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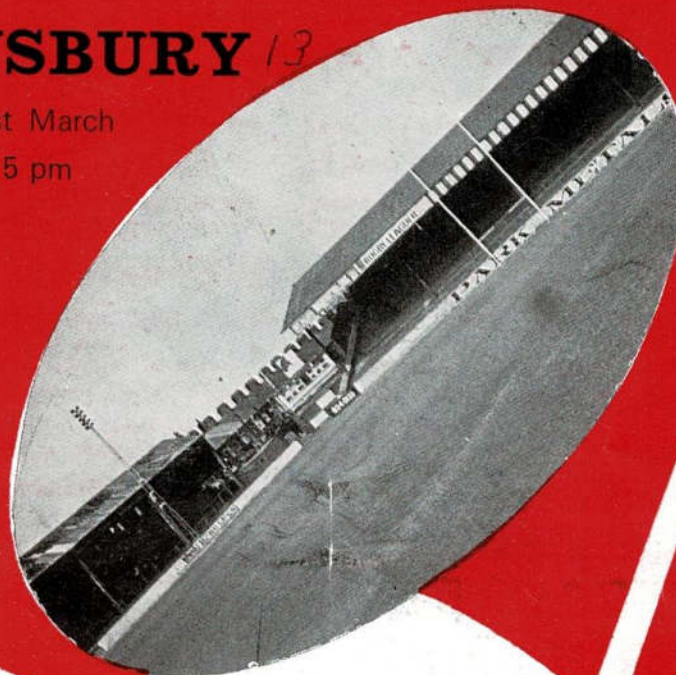
OLDHAM 4

v

DEWSBURY 13

Sunday 31st March

Kick-off 3-15 pm



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Programme 6p

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Brian Batty of the Mail

Rugby League fans pride themselves on being as knowledgeable as those in other sports but I doubt whether many can answer the following question.

Who is the former Glasgow Rangers footballer who played such a vital role for Great Britain in the World Cup success last November?

The answer is Dennis Wright, physiotherapist to Oldham and also the Great Britain side for the last five years.

Dennis, a popular and respected figure in the game, is currently running a "magic sponge" course for those who want to learn more about sports injuries and their treatment.

The course is being held at the Moston College of Further Education, Manchester, and unfortunately has not met with the same response in Rugby League as in Soccer.

"This is our third course and we have Manchester City's Tony Book and Stockport County's Jimmy Mulvaney with us at the moment", Dennis tells me.

"The main aim is to make trainers and coaches aware of what not to do as regards lacerations, abrasions and cuts. A septic injury can keep a player out for as long as bad knocks.

"The scheme has a lot of appeal for Soccer players coming to the end of their careers. I would like to see more people from Rugby League but unfortunately not enough people within the game realise it is being held."

Wright has been with Oldham Rugby League Club for 11 seasons after successfully applying for the job during Gus Risman's days.

It must all seem a far cry from the days when he joined Oldham Athletic as a 16-year-old, moving to Glasgow Rangers a year later.

"I was a left winger and played in the same Rangers side as Bobby Brown, George Young, Willie Waddell and Willie Thornton", he recalls.

"I also played in the Scottish Command side alongside ex-Manchester City forward Bobby Johnstone, who was an 18-year-old with Hibernian at the time.

"After four years I returned to play with Oldham Athletic under manager George Hardwick and eventually went non-League.

"It may seem a strange contrast to my present job in Rugby League but I love the work. Rugby players aren't like some of the prima donnas in Soccer, they are more genuine and they certainly take the worst knocks."

Dennis would now like to emulate Paddy Armour, Wakefield's physiotherapist who has made the tour of Australia and New Zealand, and there is no doubting the value of these men to the side.

Around the League with - DAVE PARKER

First Division clubs, and for that matter Second Division clubs, will have to put up with another Tonks, but not quite as big as the Featherstone Rovers prop forward and player of the year, Les, a cuddly 17 stone. His 22-year-old brother Alan, formerly with Featherstone Miners Welfare, has just signed for Wakefield Trinity after only one first team trial. He is as tall as his brother, but weighs only 14½ stones at the moment.

Hull, checking on forward talent in preparation already for next season, watched the Halifax-Featherstone, Huddersfield-Batley games last weekend. The men under review were Halifax's £3,000 transfer-listed prop Terry Dewhurst and Batley's craggy prop George Standage.

