

Premiership

Ipswich bid bye as Gunners celebrate

Football

AFP, London

Ipswich's relegation from the English Premiership was confirmed in a 5-0 defeat at Liverpool Saturday as Arsenal celebrated the double with a 4-3 win over Everton at Highbury.

With Arsenal already crowned champions, the major issue to be settled on the final day was whether Ipswich could avoid joining Leicester and Derby as the relegated teams.

But two first-half goals from Liverpool's Norwegian international John Arne Riise all but settled the encounter at Anfield, sending the 'Tractor Boys' ploughing a lonely furrow back to the First Division.

England striker Michael Owen, Czech international Vladimir Smicer and Frenchman Nicolas Anelka added goals in the second half to complete the rout.

The win clinched a second-place finish for Gerard Houllier's Liverpool - the club's highest final league position for 10 years - and condemned Manchester United to third place.

Defiant Ipswich manager George Burley insisted this season's experience would help his side bounce straight back into the Premiership.

"We're a great club, we're determined to learn lessons from this season and we will certainly be going for it from the start of next season," he said.

"There will be changes, we've been in the First Division before and had to sell players to balance the books, so it won't be any different."

Manchester United, who were held 0-0 at Old Trafford against Charlton, must now play in the preliminary round of the Champions League next season to confirm their place in the first phase.

There was good news for United however when midfield star and England captain David Beckham announced a two-year extension to his present deal shortly before kickoff which will keep him at Old Trafford until 2005.

Blackburn striker Andy Cole responded to his exclusion from England's World Cup squad by scoring twice in Rovers' 3-0 win over Fulham at Ewood Park.

Republic of Ireland international Damien Duff was Blackburn's other scorer as Jean Tigana's Cottagers were comfortably beaten.

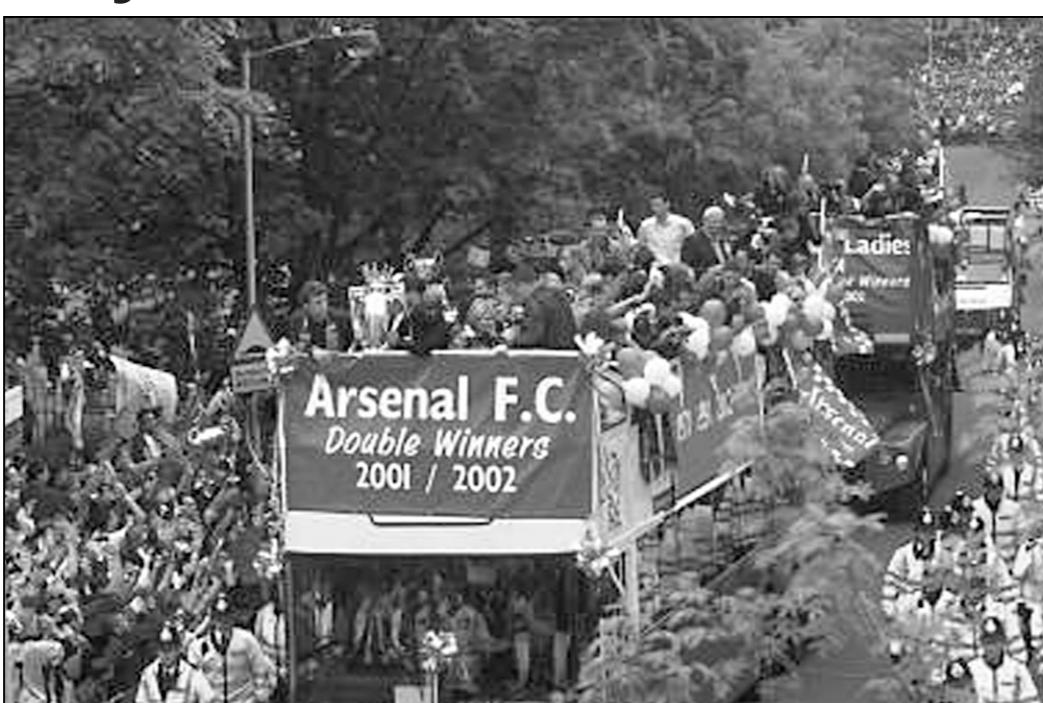
Chelsea, still smarting from last week's FA Cup final defeat, plunged to a 3-1 home defeat against Aston Villa at Stamford Bridge.

