

OH, WHAT JOY!



Even in a quagmire Town had the class

ROCHDALE 1, LUTON TOWN 2

By ERIC PUGH

AS if to demonstrate once and for all that they did not have to rely on the final frailties of Bristol Rovers in order to secure the promotion prize, the Town went out to hit what, at one time, appeared to be their likely necessary target of three points from the last four.

However, if this game at Spotland had been the one on which the destination of the prize rested, then it is probable that the Town would have had to make a third trip to Lancashire in order to fulfil the fixture.

Many hours of incessant, heavy rain had left the pitch in a dreadful state, and there is little doubt that if this game had not merely been the formality for both teams of rounding off the season, the referee would not have countenanced a start.

And, even if he had, I doubt whether the game would have gone its full span, because conditions were never other than atrocious.

Much was pure farce

So, it followed that much of what went on was pure farce, with any attempt at constructive football doomed from the outset.

Because the Town were better organised in mid-field and at the back, and had two strikers in MacDonald and Busby with greater resource than those of their opponents, the Town deserved to record their tenth away victory of the season.

The BUSBY—MacDonald combination brought the first goal after 16 minutes, with the former applying the finishing touch to the latter's shot.

After that, there was a good deal of trouble among the crowd on the terrace behind the Rochdale

goal, where the Town fans were most thickly congregated.

Arrests and ejections were made, there were some casualties, and it all made one wonder what would have happened had the occasion been more important than it was and if the attendance had been double that of 5,830.

Considering the following the Town had, the size of the crowd was a disappointment to the home club, but there was nothing to blame but the terrible weather conditions.

Goal for MacDonald

MACDONALD, with his 28th goal of the season, increased the Town's lead to a comfortable 2—0 nine minutes after the interval, but Rochdale, who substituted Clarke for Rudd, hit back nine minutes later when JENKINS was left with a simple chance to head past Read, who was marooned on his line.

Something of a storm was weathered by the Town defence after that, but they were well organised by Branston and Keen, and left few gaps. There were few times when it seemed that victory would not finally go to the side that deserved it, and indisputably that was the Town.

On such a day, and on such a quagmire, any attempt at even constructive criticism would be manifestly unfair. Suffice to say that this was another efficient display by the Town.

ROCHDALE: Harker; Smith, Ryder; Riley, Parry, Ashworth; Butler, Rudd (Clarke), Cross, Jenkins, Downes.

LUTON TOWN: Read; Ryan, Bannister; Slough, Branston, Moore; Busby, MacDonald, Tees (Allen), Keen, Collins. Referee: K. H. Burns, Dudley.

Town's young fans swarmed on to the Rochdale quagmire at the end of Saturday's game to give congratulatory pats to their mud - spattered promotion heroes. More than 1,000 followers made the journey in two special trains.—AW2880T.



VIV BUSBY, above, has struck up a fine understanding with top scorer Malcolm MacDonald. Each got a goal in the victory at Rochdale, which wound up the Town's season on Saturday.