Leigh's hooker Derek Clarke has created a record in an up and down season for him. Currently injured with leg troubles, Clarke held the captaincy for only two weeks before the players asked that he be relieved of the post as they fancied a player out of the pack. The player who took over was long serving former Waterloo centre Mick Collins.

Warrington referee Eric Lawrenson came in for some strong words from Halifax and Featherstone supporters last Sunday, and at half-time and full-time, despite police protection, he was jostled.

Rochdale Hornets I understand are ready to unload some of their forward strength. Two of those forwards currently in the background, Henry Delooze and Alan Hodgkinson, could be joining clubs this weekend. Delooze has already had talks with another Lancashire club about a player-coach position next term.

With Barry Smith having been playing so well for Whitehaven at scrum-half, utility player Billy Atkinson has had a long wait for a first team spot this season, and when the club went after Workington's experienced Jackie Newall it looked very much as though he would have to sit things out this season.

Huddersfield's former Bradford Northern and Hunslet hooker Graham "Grabs" Wilson has resumed training at Fartown after a three month break owing to work commitments in the south.

York's go-ahead board see Salford's Bill Kirkbride as the player to mould next season's efforts on, while Keighley have not given up hope of landing the player they think will put them amongst the second division leaders, Leeds' stay away forward Bill Ramsey.

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SPOTLIGHT on FRED HALL



Watersheddings will always hold a special place in the memory of Fred Hall, Oldham's recent second-row forward signing from Blackpool. You can bet that, in many years to come, when Fred relates rugby yarns to his grandchildren, this ground of ours high up on the hill will figure prominently in his round-the-fire stories.

As the son of a well-known local worker for the amateur R.L. cause, Fred Hall snr., Fred used to watch Oldham from the terraces as a boy.

Later in life, when he was playing centre for Waterhead, he had trials at Watersheddings, but they came to nothing. "Oldham wanted to extend the trial period", he says, "but I didn't fancy the idea".

When his work as a heating engineer took him to Blackpool, where he ultimately signed for trials, Fred wore the tangerine jersey for the first time in a pre-season charity match . . . at Watersheddings.

And four years later, when he became disenchanted with the Borough set-up, he again stepped out at Watersheddings, this time on trial with Oldham.

At the end of those trials, the clubs could not agree terms for the transfer and it looked as if Fred was destined to go back to the town's amateur soccer grounds on which he had played so much in his 'teens.

But Lady Luck smiled down on Fred when Oldham and Blackpool finally reached agreement and the deal went through just in time for Hall to regain his place in the Oldham second-row for the second round Challenge Cup clash at Hull.

Having failed to convince Oldham of his potential several years earlier, Hall was now firmly established with his home-town team . . . and he reckons the move from the seaside was the best he has ever made.

"Oldham is a grand club", said Fred this week. "It is very progressive in its thinking, there is a hard-working committee, and the set-up under Graham Starkey is first class."

Unlike many youngsters who play R.L. at junior school and then switch to soccer in later years, Fred went the reverse way.

He was an inside-forward or wing-half with his school, Waterloo, in the days when the headmaster, Mr. Stanley Stretch, was president of Oldham Football Club as it was then known.

On leaving school, though his dad was by now the secretary of the Oldham Amateur Rugby League, Fred continued at the round-ball game with local clubs, Community Centre and Shakespeare.

"My dad never tried to influence my sport at all", says Fred, "but I think he was quietly pleased when I began to play rugby with a public house team in Ashton-under-Lyne.

"They played most of their matches on Sundays, and I enjoyed it because I was able to play soccer on the Saturday and rugby on the Sunday."

Fred's love of Rugby developed from there and thanks to a relative, who had connections in the Oldham Amateur R.L., he finally moved to Waterhead where he paired up in the centre with a lad who was to sign professional for Oldham not long afterwards, Terry Garrett.

There was some compensation for his disappointment at not making it with Oldham at the first attempt when he went to Blackpool to work and signed up with the Borough.

"I just walked into the ground one night and asked if I could train", he recalls "Then I signed for trials, and was ultimately taken on.

"In my second season Borough asked me if I would switch from the centre to the second-row, and I was pleased to go into the pack because the Borough backs seemed to be doing nothing but chasing and tackling."

For four seasons, Hall grafted hard for Blackpool, and earned himself a reputation with Borough officials for being a dedicated club man.

Having moved back to work in Oldham, Fred used to travel to the seaside for training and playing — and it was usually just losing pay to pick up on Thursday nights.

"Things began to go wrong this season", he says, "and several players either asked for a move or just went out of the game."

