IT'S ENDY MURRAY

By STEVE BRENNER

ANDY MURRAY fears his best season has come crashing to a premature, injury-ravaged end.

The in-form British No 1 slumped to a wretched Barclays ATP World Tour finals defeat to David Ferrer and then gloomily revealed a groin strain picked up last week could force him out of the whole tournament.

Murray will decide today whether to soldier on — but if his mood last night was anything to go by, the world No 3 will not be seen again at the O2 this week.

The Scot looked a shadow of his recent superb self

as Ferrer deservedly bagged a 6-4 7-5 win.

But he reckons the shock
loss was down
to his fitness
and said: "I
had a problem
with my groin.
I have to see
how it goes.

"It certainly doesn't help with my game but I didn't move particularly great.

"I will decide on Tuesday whether or not I keep playing. You have got to sometimes do the right thing.

"I don't know exactly how it was going to feel on the court. I haven't been able to do much training this week. "I just felt it. I have never really had many strains. It was the first time I'd really felt anything go really.

Battle

"There's stuff you do anytime you have injuries to try to help it — ice it, wearing compression shorts, ice baths.

"You know, you can get acupuncture needles and sometimes those things can help and make it feel better.

"If this wasn't such an important event, I wouldn't have played."

We have been here before with Murray — most recently at the French Open in May when a twisted ankle in the third round had everyone, including the player himself, fearing the worst.

He managed to battle through the pain barrier that time before losing to Rafa Nadal in the semis but this appears to be more serious.

Providing he recovers, Murray can still make Sunday's final but, make no mistake, his path has just got much more difficult with Tomas Berdych and Novak Djokovic lying in wait.

The Scot really needs to win both clashes.

It was desperately disappointing stuff from Murray, who had one of those days.

His first serve was all over the place and badly let him down, with five breaks telling

its own sorry story.

A whopping 44 unforced errors hardly helped either.

Ferrer is a dogged, tough

customer who never gives an

inch, yet the Brit has spanked him four times already this year and had never lost to him on a hard court.

Murray's movement did not look sharp — a clear sign that all was not well — and it was no surprise to see him lose the first set 6-4.

On came the trainer to try to fix his problems but the energy which has characterised some blistering autumn form just was not there.

Murray was as flat as a

disappointing crowd.

He broke the Spaniard early in the second set only for the world No 5 to hit straight back and, from then on, the writing was pretty much on the wall.

There were some occasional glimpses of his undoubted class but nowhere near enough to stop his second defeat on the spin, after losing to Berdych in Paris two weeks ago.

If Murray does make it on to court tomorrow, he will face Czech Berdych who came agonisingly close to defeating world No 1 Djokovic last night.

Berdych wasted his one match point before the Serb went on to win 3-6 6-3 7-6.