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Brian Batty of the Mail

If Peter Fox fails to become Rugby League's champion golfer for the third successive time in May it could be that his mind has been more on Wembley than his swing.

For as the Featherstone Rovers coach, the 7-handicap Fox, has had little time to prepare for another crack at the Alfred Sharman trophy.

"I love the game but I haven't been able to practice much lately," confesses Peter, whose first love is undoubtedly Rugby League.

A trip to Featherstone is never complete without a discussion on the game with the eldest of the three footballing Fox brothers.

With Don busy at Batley as a coach and Neil in the dual role of player-coach with Wakefield Trinity the game is certainly influenced by the Fox family.

If Peter was the least known as a player — he failed to win representative honours — he is leading in the coaching stakes.

"They didn't have such clever county selectors in those days," he jokes. "They didn't appreciate the footballers."

"I was too short and square when I went into the front row but if they had invented Cuban heels in time I would have walked into the Yorkshire side."

But few players learnt the trade more thoroughly than Fox in the 14 years in which he started out with Featherstone and ended at Wakefield, via Batley and Hull K. R.

"Wakefield persuaded me to help along their 'A' team and I had one game in the first team but then I had trouble with an Achilles tendon and decided to call it a day," he recalls.

Now Peter proves the theory that you don't have to have been a great player to coach successfully.

"I have always said that the greatest difficulty for someone like myself is getting your hands on a job — getting the chance to prove yourself," he says.

"I am afraid that Rugby League is losing out because of this attitude that you've got to be able to throw international caps on the table at an interview."

"But Don Revie is one of the managers in soccer who has proved this isn't the main requirement. He never won a lot of honours as a player but he's done a wonderful job with Leeds United."

"Myself I'm just grateful that Featherstone have given me the chance."

Around the League with - DAVE PARKER

It's record-a-go-go at the Athletic Grounds, home of Rochdale Hornets at the moment as their record "Hornets-Hornets" continues to sell at a steady rate for 60p a copy. Written and composed by the manager of the Storybook group, the chorus by all three teams, and sung by Storybook it is destined to rock the foundations from Mayfield to Spotland.

Leeds, although riding high once again after a lapse in early March, are still on the lookout for talent and at the moment have Kippax White Swan scrum-half Geoff Nicholson on trial. I am told he is in the Keith Hepworth mould and destined for great honours.

Doncaster's livewire stand-off Dick James is awaiting a specialists report to know whether he can play again.

Bramley's prop forward signing of last season from Bradford Northern, Alan McCurley, is to enter hospital in the near future for an operation on a troublesome knee injury.

It appears the 'clear-the-air' talks at Wakefield last week worked wonders, after Trinity ended Featherstone's great run with a 28-12 victory, at Post Office Road.

Blackpool Borough, who have dropped their interest in Rochdale's Henry Delooze on the list at £1,000, are in talks with Salford about bringing veteran forward Jim Hardacre, who last season had a benefit, back into the game.

In 1967 before Dewsbury met Barrow in a semi-final of the Challenge Cup the clubs met the previous week in a league match and Barrow played all their reserves with a certain Eddie Tees at sub-back. The half-time score saw the men from Crown Flatt leading 35-0, but in the second half Tees was introduced and Dewsbury never scored another try. Tees is in combat with Dewsbury again this weekend, and we shall have to await the outcome.

There is no stopping Hull K.R. international forward Phil Lowe. He has just crossed for 14 tries in 9 games, making it 15 in 11 starting on February 4.

Alan Bancroft, given a "free" at Keighley last month, has joined Hunslet again, via a two match trial spell with Batley.

Former Warrington forward Brian Larkin, who joined Barrow with Alan Whittle in September, has packed up at Craven Park.

Halifax have told Hull they will only take £2,000 in cash for Terry Dewhirst their rugged prop, and not any player exchange tie-ups.

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SPOTLIGHT on

JOHNNY FARRELL

JOHNNY FARRELL learned his rugby in the same school as so many thousands of his predecessors in Rugby League football — on the amateur grounds of the North, with a cold bucket as an after-the-match shower and a wooden hut as the dressing room.

And he hasn't forgotten the hardships of those early days, and the battle that is currently under way to make a bright, new life for the stars of tomorrow.

"I think it would be a great idea if the members of the 15 Northern League clubs who pick up winning pay every week of the season contributed 50p out of their wages to help the amateurs", said Johnny this week.

"Fifty pence isn't a great deal, but collected out of winning pay packets each week of the season it would net more than £4,000 annually to help the fight at the game's grass roots.

"Let's face it, most of us have been in the same boat as the lads who are just starting out their life as rugby players, and I don't think a professional would jib if he were asked to contribute a small item."

