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RUGBY LEAGUE MATCH

LEIGH v OLDHAM

SUNDAY, 13th JANUARY, 1974

Kick-off 2-15 p.m.

OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME

5p.

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RUGBY LEAGUE MATCH

LEIGH

v.

OLDHAM

SUNDAY, 13th JANUARY, 1974

KICK-OFF 2-15 p.m.

Welcome to Oldham

We are happy to welcome the officials, players and supporters of our very good friends from Oldham to Hilton Park and in doing so look forward to what could well be the most attractive game of football seen at Leigh this season.

We are basing this on the recent fixture at Watersheddings when Leigh played their best football for many months to score 20 points. This should be enough to win away from home, but once again it was the same old story—bad defensive errors—coupled with the dismissal of the much provoked hooker Derek Clarke and Leigh were unable to hold on.

But no credit must be taken from Oldham, they are a fine side. Coach Griff Jenkins is a stickler for high speed ball handling and this has been so obvious in recent weeks as Oldham have rapidly climbed up the league table.

Oldham are well blessed with having one of the finest full backs in Rugby League and he, Martin Murphy, of course, needs no introduction here for he

is a Leigh lad born and bred. He learned his basic rugby from local amateur club, Astley Collieries, from where Oldham signed him several seasons ago. He is a good attacking and defensive player and is particularly dangerous when he links up, something he does well and often.

In the face of opposition from several other clubs, Oldham last week-end signed Salford's highly promising winger, Ian Holland, who is also a goal kicker and will strengthen the weak link in an otherwise formidable line up. He made his debut last Sunday against Hull Kingston Rovers. Choice for the other flank will be made from either coloured Welshman, Mike Elliott, who was born in Blaenau and signed from the Cwmcllyn Rugby Union Club and was Oldham's leading try scorer last season with 19 to his credit; Geoff Munro, who has come up through the club's 'B' team; or Bristol born Chris O'Brien who Oldham signed from the Fairwater Rugby Union Club.

Regular goal kicker Phil Larder, an ex-Sale Rugby Union Club man, will be centre but at the time of writing it is not known who will fill in the other three-quarter berth. Usually it is taken by ex-Leeds star Tony Wainwright but Tony has been on the injured list and could be unavailable still.

Working well from the half-back slot are David Treasure who was recently signed from Bradford Northern, and scrum-half Mick McCone. Mick was unavailable until late September because of work commitments but what a difference he has made to the side since his return. This ex-Doncaster player is surely the most under rated number seven in the game.

Understudies for the half-back positions are 18-years-old stand off Bob Gaitley and ex-Warrington scrum half Jim Brady who has been showing up well in the 'A' team.

Oldham have spent a lot of money in recent months in an effort to make their pack what it now is—a set of forwards who hold just the correct combination of strength, experience, youth, ball handling and running.

They have three exceptional props in Keith Ashcroft, the ex-St. Helens and Wigan stalwart, popular Fred Hall, the former Blackpool Borough player who is such a solid grafter and an 80-minute man, and Yorkshire County star Terry Clawson, another goal kicker. Clawson, who was signed in the close season for £4,500 is much-travelled and has gained valuable experience with Hull Kingston Rovers, Bradford Northern, Featherstone Rovers and Leeds.

Hooker is local born Kevin Taylor, now in his tenth season at Watersheddings but at only 26 Kev has much in front of him. He has been a first teamer for eight seasons during which time he has made over 300 appearances for the club. He has represented Lancashire and has Under 24 honours.

Most expensive signing for some time is second rower Brian Gregory who moved to Watersheddings from Warrington for £7,500 a couple of months ago. This 6ft. 3in., 15½ stone player was a prolific try scorer for the Wires and Oldham are hoping for similar achievements for them. He most certainly is a good player and will need some handling this afternoon.

His partner is Cumbria County player Bill McCracken, another 15 stone plus player. He cost £3,000 when he moved to Oldham from Whitehaven recently. He is a useful man to have around because he is a fine utility player but he seems to have his best form in the second row.

For the first time since he was granted a free transfer at the end of last season, we are able to welcome back to Hilton Park, Tony Peters. Tony, who always showed a great deal of promise but was forced to often play out of position at Leigh, has found himself with the regular loose forward role at Oldham and what a superb job he is making of it, too.

Oldham have speculated a lot this last twelve months and for this they must be admired and congratulated. They deserve a lot of success and with the frame of mind they are in at the moment, they are sure to get it!

