

Oldham

21

- 1 MURPHY, M.
- 2 ELLIOTT, M. *2 times*
- 3 LARDER, P. *try*
- 4 BLAIR, J. *3 goals*
- 5 BARTON, E.
- 6 TREASURE, D.
- 7 McCONE, M.
- 8 HICKS R.
- 9 TAYLOR K.
- 10 McCracken, W.
- 11 HALL, F. *try*
- 12 WELDING, R.
- 13 FARRELL, J.
- 14 LUND, S.
- 15 REYNOLDS, J. *try*

Referee:

R. Jackson (Halifax)

Leigh

9

- 1 PHYTHIAN, M.
- 2 BILSBURY, T.
- 3 STACEY, M. *3 goals*
- 4 WHITTLE, J.
- 5 WALSH, J.
- 6 MACATEE, J. *try*
- 7 SAYER, C.
- 8 PLATT, M.
- 9 CAREY, D.
- 10 FLETCHER, G.
- 11 CLARKE, K.
- 12 JONES, C.
- 13 MACKO, D.
- 14 GRIMSHAW, S.
- 15 ROWLEY, A.

E. Leach (St. Helens) Orange
A. I. Barrow (Marple) 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

LEIGH

was *Fred Hall*

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 WIDNES
M. MURPHY

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OLDHAM

21

v

LEIGH

9



Hughes brings down full-back Dutton.

(Picture by courtesy of the Evening Chronicle.)

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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

NOW that the Challenge Cup run is over—and we would like to express our thanks to everyone concerned in it—the time is opportune to discuss less glamorous aspects of the life and times of Oldham R.L. club.

Maybe some of you were surprised to read in the Press last week of the seriousness of our financial position. The facts are no secret. We owe £38,000 to various sources and, over a 12-month period, we are faced with a loss situation of something like £150 a week.

We are not pleading poverty. No doubt, in these hard, economic days, you have your own financial problems to worry about. But we feel it well advised to let you know just where the club stands in terms of financial matters.

It is pointless, when faced with such a situation, to go deeper and deeper into trouble without saying anything. To put you in the picture cannot do any harm. It can do a lot of good.

It is imperative that, somehow, we bring more money into Watersheddings if the club is to have any sort of future.

Professional sport, as we know it, is balanced on a financial tightrope. Last week the Daily Mirror did a big investigation into the state of soccer. It forecast more "Accrington Stanleys" in the not-too-distant future and revealed that total debts of the 92 Football League clubs total a staggering SEVEN MILLION POUNDS.

Rugby League is similarly placed. But our concern, within that wide framework, is Oldham. We have to survive and we will survive ... with your help!

Many hundreds of people, and several offshoots of the parent body, are doing their utmost. To the pools agents, the Supporters' Club, the 200 club organiser, Fred Halliwell, and our hard core of members, supporters and voluntary helpers we say THANK-YOU. If we have overlooked anyone it is by accident and not design.

But, collectively, we can do more. We must do otherwise there is only one end.

What CAN you do? Bear with us a moment while we offer suggestions.

1. **Become a pools agent.** It need take only a small amount of time. If a mere 50 of you could bring in £3 a week our running loss would be turned into a profit. But no matter how little you can collect weekly, Alan Taylor at the pools office will welcome you with open arms.

2. **Seriously consider taking out membership for next season.** We expect to be in the First Division and as a season-ticket holder you are in on the "inside" of the club with invitations to members' meetings and, of course, an election vote and a say in the administration.

3. **Do all in your power to help spread the Rugby League gospel.** Though many things are against us, we have one in our favour—the rising cost of motoring. It is likely to go higher, with the result that the public will be more inclined to look locally for their entertainment and their leisure activity. Maybe, we can channel some of them to Watersheddings. The message—do your best to bring a friend.

4. **Try our social club for your evening entertainment.** Full details of what's on are given in the local Press. Every pint that passes over the bar is helping to keep Rugby League alive here at Watersheddings.

Make no mistake, the situation is serious. Perhaps, above all, we would like you all, as R.L. supporters, to consider yourself as part and parcel of our fight for survival.

We cannot afford the old attitude that there is "them" and there is "us". We are all in this together ... from the committee, down through the members, the supporters' club, the vice-presidents' association, the pools agents the faithful on the terraces, and anyone else connected with the club.

Oldham R.L. club is our heritage. We owe it to all those who passed before us to fight the good fight. Help the club—PLEASE—at this time when it needs YOU most of all.

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ONE of these days Oldham WILL get to Wembley. I'm not a believer in the consoling powers of that hackneyed and over-used phrase, "Never mind, there's always next year". I don't suppose many of you are, either, after waiting all these years in vain to see your side at the Empire Stadium.

But the cherished dream will be realised some time. It could be next year, it could be in ten years. All we can say for sure is that when it does happen it will be all the better for the waiting.