Johnny, who lives with his wife, Barbara, and three-year-old son Lee at Whelley, near Wigan — "It's a little village out in the fields" — first began to attract the interest of senior clubs as a stand-off half with Wigan St. Patrick's.

Arthur Walker, our club chairman, was chairman of Rochdale Hornets at the time, and it was he who made the first approach on Rochdale's behalf.

Johnny says honestly: "Mr. Walker came to our house, and I went along to the

Athletic Grounds, but Wigan became interested as well. I tried to play one off against the other, as youngsters sometimes do, and ended up by chancing my arm with Wigan, and coming unstuck."

Johnny was at Wigan for only a matter of weeks, playing in the Colts team, before he realised, like so many other Wigan lads, that the big chance was never going to come his way.

When he was invited for trials at Warrington, he jumped at the chance, but bad luck robbed him of signing for the Wires.

"They told me they wanted me to sign and, in fact, they moved Bobby Greenough out to the wing so that I could play my last trial at stand-off half.

"Everything was going fine, and then I broke my ankle and was out of the game for 17 weeks."

The injury robbed him of turning professional, and Johnny looked like ending his days as an amateur, until Albert Seddon, the old Blackpool forward, persuaded him to accompany him to Borough Park for training one night.

Ultimately, he signed — and so began his seven-year courtship with Borough, for whom he played in every position on the team, with the exception of prop-forward!

"But my first love is definitely the loose-forward spot", says Johnny. "I like to be involved, and there's an awful lot of involvement for a No. 13".

Like Roger Millward, Johnny made something of a name for himself in the Sunday afternoon matches televised by Independent Television in the early sixties.

Playing at the time for Wigan Colts, he helped his side through to the final of the televised competition in which Wigan were beaten 3—0 by Barrow side, Walney Central.

"When I signed for Blackpool after several clubs had expressed an interest in me, I thought it might be a short stay, but it didn't quite work out like that: I was there seven years and became the senior professional."

Finally, after repeated requests for a transfer, Johnny was put on Borough's list at £3,000 last autumn, and joined Oldham in the New Year for a much reduced fee.

Like Fred Hall, his former colleague at Borough Park, Johnny is delighted with the set-up at Watersheddings.

"At first, it was all so foreign to me", he says. "Everything was so well-planned and organised, and I hadn't been used to that at Blackpool.

"The difficulties at Borough arise because they don't have an 'A' team. Lads are pitched right in at the deep end, and this caused a lot of worries".

There are two other rugby-playing members of the Farrell family: Dad, who was loose-forward for Higher Ince when they reached the first round of the Challenge Cup in the mid-forties, and brother Kevin, a 19-year-old loose-forward who has represented Lancashire amateurs.

"Sadly, his interest in the game is fading somewhat, and he is now so keen on soccer that he went all the way to Sunderland to watch Manchester City in their F.A. Cup replay some weeks ago.

"This is the sort of thing that has to be arrested in Rugby League . . . and that's why I would back to the hilt a move for us professionals to do our little bit for the good of the amateurs".

OUR VISITORS . . .

SWINTON

Swinton Statistics

Colours: Blue jerseys with white 'V', white shorts.

Nickname: Lions.

Ground: Station Road.

Joined League: 1896.

Attendance record: 44,621, Lancashire Cup Final, 1951-52. Wigan v. Leigh.

Goal-kicking & Points record: 132 goals, 9 tries, 291 points by Albert Blain in 1960-61.

Try-scoring record: 44 by Johnny Stopford in 1963-64.

Record win: 76-4 v. Pontefract, 1906-07.

Record defeat: 76-3 v. Huddersfield, 1945-46.

Rugby League Champions: 1926-27, 1927-28, 1930-31, 1934-35, 1962-63, 1963-64.

Runners-up: 1924-25, 1932-33, 1939-40.

Challenge Cup Winners: 1899-1900, 1925-26, 1927-28.

Runners-up: 1926-27, 1931-32.

Lancashire Cup Winners: 1925-26, 1927-28, 1939-40, 1969-70.

Runners-up: 1910-11, 1923-24, 1931-32, 1960-61, 1961-62, 1962-63, 1964-65, 1972-73.

Lancashire League Champions: 1924-25, 1927-28, 1928-29, 1930-31, 1939-40, 1960-61.

Runners-up: 1922-23, 1925-26, 1926-27, 1931-32, 1938-39, 1963-64.

As expected with a side not having their best season, Swinton have been making several changes in their line-up and the exact composition of their side has varied considerably from week to week.

Full-back Stan Gittins is a most attractive attacking full-back, although this season he has been unsettled due to injury problems.

