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... reporting from Berne



(the club was founded only in 1970) had shaken the soccer world by defeating such European elite as Sparta Prague, Sporting Lisbon and Malmö of Sweden. Even in the first leg of the quarter-final tie in Hamburg, Xamax twice held the lead before losing 3-2. But Hamburg forced a 0-0 draw in the return game in Switzerland to win on aggregate and reach the last four.

The Irish connection? Neuchâtel Xamax centre forward Don Givens, one of the driving forces behind the team's rags-to-riches rise, hails from the emerald isle. It was Givens who scored the first shock goal in Hamburg – and who then hit the post in the later stages of the goalless game in Neuchâtel.

The 32-year-old Irish international played previously with Manchester United, Luton, Queen's Park Rangers, Birmingham City and Sheffield United before opting for the continent when the Sheffield club was relegated to the 4th Division. He has a two-season contract with Neuchâtel, but would like to extend his stay for another few years before retiring from the game and returning to settle in the Birmingham area.

How does he compare Swiss soccer with the game in Britain? "I would say that the best four clubs in Switzerland could compete very well at British level. But overall, footballers lead an easier life in Switzerland.

The fans are not so fanatic, and the players are under less psychological and physical pressure."

★ ★ ★

SWITZERLAND is to tighten its regulations on motor car exhaust emissions, Federal President Fritz Honneger has announced.

Speaking at the opening of the Geneva Motor Show, Mr Honneger said; "Since it has not been possible to work out on a Europe-wide basis regulations corresponding with our own conceptions, the government here is determined to strengthen controls concerning exhaust emissions".

The stringent new standards, which have been strongly criticised by manufacturers, will

take effect from October of this year.

Mr Honneger said the motor car had become "the number one means of transport but also the number one environmental problem."

He added: "It is the motor car which makes the most noise and takes up the most space. It is also the motor car which, after air transport, uses most energy per person. The motor car gives us certain freedom but it also endangers our freedom to live in an intact environment."

In the long term, said President Honneger, the motor car only made sense "provided it is less harmful to the environment, and other means of transport are assured a proper place."

SWISS SOCCER

Football League tables up to and including April 6

'A' Division	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts
Servette	21	17	2	2	62:21	36
Zürich	21	12	8	1	36:14	32
Grasshoppers	21	12	7	2	44:16	31
Xamax	21	11	7	3	41:17	29
Sion	21	10	6	5	39:26	26
Young Boys	20	10	5	5	34:28	25
Lucerne	20	9	2	9	35:35	20
Basle	21	7	5	9	29:30	19
St. Gallen	20	7	3	10	26:33	17
Vevey	21	4	9	8	28:35	17
Aarau	20	5	6	9	30:39	16
Bulle	21	4	8	9	23:37	16
Bellinzona	22	5	6	11	24:47	16
Lausanne	21	4	6	11	23:36	14
Chiasso	22	3	5	14	14:51	11
Nordstern	21	4	1	16	20:53	9

'B' Division	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts
Wettingen	21	12	8	1	42:20	32
Winterthur	19	13	4	2	44:16	30
Chênois	20	10	6	4	33:18	26
Grenchen	20	8	8	4	36:25	24
Biel	21	7	10	4	33:28	24
Lugano	21	9	5	7	40:32	23
La Chaux-de-F	18	8	6	4	35:21	22
Mendrisiostar	20	9	4	7	32:41	22
Ibach	21	6	10	5	29:31	22
Locarno	21	7	6	8	40:32	20
Fribourg	21	5	7	9	26:32	17
Berne	21	6	5	10	31:42	17
Aurora	20	4	6	10	18:46	14
Altstätten	21	2	8	11	17:38	12
Frauenfeld	21	2	7	12	18:40	11
Monthey	20	2	6	12	17:30	10

Lines separate championship leader, relegation and promotion zones.