Luck plays a part in any cup competition because of the very nature of the sudden-death system. It is less decisive in winning a league championship, for instance, because over the course of a full season the good and the bad that fate has in store for any side tends to even itself out.

But to get to Wembley a team has to win four matches—and if good fortune is its companion on the Challenge Cup trail it is half way there.

Take Widnes this year. In no way do I wish to decry their achievement in reaching the semi-finals at our expense. But even their supporters admit that Lady Luck has smiled down on them. At Swinton in round one they met a side that was crippled by injury. At Hull in round two they scraped through with a late drop goal.

At Oldham in round three... well, I don't need to remind you of how the ball twice bounced kindly for them and allowed them to score that fortunate try in the last five minutes.

Yes, luck is important in the Challenge Cup. I know some will say that a side makes its own luck. But it doesn't always apply. You can be sure that any side that reaches Wembley will have had its share of good luck on the way.

In 1967, when I was player-coach at Barrow and we got to Wembley, I shall never forget how we won at Hull in the third round. We were leading by two points when Clive Sullivan raced away into the clear. He was chased by Bill Burgess, but in those days there was only one end when Sully had only fresh air between him and the line..

a try.

It was all over bar the shouting. Then, dramatically, Sullivan slowed down and Burgess caught him. He had damaged a hamstring just outside our 25 and was forced to pull up!

Thanks to his terrible misfortune we went on to win—and reach Wembley.

In 1972 it was the turn of St. Helens. We certainly had our share of luck en route to the final. And in the big game itself we got a try in the first minute that set us on our way to victory against Leeds.

The match started two minutes early, and we were actually in front before 3 p.m.! Keith Hepworth, a tremendously experienced cup campaigner, tried a very chancy kick out of his own 25 and Graham Rees charged it down to follow up and score. You could play that game ten times over and Hepworth wouldn't make the same mistake again. It was our sheer good fortune that, in the excitement and tenseness of the opening minute, he made that costly blunder.

Oldham, alas, have had more of their share of bad luck in the Cup over the years. They are known for it throughout the league.

Last Sunday, the players were bitterly disappointed, partially because we had not played up to our best form but more than ever because we had been knocked out by a try like that.

Like true professionals, however, we have to put the defeat behind us and look to the future. We have four league matches left and, hopefully, a place in the play-off.

It would be nice to think that we could retain some of the tremendous support we received during the cup run. I think the crowds proved what a tremendous amount of interest there is in the town.

By my biggest disappointment will come if we are back to a breadline gate of below 2,000 for today's game. I would dearly hope that at least 4,000 of our big following in Sunday's crowd of 11,000 show that they believe we are worth watching again.

OUR VISITORS BY DON YATES

At the start of this season several clubs were put forward as possible promotion candidates and amongst those nominees were Leigh. However, things have not worked out as planned for the Hilton Park club, whose loss of Tommy Martyn and Jim Fiddler hit the club particularly badly.

At present the club lie down in 10th position in the Second Division Championship table with nine wins and a draw from their 20 league matches. Inconsistency is one of the Leigh problems and their matches against Barrow highlighted this fault for they won 8-5 up in Cumbria but then fell to a 20-8 home defeat. Possibly Leigh's best results were against Hull who were beaten 16-8 away and 6-0 at home whilst Leigh also scored a league double win over Batley (19-10 home, 20-9 away). On the other hand Leigh have conceded double defeats to both Workington Town (7-18 home, 0-7 away) and Huddersfield (7-15 home, 0-36 away) whilst New Hunslet took three points off Leigh by winning 20-8 in Leeds and drawing 13-13 at Hilton Park.

Leigh have not met with any great success in cup football either but they did reach the semi-final of both the Lancashire Cup and Floodlit Trophy. In the Lancashire Cup Leigh visited Barrow in what was expected to be a close match but the visiting pack took control early in the second half and Leigh ran out convincing 31-10 victors. Leigh then drew a bye and passed through into the semi-finals where they entertained the eventual winners of that trophy, Widnes. Two first half slips gave Widnes an 8-2 lead and although Leigh fought back to within 8-5, that was how the match ended after a rousing cup tie.

In reaching the semi-final of the Floodlit Cup Leigh knocked out three First Division clubs starting with Bramley who were eliminated in a two legged first round match. The first leg was at Leigh when Tommy Martyn and Jim Fiddler demonstrated all their skills in a convincing 19-5 win. Leigh did not expect too much trouble in the second leg after gaining such a big lead but at half-time they trailed 15-0 and elimination looked likely until a second half revival enabled them to pull back to 15-9 and go through by an aggregate of 28-20. Leigh visited Dewsbury in the following round with the home side beginning brightly with sound running and passing which gave them a 6-3 interval lead. However, as the game progressed Leigh's forwards got on top by the end of the game they were well worth their 14-8 victory. In the quarter-final Rochdale Hornets visited Hilton Park and although the Hornets had the better of the play territorially they never looked likely to penetrate the much stronger Leigh defence and so the home side progressed through by 8 points to nil. The semi-final visit to Warrington proved just too much for Leigh who were well beaten by Alec Murphy's boys. At no time did Leigh look like winning and by the end of the game Warrington had built up a 32-0 winning margin.

