

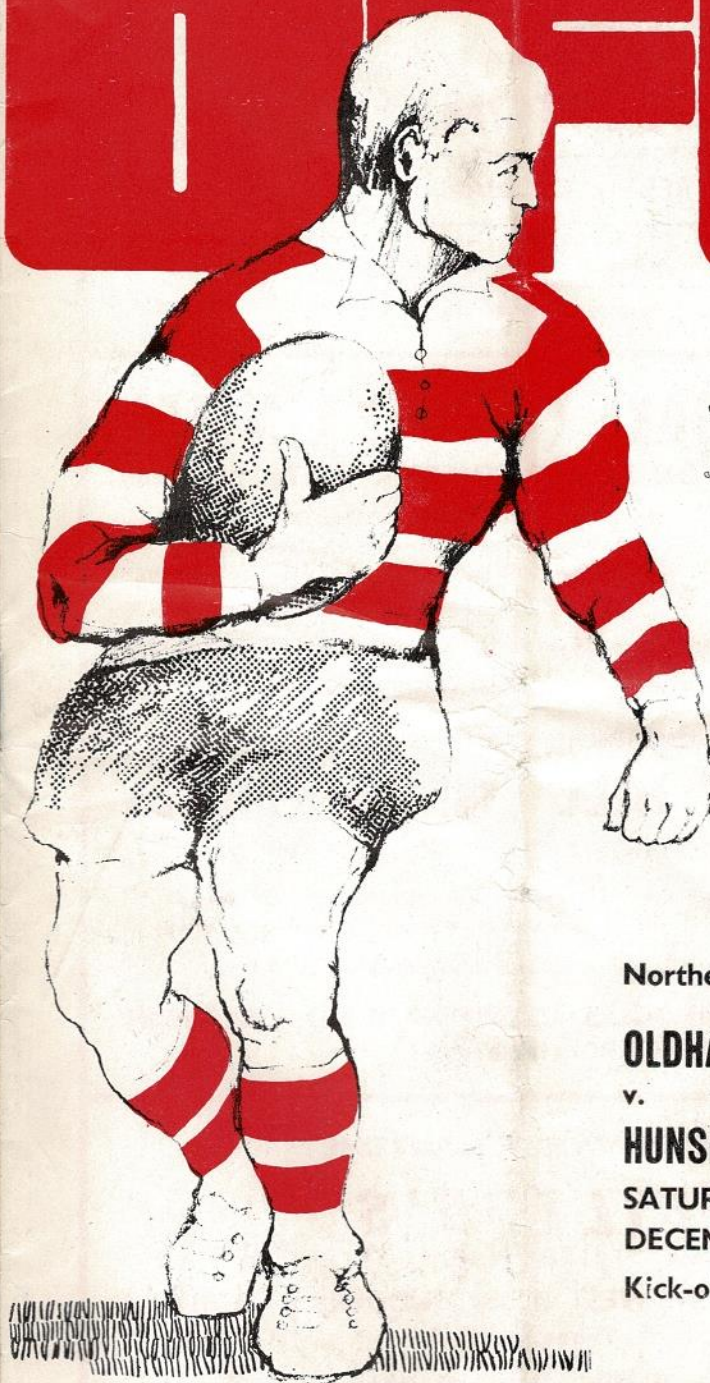


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Northern League Match

OLDHAM 3 0

v.

HUNSLET 1 3

**SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 7th, 1968**

Kick-off 3-0 p.m.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

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Don't miss this great Sunday Lunchtime Wrestling Show

TICKETS 5/- EACH

We regret that all Tickets for Christmas Eve have now been sold

THE TIME HAS COME FOR 'STRAIGHT TALKING'!

This week bosses of one of two Clubs have publicly expressed concern at the drastic fall in gates at Rugby League matches and so they should. The game is now in serious trouble unless something is done and quickly.

The trouble is, what can be done which would improve the spectator interest at our games.

Should we ban 'live' television coverage, or will a reduction in the 5/- minimum charge make any difference or are the Rugby League authorities going to stop keep altering rules?