COLTS LOSE CRACKER

Warrington Colts 24 points,
Leigh Colts 15 points.

After an entertaining game at Leigh two weeks ago the Colts played their return fixture with the Warrington juniors. And what a real cracker of a match it turned out to be.

The sides were much more evenly matched than in the game at Leigh and Leigh were leading 15 minutes from time and looked like pulling off a grand victory. But the referee disallowed a try near the posts from Maurice Platt, alleging a Warrington player had kicked the ball out of his hands as he grounded it.

This seemed to knock the stuffing out of Leigh and the Wires were able to forge ahead.

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The game began with Leigh being pressurised but this was relieved when Alan Fairhurst put them in front with a penalty goal. With play back at the other end the Warrington wingman managed to squeeze in at the corner to make it 3-2. With the play equal the game was wide open and Drummond, after a couple of good runs, restored Leigh's lead with a try, the goal kick failing.

Leigh's clever young forward, John Coop, was forced to retire with an ankle injury and the visiting side missed his weight in the pack. Soon afterwards the Wires took the lead again with a good try in the corner and a wonderful goal from Turley. Centre Terry Bilsbury levelled the half-time score when he ran 35 yards for a fine opportunist try.

The high standard of rugby was maintained in the second half and once again Warrington took the lead with a try. But Leigh were soon back in command and scored a good try when Platt sent Herbert sailing under the sticks for Fairhurst to goal. Soon after, Tommy Gittins, who had moved from full back to loose forward, spotted a gap and raced through for what seemed a certain try. He was stopped dead in a stiff arm tackle and Fairhurst took Leigh two points further in front with the resulting kick. They were unable to hang on, however, and three quick tries and two goals from Warrington clinched the match in their favour.

This was an entertaining game in which both teams should be warmly complimented on their rugby. Outstanding for Leigh were Herbert who put in some strong runs well prompted by second row partner, Maurice Platt, who made his first team debut three days later, Tommy Gittins and Terry Bilsbury.

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At Leigh—

1969-70	Leigh 14, Oldham 4.
1968-69	Leigh 12, Oldham 5.
1967-68	Leigh 29, Oldham 4.
1966-67	Leigh 12, Oldham 8.
1965-66	Leigh 2, Oldham 6.
1964-65	Leigh 10, Oldham 20.
1963-64	Leigh 2, Oldham 6.
1962-63	Leigh 24, Oldham 17 (Western Division).
1961-62	Leigh 18, Oldham 12.
1960-61	Leigh 13, Oldham 4.

At Oldham—

1969-70	Leigh 8, Oldham 4.
1968-69	Leigh 7, Oldham 20.
1967-68	Leigh 7, Oldham 10.
1966-67	Leigh 5, Oldham 14.
1965-66	Leigh 5, Oldham 15.
1964-65	Leigh 25, Oldham 0.
1963-64	Leigh 0, Oldham 12.
1962-63	Leigh 10, Oldham 16.
1961-62	Leigh 10, Oldham 22.
1960-61	Leigh 12, Oldham 9.

ON THE HOME FRONT . . .

Will our supporters please make careful note that next week's Leigh v. Salford match, which should have been played on this ground on Sunday, January 20th, has now been postponed. This is because Salford have Paul Charlton, Keith Fielding, Chris Hesketh, Ken Gill, Colin Dixon and David Watkins on International duty in Grenoble, France. A re-arranged date has not yet been fixed.

* * * *

We think it is worth a mention that the pack which gave such a remarkable and spirited performance against Castleford had an average age of only 20. Oldest member was Jimmy Fiddler at the ripe old age of 24 while youngest was Maurice Platt, son of former Hilton Park favourite Don Platt, making his first team debut at only 17 years of age. The pack also included another first timer in young Australian hooker, Eric Walton, who had an exceptional game both striking and in the loose. This pack must have been the youngest to take part in a professional Rugby League first team game for a long time and they deserve a lot of credit for holding Castleford to 9 points to 5.

* * * *

Youngster Terry Bilsbury, the highly promising centre we signed from the Colts side this season has been troubled lately with a cyst on his knee which will need hospital treatment. As it does not appear to need immediate attention, the club will defer sending Terry into hospital for an operation until the close season.