So Leigh now find themselves playing out the season with no hope of promotion and out of the Challenge Cup. Oldham's Challenge Cup hopes were snatched away against Widnes last Sunday but promotion is almost certain and the Second Division Championship a real possibility. Two more points this afternoon would greatly assist Oldham in their Championship quest.



Brown fails to hold Adams as he passes out the ball.

—Picture by courtesy of the Evening Chronicle.

BRIAN BATTY OF THE MAIL

The decision that led to the suspension of Welsh forward Jim Mills for the new World championship in France surprised many people, including top officials.

With two recorded cautions, the League disciplinary gave Mills a one-match ban but this was for offences in a domestic competition—not international.

Was it right to rob Wales—and not his club Widnes—of the match winning prop forward?

As it turned out, Wales sadly missed his power in Toulouse and he could well have been the man to have upset the French.

The reason I bring up this controversial point is that I cannot believe the Australians, New Zealanders or French would have acted the same way in such circumstances.

Could you imagine the Aussies banning Artie Bettson from playing in a Test against Great Britain for something he did at club level?

In an effort to get the pitch playable for last week's cup tie I put out an S.O.S. for volunteer labour.

I would like to thank the following for the loan of equipment:

Mr. Morgan, of Morgan Tractors, for use of the tractor. Mr. Morgan also drove the tractor himself, worked until 8 p.m. on Friday night and again both on Saturday and Sunday morning.

The policy on tours in this country or Down Under, is to give a player a caution or the "sending off" sufficient ruling for a first offence.

I don't want to single out the Welsh for preferential treatment even though they have more problems to overcome than any other side in the World championship.

But I do feel a fine would have matched the offence far more accurately and given Wales a fairer deal.

I will be interested to see what happens in Australia and New Zealand this summer if any World championship players are dismissed prior to international clashes.

If they are treated as in the past then they will be allowed to play in the next game—international or friendly.

This will apply for a high tackle or a punch and yet two cautions dealt Mills a critical knock-out blow.

Mr. Brown of Peter Brown for use of a dumper. Mr. Beddoes of Geo. Dew for use of a spiking machine.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all the schoolboys and adults who helped in any way, obviously these are too numerous to mention but in particular to Alan Kay who gave up the whole of his weekend to work.

To everyone concerned a big thank you, it was you who made the match possible.

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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 13-10
Sept. 1—Widnes (3-15 p.m.) Home 9-14	Sept. 7—Blackpool Home
" 8—Blackpool Away 13-5	" 13—Salford (7-30 p.m.) Away
" 14—Huddersfield Home 11-15	Oct. 5—Rochdale Home
" 20—Hull K.R. (7-30 p.m.) Away 8-17	" 12—Wigan Away
Oct. 6—N. Hunslet (3-30 p.m.) Away 24-7	" 19—St. Helens Away
" 12—Hull Home 10-5	" 26—Huyton Away
" 18—Whitehaven (7-00 p.m.) Away 10-2	Nov. 2—Swinton Home
" 26—Huyton Home 18-7	" 8—Warrington (7-30 p.m.) Away
Nov. 3—Swinton Away 7-15	" 23—Widnes Home
" 16—Workington Home 7-11	" 30—
" 24—Doncaster (2-30 p.m.) Away 18-3	" 14—
" 30—Batley Home 17-2	" 21—
Dec. 8—Workington (2-30 p.m.) Away 20-7	" 26—
" 14—Hull K.R. Home 15-6	" 28—Huyton Home
" 26—Huddersfield Away 11-12	Jan. 4—
" 29—Huyton (2-30 p.m.) Away 22-12	" 11—
Jan. 4—New Hunslet Home 23-2	" 18—Barrow Home
" 11—Doncaster Home 23-3	" 25—Swinton Away
" 17—Barrow (7-00 p.m.) Away 0-10	Feb. 1—
" 25—Swinton Home 18-2	" 8—St. Helens Home
" 15—Leigh (3-45 p.m.) Away 18-4	" 15—Leigh Home
Mar. 1—Whitehaven Home 17-1	" 22—Salford Home
" 8—	Mar. 1—
" 15—Leigh Home	" 8—
" 23—Batley Away	" 15—Leigh Away
" 30—Hull Away	" 21—Rochdale (7-30 p.m.) Away
Apr. 5—Barrow Home	" 29—
" 12—	Apr. 5—Barrow Away
" 19—	" 12—Warrington Home
	" 19—Wigan Home

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