So it was, with Hall temporarily retired and living within a few miles of Watersheddings, that Oldham and Blackpool opened the negotiations which finally brought the Hall story to full circle.

Memories of his days at Blackpool are few, but Fred does take something of a delight in the fact that, in recent seasons, he and his mates were usually able to put one over on Oldham at least once in the two clashes.

"We got to the stage where we came to expect ONE win against Oldham in the season — and it always gave me a little bit more pleasure than the rest of the lads", he says honestly.

Now, though, Fred is enjoying his rugby better than ever before . . . and looking keenly forward to the first division challenge next term.

"The crowd we had against Warrington showed that next season could be a real humdinger", says Fred, who lives in Silverdale Drive, Lees, with his wife Kathleen and sons Martin, aged four, and Robert, aged two.





Dewsbury Statistics

Colours: Black, red and yellow hooped jerseys, white shorts.
 Ground: Crown Flatt.
 Joined League: 1898.
 League Champions: 1915-16, 1916-17, 1941-42, 1942-43.
 Championship runners-up: 1917-18, 1943-44, 1946-47.
 Second Division Champions: 1904-05.
 Challenge Cup Winners: 1911-12, 1942-43.
 Challenge Cup runners-up: 1928-29.
 Yorkshire Champions: 1946-47.
 Yorkshire Cup Winners: 1925-26, 1927-28, 1942-43.
 Yorkshire Cup runners-up: 1918-19, 1921-22, 1940-41, 1972-73.
 Attendance record: 26,584 v Halifax (Yorkshire Cup) 1920-21.
 Goal-kicking record: 110 by Stan Thompson, 1951-52.
 Try-scoring record: 40 by D. Thomas, 1906-07.
 Points-scoring record: 100 goals, 16 tries, 248 points by Nigel Stephenson, 1971-72.
 Record win: 64-0 v Liverpool City, 1906-07.
 Record defeat: 2-62 v Halifax, 1957-58.

THE GREEN FINAL FOR ALL LOCAL SPORT

OLDHAM

4

- 1-DAVIES T
- 2-ELLIOTT M.
- 3-LARDER P. *2 goals*
- 4-WAINWRIGHT T.
- 5-O'BRIEN C.
- 6-HILL C.
- 7-McCONE M.
- 8-WILSON K.
- 9-TAYLOR K.
- 10-ASHCROFT K.
- 11-IRVING R.
- 12-HALL F.
- 13-FARRELL J.

- 14-SIDDALL M.
- 15-DALEY A.

Referee

J. E. JACKSON (Leeds)

DEWSBURY 13

- 1-RUSHTON A.
- 2-DAY T.
- 3-CLARK J.
- 4-STEPHENSON N. *3 goals*
- 5-YOIRD J. *2 tries*
- 6-AGAR A.
- 7-BATES A. *try*
- 8-BELL G.
- 9-STEPHENSON M.
- 10-LOWE T.
- 11-GRAYSHON J.
- 12-BATES J.
- 13-WHITTINGTON J.
- 14-LEE S.
- 15-ROBINSON B.

Touch Judges

F. Beswick (Widnes) Red
 P. M. Oliver (Bolton) Orange

OUR VISITORS . . .

DEWSBURY

One of the most under-rated players in this most under-rated Dewsbury side is full-back Adrian Rushton. He is a fast attacking player who has crossed for ten tries so far this term and earlier in the season he made his Yorkshire County debut.

On the right wing Dewsbury have a real flyer in 22-year-old Gregg Ashcroft, the former Pontypridd R.U.F.C. player who turned professional in November 1971. He scored Dewsbury's try in the Yorkshire Cup Final and his total for the season now stands at 11.

In recent games the left wing spot has been occupied by Geoff Yoward with Terry Day moving into the centre. Other candidates for the centre position are John Clark and Alan Childe, but the biggest start at Crown Flatt is Nigel Stephenson. How international recognition has avoided this 23-year-old is something of a mystery although he still has time on his side. In 1966-67 Stephenson landed 138 goals for the Shaw Cross Boys' Club and the following June he was signed by Dewsbury for £1,000. In no time at all Stephenson was scoring regularly for Dewsbury and in 1970-71 he made the first of his six Yorkshire County appearances. It was a more than useful debut in the County jersey, for as well as playing a big part in Yorkshire's 32-12 victory over Lancashire he crossed for two tries and retained his place in the play off game, also against Lancashire. This match was virtually a repeat of the previous encounter, for Yorkshire won again 34-8 with Stephenson contributing three goals and two tries.

