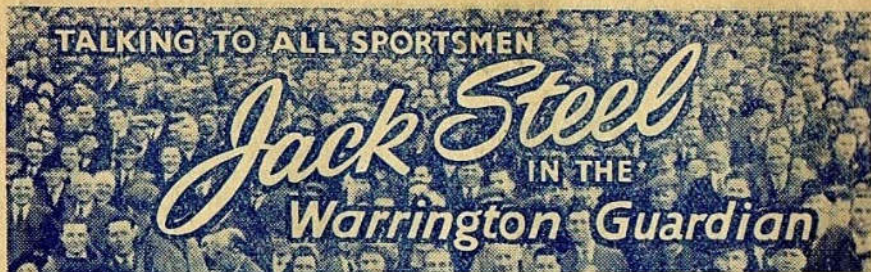


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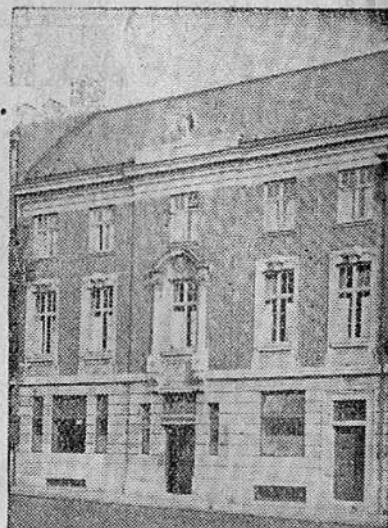


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SPOTLIGHT ON THE VISITORS

Oldham our visitors to-day make their second appearance at The Stadium this season, having previously met us in the semi-final of the Lancashire Cup, when we were successful by 55-0.

At that time they were passing through a difficult period, and actually many misfortunes have befallen them throughout the season.

In efforts to secure the correct blend there have been many comings and goings at Watersheddings in past months, and much money has been poured out to lift the club to their former high plane, but they have had atrocious luck in the way of injuries, which have prevented them from being able to field anything like a settled side.

And that luck apparently still persists, for on Saturday last they lost the services of promising Bob Batten, who sustained a fractured collar bone.

However, there is much promising material at Watersheddings to suggest that a sound side will be welded together, capable of extending the best of sides, and although championship prospects cannot be considered to be very bright for this season, the Challenge Cup may be another matter.

Oldham are traditionally good cup fighters, and they may well be a force in this season's tourney.

A good run in that competition would certainly be some compensation for many disappointments suffered to date.

With experienced Stanley Smith, the former Test winger in charge of coaching at Oldham, we may be sure that the value of open football will be stressed, and with our own boys returning to something like their normal form on Saturday last, we should be able to look forward to an afternoon of really good football.



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CURTAIN RAISER

Prior to the senior game this afternoon, a curtain raiser will be staged between our junior side and Wakefield Trinity Juniors. Kick-off 1.45 p.m.

Our own team is composed of the youngsters who made up the Warrington Schoolboys' team last season, and who gave such splendid displays in the process of winning the Lancashire Schoolboys' Cup.

They have been receiving careful coaching for some time now, and have shown themselves to be most enthusiastic, and they have been eagerly looking forward to making their debut to-day.

SCHOOLBOY FOOTBALL

On Tuesday next, 1st March, the local final of the "Daily Dispatch" Schoolboys' Shield will be played at The Stadium. Kick-off 3.0 p.m. The contesting teams will be Richard Fairclough and Bewsey Schools, and a keen game is expected.

Make a note of the date, and if you have an hour to spare that afternoon come along and give your support and encouragement to the boys.

BELLE VUE CUP-TIE

Stand Tickets, price 5/- and 2/6, for the cup-tie at Belle Vue on Saturday next, will be on sale at The Stadium during next week.

Shareholders should apply on Monday, and Stand Season Ticket Holders on Tuesday. Voucher No. 48 should be presented each day.

The remainder of the tickets will be available to the General Public from Wednesday onwards.

As some confusion already exists, perhaps it should be stated that this game is not an all ticket game.

The approximate holding capacity of the Belle Vue ground is 32,000, and more than threequarters of this number can be accommodated under cover.

It is also felt that a word of advice would be appreciated regarding entry into the Belle Vue ground, as complaints have been made in the past from our supporters that there are insufficient turnstiles available. We have pointed this out to the Belle Vue authorities, who assure us that sufficient turnstiles have always been opened on the occasion of our visits, to deal with a capacity crowd, but spectators—especially late-comers—have been converging on just a few turnstiles.

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RUGBY LEAGUE REVIEW

The approach to the Belle Vue ground is admittedly confusing, but it should be pointed out that there are turnstiles all the way round the ground, so there should be no recurrence of some of the scenes which have been witnessed when we have visited there, if spectators would distribute themselves among all the turnstiles, and quicker entry will be made.

