

Oldham

9

Widnes

14

- 1 BLAIR, J. *goal*
- 2 ELLIOTT, M.
- 3 LARDER, P. *try*
- 4 WAINWRIGHT, T.
- 5 HOLLAND, I. *try*
- 6 TREASURE, D.
- 7 PATTERSON, J.
- 8 ASHCROFT, K. *drop goal*
- 9 TAYLOR, K.
- 10 HUGHES, B.
- 11 DALEY, A.
- or GREGORY, B.
- 12 WELDING, B.
- 13 HALL, F.
- 14 *Manro C*
- 15 *Daley A*

- 1 DUTTON, R. *4goals*
- 2 GEORGE, M.
- 3 O'NEILL, D.
- 4 ASPEY, M.
- 5 PRESCOTT, A.
- 6 HUGHES, E. *try*
- 7 BOWDEN, R.
- 8 HOGAN, B.
- 9 ELWELL, K.
- 10 SHERIDAN, B.
- 11 FORAN, J.
- 12 BLACKWOOD, B. *Adams*
- 13 LAUGHTON, D. *Blackwood try*
- 14
- 15

Referee:
P. Gerraghty (York)

A. I. Barrow (Marple) Red
D. Hewitt (St Helens) Orange

OLDHAM MAN OF MATCH

Fill in the coupon below to nominate the Oldham player, who in your opinion was the most outstanding in today's match.

Drop your voting slip in at the Secretary's office, or Souvenir Shop, on your way home, or post it to reach us no later than 3 days after the game to "Man of the Match" The Pavilion Watersheddings, Oldham.

Name

Address

The Man of the Match
v WIDNES

was *Kevin Taylor*

OLDHAM PLAYER OF YEAR

At the end of the season, the player who has received most Man of the Match votes over the whole season will become Oldhams Player of the Year.

All voting slips will be kept, and the Player of the Year will be asked to draw one out at random when he receives his award. The lucky voter will receive a £20 cash prize, so don't forget your name and address when you cast your vote — YOU could be on a winner as well as the player for whom you vote.

xx Only voting slips from the Oldham programme will be accepted — plain paper votes will be void.

VOTED MAN OF MATCH
v BLACKPOOL WAS —
KEITH ASHCROFT

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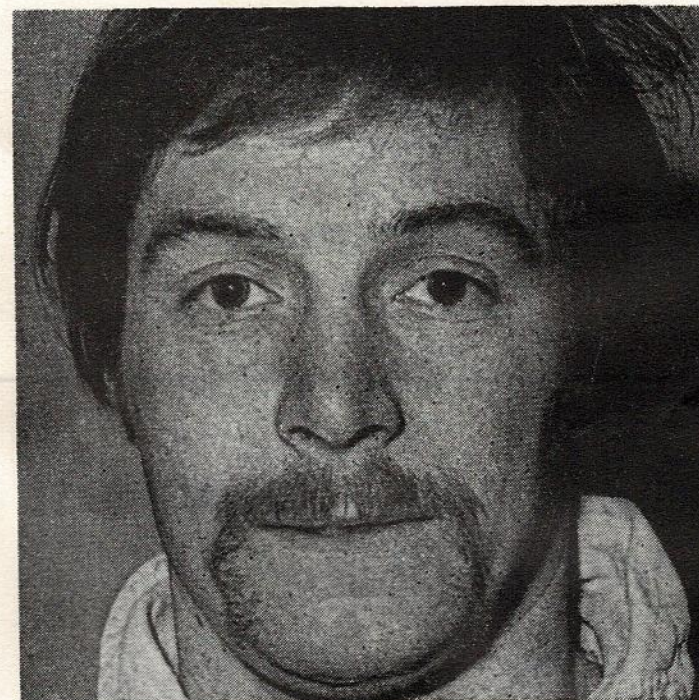
OLDHAM

9

v

Widnes

14



—Photo by courtesy of The Evening Chronicle.

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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

WELL, WELL... that was a turn-up against Blackpool wasn't it? The Borough gave us the fright of our lives in the closing minutes and in the end we were extremely thankful to have escaped with the two points.

But no one is too wise, or too old to learn—and the lesson we have surely all learned from last week-end's near thing is that no team must be underestimated.

Our players, apparently, did just that. It is easy to criticise. But who among you can say honestly that they did not expect to see Oldham piling on the points after the way we took the Law Cup from the Hornets seven days earlier?

Our players are only human. And if they did underestimate Blackpool they merely fell into the trap that everyone else tumbled into, too.

Thankfully, they still picked up the vital league points though producing a below-par performance, and if they have learned from their experience the shock Borough almost handed out might not be such a bad thing in the long term.

