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Fixtures for the Season

Date	Opponents	Venue
Aug. 10—	Rochdale H.	Away
	(Charity Match)	
17—	Halifax	Home 3-0
22—	Barrow (Thurs.)	Away
24—	Wakefield	Away
26—	St. Helens (Mon.)	Home 7-0
31—	Barrow (L.C.)	Home 3-0
Sept. 2—	Huddersfield (Mon.)	Away
7—	Halifax	Away
14—	Warrington	Home 3-0
21—	Leigh	Home 3-0
28—	Workington	Away
Oct 5—	Hunslet	Home 3-0
12—	Rochdale	Away
19—	Hull	Home 3-0
26—	Blackpool	Away
Nov. 2—	Wakefield	Home 3-0
9—	Salford	Away
16—	Liverpool	Home 2-30
23—	Leigh	Away
30—	Salford	Home 2-30

Date	Opponents	Venue
Dec. 7—		
14—	Liverpool	Away
21—	Whitehaven	Home 2-30
25—	Swinton (Wed.)	Home 2-30
26—	Hull (Thurs.)	Away
28—	Warrington	Away
Jan. 4—	Leeds	Home 2-30
11—	Barrow	Home 2-30
18—	Widnes	Away
25—	Workington	Home 3-0
Feb. 1—	Wigan	Away
8—	R.L. Cup	
15—	St. Helens	Away
22—	R.L. Cup	
Mar. 1—	Blackpool	Home 3-0
8—	Widnes	Home 3-0
15—	Whitehaven	Away
22—	Rochdale	Home 3-0
29—	R.L. Cup semi-final	
Apl. 4—	Swinton (G.F.)	Away
5—	Wigan	Home 3-0
7—	Huddersfield (E.M.)	Home 7-0
12—	Hunslet	Away
19—	Leeds	Away

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WATERSHEDDINGS NEWS & VIEWS

Our match last Saturday, against Whitehaven, was a thriller, and it gave our supporters and members some anxious moments, especially in the first half, when Whitehaven appeared to be on top with some splendid football, which, with the superb backing up gave our players something to think about. In this period the Whitehaven forwards held the mastery, which goes to show that forward strength is the mainstay of any team.

Forwards are equal to the battle cruisers which go into action before the battleships, and which pave the way for the backs securing protection and allowing them freedom of action.

A compliment must be paid to the Whitehaven team for the really good exhibition of football which was much appreciated by the crowd, being shown by the applause received for their good play.

To-day, being Christmas Day, would not be the same from a football point of view if our old friends from Swinton did not come to Watersheddings. It is a time-honoured fixture and many have been the great games played between the teams on this enclosure, and before some very fine crowds indeed.

We hope that to-day will be no exception and that we shall see a game worthy of the name of Rugby League played in the true spirit of goodwill of the Festive Season. And so we say, "Welcome to Watersheddings, Swinton," and although they are not enjoying the glory of the past they are a very capable side and an enjoyable team to play against.

TAKING STOCK

The end of the old year is usually the end of half of the season and general stocktaking of the results and deficiencies of the team can be made and indications of where improvements can be made may be shown. The second half of the season is more strenuous from a club point of view. The Challenge Cup will soon be with us and all clubs are optimistic of their progress in the competition with the hope of a glorious finish by appearing at Wembley. What a name to conjure with, and what an honour to appear there. Well, quien sabe?

SHOULD WE PLAY R.L. AT CHRISTMASTIME?

By Cyril Briggs, Sports Editor, "Warrington Guardian Series" and
B.B.C. Reporter

Should games be played on Christmas Day and Good Friday? This is indeed a thorny problem and one which constantly demands the attention of many religious people. Christmas Day, say these folk, is a sacred day and therefore should be one of deep religious reflection. The same argument is advanced for Good Friday. Now the R.L. rules make it quite clear that a club must not penalise a player who does not wish to play on Christmas Day or Good Friday.

I'm not making any claims, but I think one of the men who changed the R.L. laws, or had them re-written to fit his personal case was George Arthur Skelhorn, the Warrington forward, who also gained Tour honours. "G.A." refused to take part in football on Christmas Day or Good Friday. Neither would he visit a game on those days. Very few men of his time followed suit, although I cannot recollect the Rev. Chambers, of Dewsbury, having a refereeing appointment on either of those days.

Unfortunately, these two gentlemen are no longer with us. But they still talk about "Skel" at Warrington, while the Dewsbury parson will have his memory perpetuated by a memorial at the Crown Flatt ground at Dewsbury. Here I should say that the R.L. refused to contribute to the cost of the erection of the memorial, although members of the Council did leave donations from their clubs as they left the room following a Manchester meeting.

Near A Church

What influenced Skelhorn not to play on the two days mentioned may have stemmed from his religious beliefs. But I do think that he must have borne in mind the fact that the Warrington club's ground at Wilderspool is in close proximity to the St. James's Church, where often a service has been held at a time when the usual "Derby" game has been played with Widnes at the nearby stadium.

