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Watersheddings News and Views.

From a reasonably respectable position in the Rugby League Table we have slipped and have vacated the high position in the game which we fully intended holding. The last six matches have produced one win, which is definitely bad going and this slide must be stopped. One may ask, what is the reason for loss of form, displays that are second-class in comparison to the brilliant exhibitions of football that we opened the season with and continued to delight the crowds both home and away. A variety of reasons can be given by the man in the street; the main reason that one hears is that heavy grounds are too much for the team which, in comparison to some teams, is too light. Comparisons can be odious, but taking our team as regards weight with the New Zealand Test Team, there is very little difference in the collective weight of the teams, and the "Kiwis" have played splendid football on heavy grounds. One must face facts, and in the main run, weight will tell—it is an asset—but it must be aided by the class that will also count, plus the ability to win matches. Our game at Whitehaven on Saturday last was lost, not that we were the inferior team, but that we lacked the ability to overcome the spotting tactics of our opponents. A mistake on our part gave Whitehaven the opportunity to score the only try of the match. The Whitehaven team compare with the best in the League for its tackling and defensive tactics but these can be overcome by team work and the ability to produce the guile to stop opponents well up on our team during passing movements.

Ban on Imported Players.

The ban on the signing of New Zealand Rugby League players was extended by a meeting of the Rugby League Council on December 6th last for a further period of three years; this also embodies the signing of New Zealand Rugby Union players also. The New Zealand representatives put a very sound case before the R.L. Council inasmuch that in New Zealand there are 12,000 players in the League game and 100,000 in the Union game, and to put an embargo on the League game would leave the Union players as free agents to join English Rugby League Clubs, and equally as important, a complete embargo would give Union players in New Zealand an opportunity to join the League game, which several Union players have done in the past. There appears to be a more important decision to be made at a meeting of the International Committee to be held in France in mid-January, regarding the ban on the signing of Australian Rugby League players. The ban on League players only

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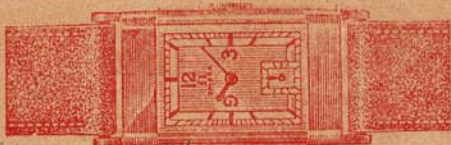
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The Half-time Scores in the Matches given below will be shown on the Score Board immediately they are received—

A

D

B

E

C

F

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in Australia does not expire until August, 1952. As to whether this meeting will extend the Australian ban and also include the Union players remains to be seen. The ban on New Zealand players put the brake on the activities of this club in an effort to strengthen certain positions in our team, as we were intent to go into the market in securing one, if not two, New Zealand star players, but in the case of the previous re-imposing of the ban we lost the services of two Commonwealth players in Laird and Anderson. We are once again unfortunate but we agree with the ruling authority and must abide by the decision that has been taken and which we must honour.

The word ban or embargo appears to have a creeping disposition and, from information, efforts are being made to this effect to embrace Welsh Union players for the benefit of the Rugby League game in Wales. One can visualise carrying this ban to no end of limits with a possibility of junior players in not leaving the town in which they play without a clearance certificate. One may speak on the liberty of the subject in a so-called free world, but at the present time this is a dangerous topic to enter into discussion. Events in the future may govern the advancement of our game and also its destiny.

The Future.

As previously stated, of the last six matches played we have lost five, and of our next six matches, five of these will be played at Watersheddings. Let us hope that we win five of the six and reverse the past state of affairs. It will be hard going but we see no reason why not. The first win will give the team confidence to go through from victory to victory, and let us hope that our match against Keighley will prove a forerunner of things to come.

Referee Appointments.

Xmas Day—Oldham v. Swinton—Mr. A. S. Dobson.
Boxing Day—Oldham v. Workington—Mr. S. Adams.
29th December—Bradford v. Oldham—Mr. F. Smith.
5th January—Oldham v. Widnes—Mr. H. Squires.
12th January—Oldham v. Salford—Mr. A. Howgate.
19th January—Rochdale v. Oldham—Mr. A. S. Dobson.

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