

Oldham

1 MURPHY, M.

2 ELLIOTT, M.

3 LARDER, P.

4 WAINWRIGHT, T.

5 BARTON, E.

6 TREASURE, D.

7 BROWN, R.

8 ASHCROFT, K.

9 TAYLOR, K.

10 HUGHES, B.

11 HALL, F.

12 McCracken, W.

13 FARRELL, J.

14 BLAIR, J.

15

Referee:

B. Shooman (Leeds)

Swinton

1 HINDLEY, K.

2 FLEAY, R.

3 COOKE, J.

4 EVANS, G.

5 JACKSON, P.

6 ATKINSON, L.

7 GREEN, K.

8 BUTLER, B.

9 EVANS, R.

10 YOUNG, T.

11 WHITTLE, K.

12 LOWE, L.

13 HENIGHAN, M.

14

15

R. Dennett (Warrington) Orange

J. Meadows (St. Helens) Red

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

SWINTON

was

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 Oldham's 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 DONCASTER
K. ASHCROFT

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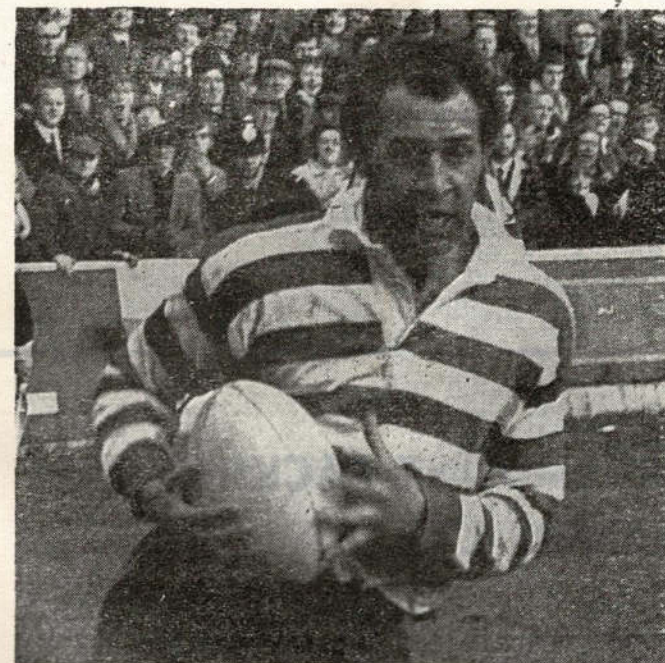
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OLDHAM

v

SWINTON



Winger Mike Elliott's two tries against Doncaster took his total for the season to 13. And seven of them were scored in the seven matches prior to the Barrow game — testimony to the sort of form Mike is now displaying.

—Picture by courtesy of the Evening Chronicle.

Sunday 2nd February

kick-off 3.30 pm

8p

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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

AS soon as the season is over experts will be called in to analyse the Watersheddings pitch and give us the benefit of their many, many years of experience.

Quite obviously, something has to be done to try and improve the pitch and we have already been in touch with the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, whom we hope will be sending their representatives to Oldham to examine the pitch at first hand.

We refute suggestions that the pitch has deteriorated through lack of care and attention ... and you will be interested to know that there exists in the records of both the Oldham club and the people at Bingley written proof of a previous call for help only a few years ago.

The likelihood is that extensive work will have to be started immediately the season is over and that will probably mean that we will be unable to accommodate those organisations who like the use of our ground after the R.L. season has come to an end.

We HAVE been able to grant the Oldham Amateur League use of the pitch on Good Friday morning (11 o'clock) for the Standard Cup final.

As the fixture list stands at present we have at least one remaining senior game at Watersheddings after that date and, all being well, the weather will have improved sufficiently by then to allow us to make the ground available for the Standard Cup without impairing conditions for the outstanding R.L. match.

Sadly, we have had to refuse the Amateur League's request to stage their championship final here. The reason is that, as yet, no firm date is forthcoming and we cannot allow ourselves to jeopardise our very firm ruling that once OUR season is over the ground will be closed down.

To the amateurs and any other organisation who will be disappointed we extend our sincere regrets but we feel certain that it will be readily appreciated just how vital it is that work on the ground starts as soon as is humanly possible.

Last year we loaned out the Watersheddings facilities for a charity event and this meant that work on the ground was delayed somewhat. We mustn't let that happen again.

MAY we take this opportunity of wishing a speedy and complete recovery to two well-known Watersheddings personalities — Jimmy Howarth and Norman Hodgkinson.

Jimmy, our long-serving kit man and back-room boy, has been off work ill for several weeks. We understand he is steadily improving and we trust and hope that it won't be too long before he is back in harness at Watersheddings.