Born in Leigh 24 years ago, Gittins signed for Batley in November, 1967 from Tyldesley R.U.F.C. and turned in some really eye-catching displays from the full-back position. In 1969 his form earned him a place in the England under-24 team which raced to a 42-4 victory over France. Gittins scored a try in that game but, surprisingly, that has been his only representative honour despite winning the Players No. 6 'Player of the Season' competition in season 1970-71. After a lengthy dispute with Batley, Gittins was eventually transferred to Swinton in January, 1972, when Batley received both £2,000 and the experienced Cliff Williams in exchange.

As previously stated, Gittins has missed a large slice of this season through injury and consequently the full-back berth has been one of the problem positions for the Lions. Tony Connolly, who joined Swinton three years ago from Wigan junior football, made his debut at full-back against Whitehaven last November and he had a spell in the No. 1 jersey, but it seems as if Swinton supporters will not be happy until the return of Gittins.

THE GREEN FINAL

FOR ALL LOCAL SPORT

OLDHAM 23

SWINTON 10

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

- 1-GOWERS K. *2 goals*
- 2-FLEAY R. *try*
- 3-BUCKLEY A.
- 4-EVANS G.
- 5-JACKSON B.
- 6-ATKINSON L.
- 7-HOPKINS R.
- 8-BATE H.
- 9-EVANS R.
- 10-MURRAY D.
- 11-WHITTLE K.
- 12-SMITH R.
- 13-HENEGAN M. *try*
- 14-DAINTY S.
- 15-HUTTON F.

Referee

S. WALL (Leigh)

Touch Judges

B. Baker (Wigan)	Red
J. Middlehurst	
(Monmouthshire)	Orange

ons which cause no problems at Station Road are the wing spots which are more than adequately covered by Bob Fleay and Paul Jackson. Fleay is an extremely fast player who was obtained from Aberavon R.U.F.C. He was a try scorer in this season's Lancashire Cup Final. The tricky Paul Jackson joined the Lions arch rivals Salford in December, 1965 from Langworthy Juniors. Whilst with Salford, Jackson appeared at Wembley in 1969 but then lost his place amongst the big signings at the Willows. Last September he moved across the city to Swinton in a straight exchange deal involving Graham McKay. Jackson played against his old club in the Lancashire Cup Final in the problem full-back spot but, unfortunately, Salford managed to win by 25—11. So far this season, Fleay has scored 17 tries and Jackson 11.

There are three candidates for the centre positions and each one is a strong experienced player.

Graham Evans was signed from Huddersfield last November, just one month after his 22nd birthday and he has been in impressive form with the Lions for whom he has scored 10 tries.

John Cooke is another shrewd signing, who began his professional career with Batley in 1969. After a few seasons at Batley, Cooke drifted back into junior football with Leigh Miners' Welfare and it was after being spotted with this highly successful junior club that Swinton snapped him up 12 months ago. He is a robust sort of player and he, too, has had the occasional outing at full-back! He has kicked 35 goals as well as scoring 4 tries with Swinton this season.

Alan Buckley, although now aged 32 and in his 15th year at Station Road, is still a great favourite and a powerful attacking force. He was signed in 1958 from Broughton Park R.U.F.C. and made his debut two years later against Barrow. Buckley has represented Lancashire on several occasions between 1962 and 1971 and he has also represented England and Great Britain and toured Australia and New Zealand with Great Britain in 1966. Of course, Buckley was a member of that wonderful Swinton combination which won the First Division Championship in 1962-63 and 1963-64. A loyal clubman, Buckley fully deserved the £1,213 benefit cheque which came his way in July, 1971.

Another great Swinton stalwart is Ken Gowers, who is fast becoming the Peter Pan of Rugby League. Gowers was born 36 years ago in Wigan and signed for Swinton from Kirkholt Juniors in 1954. It was here at Watersheddings against Oldham, on Christmas Day, 1954, that Gowers made his professional debut. Since then Gowers has been a loyal and consistent member of the Lions. He is equally at home whether at full-back or in either half-back position and like Buckley, he has represented both Lancashire and Great Britain. Last season he landed 124 goals and scored 3 tries and this season he is around the 50 goals mark. He landed 3 goals in the Lancashire Cup Final which, incidentally, was his sixth Lancashire Cup Final appearance with Swinton.

In January, Swinton signed another experienced player, Johnny Houghton, from St. Helens. Houghton joined Saints in February, 1967 shortly after Houghton had assisted his junior club, Blackbrook, into the first round of the Challenge Cup and a trip to York. By the end of that 1966-67 season Houghton was a member of the Saints team which was beaten, after a replay, by Wakefield Trinity in the Championship Final. Whilst with St. Helens, Houghton played in several finals and was substitute in the Saints' team which hammered Oldham 30—2 in the 1968 Lancashire Cup Final. Houghton is quite a useful goalkicker and he landed 2 goals on his debut against Warrington.

