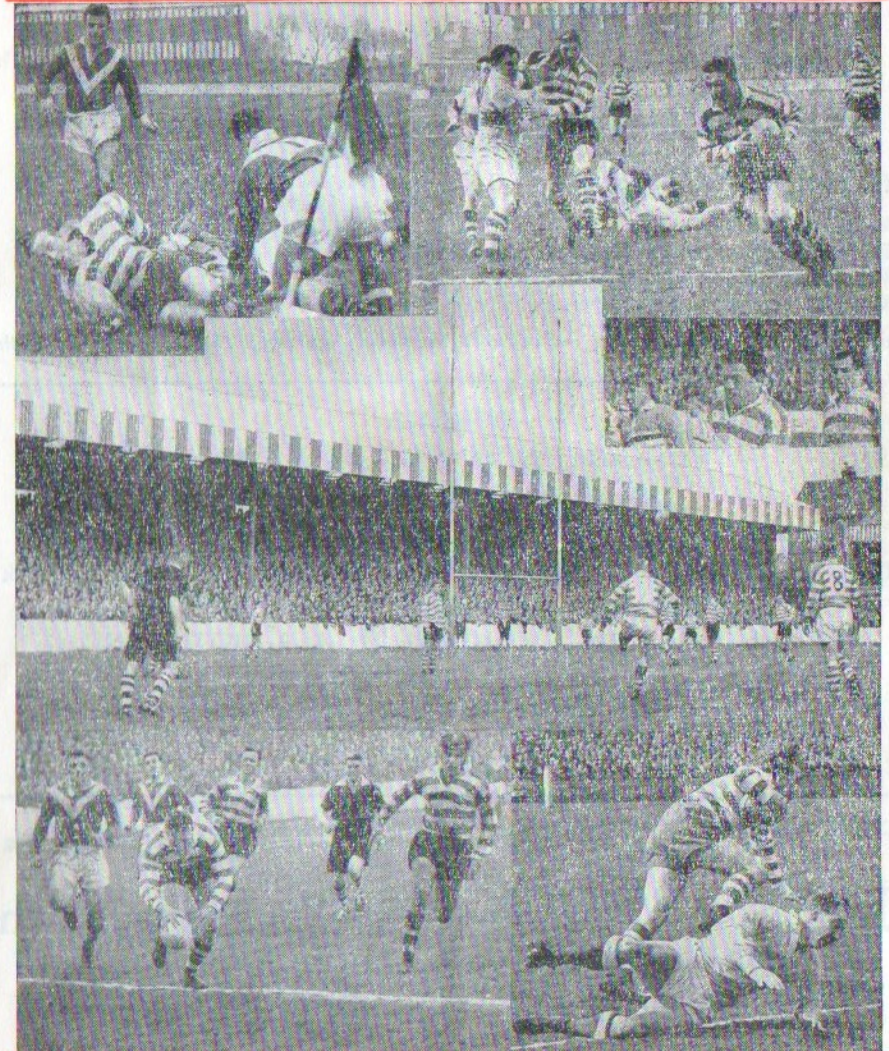


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No. 3—Friday, 31st August, 1962

Kick off 6-30 p.m.

OLDHAM v. WHITEHAVEN

WATERSHEDDINGS NEWS AND VIEWS

Although we won our two home matches against Barrow and Leigh, our match against the Hornets at Rochdale on Tuesday evening last just touched rock bottom and we were deservedly beaten by 10 points to 2 points. This was a great surprise to the large number of our supporters who travelled to Rochdale, and to be honest about the fact, our team will never play a worse game, in fact it would be well nigh impossible. The result may do the Hornets a good deed but our reputation was somewhat tarnished and a display like this does the club a great deal of damage. Spectators will not watch displays like this, it is one sure way of driving people away from our matches and creating empty terraces. Our team is capable of better things and we consider that the players have learned their lesson. One can hold an opponent too cheaply until the unexpected happens and possibly this was the case on Tuesday night. To give the Hornets credit they played full of fire and the spirit shown suggested that their lives depended upon the result. Their tackling was an object lesson and they very seldom missed a man. Enthusiasm abounded in their efforts compared with attempted passing moves of our team.

NEW PLAYER

The committee have done a good stroke of business in securing the signature of Michael Elliott, a coloured boy, who plays on either wing. This boy has been playing Rugby Union football as long as he can remember, and from some very capable judges in South Wales, this boy has everything.

Standing 5ft 10in. and weighing just over 12st. and at the age of 17½ years, he must command respect as a wingman. There is no doubt that had this boy remained in South Wales, he would eventually have been amongst the honours. He is an apprentice electrician with the National Coal Board and we hope to get him transferred to a colliery in the Manchester district.