Peter Crouch headed Villa into the lead in the 21st minute, rising above the Chelsea defence to nod home Steve Stone's inswinging corner.

World Cup-bound Darius Vassell made it 2-0 to Villa in the second half before Icelandic international Eidur Gudjohnsen pulled one back for Chelsea with a 70th minute spotkick.

But Dion Dublin made sure for Graham Taylor's men in the final minutes.

At Elland Road, Leeds signed off with a 1-0 win over Middlesbrough



DOUBLE WINNERS ON A DOUBLE-DECKER: The Premiership and FA Cup champions Arsenal team parades through London on May 11.

PHOTO: INTERNET

thanks to a 63rd minute right-footed strike from Alan Smith.

Meanwhile at Filbert Street, relegated Leicester bade a victorious farewell to the top flight with a 2-1 win over Tottenham Hotspur.

Spurs' skipper Teddy Sheringham fired his side ahead

Marvin Robinson levelled for the Rams.

At Upton Park, West Ham finished the season on a winning note in dramatic fashion when Ian Pearce scored an 89th-minute clincher in a 2-1 win for the Hammers over Bolton.

The tenacious midfielder walked from the pitch after suffering a slight groin strain.

But after the match Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier said the injury did not look too serious and was confident Gerrard would fly out to Dubai on Monday with the rest of Eriksson's 23-man World Cup squad as England begin their World Cup preparations.



THIERRY HENRY

TOP SCORERS

24 - Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
23 - Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Chelsea), Ruud van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
20 - Peter Crouch (Aston Villa)
19 - Michael Owen (Liverpool)
17 - Ole Gunnar Solskjær (Manchester United)
15 - Robbie Fowler (Leeds)
14 - Marian Pahars (Southampton), Ormerod (Southampton), Eidur Gudjohnsen (Chelsea)
13 - Cole (Blackburn)
12 - Juan Pablo Angel (Aston Villa), Fredrik Ljungberg (Arsenal)

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Relegated: Leicester, Derby, Ipswich

from the spot on 54 minutes before the Foxes hit back through Paul Dickov and Matthew Piper.

Two goals in seven minutes put Southampton on the way to victory over Newcastle at St Mary's, Sweden's Anders Svensson scoring the first before James Beattie added the second from the spot.

Former England skipper Alan Shearer clawed one back for the Magpies before Paul Telfer made sure of a 3-1 win for Saints with a lob on full-time.

Sunderland, meanwhile, were held 1-1 by relegated Derby at the Stadium of Light. Kevin Phillips put Peter Reid's men 1-0 up before

Bolton's Youri Djorkaeff had equalised in the second-half after Steve Lomas put West Ham ahead.

England coach Sven Goran Eriksson had an anxious day. The Swede was left sweating over the fitness of Kieron Dyer and Steven Gerrard after the pair picked up injuries.

Dyer appears to be the biggest concern. The versatile Newcastle midfielder was stretchered off in his side's defeat at Southampton after an horrific two-footed tackle by Tahar El Khalej.

However, Eriksson was relieved to hear that Dyer was not taken to hospital but did have his ankle

heavily strapped and packed with ice.

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After last round of matches on Saturday (Played, Won, Drawn, Lost, Goals For, Goals Against Points)

	38	26	9	3	79	36	87
1 Arsenal	38	26	9	3	79	36	87
2 Liverpool	38	24	8	6	67	30	80
3 Manchester Utd	38	24	5	9	87	45	77
4 Newcastle United	38	21	8	9	74	52	71
5 Leeds United	38	18	12	8	53	37	66
6 Chelsea	38	17	13	8	66	38	64
7 West Ham United	38	15	8	15	48	57	53
8 Aston Villa	38	12	14	12	46	47	50
9 Tottenham Hotspur	38	14	8	16	49	53	50
10 Blackburn Rovers	38	12	10	16	55	51	46
11 Southampton	38	12	9	17	46	54	45
12 Middlesbrough	38	12	9	17	35	47	45
13 Fulham	38	10	14	14	36	44	44
14 Charlton Athletic	38	10	14	14	38	49	44
15 Everton	38	11	10	17	45	57	43
16 Bolton Wanderers	38	9	13	16	44	62	40
17 Sunderland	38	10	10	18	29	51	40
18 Ipswich Town	38	9	9	20	41	64	36
19 Derby County	38	8	6	24	33	63	30
20 Leicester City	38	5	13	20	30	64	28

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