Unofficial sources quote this week that 'gates' are some 60,000 down on last season and having in mind our own 'gates' here at Oldham, I would be the last person to argue with that statement.

The times have changed, that is one thing which everyone is sure about but let's sit down and consider what the real reason is for the drastic fall in attendances throughout the Rugby League.

Let's look at that 5/- minimum admission charge. The 'gates' last season were slightly down on the season previous, but this year the 5/- minimum admission charge was introduced by

the Clubs, obviously to increase turnstile revenue, but contrary to the expectations of Club officials things have begun to go the other way.

A man who used to bring his boys to a game on a Saturday afternoon to enable his wife to do her shopping has started to consider whether in fact it is worth the trouble or the expense. He has begun to watch a selected match on television thus losing interest in the game. What he does then is just selects the odd game or two to go to which he thinks may be exciting.

An example of this match selecting was witnessed here at Watersheddings only last season. You will all remember that blood tingling second round Challenge Cup tie at Bradford which was drawn 7-7. At that game 17,400 spectators turned up. In the replay the 'gate' was 18,206 and they saw a great Oldham win against a Bradford team who were on top of the world at that time.

Everyone at Watersheddings, players and supporters alike then sensed a first ever Wembley appearance and a plum home draw against Leeds in the third round set everyone talking.

What happened however in the period between the second and third rounds was disastrous. A home game against Workington brought in only 3,407 spectators but the following week in the cup tie 18,502 fans packed the ground.

The alteration and introduction of rules could also have had a bearing on this terrible loss of spectator support, although I personally feel that the four tackle rule has made the game more open, but I like the look of a modification put forward by one of our supporters, Mr. G. Burgess, who says "I would allow the attacking side to have unlimited possession as long as they were in their opponents' '25' area."

"If the attacking side had possession in their opponents' '25' and were then forced out after four tackles, the first time one of the attacking side was tackled a scrum would be formed."

Mr. Burgess goes on, "This I feel would put back some bite into the game which it has lost and which I feel is why support is falling off". He could be right.

The game at Whitehaven last Sunday was a frustrating affair, particularly for the Whitehaven officials and players.

First, they saw a paltry 805 'gate' and then watched their team do everything that is possible on a rugby field, except to score a try. They had no fewer than five tries disallowed by referee Bob Appleyard but were repaid a little with eight scrum penalties against one.

It was a game which should never have had any doubt about the eventual winners. We were five points up early in the game but literally threw a try away minutes later and from then on it was hard and vigorous throughout.

WELCOME HUNSLET

Today we extend a warm welcome to Watersheddings to our very good friends from Hunslet.

Earlier in the season after an exciting game we beat the 'Parksiders' by 22 points to 14. On that day our scorers were Whitehead 5 goals and Briggs, Irving, Wilson and Hughes got our tries.

Our supporters will today be able to see for themselves some very valuable young talent in the Hunslet ranks. The Hunslet Committee have gambled on youth in the past few weeks, and we should see, provided they can be kept together, a fine team from Parkside before very long.

One of these starlets is Steve Hudson, a centre in whom we ourselves expressed interest recently, but were turned down flat, which goes to show that attempts are being made to keep their young side together.

One of the biggest transactions ever to concern Hunslet was the transfer of International centre Geoff Shelton to Oldham for a fee of £6,250. This as far as we were concerned was a deal which failed, but Shelton is now gaining some of his lost confidence at present in the Warrington team.

On paper, a good game is assured. Let us hope both teams play their part in order to entertain the public who have paid to see the game.