OUR VISITORS

This evening we see the return of the opening match of the season in visitors from Whitehaven. Here again we met with a surprise defeat by 18 points to 10 points, so this evening we have something to rub off and get even. Our team will have to show a considerable improvement on recent showings, but we are confident they are capable of better things than in the past and a win this evening will give that encouragement and confidence for future matches.

THE GAME

Of several games witnessed this season so far there appears to be a general dis-satisfaction in the manner of tackling. Far too many head tackles are being made in the game. This continual head tackling does the game no good, it irritates the spectator and creates bad feeling amongst the players concerned, a spirit of revenge creeps into the game, which results in the use of too much whistle by the referee. As to the character of the tackle, while there are at times, with players bunched together, when it is difficult to go low, there can be no question that, when it is possible, to go low is the surest way to stop a man. The little man who weighs only 10st. can bring down a giant who overtops him by a foot and weighs four or five stones more, if only he has the pluck, the speed, and the wisdom to go for him just above the knees. If the defensive player has the speed to get at his man he can time his tackle, and if he goes hard and low there is no escape.

There is another point from which our game is now suffering from, and that is off-side tactics, deliberate standing offside by opponents who are not in possession of the ball. This appears more than ever this season and the referee has power to send off the field persistent offenders, but how often do we see this. In a recent game a referee called a team together to explain the rule. This team had been continually closing up the game by continually standing offside. Why should this be, the referee should dismiss from the field a persistent offender as a lesson to the others. There are too many stoppages in our game without creating more, the spectators desire value for their money not to hear a whistling solo or continual stoppages. The players are the main culprits by creating an unsatisfactory state of the game and they should realise that the man who pays his money to watch, helps to pay his wages.

MOMENTOUS SEASON

While I don't subscribe to the view that the Rugby League game has arrived at the cross roads, there are certainly many points which the legislators will have to watch with ever growing keenness during what can be safely described as "a momentous season". —(Writes CYRIL BRIGGS)

The re-introduction of the two divisional scheme after a break of many years, is interesting especially in view of the fact that over the years efforts to bring about a separation of clubs, has often been defeated. The two division on somewhat the same lines as Soccer does not start until October, but we have the regional competitions, one of which games we are playing today.

Because Northern Rugby League clubs are divided geographically by the Pennine range of mountains, an Easterly zone, composed of Yorkshire clubs has been formed, with a Westerly section for the Lancashire and Cumberland clubs. Unfortunately it is not possible for all clubs to face each other in these two separate tournaments. One club meets four others in a home and away tourney for what was normally a Lancashire or Yorkshire Championship.

NO MORE "CRICKET SCORES"

The regional idea could be scrapped at very short notice, but the two divisional scheme is to be given a run of several seasons. The followers of the teams who have qualified for the first division are cock a hoop. The reason is because they will be seeing all the crack sides in the membership of the Northern League. Hitherto they met only a number of teams from the other counties, and not the best sides at that.

Let us all hope that the first division is all what is anticipated. The "cricket scores" should be lessened; the old idea of the "chopping blocks" will be forgotten, and from time to time we may see drawn games, which are very unusual happenings in the Rugby League world. Yes, everything points to a levelling up of teams and strength, a point which has often been overlooked by those who voted against a splitting of the league into two parts.

Out goes the time-honoured idea of declaring the league champions. The four teams who lead the league will not play as hitherto in a tournament with the winners meeting on a knock-out system. This time the team at the top of its division will be champions. So Rugby is going like Soccer in more ways than one, especially as far as administration is concerned.

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- 4—COLLOBY
- 5—MOSSOP
- 6—HAZELDON
- 7—SHILLINGLAW
- 8—HEWITSON
- 9—HILL
- 10—BURNS
- 11—NEILE
- 12—HOLLIDAY
- 13—SHORT

Touch Judges:
Mr. J. TYRER, Leigh (Yellow)
Mr. J. P. DAWSON, St. Helens (Crim.)

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But while there will be no finger biting sessions by supporters of clubs who are on the fringe of the "top four", there will be the additional "interest" of relegation and promotion. It is two down and two up. A system which has proved so successful in Soccer despite the argument about four for the big drop and the same number for elevation and elation.

HIGHER EXPENSE

There should be bigger gates for the first division matches, and if the present indications are maintained then there may be keener competition among the lesser known clubs. Unfortunately, there is the matter of travel, and long travel at that for certain clubs. Whitehaven and Barrow have some long treks over the Pennines, and such journeys are likely to make inroads into the finances of both organisations.

Nevertheless, the more fashionable clubs will have to pay bigger quotas to the league pools, providing the attendances show an improvement over last season. And there ought to be. At one period last term the overall attendances were up by 25 per cent, even though some games were foregone conclusions.

