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Programme 6p

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Brian Batty of the Mail

There isn't a fan in the Rugby League who, at some particular time of the season, doesn't feel he can do better than his club's or country's selectors.

It is part of the fascination of following the sport to dispute the decisions of the selectors for a variety of reasons.

The poor selectors are often accused of being biased, afraid to experiment and generally incompetent as they struggle with a thankless task.

Yet those responsible for choosing the 26-strong Great Britain squad for this summer's tour of Australia and New Zealand have my sympathy.

They have been placed in an unenviable position and given possibly the most difficult job since it was decided to introduce tours.

They have to pick a side with one thing utmost in their minds — is it capable of regaining the Ashes? In other words, winning the three Tests rather than setting up any record scores in country games.

The reason for their problems lies largely in the following team I have chosen: Geoff Wraith; Ken Batty, Bill Ashurst, Terry Harkin, Bob Wear; Alan Hardisty, Tommy Bishop; Steve Lyons, Mick Stephenson, Cliff Watson, Phil Lowe, Doug Laughton, Malcolm Reilly.

All these English players are expected to be playing in Australia when the tour squad lands, pulling in the crowds for club sides when many of them could be leading our Ashes bid.

That particular team may not possess the balance or all round ability needed to win the Tests but it could give the Aussies a lot of trouble, particularly at half back and in the back row trio.

The Aussies are gradually admitting that Reilly ranks as one of the greatest loose forwards in the history of the game as he helps to keep Manly out in front in Sydney.

It will be interesting to see how Mick Stephenson fares with Penrith in his first season in Sydney, with Bill Ashurst in the same pack.

But it would have been a lot more interesting if our selectors had been able to have these men available for that demanding challenge of putting the Aussies back in their places again.

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Appearances and Scorers

	app.	tries	goals		P	T	G
Kevin Taylor	28	1	0	Jim Reynolds	9	0	0
Chris O'Brien	27	7	0	Johnny Farrell	8	1	0
Fred Hall	26	1	0	Bob Gaitley	7	1	0
Martin Murphy	25	3	0	Neil Goodwin	7	0	0
Tony Wainwright	24	13	1	Brian Hughes	7	0	0
Geoff Munro	21	5	0	Terry Gorman	6	0	0
Mike Elliott	21	3	0	Stuart Bottom	5	0	0
Keith Ashcroft	21	1	0	Ken Wilson	4	0	0
Terry Clawson	17	1	39	Peter Astbury	4	0	0
Tony Peters	17	3	0	Ian Holland	4	0	6
Phil Larder	15	2	25	Steve Whitmore	3	0	0
Johnny Blair	14	2	10	Andy Kavanagh	3	0	0
Bill McCracken	14	4	0	Bob Irving	2	0	0
Mick McCone	12	4	0	Gareth Owen	1	0	0
Arthur Daley	11	1	0	Norman Hodgkinson ..	1	0	0
Brian Gregory	11	5	0	Ian Radcliffe	1	0	0
David Treasure	11	7	6	Sid Highton	1	0	0
Tommy Davies	10	1	0	Jim Brady	1	0	0

this space

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ON THE INSIDE—

DAVE PARKER

Huddersfield referee Billy Thompson became a dog catcher at the Barrow-Featherstone cup tie. When the lone stranger appeared on the pitch Billy showed his speed and craft to arrest the dog to the delight of the spectators. Featherstone have received a boost this week for their division one plans and also the second round of the cup. After lengthy injuries and operations, internationals Vince Farrar and Jimmy Thompson are coming back. Rovers stayed overnight for their cup tie at Barrow with Great Britain team boss Reg Parker. They then trained on Saturday morning at Grange taking over the wind-lashed promenade under coach Peter Fox, who had travelled up Saturday morning.

Did Rochdale coach Frank Myler, who is a perpetual chain smoker cross the path of Lady Luck only 50 minutes before the start of last week's Player's Trophy final at Wigan? The Hornets dressing room was well decorated with well-wishers telegrams and letters, including one from a fan who had enclosed a cigarette and a match for what he said was to be Frank's victory smoke upon arriving back in the dressing rooms with the trophy, but Widnes bookie Frank lit up straight away as he was dying for a smoke. Things never went Hornets way with a terrible lack of possession and frequent dropped passes when they got hold of the ball from the Warrington mistakes.

Warrington received only about half the amount of good wishes, but they had one special telegram from Brian Clough, manager of Brighton & Hove Albion, who is a friend of another great talker, Alex Murphy.

An informal after the match get together in the Wigan tearoom saw the Welsh flyer John Bevan meet up with the legendary Jim Sullivan. Apparently Bevan, who like Keith Fielding has taken to this game of ours like duck to water was all ears, and willing to pick up any useful hints. Rochdale players would have shared £1,000 had they won.

