

SPECULATION GROWS OVER RETAINED LIST

ROCHDALE

1

LUTON TOWN

2

69/70

FOR THE THIRD consecutive season Luton Town have reached the promotion target of 60 points and for the second of these campaigns have moved into a higher grade of football. But Saturday's masquerade at Rochdale would not have done for soccer's culture vultures.

Before it began Luton had made sure of promotion and Rochdale had nothing else to fight for except their pride. Had this not been the case referee Ken Burns would never have started the match.

An 18-hour deluge had left the Spotland pitch in an impossible mess. At noon it was completely under water, and only gallant efforts by the ground staff got most of it mopped up.

Clapped on

Had everyone concerned not wanted to clear up the season the match would have been put off for a second time. It was postponed because of snow in March.

And that would have been a pity, for more than 2,000 Luton fans travelled north to cheer them into Division Two. Luton were clapped on to the field by the Rochdale players. And at the end skipper Mike Keen led his team on a lap of honour to thank the Luton fans for their support.

It's a pity a section of the Luton fans had to spoil things by fighting among themselves, and a girl, who looked to be in her teens, was carried out with a broken leg after a section of the crowd collapsed.

And several skinheads were tossed out of the ground by

policemen. Perhaps they were frustrated by the fact that good football was not possible in the ankle-deep mud.

Whenever the ball landed in the middle of the field it stopped dead and remained half buried in the deep mud. The players deserve every praise for trying to make a go of it.

It was Luton's tenth away

him as a regular in Division Two.

I think his position will go back to Nicholl, Luton's most costly player. Jack Bannister, who has had an outstanding season at left-back, must be wondering why Alec Stock bought Peter Woods, another left-back, from Old Trafford, and there will be some uneasiness among the mid-

after 15 minutes in a goal-mouth scramble. It was his fourth goal since he came into the side at Easter. He obviously has a bright future at the club.

So has Malcolm Macdonald, if Luton can hold on to him. He rounded off his season Saturday by banging in his 28th goal of the season to put Luton two up in the 54th minute.

By

ROGER DUCKWORTH

Read foxed

Eight minutes later Reg Jenkins pulled one back for Rochdale by heading in an Ashworth cross that foxed Read all the way over.

Conditions were so difficult that it is not fair to evaluate all the players. Suffice to say that Macdonald and Busby ran willingly up front for Luton — while Jenkins and Cross did the same for Rochdale.

Keen impressed in the middle of the action — where the mud was deepest.

Luton can now look forward to a 14-day tour of Spain. They jet out next Sunday morning. Nobody can say they have not deserved a few days in the sun. It's been a long hard season.

win of the season. Twenty-six of their 60 points have come from away matches.

Now we can wait for Luton's retained list. Speculation has begun already. Northampton and Torquay are among the clubs waiting to secure the services of Keith Allen — if he is released. The seashiders are favourites.

And I fancy either Sandy Davie or Tony Read will be released — probably Davie, who was recently ousted by Alan Starling. Davie is a first-class keeper — and should command a good price. He cost Luton in the region of £10,000.

Tees may move

Mike Harrison has already been given a free transfer, and of the other forwards Matt Tees, who cost £25,000 from Charlton, can expect to be put on Luton's stall. I say this because the Town have just invested in Eire international Don Givens, a centre-forward who came with Jimmy Ryan from Manchester United.

Ryan is a pure right-winger and this could mean that John Collins is on the move. He does not play orthodox number seven, but there aren't going to be enough places for everyone.

Terry Branston has been a magnificent servant to Luton but at 31 I don't expect to see

field men, as Mr Stock is still reported to be interested in Crystal Palace's Roger Hoy.

Pruning

Robin Wainwright, a local youngster who has still to make the grade, may also be released. The Luton staff is remarkably large and the club will have to do some ruthless pruning if, as promised, more new faces are to come on to the Kenilworth Road scene.

Because of the conditions Saturday was no pointer to the future.

Viv Busby put Luton ahead

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Read; Ryan, Bannister; Slough, Branston, Moore; Macdonald, Busby, Tees (Allen), Keen, Collins.

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

GOALS: Busby (Luton, 15 minutes)
Macdonald (Luton, 54 minutes)
Jenkins (Rochdale, 62 minutes)

REFEREE: Mr Ken Burns (Stourbridge)
ATTENDANCE: 5,830