Those travelling by coach should advise their driver to park on the motor coach park opposite the Longsight entrance, and spectators can make their entry at that end of the ground.

PROGRAMME PRIZE

This programme may be worth 10/- to you. Watch for the announcement of the prize winning number on the scoreboard at half-time, and if yours is the lucky number, take it to Mr. C. Brockbank, who will hand you a voucher, value 10/-, to be spent with any of our advertisers.

INVALIDS' PROGRESS

Bill Derbyshire is now fit again, but it was thought to be wiser to let him have a further week's training before he resumes his accustomed position.

Ernie Hopper is now in full training, and will probably be ready for a game in another fortnight.

Bob Ryan still continues to do all that is asked of him in training, and says he feels ready "to have a bash," but the specialist still says "No!"

Eric Frodsham is almost fit again after his shoulder injury.

CLUB GOSSIP

Professional terms are being arranged with 23-year-old scrum-half Eric Gore, who has graduated to the "A" team by way of our "B" team, and has been giving excellent accounts of himself.

When we visit Hull on 12th March, we shall be without the services of Fleming, Helme and Featherstone, who will be assisting England against France at Wembley.

With the permission of Barrow, on whose transfer list he appears, we are arranging to give a series of trials to Bill Fishwick, brother of Ike.

Incidentally, Ike gave a grand display in the loose at Hull on Saturday last, and surprised the local followers—and their players—on many occasions by his turn of speed.

Sports Hints — Bristle Dart Boards

These have not been available for some years, but now we are able to announce that—

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WARRINGTON RUGBY NEWS



THE NORTHERN RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

Instructions to Referees and Players on the application and Interpretation of the Laws of the Game.

Before proceeding in detail with each aspect of the game, it is an appropriate time to state that it is felt that Referees are too prone to sacrifice the intelligent application of the broad principles of the laws in their search for trivial technical offences.

It appears evident that the laws relating to the tackle and the playing of the ball after a tackle, and also scrummages are those which Referees experience most difficulty in applying. The application is difficult in these cases because the players will not make every effort to obey the principles. There are also so many possible infringements that the Referee finds it difficult to check them all and consequently a wider loop-hole is left for the players to take advantage.

The tackle and playing the ball

(1) There has been a considerable amount of scrambling for possession when a player has been tackled, especially in the case of smother tackles when the tackler's arms are wound around the body of his opponent, and

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consequently he assumes that he is also in part possession of the ball. This can be reduced if the Referee is always up with the play. Immediately a player is tackled the Referee in accordance with the laws of the game gives the verbal instruction to "play the ball". It should be fairly obvious in most cases who is in possession of the ball when the player is tackled, and if any doubt arises the Referee can instruct either player to "play the ball." If a player steals the ball from a tackled player, and by tackled player is meant the player who is fairly held and whose progress is stopped, then the said player should be penalised. A Referee cannot penalise a player for stealing the ball from the opponent if the opponent is not actually tackled.

(2) If a player is tackled it is an offence for a player of the tackler's side to effect a second tackle. Referees should watch carefully for the player who effects a second tackle by kneeling his opponent in the back. This is foul play. It is quite in order for a player to push his own player holding the ball in any direction provided that the said player is not tackled, and also provided that he in no way obstructs an opponent from tackling the player with the ball.

(3) Very rarely does the acting half-back stand two yards from the player playing the ball, this must be enforced.

(4) There is a pronounced tendency for tackled players especially those who are in a defending position to delay re-gaining their feet, in order that all players can line up in the correct on-side positions, in other words the defence has time to recover. The law says that the ball must be played immediately, and Referees are to penalise any undue delay. It is not essential for all players to be on-side at a play the ball, as for instance a quick break-away from one end of the field to the other, and Referees need only penalise those players who deliberately remain in an off-side position or those who take advantage of being in an off-side position.

(5) The tackled player must retain possession of the ball. This is clearly stated in the laws. If he loses it accidentally a scrum is formed, and if he loses it deliberately he is penalised. Thus if a player whilst regaining his feet leaves the ball on the ground and then picks it up to play it, he is deliberately losing possession and should be penalised. If Referees insist on this then the difficulty in enforcing the dropping of the ball should be decreased. Please note that the ball must be dropped before it is played with the foot, often it is placed on the ground by the tackled player before he plays it with his foot. A player heeling the ball should not move forward, i.e., butt with his head.

(6) If the Referee cannot decide which player has the ball he should order a scrum, and if there is a mutual infringement by both sides, then he should also order a scrum. The Referee must penalise the first offender rather than wait for both sides to offend.

(7) Referees must apply the advantage law intelligently to the playing of the ball after a tackle. Thus if a player marking the tackled player kicks the ball before it reaches the ground and it goes through to the non-offending side, who open up the play and gain an advantage, then play should be allowed to proceed. If no advantage is gained by the non-offending side then a penalty kick must be awarded against the offender. Whilst discussing the advantage law it is regretted that nearly all Referees omit to apply it. The law in principle allows a team to profit from the other side's mistakes and if applied correctly will reduce the number of stoppages in a game.

