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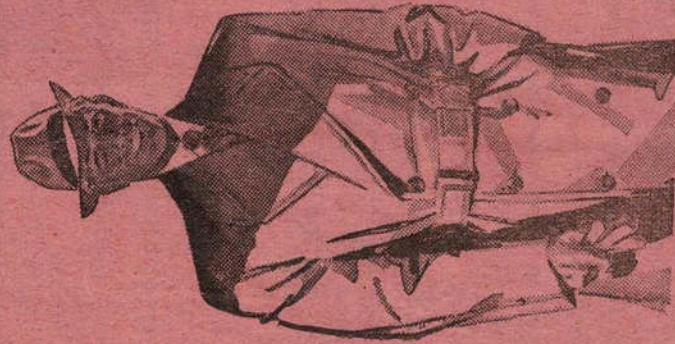
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CLUB COMMENTARY

The Oldham Club, whom we are always pleased to welcome to Kirkhall Lane, have been engaged in considerable transfer activity this season in an all-out effort to improve the standard of play of their team. Although their efforts appear to have only met with limited success so far we feel that next season they will figure well up the league table.

Today's match is the rearrangement of our postponed fixture of December 23rd, 1950. It was originally rearranged for last Tuesday but with the Management Committee rearranging our Salford match for last Wednesday, Oldham kindly consented to bring this match forward to today.

Next Wednesday evening we entertain Rochdale at Kirkhall Lane and on Friday evening the "A" team meet Oldham "A". Both kick-offs are scheduled for 6-45 p.m.

Rugby League Combination. The Oldham Club are to propose at the next Annual General Meeting of the Rugby League that the Rugby League Combination, to combine the Lancashire Combination and the Yorkshire Senior Competition, should be revived. They claim that no legislation has been passed disbanding the Rugby League Combination which was in existence before the last war.

All Lancashire Clubs are in favour of this proposal and have been for the past three or four seasons. With only twelve Clubs in the Lancashire Combination friendly fixtures have to be arranged in order to compile the full match programme.

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In the Yorkshire Senior Competition however there are eighteen Clubs and in consequence they have no fixture worries and happy to remain as they are. They are not in favour of incurring extra costs in order to play "A" team matches in Lancashire but we are of the opinion that Inter-County matches will provide a greater attraction which will more than offset the extra travelling costs.

Few people in Lancashire ever take interest or have heard of the Yorkshire Senior Competition and the same can be said of the Yorkshire people regarding the Lancashire Combination. We feel that a revised Rugby League Combination would receive wide publicity and arouse more interest in "A" team football in general which would be all to the good of the game.

OUR VISITORS

Oldham have been experiencing a season of ups and downs and in an effort to strengthen their team have entered the transfer market on several occasions. Their best buy would appear to have been Goodfellow, the ex-Wakefield scrum-half, who is playing extremely well now. As well as being an able and clever tactician, Goodfellow's experience and skill is helping to bring the best out of his colleagues.

In recognition of these qualities he has been made captain of today's side. His partner today is Heyes, the ex St. Helens R.U. player.

Of the threequarter line our interest will be centred on the left wing threequarter O'Grady. This boy is only 16 years of age but we have heard

good reports of his play. 5ft. 9in., 11 st. 4 lbs. he hails from an Oldham junior club. Oldham make him the fastest player on their books.

They have a strong pack of forwards. 2nd row-forward Winslade was signed this season from the same Welsh R.U. club as Yendle Pugsley, Meastag. At 19 years of age he shows great promise.

Loose-forward Goldswain is on international duty in France.

Playing Record v. Oldham from 1946

Date	Home				Away			
	Res.	G	T	Pts.	Res.	G	T	Pts.
October 2nd, 1946	L	—	2	6	L	1	3	11
November 9th, 1946	W	—	1	3	W	—	1	2
April 7th, 1948	W	2	2	10	W	2	1	5
December 18th, 1948	D	—	—	—	D	—	—	—
August 20th, 1949	W	4	3	17	W	4	1	11

Away

Date	Home				Away			
	Res.	G	T	Pts.	Res.	G	T	Pts.
September 24th, 1946	L	1	2	8	L	1	4	20
May 17th, 1947	W	2	3	13	W	2	1	7
March 6th, 1948	L	3	3	15	L	3	4	18
October 23rd, 1948	L	—	—	—	L	—	—	—
September 17th, 1949	L	3	2	12	L	2	3	13
October 21st, 1950	W	3	2	12	W	2	—	4

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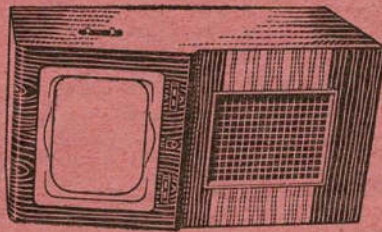
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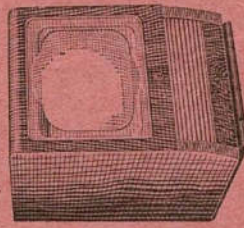
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TWO DIVISIONS

This is the time of the season when rugby fans get talking about the future League? Will it?