Norman recently had an operation on his achilles and the reports are that the surgery was a big success. He is still in plaster, and will be for a week or two, but he should be fully fit to resume training in plenty of time for the start of next season.

TODAY sees us faced with one of our most crucial games of the season. Swinton not only beat us at Station Road in November but they are one of a handful of clubs, ourselves included, who are now gearing up for the final run-in of the promotion race.

It will be a four-pointer for both sides and though Huddersfield now look a fair bet for the Second Division title, they have some hard matches left, among them Hull and Swinton at home and Hull K.R., Barrow, and Hull away.

Neither Swinton nor ourselves have conceded the title yet but such is the manner of the promotion battle that a defeat for either today could spell danger as far as promotion is concerned.

Huddersfield, Oldham, Swinton and Hull K.R., the clubs now occupying the top four places, look favourites to go up but there must be no slip-ups on our part for several other teams, including Barrow, Workington and Whitehaven, are hot on our heels.

It all makes for an extremely interesting and competitive finale ... and we have to ensure that we are equal to the test.



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LAST Friday's 10-0 defeat at Barrow was, to say the least, a big disappointment to everyone concerned—players, officials, and the Oldham fans who made the long trip on a wretched evening.

It wasn't so much the result that disappointed as the fact that we had a huge territorial advantage but still failed to pick up the two promotion points to keep us in touch with the Second Division leaders, Huddersfield, who won at Workington on Sunday to command a four-point lead at the top.

It is hard to believe, even now, that we failed to score a single point after all that pressure in the second half. We were worthy of at least a couple of tries. I know Barrow defended well and that their players were lifted by two tries out of the blue in as many minutes.

But to be truthful I believe we made their task easier by our own failings on the night.

We lacked, for instance, the element of surprise; the little bit of unorthodox play which, at best, would have split Barrow's defence or which, at least, would have given them something to think about.

On numerous occasions we pounded their line but we were too stereotyped, too unsteady in our finishing, to create the vital chink in the defensive wall.

A case in point was the number of times we were awarded penalties in the Barrow 25. A goal wasn't much use to us at that stage so we went through the motions of putting the ball into touch. But all the time Barrow were being given vital seconds to reform their defence. A quick tap, to catch the defence napping, could have paid greater dividends.

It was the Workington home match all over again. On that occasion, as at Barrow, we attacked, attacked and attacked—but still conceded defeat.

On the face of it a 10-0 defeat looks to be a hiding but I maintain that on balance of play and the football provided we were the better side. At least as far as attacking was concerned I thought Barrow were a very ordinary side, indeed.

We were extremely unfortunate early on when, with the scoreboard blank, Phil Larder was sent away on a long run into the Barrow 25.

Mike Elliott was undoubtedly obstructed by the Barrow winger as he went up in support, but the offence went unnoticed by the touchjudge.

Even a Barrow official, with whom I was talking after the match, admitted that he had seen the offence—a particularly crucial one because a try then would have given us the lead and I don't think we would have looked back.

In the event it was Barrow who went in front, and then increased their lead to 8-0 within two minutes, and we had a mountain to climb.

As I say Barrow defended well. But my concern was for Oldham—and why we didn't attack even better. Our passing and approach work was too stereotyped. We lacked bite and purpose and we didn't try several of the moves that we rehearse for situations that are identical to many of those that presented themselves at Craven Park.

I don't mind getting beaten if we have tried everything we know and we fall to a better side. But on Friday we were beaten by an inferior side and we didn't play to the full limits of our capabilities.

We now have to put the defeat behind us and get on with the important task of tackling promotion rivals Swinton today. It should be a good game with plenty of entertainment for the spectators. Needless to say I hope that we will not only be the better side—but that we will improve sufficiently to make our superiority count.

OUR VISITORS BY DON YATES

In recent weeks Swinton have crept up the Second Division table in tremendous style to make them favourites for promotion along with Huddersfield, Hull Kingston Rovers and Oldham.