Promotion must be our ultimate goal this season, but there is no hiding the fact that the cash, the spectator appeal, the interest and the atmosphere still belong, in the main, to cup ties.

That's why we're anticipating a much bigger crowd for today's visit of Widnes to Watersheddings in the first round of the Lancashire Cup. With it, we hope, will come a much improved Oldham performance, for there is no doubt that our players usually reserve their best for the stronger type of opposition.

Actually, Widnes will be on strange ground, today, for they haven't met Oldham in the county cup competition for more than TEN years.

It is a strange quirk of fate, with only the Lancashire and Cumbria teams involved, that so long has passed since we last did battle with the Chemics in this tournament.

One reason, alas, is our poor record in the Lancashire Cup over the last few seasons. Believe it or not we have not won a Lancashire Cup tie since 1968 when we knocked out Rochdale, Workington and Salford en route to the final against St. Helens at Central Park, Wigan.

A year ago, Wigan triumphed here by 20 points to 12 though both sides scored four tries, three of Oldham's going to winger Chris O'Brien.

The year before, after winning our first five matches of the season, we went down 41-17 at Salford, and in 1971 Swinton delivered the KO blow to our hopes with a 10-7 first-round win at Station Road.

Salford in 1970 and Swinton again in 1969 knocked us off the cup road, the '69 clash being memorable for the performance of Wilf Briggs who landed four goals and three tries (17 points)... and still ended up on the losing side!

So to 1968. We beat Rochdale 17-5 in the first round at the Athletic Grounds, narrowly defeated Workington 7-5 in the second round at home and then in one of our finest matches in recent years, shocked the whole Rugby League world by winning 12-9 at Salford in the semi-final.

This match will forever live in the memory as the Ken Wilson semi-final. What a terrific match he had!

The final, against St. Helens at Wigan, produced one of those crucial injuries on which matches are often won and lost. There was only two points in it at half time, but Geoff Fletcher was unable to resume in the second half, and the Saints went marching on to win 30-2!

Since that disappointing autumn evening we haven't won a single Lancashire tie. Let's hope we can put the record a little bit straighter today.



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IT seems a long, long way from Wollongong to Watersheddings. But it's great to be back home after the arduous tour of Australia and New Zealand, and preparing for a brand new English season with the added challenge and excitement of joining a new club.

Many people have asked me why I came to Oldham. The answer is simple. Though they have been in the Rugby League wilderness for many years—and I hope I can do something to get them out of it—their rightful place is among the game's front-runners.

I was particularly impressed, when the Oldham officials came to see me, at their ambitions in the way of setting up and organising an efficient youth policy.

This type of team building has always interested me tremendously. Rugby League may be short of big-name stars... but in the hard, economic times that we all face today not every club could afford them even if they were two-a-penny.

Furthermore, I am convinced that within the less fashionable senior clubs, the amateur game, and the more modest levels of Rugby Union there is a wealth of talent which, by and large, is untapped.

To draw from this supply line successfully we have to possess an efficient and widespread scouting system. There is already such a system in operation at Watersheddings—and its existence was one of the main factors which influenced my decision to come to Oldham.

Certainly, when I have settled in, I shall be looking to see how improvements can be made. For instance, I cannot see how one man can cover a particular area. It is just impossible for him to do it. No one can be in more than one place at once.

I have already had long talks with Ken Wilson about the role of the 'A' team and our views are identical—namely, the reserve side must be used as a vehicle for transporting players through to the first team.

There is nothing to be gained from having 'good 'A' teamers'. What we are looking for in the 'A' side are potential first-team players. This does not mean that there will be no place at Oldham for the older player. The main criterion is a player's ability, not his age.

However, let me repeat that there are many, many good players in the lower echelons of our game who are being overlooked because of the constant and never-ending search for big names.

So what are the chances of Oldham's success in the scouting field? I have had an assurance from the committee that this policy will always be foremost in their minds and, from the geographical point of view, we are ideally situated to pull in talent from both sides of the Pennines.

The new motorway network has opened up a whole new Rugby League area stretching from the West Riding to West Lancashire... and we at Oldham are slap bang in the centre of it.

OUR VISITORS

AFTER a rather poor start to last season when injuries upset the Widnes rhythm, the Chemics ended the season with a long winning spell which augers well for this season and they will provide Oldham with a stiff test today writes Don Yates.