During that 1970-71 season Stephenson also created a new club points scoring record for Dewsbury. Last season he again played in both Yorkshire's matches, scoring a try and four goals in the 42-22 defeat of Lancashire and two tries in Cumberland's 17-12 defeat. This season another two County appearances have come Stephenson's way although his best form has been in club matches where, despite a lengthy lay off with a broken wrist, he has contributed 16 tries and 97 goals to Dewsbury's scores.

His best performances have been in the home 41-13 league defeat of Blackpool when he landed ten goals and scored a try, and the weekend before last his six goals and three tries made up 21 of his side's points in the 24-15 defeat of Wigan. Obviously he is a player to be watched for he is tipped to be a future British captain.

Another tricky and skilful player is stand-off Alan Agar who landed Dewsbury's three goals in the Yorkshire Cup Final in the absence of Nigel Stephenson. He forms a formidable half-back partnership with the hard working and tireless Alan Bates. Bates has been at Dewsbury for quite a few seasons now and both last season and this season he has represented Yorkshire.

Amongst the up and coming youngsters at Crown Flatt is 20-year-old utility back Stephen Lane who was signed from Castleford junior football just over 12 months ago.

The extremely mobile Dewsbury pack is well led by another Stephenson, Mike Stephenson, who is, however, no relation to Nigel. Hooker Mike is a regular member of both the Yorkshire and Great Britain teams and he is extremely lively in the loose as well as being a renowned striker. Stephenson's first Great Britain appearance was as substitute in the second Kiwi Test last season. He was then selected to hook in the trial match against York. Despite being sent off at York he played against France and, in fact, he scored a try in Britain's 45-10 victory. This season he has played in all Britain's four World Cup matches and, in addition, he played in that exciting British trial game against Oldham. Stephenson has crossed for 12 tries so far this season including the three he scored in France during the World Cup campaign. His duel with Kevin Taylor this afternoon will be one of the highlights of the match.

Propping Stephenson are two experienced players — Dick Lowe and Harry Beverley. Lowe is an accomplished goal-kicker who earlier this season made his debut for Yorkshire, whilst Beverley gained experience with Leeds before transferring to Dewsbury.

Graham Bell, only 25 years old, is a good forward prospect who was signed from junior football six years ago. The second row partnership, however, is likely to be comprised of John Bates, brother of Alan and another Yorkshire representative, and Geoff Grayshon, although Brian Robinson is pressing for inclusion in the pack.

Joe Whittington has been occupying the loose-forward berth in recent weeks but he has a great rival for this position in 21-year-old Steve Hankins who was signed from Sharlston Juniors last May. Hankins played in the Yorkshire Cup Final.

Like Oldham, Dewsbury have had quite a successful season with several excellent league victories and they have also had some lengthy runs in Cup football. So far Dewsbury have scored four league double victories against Blackpool Borough (41-13 home, 11-10 away), Huyton (29-4 home, 9-7 away), Workington Town (11-6 home, 14-5 away) and Wigan (24-15 home, 9-7 away).

Should Oldham win this afternoon's encounter it will be Dewsbury's second league double defeat of the season for they have fallen to St. Helens by 17-12 at home and 12-7 away. In most matches, however, Dewsbury have given a good account of themselves with only the 10-2 defeat at Barrow being uncharacteristic. In the John Player Competition Dewsbury were fortunate enough to be drawn at home to local juniors Dewsbury Celtic in round one. Although they were not at their best the Crown Flatt side coasted home 22-4. At Salford in round two, Dewsbury went in front with a Geoff Grayshon try but they were unable to hold on to their lead and the eventual runners-up went on to beat them 19-3.

The Yorkshire Cup campaign as far as Dewsbury were concerned was a personal success for the dynamic Nigel Stephenson. In round one he scored a try and five goals in the 19-5 defeat of Castleford when Cas were severely handicapped with the dismissals of Mike Redfearn and Trevor Briggs. Stephenson went one better in the quarter-final at Bramley when his try and seven goals assisted Dewsbury to win by 20 points to 8. In the semi-final Stephenson was unable to score a try but he did land another seven goals and although Halifax scored two tries to Dewsbury's one the Thrum Hall side lost 19-10. Unfortunately for Dewsbury, Stephenson broke his wrist shortly before the final and, as expected, he was badly missed for Leeds raced to a comfortable 36-9 victory. Best for Dewsbury in the final were Alan and John Bates and the tireless Mike Stephenson.