The tenacious little Scottish halfback Glen Turnbull, who has been unable to get on with Ike Southward since he took over as coach at Derwent Park, has left the club and is currently on permit with Seaton Rangers. Little Glen, who plays above his weight and can create openings with shrewd play and delayed openings, will move south to continue his professional career.

Wakefield gave David Knowles £4,000 for himself when he signed, not £4,500 to Upper Wharfedale as it was reported in last week's "Sunday People." Knowles has said he will not play for Trinity again, and this is expected to bring Wigan out into the opening for another big signing.

Huddersfield hooker Ian Entwistle, who was signed 18 months ago from Swinton and is the son of Rochdale Hornets assistant coach Harold, has been in to see the Fartown committee because he is unsettled.

Halifax have lost their big strapping Wakefield based 20-year-old prop Stephen Booth, son of the former Trinity stalwart Jack, because he too became unsettled after being discarded into the second team when only first team football would have got him match fit. Big Stephen has been dogged by injuries, and feels a change of club would benefit him.

Alan Bence, the former Leeds forward who is taking Wigan's new signing Dave Willicombe across to Central Park, would secretly like Yorkshire clubs to know he would welcome a chance to return home to the White Rose country as the travelling and lack of first team outings is beginning to tell on him



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Rugby Quiz

1. What is the Wakefield club record for successive match victories?
2. When did Wakefield move to their Belle Vue ground?
3. Have Oldham ever played in the Yorkshire Cup?
4. Have Trinity ever met Oldham in the Championship Play-off?
5. What was the result of Wakefield's first match in the Northern Rugby Union in 1895?

ANSWERS

1. In season 1961-62 Wakefield won 23 consecutive matches as part of a run of 28 matches without defeat.
2. 1878.
3. Yes! In 1940-41 Oldham were included in the war-time Yorkshire Cup competition. Wakefield Trinity beat Oldham at Belle Vue in the first round by 17-5.
4. Under the old Top Four Play-off system Wakefield have twice visited Oldham in semi-final matches. In 1909-10 Oldham won 12-6 and the following season Oldham won 13-12.
5. Bradford 11, Wakefield Trinity 0.



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White Shorts

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- 2—BARTON E.
- 3—LARDER P.
- 4—BOTTOM S.
- 5—HOLLAND I. 3 goals
- 6—TREASURE D.
- 7—McCONE M. try
- 8—ASHCROFT K.
- 9—TAYLOR K.
- 10—HUGHES B.
- 11—GREGORY B.
- 12—HALL F.
- 13—PETERS A.

- 14—ELLIOTT M.
- 15—FARRELL J.

Referee:

A. W. ALLEN (York)

WAKEFIELD 2

White jerseys, Red & Blue Bands
White Shorts

- 1—COOKE goal
- 2—SMITH
- 3—SHEARD
- 4—WRIGGLESWORTH
- 5—ARCHER
- 6—TOPLISS
- 7—BONNAR
- 8—VALENTINE
- 9—HANDFORTH
- 10—CAMPBELL
- 11—GOODWIN
- 12—FOX
- 13—MORGAN

- 14—DAVIES
- 15—GARFORTH

Touch Judges

E. Glazebrook (Wigan) Red

J. Meadows (Prescot), Orange

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Action Replay



OUR VISITORS . . .

WAKEFIELD TRINITY

The recent drain of English rugby league talent to Australia has affected Wakefield Trinity more than most for three of their players seem set for at least a season amongst the Kangaroos. They are prop Steve Lyon, Kevin Harkin and their fine attacking full back Geoff Wraith. A fee of £6,000 has been agreed between Trinity and South Brisbane for Wraith who has been substitute for Yorkshire in their last four matches. In addition he played for Great Britain in the trial match against York in season 1971-72. Trinity's leading try scorer is 21 years old Dave Smith who was signed from Shaw Cross Boys' Club in August, 1971 after scoring over 70 tries in the previous two years of amateur football. On his debut he scored 2 tries as Trinity defeated York 32-3 but this season looks like being his best. His tally so far stands at 25 including 4 in the 39-7 Yorkshire Cup defeat of Doncaster. John Archer, who will be on the other wing, also scored on his debut, which was last month up at Whitehaven. He was signed from Wakefield R.U.F.C. The other winger on the Belle Vue register is 20 years old Barry Lumb who was signed last March from Stanley juniors. He made his debut against Batley and, not surprisingly, he also scored. He kicked 7 goals as Batley went down 29-16. With Neil Fox moving into the pack, Trinity quickly obtained a high scoring centre to replace him when they signed Terry Crook, a player who has scored 12 tries and 45 goals so far this season. Crook's high scoring feats include 10 goals and a try against Batley in 1971-72 when Trinity won 59-9 and 2 tries and 8 goals in last season's 52-0 drubbing of Hull. Occupying the other centre position will probably be Les Sheard, a player who gained 7 'caps' for Yorkshire at rugby union before turning professional from Wakefield R.U.F.C. in January, 1971 when he joined Castleford. Since moving to his home town club he has settled nicely into the centre position although he was originally a full-back. Other candidates for the centre positions include Ray Layton and versatile Ernie Holmes, who played loose-forward in this season's Yorkshire Cup Final. The star of the Wakefield backs and probably Trinity's most dangerous player this afternoon is former Normanton junior David Topliss. If, as seems likely, he scores 20 tries this season, it will be the fourth successive season in which he has attained that total, such is his level of consistency. In these four seasons he has played 6 times for Yorkshire and twice for Great Britain. In 1972 he travelled to France with the British World Cup Squad but he did not play in any of the matches. Topliss has scored 4 tries in a match on three occasions, in 1971-72 against Keighley (44-14) and in 1972-73 against Castleford (35-10) and Hunslet (47-9). Partnering Topliss will be Joe Bonner, a player who has represented Cumberland on 5 occasions. The other Trinity scrum-half, Kevin Harkin will soon be seeking the sun for South Brisbane have paid out