Ray Dutton, the Chemics full-back has been at Naughton Park 10 years now having been signed in 1964 from Widnes Rovers juniors. During this time he has given sterling service to his club both as a consistent goal kicker and a reliable full-back. He has played for Lancashire, England and Great Britain. In 1970 he toured Australasia but injuries reduced his number of appearances to nine, but in these games he scored two tries and 43 goals. That same year he played in all four of Britain's World Cup matches and kicked 13 goals. In season 1972-73 he scored a try and 10 goals in Widnes's 53-5 victory over Barrow and he is sure to punish Oldham for any infringements which they concede in their own half of the field today. The productive Widnes junior league is where the Chemics discovered Denis O'Neill, a very capable inside back who has played six times for Lancashire and six times for Great Britain. He was a member of the World Cup winning British squad in 1972 when he played against Australia and France and was substitute in the World Cup Final. In the 1972-73 season Challenge Cup he was selected as substitute for Widnes against Blackpool and came on to score 4 tries in the Chemics 53-3 win. Tommy Warburton needs little introduction to Watersheddings for he joined Oldham from Tyldesley R.U.F.C. in November 1964. Whilst with Oldham he played for both Lancashire and England under-24 but since leaving Oldham in January 1968 he was unable to settle and played for Leigh, Bradford Northern and Blackpool Borough before arriving at Widnes in March 1973 and finding a

suitable club. One of the stars of the recent tour of Australasia was prop forward Jim Mills, the rugged former Bradford Northern and Salford player who Widnes signed in November 1972 from North Sydney. Prior to his emigrating to Australia, Mills had represented Wales against France in 1969 but the spell in the Sydney competition improved his game considerably and he was able to return 'down under' with the British party where he played in 16 matches and scored two tries. Skipper and loose forward Doug Laughton would have certainly accompanied team mate Jim Mills to Australia if he had not made arrangements to play in Australian club football during the summer. Twenty-nine years old Laughton was signed by Saint Helens in 1962 and was transferred to Wigan in 1967 and then transferred again to Widnes in March 1972 for £6,000. Laughton has played for England under-24, Lancashire 11 times and several appearances for Great Britain including the 1970 Tour and the World Cup competition of the following autumn. During the 1970 Tour Laughton played in 15 matches and scored 8 tries and he played in all four of Britain's matches in the 1970 World Cup. Following season 1970-71 injuries kept Laughton out of representative football but he returned to test match action for the third Australian test last December when he was the pick of the British team. He scored a try in each international against France early this year which set the big Sydney clubs on the trail of who is considered to be the best loose forward in the World.

It will be difficult for Oldham against players of this class but teams of the calibre of Widnes will have to be beaten if a place in the final of a major cup competition is to be won.



Two of the Widnes stars — DOUG LAUGHTON (left) and JIM MILLS.
Pictures by courtesy of Widnes Weekly News.



BRIAN BATTY OF THE MAIL

IT would be rare for a Great Britain tour to be completed without at least one player emerging as a personality or a star.

In 1970 it was largely Roger Millward, with his valuable, high scoring feats who captivated the Australian crowds.

They had marvelled at his courage in defence when facing players who seemed twice his size and they couldn't believe the ease with which he darted in for tries and strength he found for goal-kicking.

I could sense the disappointment on this last tour when they realised injuries had taken their toll of his speed although they saw glimpses of his greatness.

He was still too clever for the country sides and when switched to the left wing in the successful Second Test he produced a wonderful display of tackling and covering.

But this time it was John Gray, Wigan's shrewd signing from Rugby Union, who earned the respect of the crowds and Test rivals such as Graeme Langlands and Artie Beetson.

Gray's life is one of colour and action both on and off the field. There seems no limit to his capacity for succeeding in sport.

His round-the-corner kicking displays in the Second and Third Tests were memorable and deserved to part the destiny of the Ashes trophy.

It will be a long time before anyone improves on the quality of the six goals, from the same number of attempts, he landed in the Third Test.

Australian fans were as full of admiration for his kicking feats as they were for his courage in the Second Test.

When an explosive flare-up left him nursing a kick over the eye, Gray retired for five stitches and head binding that gave him the appearances of an Apache brave.

Few people in that moment of glory, would have dreamt he once performed solos playing classical trumpet at Coventry's Cathedral.

With his flowing locks and jaunty stride he reminded many Australians of England's pace star John Snow and the similarity does not end with appearances.

Gray has bowled for Warwickshire and actually represented MCC schools but turned his back on county cricket to concentrate on his studies to become a schoolteacher.

He emerged as star of Coventry Rugby Union club's powerful pack toured the Far East with the England Rugby Union party and seemed set for a big future in the game.

Wigan had other ideas and their perseverance paid off when they finally signed him, using a big share of the £15,000 they received from Sydney club Penrith for Bill Ashurst.

How ironic it would be if they were to lose Gray in the same way, for Sydney clubs particularly Eastern suburbs, are prepared to part with big money for his services.

It would be a blow for Wigan fans who have yet to enjoy the best of Gray, the footballer, swimmer and talented golfer.