At scrum-half Swinton have their expensive 25-years-old Rugby Union signing Ray 'Chico' Hopkins who cost Swinton a hefty £8,000 fee when he was signed from Llanelli R.U.F.C. last November. Hopkins is best remembered in Welsh Rugby Union circles for his display in the England v. Wales international in 1970. He was substitute in this match, for it has always been his misfortune to lie in the shadows of Gareth Edwards, but in this game Edwards left the field injured and Hopkins replaced him as England led 13—6. In no time at all Hopkins had made one try and scored one himself to give Wales an eventual 17—13 win. Hopkins had previously toured Australia and New Zealand with Wales in 1969. He scored a try in his professional debut, although in that match Swinton were only able to register a 19-all draw against Huyton.

As in the backs, Swinton's forwards have shown several changes throughout the season, although hooker Dick Evans seems to have secured a permanent place in the middle of the front row. Evans began his career with Huyton and then moved to Barrow before Swinton signed him for £5,000 on New Year's Eve, 1970.

Propping Evans could be Harold Bate, a tough experienced customer who was signed in 1960 from St. Helens R.U.F.C. A more famous Rugby Union convert is Brian Butler, a former Llanelli and Barbarian star who Swinton signed from Bradford Northern last January. Also in the running for a front row position is Tom Young, a sturdy player who was signed from Wigan 'B' in 1971.

Second row forward Kevin Whittle originally joined Swinton from Blackbrook Juniors but then returned to junior football with Pilkingtons Recreation, but recently he has forced himself back into the Swinton line-up. Rod Smith is a tough Cumbrian who has been playing professional rugby for over 10 years, firstly with Workington Town before joining the Lions. Last season he made two appearances for the Cumberland County side.

One of the discoveries of this season is Granville Hoyle who, although he joined Swinton from Huddersfield junior football in 1965, has really been outstanding in the Lions pack, where he has scored 11 tries this season.

Swinton's second former Salford player is 27-years-old Mick Henighan. He started playing rugby with Swinton's junior nursery side, Folly Lane, but then signed for Salford. In January, 1971 he moved to Warrington for £2,500 and made his debut in the first round of the Challenge Cup. Again, last January, Henighan moved for a £2,500 fee, this time to Swinton, and again he made his debut in the first round of the Challenge Cup. Swinton lost that Cup tie at Castleford but Henighan impressed and is sure to cause Oldham a few headaches this afternoon. Another player well worth watching is Barry Philbin, a 22-years-old utility player signed from St. Helens junior football.

With such a comprehensive list of first team players available it is surprising that the Lions find themselves in such a lowly position in the league table. Indeed, it looks as if Station Road will be staging Second Division Football next season. So far Swinton have won 13 and drawn 1 league match with the other 16 matches ending in defeat. Impressive victories have been won at home against St. Helens 11—7, Wakefield Trinity 17—7 and Widnes 15—2, whilst away from home Blackpool Borough were beaten by 30—2 and early on in the campaign Salford were beaten 13—8 at the Willows. Apart from these matches, though, it has been a most disappointing season as Swinton have slid down to 20th position with only the Lancashire Cup competition to look back on with any satisfaction. In this competition Swinton pulled off a 28—25 first round win over Blackpool before beating Barrow on Furnesside 7—4. In the semi-final the Lions scored perhaps their best win of the season by 13—4 at Widnes but they lost in the final against their old enemy, Salford by 25—11 although the score stood at only 15—11 with 10 minutes left.

Oldham will be hoping for an impressive win this afternoon to banish the memory of last week's unhappy defeat and set the team off into what Watersheddings fans will hope to be a successful finale to the season.

1. In season 1939-40, Martin Hodgson kicked a goal which was measured at 77½ yards at Rochdale.
2. In 1962-63 Swinton won 17 consecutive matches.
3. Four — Ken Gowers, Alan Buckley, John Stopford and Dave Robinson.
4. October 22nd, 1878, Broughton v. Swinton.
5. Hunslet, 1907-08; Huddersfield, 1914-15; Swinton, 1927-28

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1972			
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	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 16—	10
	19—Barrow	A 5—	8
	27—Barrow Ch. Cup 1st Rd.	H 24—	7
Feb.	4—Leigh	A 23—	8
	11—Blackpool B.	H 25—	7
	17—Chal. Cup 2nd Rd.....	H 23—	2
	25—Widnes	A 19—	12
Mar.	4—Warrington	H 11—	12
	11—Barrow	H 34—	6
	18—Blackpool B.	A 55—	5
Apr.	1—Dewsbury	H 4—	13
	8—Swinton	H 23—	10
	21—Swinton	A	
	23—Rochdale	H	

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