£2,500 for his services. Leading the tough Trinity forwards this afternoon will be Mick Morgan, who captained the side in the Yorkshire Cup Final and who played in both Yorkshire's matches this season. Morgan alternates between hooker and loose-forward with Tony Handforth being Trinity's other hooker. Wakefield have two very experienced props in George Ballantyne and Rob Valentine. Twenty-two years old Ballantyne is very fast for his size and this season he made his representative debut when he played for Yorkshire. Valentine has been playing professionally since 1963 when he signed for Huddersfield. In October, 1970 Trinity paid £4,500 for him and he has spent the past 10 or so years putting in a tremendous amount of work for Wakefield. Last month former Wakefield junior Tony Garforth made his debut for the senior club at Salford and he could replace Valentine for he has impressed as a player with a good future. In the second-row Trinity have David Knowles, the Yorkshire rugby union triallist who Wakefield signed in September, 1972 from Upper Wharfedale R.U.F.C. Alongside Knowles will be Neil Fox, who, on his day, was the highest scoring centre in the rugby league. Now at the veteran stage, he is 35, he joined Wakefield in 1955 and has a most impressive record to look back on. He has played 17 times for Yorkshire and in 31 test matches for Great Britain. In the 1960 Challenge Cup Final he scored 2 tries and 7 goals as Hull fell to Wembley's biggest defeat 38-5 and Fox's other high scoring feats have included 10 goals and a try for Yorkshire when the White Rose side defeated the 1959 Australian tourists by 47-15. Incidentally, in this game Oldham's Alan Kellett crossed for 3 tries. In 1971 Fox kicked 12 goals against Workington when Trinity won 42-6 and this season his points tally stands at 139 from 7 tries and 59 goals. Although last season was his 18th in professional rugby, Fox still earned enough respect to be voted Wakefield's 'Player of the Season'. Trinity's loose-forward Ian Ellis was just three years old when Fox made his debut so this former Earlsheaton junior who was signed in December, 1971, will be able to learn his trade from his experienced player-coach.

This fine blend of youth and experience has made Trinity into a useful side who at present lie in 5th position in the league with 11 wins from 17 matches. But for some rather uncharacteristic results Trinity would be strong Championship Challengers but home defeats against Featherstone Rovers (13-17) and Bramley (13-18) have blunted their record. One of Trinity's biggest disappointments of the season has been their matches against Widnes for not only have the Chemics scored a double league success at Wakefield's expense (12-7 at Belle Vue and 28-13 at Widnes) but they convincingly defeated them 27-7 in the Challenge Cup. On the brighter side Wakefield have scored good home wins against Leeds (18-9) and Rochdale Hornets (42-8) and they have also beaten Warrington 26-15 at home and 13-10 away. Most Trinity fans however, will remember this season for Wakefield's appearance in the Yorkshire Cup Final. In the first round of this competition Neil Fox scored 3 tries and 6 goals in the 39-7 home defeat of Doncaster but statisticians will remember their game not for Wakefield's crushing victory but because during this game Fox scored his 500th point in first class rugby league. The second round away tie at Keighley brought another convincing 39-4 win but there was nothing clear cut about the thrilling semi-final tie when, although Castleford scored one more try than Trinity, the Belle Vue boys scraped through 19-18. The final tie was played at Headingley which was probably the deciding factor in Leeds 7-2 win. In this game Trinity played extremely well and early in the game, when they led 2-0, they looked likely to win but they could not convert their superiority into points and Leeds withstood the early pressure to win.