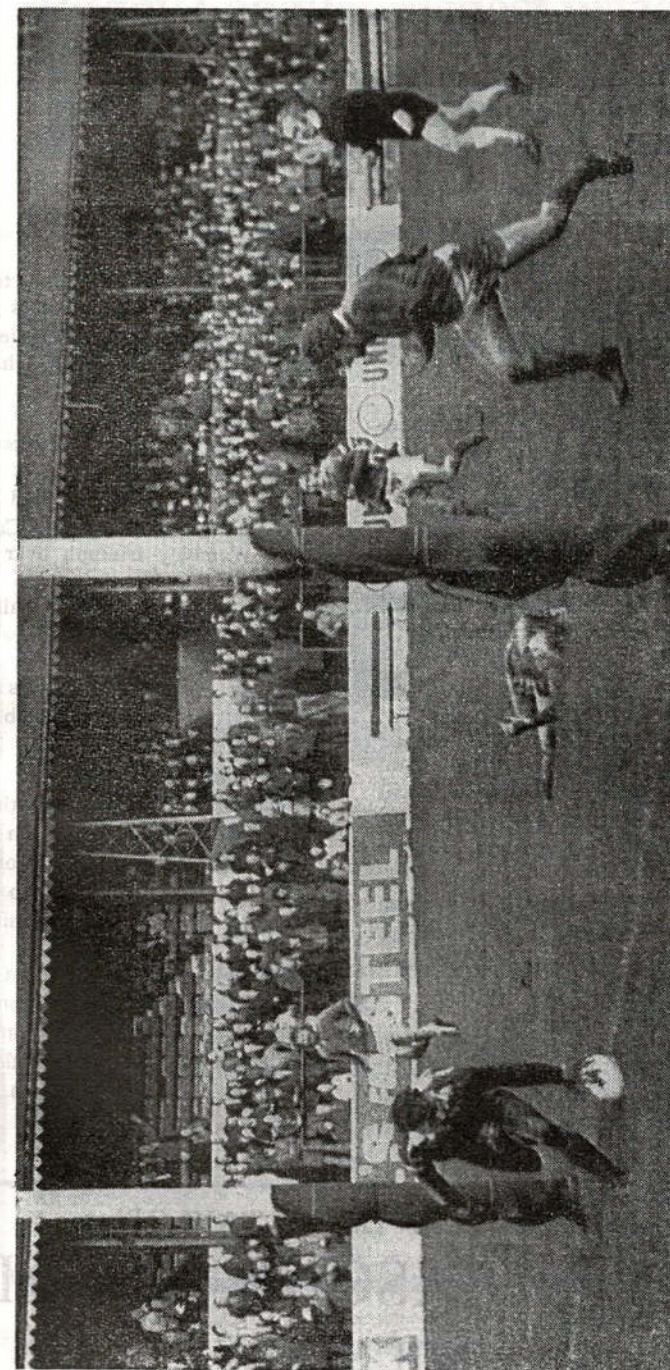
The Championship struggle is far from over for Swinton still have to visit their three major rivals and they begin that stiff task by visiting Oldham this afternoon. The three clubs mentioned have visited Station Road but no visiting club has won there this season with Huddersfield losing 12-11, Hull Kingston Rovers losing 14-6 and Oldham 15-7. In cup football Swinton have both pleased and disappointed their supporters. Wigan visited Swinton in the Lancashire Cup when a thrilling match ended in dramatic fashion. With three minutes remaining Swinton led 12-11 but two late penalties by John Gray put Wigan 12-15 up as the game entered injury time. Kevin Whittle then scored a try to level the scores and give Ken Hindley the opportunity to convert and so give Swinton a 17-15 win. A visit to Workington was Swinton's reward but they lost 17-7.

Swinton also had a difficult draw in the Floodlit Trophy when they were drawn to visit the eventual finalists Warrington. The Wires led 10-0 at one stage but they had to hang on desperately against waves of Swinton attacks before winning 10-5.

The visit of Saint Helens to Station Road in the John Player Trophy saw Swinton take a 7-2 interval lead. The Lions hung on to pull off a shock 7-6 victory. A second cup visit from Wigan resulted and again Swinton ended up winners by the more convincing margin of 18-2. In the quarter final Swinton had to visit Widnes who won comfortably enough 15-5. Swinton, who trailed 15-0 at half-time, recovered a little in the second period but they were not good enough to overcome the efficient Widnes XIII.

Last season Oldham and Swinton did not meet in league football but the two sides met the previous season when Oldham scored a league double over the Lions. The match at Watersheddings ended in a 23-10 home win whilst Oldham followed this up by winning 21-7 away. The double Oldham victory avenged a similar Lions double of season 1971-72 when Swinton's 20 points to 2 home win over Oldham was followed by a 12-2 win at Watersheddings.

Swinton have already recorded a win over Oldham this term and they will be all out to complete the double but with league points so vital to both clubs the only thing certain is that no quarter will be asked or given and a rousing game is in prospect.



Having handed off Doncaster centre George Pflaster, Oldham's Dickie Brown touches down between the sticks for the game's first try.

—Picture by courtesy of the Evening Chronicle.

