

JUST THE RIGHT TONIC NEEDED NOW

LUTON TOWN 4, ROCHDALE 1

FEARS brought about by the Town's recent comparative failures, that their scoring machine had seized up, were swept away at Kenilworth Road this afternoon. They scored four times in the first half against Rochdale and laid the foundation for their first win of 1968.

Even though they did not sweep to the runaway victory many fans were expecting, after the interval, this still counted as the Town's most convincing success for about three months. In fact, we have to go back to November 15 for the last time when they scored as many as four goals.

There could have been, and probably should have been, more goals to celebrate tonight, but Rochdale were enever other than dour and hard-tackling in defence, and they did extremely well to keep their score sheet blank in the second half.

In fact, there were times when the Town were in some trouble, because Rochdale were always dangerous on the break, and Tony Read made at least two first-class saves after the interval.

THEIR DISPLAY WAS CONVINCING

Although there may be some disappointment that the Town did not really crush this opposition, this was their most positive display for some time.

There was more purpose and movement in the front line, particularly in the first half, when both Buxton and Allen took their total of goals for the season into double figures.

The scoring had been begun by Bruce Rioch with a typical effort after 14 minutes, and although Rochdale equalised they were shattered by a burst of scoring by the Town in the latter part of the first half.

As for the play after the interval, it was not very memorable — something that often happens when a team has gained the advantage which the Town had. For one thing, there was not the urgency for more goals, though there was no lack of effort, particularly of Allen and Rodney Green, who had come on as substitute.

Allen in the first half gave his best display of the season, and the recall of French was timely, because he gave former Town player John Reid a run-around, and was eventually too much for Calloway when he was brought on as a replacement.

Individually, the defence did well, with Moore, I thought, outstanding, and Branston mostly blotting out Fletcher.

However, there were instances, isolated it is true, when the understanding was not all that it might have been, and had there been more decision about the Rochdale finishing they could well have been closer at the end. On the other hand, there could well have been more goals from the Town, too, and it really was a source of wonderment that the second half should be blank.

However, this was the tonic win for which manager Allan Brown was wishing, and which he was saying confidently was only just around the corner. Certainly, before the interval the Town looked very much promotion material, and this may well be the start of a much better spell. Attendance : 10,400.