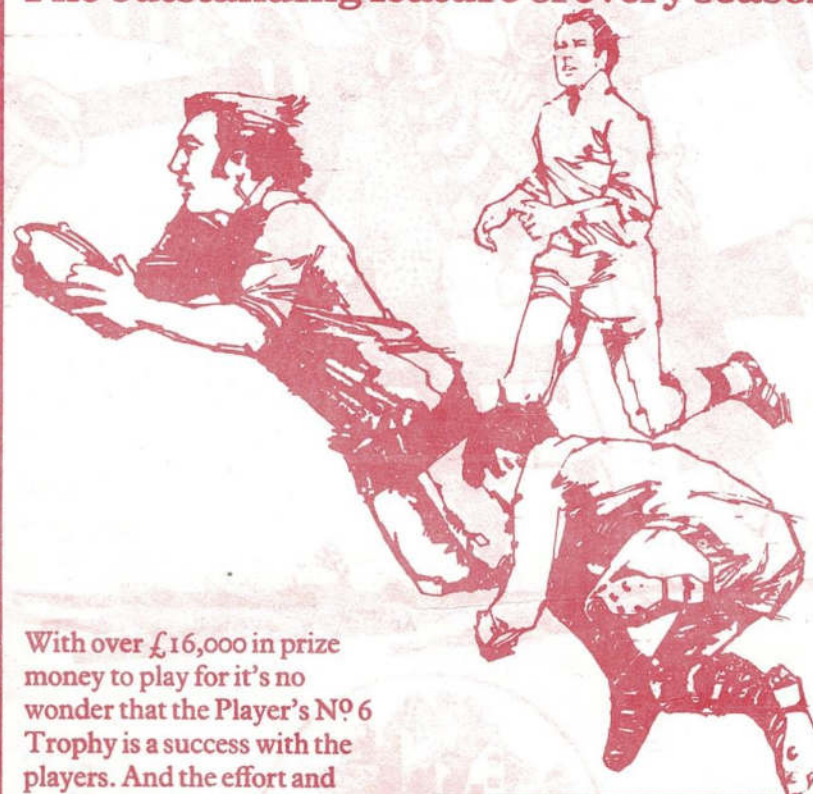
FIRST TEAM FIXTURES

1973		F	A
Aug. 13—Leeds	A	2—46	
25—Dewsbury	H	9—34	
Sept. 1—Wigan, Lancs. Cup	H	12—20	
8—Bramley	H	17—30	
15—Player's Competition			
Warrington		14—31	
22—Wakefield	A	0—22	
26—Castleford	H	14—13	
29—Wigan	A	0—18	
Oct. 6—Whitehaven	H	12—9	
14—Dewsbury	A	13—19	
19—AUSTRALIA	H	10—41	
27—Featherstone	H	14—12	
Nov. 2—St. Helens	A	—	
11—Widnes	H	14—13	
25—Wigan	H	19—12	
Dec. 1—Featherstone	A	19—10	
8—St. Helens	H	12—11	
16—Warrington	A	—	
23—Leigh	H	30—20	
26—Rochdale H.	H	11—15	
30—Whitehaven	A	19—12	
1974			
Jan. 1—Salford	A	12—15	
6—Hull K.R.	H	5—6	
13—Leigh	A	7—15	
Feb. 2—Challenge Cup (1)			
10—Bramley	A	7—10	
16—Wakefield	H		
23—Challenge Cup (2)			
Mar. 2—Leeds	H		
9—Challenge Cup (3)			
17—Widnes	A		
23—Chal. Cup (Semi-final)			
31—Hull K.R.	A		
Apr. 7—Castleford	A		
13—Salford	H		
15—Rochdale H.	A		

"A" TEAM FIXTURES

1973			
Aug. 11—Rochdale	H		
18—Barrow	H		
25—Workington	A		
29—Rochdale			
(1st leg Shield)	H		
Sept. 8—Rochdale			
(2nd leg Shield)	A		
22—Barrow	A		
29—Wigan	H		
Oct. 13—Swinton	H		
20—Swinton	A		
27—Workington	A		
Nov. 3—St. Helens	H		
9—Widnes	A		
17—Huyton	A		
24—Wigan	A		
Dec. 1—Barrow	H		
7—St. Helens	A		
16—Warrington	H		
22—Leigh	A		
Jan. 4—Salford	A		
12—Workington	H		
18—Warrington	A		
23—Salford	H		
26—Swinton	H		
Feb. 9—Huyton	A		
23—Huyton	H		
Mar. 2—Barrow	A		
9—Huyton	H		
13—Leigh	H		
16—Widnes	H		
23—Rochdale	A		
29—Swinton	A		
Apr. 6—Workington	H		

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