

The Seagulls are flying so high!

BRIGHTON'S historic victory over Southampton last week which took them to sixth spot in Football League Division One, was the high-point of a tremendous success story over the past five seasons.

In 1976 they were an ordinary Division 3 side and apart from a couple of short spells in Division 2, never expected anything else.

But that year they gained promotion and under manager Alan Mullery and chairman Mike Bamber, they made the giant step to the top flight in 1979.

Only 3 losses

But these two strong personalities fell out at the end of last season. Mullery and Mike Bailey, the manager of Charlton swapped jobs — and it is under Bailey that the Seagulls reached their highest ever position.

Victories for Manchester City and Nottingham Forest over the weekend, when Brighton had a wasted trip to Ipswich, means that the Sussex club have slipped

back to eighth spot — but still above the likes of Arsenal, West Ham, Liverpool and Aston Villa.

So, they are a team to be reckoned with, having lost only three times in the league this season. They must be ruining the new system of three points for a win, having drawn half their games. Under the new system they would be right on the heels of the leaders.

Their main aim, however, is to qualify for a place in Europe — and they have enough players of international experience to do just that this season.

Heading the list is Welsh international winger-cum-midfielder man Mickey Thomas, who made his name with Manchester United before going south this season, after a short stay with Everton.

Another star from Old Trafford is striker Andy Ritchie, whom many consider to be unlucky never to claim a regular place with United.

Together with Eire international Michael Robinson, one of Malcolm Allison's big signings in his unhappy spell

with Manchester City last season, he has formed a deadly goalscoring partnership, although Robinson has suffered from injury this season.

One man who knows all about the F.A. Cup is Northern Ireland international left-back Sammy Nelson, who gained winners and runners-up medals with Arsenal. Another former Highbury man is Steve Gattling, a versatile player and of course, brother of England cricketer Mike Gattling.

Promising

The side are captained by Steve Foster, one of the most promising centre-halves in the English game. He is particularly strong in the air and is easy to recognise as he wears a headband.

Other well-known men in their team are Eire internationals Tony Grealish, and Gerry Ryan plus former Spurs mid-field player Neil McNab. Behind them all is goalkeeper Graham Moseley.

All in all it is a very talented line-up with a nice blend of youth and ex-

perience. But the club have never enjoyed great F.A. Cup success.

Indeed, in November 1973 they lost 4-0 at home to Isthmian League side Walton and Hersham during the first round replay. That is the largest home defeat suffered by a league club against non-league opposition in the history of the competition.

However, they do not always struggle against such teams. In 1965 they beat Wisbech Town 10-1, their largest ever win in the cup.

FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	18	9	5	4	28	15	32
Ipswich	16	10	2	4	28	19	32
S'hampton	18	9	3	6	32	27	30
Swansea	18	9	3	6	28	27	30
Notts For	18	8	5	5	23	23	29
Spurs	17	9	2	6	26	19	29
Man City	17	8	4	5	22	17	28
Brighton	18	6	9	3	24	18	27
Arsenal	18	8	3	5	15	12	27
West Ham	16	6	8	2	33	22	26
L'pool	16	6	6	4	23	16	24
Coventry	18	6	4	8	27	27	22
Everton	17	6	4	7	22	23	22
W.B.A	17	5	6	6	21	19	21
Stoke	18	6	2	10	23	28	20
Leeds	18	5	5	8	18	32	20
A. Villa	16	4	7	5	21	19	19
Wolves	17	5	4	8	11	23	19
B'ham	16	4	6	6	23	23	18
Notts, C'nty	17	4	5	8	23	31	17
M'bro	18	2	6	10	16	30	12
S'tand	18	2	5	11	13	31	11