



ARSENAL v SHEFF UTD
(tomorrow, BBC1, KO 1.30)

FREDDIE SPELLS DOUBLE TREBLE



by MATT BARLOW

FREDDIE LJUNGBERG must cut down the Blades for a chance to carve his name in FA Cup history.

No player has scored in three Finals on the trot in 130 years of the famous competition.

Ian Rush found the net in three – 1986, 1989 and 1992 – but no-one has done it in successive years.

Arsenal's pink-haired Swede is on course to do just that, but first, the Cup holders must overcome Sheffield United in tomorrow's semi-final at Old Trafford.

Ljungberg said: "I've had some luck at Cardiff and it would be nice to try again, but Sheffield United are a big obstacle. They showed how good they are against Liverpool."

"It would be quite strange to score in three successive FA Cup Finals, but if we get there the important thing is that we win."

Flop

Ljungberg, 25, has made himself Arsenal's man for the big occasion.

He scored against Liverpool in a 2-1 defeat in the 2001 FA Cup Final and was on target against Chelsea last year as the Gunners clinched the first half of the Double.

The League and FA Cup Double is on again and, for the popular Swede, it will be the only way to ease the pain of another flop in the Champions League.

Ljungberg said: "We're still furious that we're not in the quarter-finals. I get a little bit emotional when I watch it."

"We talked about it straight after. We said we have to concentrate on the League and the FA Cup because if we end the season with that it's not too bad. People will say that's a good season."

"The disappointment of the Champions League is still in me, but I try to shut it out. It's up to other people to say whether we're a great

Cool Swede Gunning for Final record



CUP FOR IT: Starsport's Matt with Freddie

team or not. We feel we have a good team and we haven't done well enough in the Champions League."

"But if we can make history by winning the Double two years in a row that would be brilliant. It's never been done before. It takes a good team to do it."

Ljungberg ended last season with a flurry of goals, but suffered a miserable year of injuries since limping out of the World Cup.

He missed the start of the season after a hip operation, then a chunk of game before Christmas with flu. Next he was ruled out for another eight weeks with a nagging Achilles problem.

Ljungberg added: "When I'm injured I'm a nightmare to be around. I try to be nice to family and friends, but football is my life so I get pretty pissed off. That's just the way I am."

"Now I can smile again because I'm playing. I've

felt good the last week or two. I feel like I'm back on form again. It always takes a while after an injury."

He's back for the serious business. A title crunch against Manchester United at Highbury follows three days after the semi-final.

Ljungberg said: "To play now at the end of the season with the hype and interest, that's when you lift your game and go up a level."

Feeling

"At the beginning of the season there's so many games to go and if you drop a point or so it doesn't make that big a difference."

"Now, if we drop any points that will be good for Man United. This is why I play football. This is the feeling you want to have."

Freddie was speaking at the launch of Nike's search for the UK freestyle champion. More info at www.nike-freestyle.com/uk.

CAN you Freestyle like Freddie? Nike is searching for the UK's Freestyle Champion, and if you've got the best football or basketball tricks in the country you could be in a Nike ad on MTV and maybe even get to show off your skills at half-

time on the pitch at Old Trafford! Get to the free Nike Freestyle Face-off events at London's Earls Court 2 on May 4 or Manchester's G-Mex on May 11, and show us your moves. For more details go to www.nike-freestyle.com/uk

To make history would be brilliant