The service in the Church is bound to be interrupted by the roars from the crowd, and therefore, a good many people will be saying that football has no place in these outstanding days of the Christian year.

But football of any code cannot now be singled out by the religious critics, because TV and Radio still give out entertainment at Christmas and Eastertide. Hotels and Clubs are open in some towns and we have known of many cases where even films and stage plays have been permitted on Christmas Day and Good Friday. It may be argued that R.L.

should not follow other entertainments. I think it is a matter for the individual, and therefore he or she can please themselves whether they attend a football match on these two big days of the year.

Morning Kick-Offs?

One old lady of my acquaintance was often grumbling about Christmas Day matches. She thought they should be stopped because after many hours of preparation, the dinner was often only half eaten by the men folk of the family — they rushed off to matches. Even the turkey and plum pudding could not keep them at the festive board. The lady thought up a grand idea. She said that if all the Christmas Day games must be played, then why not play them in the morning with a start about 11 o'clock?

Some clubs (Soccer and R.L.) have favoured the morning kick-off, but unfortunately, when the town team where my friend lived, switched the kick-off from afternoon to morning the public response was poor and the home club lost many hundreds of pounds on the deal. "Never again," declared the officials, and therefore there will never be another change from the 2-30 kick-off in this town. I knew one old player who never had a Christmas dinner until after he had arrived home following the day's game. It went on for years, and how he tucked in, win or lose!

Some years ago, noted R.L. players were invited to give some of their memories of Christmas Day. Gus Risman, the ex-Salford and Workington Town player (and now Salford manager), was interviewed by a B.B.C. representative, and Gus told of one unhappy occasion. This was when he had eaten well at dinner (served round about noon) and then taken part in a game in the afternoon. He was heavily tackled, or fell heavily, and up came the dinner! Gus never had learnt a lesson — it was on the touch line.

What is wrong with the R.L. crowds at Christmas time? They are usually in a good frame of mind, but they don't let themselves go like the Welsh Rugger folk. Last week-end another friend of mine happened to be in South Wales and was fortunate to get a ticket for the Cardiff v. Australian Rugby Union game. He was astounded at the attitude of the crowd. They wanted to sing and sing, so before the game there was the usual burst of national music, and then two or three carols.

Pacifying Critics?

No, we don't put R.L. over as we should. A brass band could lead the singing — like it does on Wembley day. That, perhaps, would pacify the religious critics of R.L. Years ago, a newspaper firm organized community singing at the matches. Spectators were given song sheets with

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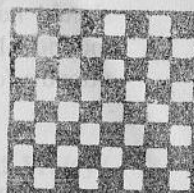
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OLDHAM

Red and White

- 1—GANLEY, W.B.—Capt.
- 2—CRACKNELL, R.
- 3—KELLETT, A. B.
- 4—DAVIES, A.
- 5—ETTY, J.
- 6—NESTOR, V.
- 7—PITCHFORD, F.
- 8—ROWBOTTOM, R.
- 9—CARRUTHERS, I.
- 10—JACKSON, K.
- 11—LITTLE, S.D.
- 12—DUFTY, R.
- 13—DALEY, F.

SWINTON

Blue

- 1—ROBSON, L.
- 2—BERRY, C.
- 3—CRITCHLEY, A. B.
- 4—PARKINSON, G.
- 5—DOUGHTY, G.
- 6—WORSLEY, L.
- 7—GOWERS, G.
- 8—BILLINGTON, E.
- 9—ROBERTS, T.
- 10—ROBERTS, K.
- 11—SMITH, V.
- 12—NORBURN, P.
- 13—HOPE, J.

Referee: Mr. J. MANLEY of Warrington

Touch Judges:

Mr. J. Holland, St. Helens (Crimson) Mr. J. Grayley, Liverpool (Yellow)

OLDHAM'S OWN SPORTS PAPER

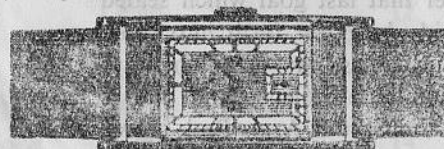
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Christmas Football—continued

popular and old-time songs printed in big characters. The scheme eventually fell through, but we have heard of attempts to renew this idea. Wembley R.L. crowds are not so lusty when it comes to the singing, but when you tune in to a Soccer final then there's a terrific din from the rival supporters. I shall never forget listening to "Blaydon Races" when Newcastle were winning, or the Midlanders singing "To the end of the road."

I was impressed by a Maine Road crowd (yes, it was the Northern League championship, between Hull and Halifax), when the Humberside men began chanting "Old faithful." They kept it up right through the game and when Colin Hutton put over that last goal which sealed the result, then the tremendous Humberside lungs let forth into song. Gentlemen, we want more atmosphere at our games. At some Christmas Day and Good Friday fixtures there is a minute's silence and that is very impressive, but why cannot we follow the Cardiff Arms Park crowd and sing Anthems on December 25th?