BRIAN BATTY OF THE MAIL

Ron Simpson is approaching his job as manager of the Welsh side with all the fervour that the country shows for its favourite sport.

A dour and durable Yorkshireman, Ron respects the Welsh for their patriotic following of Union and League.

He may not be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with his burly coach Les Pearce but he is prepared to match him all the way in enthusiasm and spirit.

As a director of Castleford for 25 years and a former League chairman, Ron Simpson claims: "I have never had any time for failure in business or sport.

"I started following Castleford in 1930 and have always been a one-club man. At 63, I look on this job as a great challenge."

It was an operation 18 months ago that enabled Ron to make himself available for this trip Down Under for the New Five Nations' championship.

"I had a steel joint inserted in my hip and I now feel ten years younger," he says. "I would have applied for the World Cup job in 1972 if I had felt fit enough."

He was chairman and vice-chairman during a 15-year spell at Wheldon Road, giving up for a period when Bill Broxup was in charge for Castleford's 1969 Wembley triumph over Salford.

Ron was back in the chair the following year as Castleford returned to retain the Cup with the Wembley defeat of Wigan and he was in charge the first two years his club won the Floodlit Trophy.

"I feel Les Pearce has the perfect approach for this competition and think we will get on like a house on fire," he says. "I am using the trip to France as a chance to assess the opposition.

"Wales should have a great chance in this championship with some experienced and talented players around. We should be stronger than England in the forwards and match them in the three-quarters."

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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 13-10
Sept. 1—Widnes (3-15 p.m.) Home 9-14	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.) Home	" 19—St. Helens Away
Oct. 6—Lancs. Cup, Rnd. 1 Home	" 26—Huyton Away
" 12—N. Hunslet (3-30 p.m.) Away	Nov. 2—Swinton Home
" 18—Hull Home	" 8—Warrington (7-30 p.m.) Away
" 26—Whitehaven (7-00 p.m.) Away	" 23—Widnes Home
Nov. 3—Huyton Home	" 30—
" 9—Swinton Away	" 14—
" 16—Player's No. 6 (2nd Rnd.) Home	" 21—
" 24—Workington Home	" 28—Huyton Home
" 30—Doncaster (2-30 p.m.) Away	Jan. 4—
" 30—Batley Home	" 11—
Dec. 8—Workington (2-30 p.m.) Away	" 18—Barrow Home
" 14—Hull K.R. Home	" 25—Swinton Away
" 21—	Feb. 1—
" 26—Huddersfield Away	" 8—St. Helens Home
" 29—Huyton (2-30 p.m.) Away	" 15—Leigh Home
Jan. 4—New Hunslet Home	" 22—Salford Home
" 11—Doncaster Home	Mar. 1—
" 17—Barrow (7-00 p.m.) Away	" 8—
" 25—Swinton Home	" 15—Leigh Away
Feb. 1—	" 21—Rochdale (7-30 p.m.) Away
" 8—Challenge Cup (1st Rnd.) Home	" 29—
" 15—Leigh (3-45 p.m.) Away	Apr. 5—Barrow Away
" 22—Challenge Cup (2nd Rnd.) Home	" 12—Warrington Home
Mar. 1—Whitehaven Home	" 19—Wigan Home
" 8—	
" 15—Leigh Home	
" 23—Batley Away	
" 30—Hull Away	
Apr. 5—Barrow Home	
" 12—	
" 19—	

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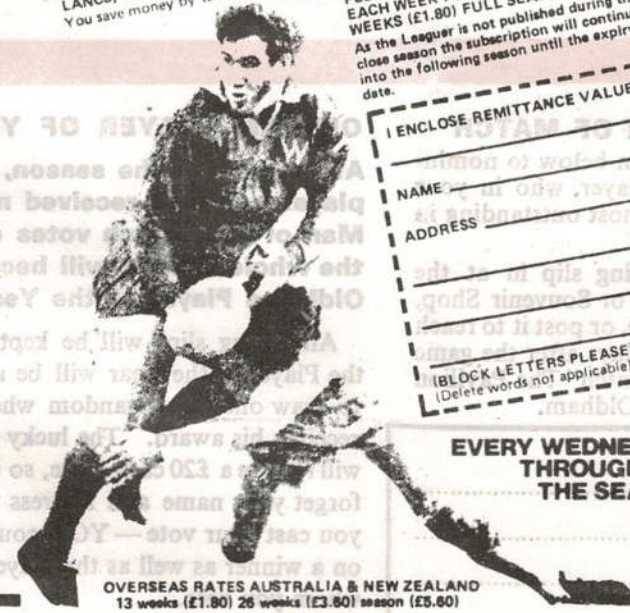
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