* * * *

In order to play the two young Aussies Eric Walton and Ken White (who came on as forward substitute and gave such a good account of himself) against

Castleford, it was necessary to first of all sign them on professional forms. As our register was full, it was decided to cross off Bob Fleet, who was transfer listed at £750 and who had not been seen at Leigh since early August, and Kiwi guest Gordon Thompson who has been forced to return home to New Zealand because of work commitments.

* * *

As supporters will have noticed from the local press we have signed prop Dennis Carden from Widnes. Dennis played in last weekend's 'A' team game, he came through well and must obviously be in line for a first team place this afternoon.

* * *

Two transfer listings have been made: Frank Barrow, in dispute with the club for several weeks, is on offer at £500 and is reported to be looking for a coaching job, and Roy Lester has been listed at £1,000.

* * *

No new date has yet been arranged for the Bramley v. Leigh league match at McClaren Field which was postponed last weekend because of Bramley's engagement in the John Player Competition. We are waiting for any further developments regarding the lighting situation before arrangements are made.

* * *

Congratulations to 'A' team forward Mick Sherwood and his wife Carole, who were married last Saturday. Fellow 'A' teamer John Randall was Mick's best man.

* * *

Unlucky Colts captain Joe Wood! After being out for most of this season with a broken arm Joe returned to the Colts team, played three matches, then broke his arm again in exactly the same place. This time Joe will be out of action for six weeks, a bitter blow for the Colts whose players have been called upon recently for the 'A' team and even first team duty and who need every strong man they can to help them stay near the top of the league table.

* * *

If Aussie guests Kenny White, Eric Walton, John Gilmore and Tony Walsh can be assured of first team football they are hoping to stay in England until the end of the playing season. Both Eric Walton and Ken White are worthy of a first team place off their showing against Castleford while John Gilmore was easily the best man on the field in last weekend's 'A' team game with St. Helens. Unfortunately, Tony Walsh has had little opportunity to prove himself as yet. If they can not be assured of first team football they will return home at the end of this month. The Board were to discuss this matter at last week's Board meeting.

* * *

As Leigh supporters will be well aware we have three players on trial at the moment. Utility back Tommy Davies is on loan until the 23rd of this month when Leigh directors will consider paying Oldham the £1,500 they are asking for him. General opinion is that Davies, who had a brilliant game at full back against Castleford, would be a bargain buy for the Leigh club. In his three matches so far he has turned out at centre, stand-off and full back and has played well each time.

Ray Hicks finishes his trials, on January 15th and a decision will be made then. He is on offer from Oldham at £500. Last trialist is second row forward Kevin Flanagan. Kevin has had some good games for us but was unfortunate in suffering from ligament trouble which will keep him out for several weeks. We have asked Rochdale to consider allowing him to play one further trial when he is fit and at the time of writing, the Hornets were considering this.

Player of the Season

(Up to and including Castleford match)

(Figures for the Castleford match are given in brackets)

	Played	Points	
CLIFF SAYER	22	134	(6)
JIMMY FIDDLER	22	131	(8)
JOHN McATEE	18	105	(6)
MICK HOGAN	17	102	
DENNIS BOYD	17	97	
BILLY MELLING	17	96	(6)
JOHN DAVIES	17	94	(6)
ALLAN ROWLEY	15	91	(6)
MICK COLLINS	15	84	
FRANK BARROW	11	70	
MICK STACEY	12	69	(7)
DEREK CLARKE	11	68	
DEREK FLETCHER	10	53	(6)
JOE WALSH	9	50	
ALAN RIDING	7	38	(6)
ALF WILKINSON	8	37	
TOMMY MARTYN	5	29	
PAUL KELLY	6	26	
KEVIN FLANAGAN	4	24	
TONY BYRNE	5	23	
STEVE HOUGHTON	4	20	
TOMMY DAVIES	3	19	(7)
LES FISHWICK	4	19	
RAY HICKS	3	17	(6)
ERIC WALTON	1	7	(7)
MAURICE PLATT	1	6	(6)
KENNY WHITE	1	6	(6)
JIM CADMAN	1	5	
KEITH CLARKE	1	5	
MICK SHERWOOD	1	4	

At the end of the season the winner will receive a cheque for £150, a silver trophy and a medal, second will get £100 and a medal and third £50 and a medal.

Last season's winner was centre Mick Collins, now in his Testimonial season, second was forward Geoff Fletcher, now at Wigan, and third was promising youngster, Mick Stacey.

