAN CUP: Semi-Final: Lynn v Norwich.

MOTOR RACING.—Aurora: AFX British National Formula One Champs (Brands Hatch 2 p.m.). Pand O Ferries Formula Two Int Raceday (Thruxton 1 p.m.).

SPEEDWAY.—World Championship Qualifying Rd (Scundorpe). British League: C Heath v Hull (7.30)—Birmingham 6 Swindon (7.30)—Wimbledon v Sheffield (7.45). Gauntlet Cold Cup: Poole v Eastbourne (7.45)—Reading v Ipswich (7.30). National Trophy: Halifax v Belle Vue (7.30). British Trophy: Kings Lynn v Leicester (7.45). Three Team Tournament: Rye House v Peterboro v Middlesbro (4.30). Challenge: Exeter v Wrexham (11.0)—Newcastle v Middlesbro (7.30).