Dewsbury are also favourites to reach Wembley for the Challenge Cup Final but it has been a hard fight to reach the semi-final. As in the Yorkshire Cup, Nigel Stephenson's goal-kicking was vital in the first round tie at Bramley where the home side scored two tries to Dewsbury's one but still lost 11-8. In the second round another difficult tie was overcome at Workington where, after trailing 3-2 at half-time, Dewsbury were just able to struggle through by 10-8. A crowd of 13,500 crammed into Crown Flatt for the visit of neighbours Wakefield Trinity in the quarter-final. After another close fought first half which ended with the scores level at 4-4, Dewsbury were able to forge ahead to record a 16-4 win. On paper Bradford should be beaten in next Saturday's semi-final and in the wide open space of Wembley Dewsbury's mobile pack and speedy backs will provide tricky opponents for who knows, next month we could see Dewsbury lifting the Cup at Wembley at Featherstone's expense.

There have been several close meetings between Oldham and Dewsbury in recent league clashes. The foggy meeting just before Christmas brought Oldham a narrow 16-12 win when Dewsbury were still without Nigel Stephenson, and although they scored four tries they were unable to complement any of them. Oldham did not meet Dewsbury last season but in the previous campaign, 1970-71, Dewsbury pulled off a 17-16 victory here at Watersheddings thanks to a last minute try and later in the season the two clubs fought out an exciting 12-12 draw at Dewsbury.

This afternoon's game has all the ingredients of another evenly matched clash. Both clubs are looking for points to enable them to get into the top eight, but with Dewsbury also having next week's Cup semi-final on their minds I expect Oldham will just steal the points this afternoon.

SUPPORTERS' CLUB NOTES

Grand National Draw — Winning Numbers

The Supporters' Club would like to thank members and friends who sold and bought tickets to help make the draw a success.

Prizes can be claimed from any committee man or in the Social Club lounge any evening except Monday, 2nd April, because the committee are helping with the benefit night out for Kevin Taylor and Mike Elliott.

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RUGBY LEAGUE QUIZ

- Which clubs took part in the first professional matches to be played on a Sunday?
- Which Dewsbury players have toured Australasia with Great Britain?
- Which record transfer took place in 1947-48?
- Which ground did Dewsbury use before moving to Crown Flatt?
- When was the first match played with the assistance of electrical under-soil heating?

ANSWERS

- On 17th December 1967; Bradford Northern v York and Leigh v Dewsbury.
- Frank Gallagher (1920) and Harry Street (1950).
- Dewsbury sold Jim Ledgard to Leigh in 1947-48 for a record £2,650.
- Sugar Lane.
- 21st December 1963; Leeds v Dewsbury.

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		F.	A.
1972			
Aug.	19—Huddersfield	A 25—	7
	23—Whitehaven	H 30—	13
	26—Workington T.	H 19—	5
	28—York	A 32—	8
Sept.	1—Salford. Lancs. Cup .	A 17—	41
	10—Hull	H 27—	2
	17—Huyton	A 25—	13
	23—Play. No. 6 1st R.	A 10—	17
	29—Wigan	A 12—	9
Oct.	3—Salford (Fl. Cup)	H 12—	8
	7—St. Helens	H 12—	12
	14—Workington T.	A 10—	17
	22—Widnes	H 17—	18
Nov.	4—Huddersfield	H 7—	7
	7—Castleford F.C.	H 9—	7
	12—Huyton	H 22—	0
	17—Hull	A 17—	14
	25—Wigan	H 11—	6
Dec.	1—St. Helens	A 10—	24
	5—Leigh F.Cup. Semi	8—	10
	10—Salford	H 12—	14
	17—Dewsbury	A 16—	12
	24—Leigh	H 24—	4
	26—Rochdale H.	A 14—	16
	31—Warrington	A 10—	20
1973			
Jan.	6—Whitehaven	A 0—	9
	14—York	H	
	19—Barrow	A	
	27—Barrow Ch. Cup		
	1st Rd.	H	
Feb.	4—Leigh	A	
	11—Blackpool B.	H	
	17—Chal. Cup 2nd Rd.		
	25—Widnes	A	
Mar.	4—Warrington	H	
	11—Barrow	H	
	18—Blackpool B.	A	
Apr.	1—Dewsbury	H	
	8—Swinton	H	
	21—Swinton	A	
	23—Rochdale	H	

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