

Swiss soccer

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to avoid too many ministers leaving at a time when the government is faced with such pressing major issues.

These include current economic problems, rising unemployment and the government's controversial campaign to win public backing for Switzerland's planned membership of the United Nations.

Under Switzerland's four-party coalition system, the government members – often referred to as the seven wise men – are traditionally chosen according to their party's strength in parliament and the linguistic regions of Switzerland they represent.

The Presidency of Switzerland rotates annually among the seven ministers, with Mr Honegger currently serving his year as President.

Mr Honegger has been a government minister for five years, and Mr Hürlimann for nine. Their successors will be elected by a joint session of both houses of parliament in December.

★ ★ ★

THE Swiss soccer season has opened with Grasshoppers of Zurich taking seven points from their first four games and an early championship lead in their bid to retain the league title they won last year.

With victories of 4-1, 5-1 and 6-0 followed by a 0-0 draw, Grasshoppers currently top the table on goal average.

Among the goalscorers already is a name familiar to soccer fans in Britain – Raimondo Ponte, who played for Nottingham Forest two seasons ago, then went on to Bastia in

France and has now returned to his old Swiss club.

Grasshoppers have been by far the most successful club in Swiss soccer history, winning the championship title 18 times, the cup on 13 occasions and achieving the coveted cup-and-league double six times – all records far from being equalled by any other Swiss club.

In addition, they have competed in European tournaments for the past 12 successive seasons.

Incidentally, some readers – Swiss and British – have written to ask how the Zurich club got its rather strange, non-Swiss name.

According to the records, the club was formed in 1886 by a group of students in the city, many of whom were from Britain. It was agreed to give the club an English-sounding name – and "Grasshoppers" has been retained ever since.

SWISS SOCCER

Football League tables up to and including September 3.

'A' Division

	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts
Grasshoppers	4	3	1	0	15	2 7
Zürich	4	3	1	0	11	4 7
Young Boys	4	3	1	0	7	4 7
St. Gallen	4	2	2	0	9	4 6
Servette	4	3	0	1	5	2 6
Sion	4	1	3	0	3	2 5
Vevey	4	2	1	1	7	6 5
Basle	4	2	0	2	7	5 4
Xamax	4	2	0	2	10	9 4
Lausanne	4	1	1	2	6	7 3
Lucerne	4	1	1	2	5	8 3
Wettingen	4	0	2	2	4	6 2
Aarau	4	1	0	3	5	8 2
Bellinzona	4	1	0	3	3	14 2
Bulle	4	0	1	3	5	10 1
Winterthur	4	0	0	4	1	12 0

'B' Division

	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts
Nordstern	2	2	0	0	8	2 4
Chaux-de-Fonds	2	2	0	0	6	1 4
Biel	2	2	0	0	5	2 4
Laufen	2	1	1	0	5	2 3
Baden	2	1	1	0	2	0 3
Mendrisio	2	1	1	0	6	5 3
Chiasso	2	1	1	0	2	1 3
Grenchen	2	1	1	0	1	0 3
Fribourg	2	1	0	1	3	2 2
Chênois	2	0	1	1	1	5 1
Lugano	1	0	0	1	3	4 0
Locarno	1	0	0	1	0	2 0
Bern	2	0	0	2	1	4 0
Monthey	2	0	0	2	1	4 0
Ibach	2	0	0	2	2	6 0
Rüti	2	0	0	2	2	8 0

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