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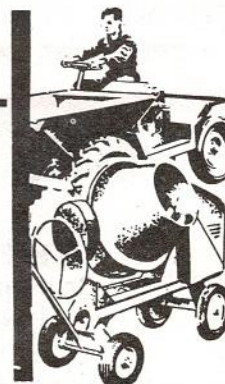
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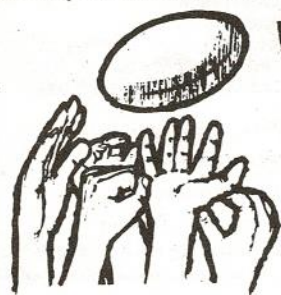
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SUPPORTERS' CLUB NOTES

Many supporters will have seen a hut on the triangular piece of land behind the Main Stand. In case anyone is in doubt as to what it is, I am pleased to say that eventually it will be our new Canteen.

I am not sure at the moment when the canteen will be open to the public but I can say that when it is open it will be a tremendous improvement on our present one and we sincerely hope that you will patronise our venture.

Workmen are now putting the finishing touches to it and when it is ready

we will announce details in a future programme and also will get it announced on the Public Address System.

We have at present the following items on sale and these may be purchased from our Canteens under the scoreboard and under the Main Stand.

Year Books 1/- ; Metal Badges 2/3 ;
Ties 17/6 ; Scarves 27/6 ; Blazer Badges 37/6.

Why not join the Supporters Club it is only a shilling a year? Ask at the Canteen for a membership form, or write, enclosing a 1/- postal order to Mr. A. Craig, 18 Gordon Avenue, O/m.

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FIRST TEAM FIXTURES					'A' TEAM FIXTURES				
Date	Club	Grd.	F	A	Date	Club	Grd.	F	A
Aug. 10	Blackpool (friendly) ...	home	37...27		Aug. 31	Workington 'A'	home		
17	Huddersfield	away	14...19		Sept. 7	Rochdale 'A' (Shield)	away		
19	Blackpool	home	29... 5		14	Rochdale 'A' (Shield)	home		
24	Featherstone R.	home	22...24		21	Wigan 'A'	away		
28	Rochdale H.	away	14...22		Oct. 12	Rochdale 'A'	home		
31	Workington T.	away	10...29		19	Widnes 'A'	away		
Sept. 6	Rochdale (Lancs. Cup)	away	17... 5		26	Salford 'A'	home		
9	Blackpool B.	away	44...10		Nov. 2	Whitehaven 'A'	away		
14	Hunslet	away	22...14		9	Wigan 'A'	home		
21	Wigan	home	4... 9		16	Warrington 'A'	away		
28	Doncaster	away	26...10		23	Whitehaven 'A'	home		
Oct. 5	Huddersfield	home	15...13		30	St. Helens 'A'	home		
12	Featherstone R.	away	12...23		Dec. 14	Leigh 'A'	away		
19	Widnes	home	17...9		21	Widnes 'A'	home		
25	Salford	away	2...4		28	Warrington 'A'	home		
Nov. 11	Wigan	away	3...50		Jan. 4	Huyton 'A'	away		
15	Warrington	home	14...10		11	Huyton 'A'	home		
30	St. Helens	away			18	Salford 'A'	away		
Dec. 1	Whitehaven	away	15... 6		Feb. 1	Leigh 'A'	home		
7	Hunslet	home			8	St. Helens 'A'	away		
14	Leigh	home			Mar. 1	Workington T. 'A' ...	away		
20	Widnes	away			8	Barrow 'A'	away		
22	Whitehaven	home			21	Swinton 'A'	away		
26	Swinton	home			Apr. 7	Rochdale 'A'	away		
28	Warrington	away			12	Barrow 'A'	home		
Jan. 4	Huyton	home			19	Swinton 'A'	home		
11	Huyton	away							
18	Salford	home							
Feb. 1	Leigh	away							
8	St. Helens	home							
Mar. 1	Workington T.	home							
8	Barrow	home							
15	Doncaster	home							
Apr. 4	Swinton (G.F.)	away							
7	Rochdale H. (E.M.) ...	home							
11	Barrow	away							

Times of Kick-off

All Saturday games at home k.o. 3 p.m. Evening k.o.'s as advertised. All 1st & 'A' team matches.

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NEXT MATCH AT WATERSHEDDINGS

OLDHAM v LEIGH

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