Perhaps the average R.L. player has got his mind too firmly fixed on the game, and therefore, doesn't like bursting into song. But surely at this time of the year it could be tried. If not now, what about next year?

Players' Benefits—continued from last Saturday's Programme

Below is the list of signings and the dates on which they were made. This should give you a pretty good picture of the Benefit qualification of ten years and the players we have on the books. We would again like to repeat that we think that ten years is a long, long time.

Ganley, W. B.—14 Aug., 1950—Amat.	Carruthers, I.—24 Oct., 1955
„ 14 Aug., 1951—Prof.	Ayres, D.—17 March, 1953
„ 6 July, 1954	Keith, J.—10 Aug., 1949
Jackson, K.—24 Jan., 1950	Watson, J. H.—12 April, 1951
Moat, R.—29 May, 1957	Davies, A.—29 July, 1950
Needham, R.—2 June, 1955	Lloyd, K.—4 August, 1956
Vines, D. G.—18 Feb., 1956	Rowbottom, R.—17 Jan., 1956
Jennings, R.—24 July, 1954	O'Brien, J.—3 Oct., 1955
Doughty, J.—4 Nov., 1954	McKeown, D.—20 Oct., 1955
Jones, A.—28 Feb., 1953	Turner, D.—30 Aug., 1955
Cracknell, R.—3 Oct., 1953	Ogden, T.—26 March, 1957
Noon, J.—24 Nov., 1953	Winslade, C.—21 Jan., 1950
Etty, J.—25 Jan., 1955	Tomlinson, A.—6 Dec., 1947
Kellett, A.—31st Jan., 1955	Little, S. D.—31 Jan., 1951
Pitchford, F.—12 Aug., 1952	Daley, F.—31 Jan., 1949
Edwards, J.—10 Nov., 1955	Stirrup, F.—23 Nov., 1950
Laverty, L.—15 Aug., 1955	Lomas, H.—19 Aug., 1950
Sims, F.—21 Feb., 1955	Rogers, J.—10 Aug., 1955
Nestor, V.—21 Feb., 1955	Duffy, R. J.—8 June, 1957

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY LEAGUE TABLE

(Up to, and including, Saturday last)

Team	Home				Away				F.	A.	Pts.
	P.	W.	D.	L.	W.	D.	L.				
St. Helens	15	6	0	0	8	0	1	329	128	28	
Oldham	14	6	0	1	7	0	0	304	156	26	
Wigan	13	5	0	1	4	0	3	298	141	18	
Workington	13	5	1	1	3	0	3	197	169	17	
Warrington	14	5	0	1	2	1	5	215	166	15	
Leigh	12	5	0	2	2	0	3	164	164	14	
Leeds	12	6	1	0	0	0	5	266	178	13	
Salford	14	5	0	2	1	1	5	179	197	13	
Widnes	13	4	0	3	2	0	4	167	106	12	
Whitehaven	14	5	0	2	1	0	6	214	228	12	
Barrow	13	5	0	2	1	0	5	187	259	12	
Rochdale	15	3	1	3	3	0	5	174	250	12	
Liverpool	14	2	0	4	0	1	7	118	315	5	
Swinton	11	1	0	4	1	0	5	119	206	4	
Blackpool	14	1	0	6	0	0	7	157	330	2	

List of Appearances and Performances—First Team only

(Up to, and including, Saturday last)

Player	A.	G.	T.	Player	A.	G.	T.
Ganley	21	137	2	Dufty	6		
Cracknell	21		15	Turner	20		7
Ayres	6		2	Stirrup	7		
Nestor	20		9	Jarman	9		1
Etty	22		7	Daley	11		
Moat	6		2	Noon	15	10	10
Pitchford	22		7	Rowbottom	7		
Jackson	20		1	Carruthers	2		
Keith	21		9	Winslade	14		3
Vines	15			Davies	9		12
Little	19		6	Kellett	3		1
				McKeown	1		

Our position in the N.R.F.L. is second and we have no cause for complaints as to the results of the matches we have so far played. Since the season officially opened we have played 25 matches, including four Lancashire Cup ties, we have won 23, drawn 1 and lost 1. We have won 19 consecutive matches which is a club record. We have had more injuries to our first team players that last season at this time but we have always found replacements who have graced the team. We are the holders of the Lancashire Cup for the second season in succession, and we are very proud of this achievement.

BRIEFS

Many of the congratulations received upon the play of our team come from distant parts of the world, and, no doubt, their exploits are read from the "Green Final," which they must have received. From boys in H.M. Forces, especially the Navy—and some serving in submarines—come messages of goodwill.

One message, and a typical American Christmas Card, comes from Mr. and Mrs. Bert. Ward of 15 Lucas Street, New Bedford, Mass., U.S.A., who state, "Along with our Christmas Greetings we would like to add our wishes for your continued success. Let's make a clean sweep this season boys. You've got fans over here who are rooting for you even though we can't see you in action. Go, boys, go."

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