(8) The Australian method of playing the ball has drawn attention to the alleged obstruction of forwards. As you are aware the Australians often pass the ball from the acting half-back to their backs, who are lying behind a row of forwards. One cannot expect a forward to dematerialise or sink below the surface of the ground, and they cannot be penalised for obstruction simply for being where they are. Thus if A wishes to tackle B and he has to run round a player who happens to be standing in the way, then if the player makes any move which increases the distance which A has to run to tackle B, or in any way interferes with the tackle, it is obstruction.

(9) Many of the offences from a play the ball are due to the tackled player dummying to drop the ball, and thus tending to make his opposite number strike too prematurely. It is a prevalent practice and Referees are instructed to stamp it out.

Scrimmaging

(1) There are many faults in scrimmaging which are deliberate attempts by the players to flout the laws. One example is packing with a loose arm. A player knows that he is not allowed to do this, and after one caution he should be dismissed from the field. The Disciplinary Committee will deal with dismissals from the field of play for breaking the laws separately from the dismissals for foul play. Another example is a hooker who persistently packs with his foot across the tunnel. This after one caution warrants dismissal from the field of play, but it should not be confused with premature striking, i.e., where the hooker strikes a fraction of a second before he should do. This may be due to the opposing scrum-half dummying when putting the ball in. Persistent premature striking of course can easily be detected and dealt with summarily.

(2) The ball must be rolled into the scrum or put in with a downward motion. This is certainly not being enforced by Referees, and to avoid any confusion about when to strike and when to push, etc., the ball is not considered to be in the scrum until it hits the ground in the tunnel between the front-row forwards.

(3) Referees are allowing open side front-row forwards to raise their feet in an endeavour to strike for the ball. It is realised that a forward may during a scrum raise a foot whilst shifting his balance, but this can easily be detected from the deliberate efforts of props who raise their feet in an effort to strike for the ball. These points are only a few of the laws which are not being enforced, whilst Referees appear to concentrate on searching for trivial offences.

Knock-on

Referees it is presumed like to be considered prompt in their decisions. Promptness is commendable in certain circumstances. Thus if the ball is carried over the seven yard line by a defending player and is subsequently made dead, one expects the Referee to be prompt in making his decisions. There are many occasions when the Referee does not require to be too prompt. Thus if the ball is accidentally played by an off-side player the Referee cannot or should not give a decision until he sees which side gains the advan-

tage. It is comforting to blow the whistle before the roar of the crowd tells us to do so, but it is not a basis of good Refereeing, nor will it earn good marks.

With reference to the knock-on you are reminded that if a player knocks-on and plays the ball again, then a scrum shall be formed. On the other hand if a player knocks-on and one of his own side following plays the ball, it is not necessarily a scrimmage because the non-offending side may be able to obtain an advantage. Thus you cannot blow your whistle immediately the ball is played by the second player; you must wait and see who gets the advantage; otherwise you will not be officiating in accordance with the laws of the game.

You are reminded that the ball is only knocked on when a forward motion of a player's hands propels the ball toward the opponents in-goal. It is difficult to see how a full-back waiting with arms outstretched is in almost every case considered to have knocked the ball on when he drops it and it goes forward; also if the ball is passed back or knocked back and it afterwards bounces forward or is blown forward, then there is no infringement, although once again we have a tendency amongst referees to stop the game.

General

One or two present-day players have the habit of jumping to avoid tackles, some have been penalised and others have not. To avoid confusion, if the Referee is satisfied that the player is jumping to avoid a tackler, he should allow play to proceed, but if the player is jumping to intimidate the tackler then it could be classed as foul play and penalised accordingly.

Mention has already been made about the persistent rule infringer. Only the strongest action can correct offending players or alternatively keep them out of the game. It is obvious that Club Committees will select those players as long as they are allowed to get away with it, and thus the onus rests with the Referee.

Another point which is worthy of mention is the fact that Referees are too prone to stop the play because a player is injured. You are reminded that play should be stopped only if the continuance exposes the player to further injury. The player should not get attention on the field but should be carried outside the field of play and the play should be resumed as soon as possible.

Your attention is also drawn to the obstructing of a player who has kicked the ball. It is felt that Referees are being a little too severe on the tackler if immediately the ball is kicked the tackler has entered into the tackle, then he cannot be expected to arrest himself in mid-air and avoid tackling.

There is an unfortunate tendency on the part of the full-backs who catch a long ball to run forward and try to touch a player who they think is within the five yard radius. Referees should do all in their power to discourage full-backs from making their own decisions and also bring the game into some disrepute by unsportsmanlike tactics.

It has been reported recently that a game was extended four and a half minutes beyond the final whistle because the ball did not go dead. The law of the game actually states that the final whistle can be blown for no side when the ball is "held or out of play".

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