It would be a blow for the English selectors who need to call on men with his ability for next summer's new International League Championship.

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FIXTURES 1974-75

Aug. 17—Rochdale (Law Cup) Home	27-15	Aug. 24—Blackpool Away	28-2
" 24—Blackpool Home	17-13	" 30—Widnes (7-30 p.m.) Away	
Sept. 1—Widnes (3-15 p.m.) Home		Sept. 7—Blackpool Home	
" 8—Blackpool Away		" 13—Salford (7-30 p.m.) Away	
" 14—Huddersfield Home		Oct. 5—Rochdale Home	
" 20—Hull K.R. (7-30 p.m.) Away		" 12—Wigan Away	
" 28—Player's No. 6 (1st Rnd.)		" 19—St. Helens Away	
Lancs. Cup, Rnd. 1 Home		" 26—Huyton Away	
Oct. 6—N. Hunslet (3-30 p.m.) Away		Nov. 2—Swinton Home	
" 12—Hull Home		" 8—Warrington (7-30 p.m.) Away	
" 18—Whitehaven (7-00 p.m.) Away		" 23—Widnes Home	
" 26—Huyton Home		" 30—	
Nov. 3—Swinton Away		" 14—	
" 9—Player's No. 6 (2nd Rnd.)		" 21—	
" 16—Workington Home		" 26—	
" 24—Doncaster (2-30 p.m.) Away		" 28—Huyton Home	
" 30—Batley Home		Jan. 4—	
Dec. 8—Workington (2-30 p.m.) Away		" 11—	
" 14—Hull K.R. Home		" 18—Barrow Home	
" 21—		" 25—Swinton Away	
" 26—Huddersfield Away		Feb. 1—	
" 29—Huyton (2-30 p.m.) Away		" 8—St. Helens Home	
Jan. 4—New Hunslet Home		" 15—Leigh Home	
" 11—Doncaster Home		" 22—Salford Home	
" 17—Barrow (7-00 p.m.) Away		Mar. 1—	
" 25—Swinton Home		" 8—	
Feb. 1—		" 15—Leigh Away	
" 8—Challenge Cup (1st Rnd.)		" 21—Rochdale (7-30 p.m.) Away	
" 15—Leigh (3-45 p.m.) Away		" 29—	
" 22—Challenge Cup (2nd Rnd.)		Apr. 5—Barrow Away	
Mar. 1—Whitehaven Home		" 12—Warrington Home	
" 8—		" 19—Wigan Home	
" 15—Leigh Home			
" 23—Batley Away			
" 30—Hull Away			
Apr. 5—Barrow Home			
" 12—			
" 19—			

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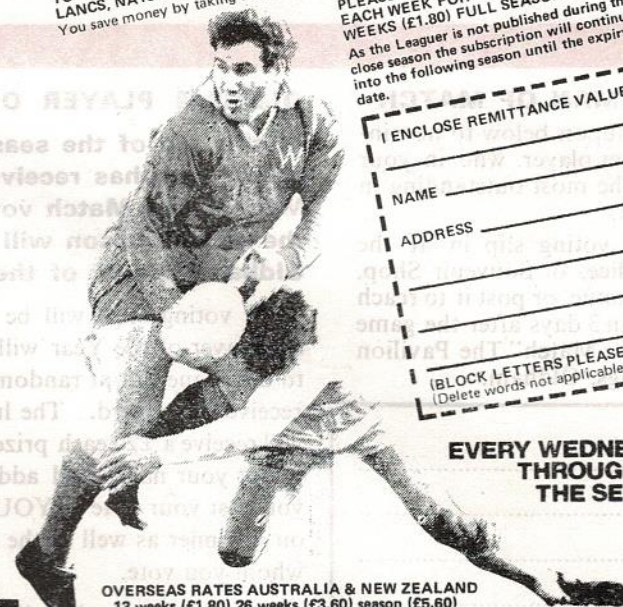
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OLDHAM v WIDNES

Sunday 1st September 1974

kick off 3.15 pm

Admission by Programme only

Oldham

- 1 BLAIR, J.
- 2 ELLIOTT, M.
- 3 LARDER, P.
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- 5 HOLLAND, I.
- 6 TREASURE, D.
- 7 PATTERSON, J.
- 8 ASHCROFT, K.
- 9 TAYLOR, K.
- 10 HUGHES, B.
- 11 DALEY, A.
or GREGORY, B.
- 12 WELDING, B.
- 13 HALL, F.
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Referee:

P. Gerraghty (York)

Widnes

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- 12 BLACKWOOD, B.
- 13 LAUGHTON, D.
- 14
- 15

A. I. Barrow (Marple)

D. Hewitt (St Helens)

Red

Orange

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Saturday 14th September v HUDDERSFIELD