If you listen to the little clubs it won't. Their big grouse is that if they go down into a Second Division they lose their best gates of the season—the games against the Big Clubs, the teams that draw in the gates—the stars who attract the fans.

Well if you look at it that way they have a case. But let's look at it from another direction. After they have been knocked out of the cup—usually around February it's a bleak prospect for the little men of the Rugby League and their fans. What have they to play for. Simply nothing; just a question of playing another game, and losing more money, because as you yourselves know few people are interested in a football match unless there is something at stake. How do the big clubs draw their gates; simply because every league game is almost a cup-tie.

Leigh, for instance were knocked out of the cup at Leeds in the second round. A sad blow for you it is true, but you did not lose interest and go to the pictures on a Saturday afternoon. No. You go on watching and cheering Leigh simply because they had a chance of getting into the first four. So enterprise is rewarded; interest is kept and everyone is happy.

Now how to keep these little clubs happy. Two Divisions surely. If the League was divided up into two sections of say .15 or 16 clubs with four being relegated each season and four promoted most of those little clubs would have their prayers answered.

A team in the running for the Second Division championship—especially if there are four chances to go up to the First Division—can keep the interest until almost the finish of the season. If all that happened then perhaps we should see the end of the nonsensical farce that goes on at present when a team can finish at the top of the league, have a bad day in either the semi-final or final play-off and lose.

And another team, who by some means or other have scraped into fourth place perhaps 10 or 12 points behind the leaders, go on preening themselves for the following twelve months that they are champions.

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As things are at present they are perfectly within their rights, but what a travesty that a team that throughout the season has proved itself the best of the 29 should suffer simply because of one bad or moderate match.

Once again the clubs will jump into defence of the present system that the struggle for the First Four makes the big gates ; that the share of the semi-finals and finals are worth while ; that the League final is a consolation match to those many thousands who cannot get to Wembley.

All that is true, but with two divisions surely the struggle for the leadership and the struggle for avoiding the big drop—especially if four clubs go down, will make up for all that. Teams at the bottom of the First Division still get terrific gates in their fights to escape relegation. Surely the same thing would happen in the Rugby League.

And if a team did take the drop into the Second Division well that is not the end of existence. Maybe the fans would take a dim view of it, but if that team started to win in the Second Division well they would soon be back cheering them on in their efforts to get back into the Big Time.

In all to my mind it is a far more cheering prospect than at present. With Doncaster, Blackpool and possibly a Welsh club trying to get into the League surely Two Divisions is the answer instead of the present unwieldy competition. A team in Lancashire that finishes well down this season will next season miss the star Yorkshire clubs. They will play teams far worse than themselves ; gain some easy points and finish in a fairly respectable position. The following season they get better fixtures and take an almighty bump—the sort of thing that does nobody any good. With Two Divisions every club plays every other one in the Division ; a far fairer arrangement.

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Let's hope the Rugby League do something about it instead of admitting clubs as they have done and let things drift on in the same old way. It's time for new ideas. Competition is good for everyone; keen and close matches draw the crowds. Let every club with ideas about senior football, providing they have the grounds, the money and the enthusiasm, into the League and make the best of it. Above all don't be parochial, which is the great fault of the Rugby League.

PHIL JONES.

Daily Express

SUPPORTERS' CLUB NOTES

Hello Supporters,

Don't forget that our Snack Bars are open at these evening matches so what about paying a call before, during and after the match. Remember the 'Inner Man' must be looked after as well as the 'Outer Man' and what is better at half-time, than to have in the words of the famous song 'a nice cup of tea in the evening.' Try it and see for yourselves.

The Social Committee of our Supporters' Club are really getting down in earnest to plan events for your entertainment during the summer months. Although footballs will be laid aside for the duration, your Committee have your future entertainment before them continually. Just listen to this programme already earmarked for your benefit:—Cricket Matches, American Football Match, Grand Professional Sports, Bowling Handicap. What better excuse can a man have, to get out for a night, if not a football match, one of the above.

Unfortunately, I shall not be able to keep you up-to-date in these notes of coming events, so watch out in the local press and by the many posters advertising these events.

Mr. H. Clare, our Appeals Secretary, informs me that quite a number of our local works have grandly responded to the Collecting Sheets for our 50,000 SHILLINGS FUND. Amounts ranging from £1 to £10 have been handed in, and to those who have so responded, may I offer the sincere thanks of all officials of the Supporters' Club for their efforts. We are a tremendous way from our target, in fact we have not yet reached a quarter way, so if YOUR works, or shop or office, has not had a Collecting Form, and wish to do so please let Harry Clare or myself know, and we shall only be too pleased to forward some.

BALL DRAW

Two winning tickets have not been handed in for the Leigh v. Warrington match on Easter Monday, so for any one that may have them here are the winning numbers not yet claimed.

B. 0249 10/- voucher.
E. 0738 10/- voucher.

If you have either of those tickets, please come round to the Supporters' Club after this match.

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