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2. Davies, J.	Right Wing	2. O'Brien
3. Stacey	Right Centre	3. Larder
4. Davies, T.	Left Centre	4. Wainwright
5. Riding	Left Wing	5. Holland
6. McAtee	Stand-off	6. Treasure
7. Sayer 2 tries	Scrum-Half	7. McCone 1 try
8. Fiddler 3 goals	Prop Forward	8. Clawson 2 goals
9. Clarke	Hooker	9. Taylor
10. Carden	Prop Forward	10. Hall
11. Martyn 1 try	2nd Row Forward	11. Gregory
12. Rowley	2nd Row Forward	12. McCracken
13. Boyd	Loose Forward	13. Peters
Substitutes—		Substitutes—
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15. Fletcher, D.		15. Ashcroft

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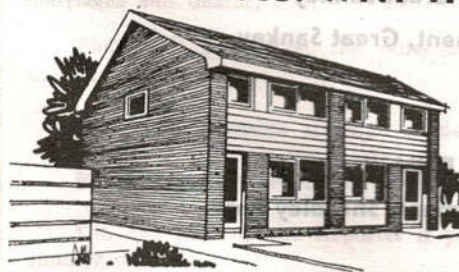
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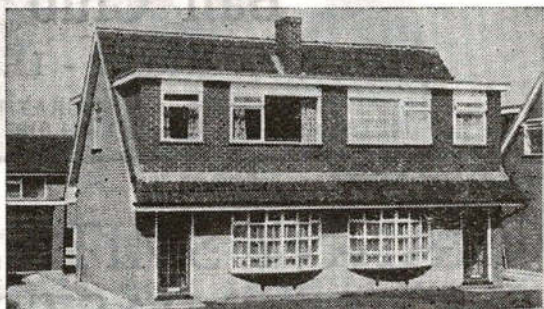
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FIRST TEAM FIXTURES

1973	
August—	
12—Widnes (A. & B. Cup) H	
17—Salford A	
24—St. Helens H	
27—Wigan A	
September—	
2—Warrington	
(L. Cup, 1st Round) A	
8—Leeds A	
15—Players No. 6 1st. Round	
23—Dewsbury H	
30—Castleford A	
October—	
7—Wigan H	
9—Widnes (BBC2 Comp.) H	
14—Hull K. R. A	
21—Whitehaven H	
28—Dewsbury A	
November—	
4—Castleford H	
9—Bramley H	
11—AUSTRALIA	
(Tour Match) H	
17—OPEN DATE	
25—Rochdale H	
30—St. Helens A	
December—	
9—Wakefield A	
16—Leeds H	
23—Oldham A	
26—Warrington H	
30—Widnes H	
1974	
January—	
5—Bramley A	
13—Oldham H	
20—Salford H	
26—OPEN DATE	
February—	
2—R. L. CUP - 1st Round	
10—Wakefield T. H	
17—Widnes A	
23—R. L. CUP - 2nd Round	
March—	
1—Whitehaven A	
9—R. L. CUP - 3rd Round	
17—Featherstone R. H	
23—R. L. CUP - Semi Final	
30—R. L. CUP - Semi Final	
31—Featherstone A	
April—	
7—Rochdale A	
10—Hull K. R. H	
15—Warrington A	

'A' TEAM FIXTURES

1973	
August—	
10—Widnes (Farrell Cup) A	
18—Salford H	
25—St. Helens A	
(Shield 1st Rnd. 1st leg)	
September—	
1—Barrow H	
8—Swinton H	
14—Swinton A	
21—St. Helens H	
(Shield 1st Rnd. 2nd leg)	
29—Rochdale H	
October—	
6—Wigan A	
13—Warrington H	
20—Huyton A	
27—Huyton H	
November—	
3—OPEN	
10—OPEN	
17—Workington H	
24—Rochdale A	
December—	
1—St. Helens H	
8—Wigan H	
15—Huyton A	
22—Oldham H	
28—Widnes A	
1974	
January—	
4—St. Helens A	
12—OPEN	
18—Salford A	
26—Huyton H	
February—	
2—Swinton A	
9—OPEN	
16—Widnes H	
23—Rochdale A	
March—	
1—St. Helens A	
9—St. Helens H	
16—OPEN	
23—Swinton H	
29—Warrington A	
April—	
6—Rochdale H	
13—Barrow A	
20—Workington A	

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