What is rather annoying about this quota business is that the clubs with big memberships don't have to pay a penny into the pools. The canny folk who know that they are going to get more for their money by watching first division clubs have taken out season tickets in increasing numbers. I think that the "seasons" ought to be taxed. It would help the smaller clubs out of a lot of difficulties.

If the two divisional scheme is a success then I sincerely hope that the League officials investigate the suggestion of a third league, but in view of information gained from the zone tournaments, such extra divisions be kept in regions to save travel expenses.

PREPARATIONS

I hear that the Widnes officials are making elaborate preparations for the visit of Cumberland on September 14th. The pitch is in splendid trim and as the kick-off is timed for 6.45 p.m. there should be a big turn up from the nearby towns of Warrington, Wigan, St. Helens and Leigh. The stands have been enlarged and one of the largest gates for a Cumberland visit is envisaged. Everything depends on the weather, but in view of their hectic programme it is not known whether any of the Tourists will take part.

Next Match at Watersheddings—

Lancashire County Shield OLDHAM 'A' v WHITEHAVEN 'A'

Saturday, 8th September — kick-off 3 p.m.

FIXTURES AND RESULTS — SEASON 1962/63

OLDHAM'S SCORE GIVEN FIRST

Date	Opponents	Grd.	Rslt.	Date	Opponents	Grd.	Rslt.
Aug. 18	WHITEHAVEN	Away	8-18	26	SWINTON	Home	.....
21	BARROW	Home	17-0	29	WARRINGTON	Home	.....
25	LEIGH	Home	16-10	Jan. 5	ST. HELENS	Away	.....
28	ROCHDALE	Away	2-10	12	HALIFAX	Home	.....
Sept. 1	WHITEHAVEN	Home	.....	19	FEATHERSTONE R.	Away	.....
8	Lancs. County Cup Competition	.....	.....	26	HULL K. R.	Home	.....
15	BARROW	Away	.....	Feb. 2	WIDNES	Away	.....
22	ROCHDALE H.	Home	.....	9	R.L. Challenge Cup 1st Round	.....	.....
29	LEIGH	Away	.....	16	HULL	Away	.....
Oct. 6	WORKINGTON T.	Away	.....	23	ST. HELENS	Home	.....
13	HUDDERSFIELD	Home	.....	Mar. 2	R.L. Challenge Cup 2nd Round	.....	.....
20	LEEDS	Away	.....	9	FEATHERSTONE R.	Home	.....
27	WAKEFIELD T.	Home	.....	16	WARRINGTON	Away	.....
Nov. 3	WIGAN	Away	.....	23	HULL K. R.	Away	.....
10	WORKINGTON T.	Home	.....	30	WIDNES	Home	.....
17	HUDDERSFIELD	Away	.....	Apr. 6	BRAMLEY	Home	.....
24	LEEDS	Home	.....	12	SWINTON	Away	.....
Dec. 1	WAKEFIELD T.	Away		15	HULL	Home	
8	WIGAN	Home		20	BRAMLEY	Away	
15	CASTLEFORD	Home		27	CASTLEFORD	Away	
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INJURIES

So far this season has produced an unusual number of injuries to players. As to how this has come about cannot be blamed on the grounds, which are covered with a good coating of grass and the grounds cannot be hard with the unusual wet weather we have had. Shoulder injuries appear to have been more in evidence than in previous years.

We have had our share of injuries, first John Rae with a damaged shoulder, then again at Rochdale on Tuesday last we had two serious injuries in Alan Kellett with a broken fore arm. This break is a serious one and Alan was kept in a Manchester Hospital overnight for general observation. We cannot see Alan returning to serious football for the next two or three months.

Another serious accident was to Malcolm Price who in a tackle at Rochdale received concussion and a damaged side. He is also in a Manchester Hospital. An x-ray examination showed no bone injury but at the time of going to press he is still ill and awaiting a specialist's report.

LANCASHIRE CUP DRAW

Matches in the 1st Round of the Lancashire Cup are to be played on Saturday, 8th September, 1962. The Draw is as follows :-

Blackpool Borough v Salford
Rochdale Hornets v Barrow
St. Helens v Liverpool City
Swinton v Widnes
Wigan v Warrington
Whitehaven v Oldham
Workington Town v Leigh

COUNTY MATCH

Stand tickets for the County Championship match, Lancashire versus Cumberland, at Naughton Park, Widnes on Wednesday, 12th September, kick-off 6-45 p.m. are available at prices of 5/- and 4/-

Applications should be addressed to the Secretary, Widnes Football Club, Naughton Park, Widnes, with remittance and a stamped addressed envelope.

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