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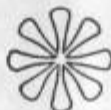
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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

Today we welcome to Watersheddings a side who are not only on course for promotion but who will probably be challenging strongly for the Second Division title.

Leigh have already had one win against us this season, winning 24-3 at Hilton Park in early November. It is now up to us to reverse that result to retain our promotion hopes, which have taken a bit of a battering recently with a run of five defeats in six matches.

You will probably all have heard by now that we are soon to launch a new pool, called Maxi Pool because we are offering the maximum possible prize money as allowed by law.

This pool really has caught on since details appeared in the Press and we are delighted to report that all the signs are very encouraging.

Rochdale Hornets are already interested in launching a similar sort of lottery at the Athletic Grounds and we have been inundated with telephone inquiries.

Several factors make it a very attractive pool as we outlined to agents at a meeting in the social club last week, but perhaps the biggest is the weekly prize of £1,000.

This sort of prize money attracted a mention in the daily newspaper, THE SUN, which reported last week in its weekly Rugby League Roundabout column: "Hard-up Oldham believe they have found the perfect way of ensuring the club's future."

"Next month they start a pool which offers a £1,000 top prize each week as well as making them a £1,000 profit in the same spell of time".

It was encouraging to get a mention in a daily paper with such a big circulation further proof, we believe, that we are on the right lines with a pool which MUST be successful if we are to look to the future with confidence.

To this end we are hoping to get across to the public in a novel manner by setting up a stall on the market. Tommyfield is still one of the best and busiest markets in the country and if we can get a stand on there it should go a long way towards helping our cause.

The Challenge Cup first-round draw, made on the BBC "Grandstand" programme on Saturday of last week paired us with Doncaster, to be played Sunday 12th February, Kick-off 3.30. p.m.

Please watch for further match details in the local press.

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OUR VISITORS BY DON YATES

After last week's much needed rest, Oldham resume their league programme this afternoon with another tough match against second-in-the-table Leigh who have won 14 of their 17 league matches and, in so doing, have scored more points than any other side in the Second Division.

Their only league defeats so far this season have been in difficult away matches at Whitehaven, Barrow and Rochdale Hornets while they themselves have scored double victories over Doncaster, Huyton, Keighley and Huddersfield and so will be out to achieve their fifth double of the season today for they have already beaten Oldham once this season, by 24 points to three last November. In order to achieve that double, Leigh will have to pull off their first league win on this ground since April 1970 when they beat Oldham 8-4 thanks to tries from wingers Les Chisnall and Joe Walsh and a goal from substitute Alec Hart. Oldham had lost 14-4 to Leigh at Hilton Park earlier during that 1969-70 season and the loss at Watersheddings was the 19th consecutive league defeat the club had suffered during the worst run in the club's history. To complete Oldham's misery they had prop-forward Danny Gardiner sent off.

Since then Leigh have lost all four league visits to this stadium, despite having won here in two Players Cup-ties, and under the guidance of player-coach John Mantle they will be making a determined effort to end that dismal league record. Prop-forward Mantle is an outstanding forward who at 36 years of age is approaching the end of a distinguished career. He is a former Newport RUFC player who played eight times for Wales at rugby union before turning professional with St. Helens in January 1965. At the end of his first full season of rugby league Mantle toured Australasia with Great Britain and so embarked on an international career which covered one game for Other Nationalities, 15 for Wales and 13 for Great Britain. He also won numerous club honours while at Knowsley Road including a couple of successful trips to Wembley, a record number of eight Championship Final appearances, a Lancashire Cup winners medal and a couple of winning medals from his three Floodlit Cup Finals. All these honours came his way while with the Saints and it was something of a surprise when he left them to join Salford in August 1976. He then moved to Leigh last April in a £2,000 deal which saw him take up the challenge of a coaching post and judging by results so far he seems to have made an excellent start to his new career for Leigh seem promotion certainties. They field an experienced and powerful pack which includes former Oldham favourite Kevin Taylor, British under-24 prop Alf Wilkinson and county loose-forward Denis Boyd while in the backs they have John Woods, a prolific point scorer who earlier this season scored four tries and 13 goals in Leigh's 62-15 defeat of Blackpool Borough. He is way out in front of the point scoring charts and is another reason why Oldham will find today's opposition as strong as any they have met so far. They will certainly have to be at their best in order to win and so dispel the gloom brought about by the recent run of unfavourable results.

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- 6 BLAIR, J.
- 7 BATES, A.
- 8 CHARLES, C.
- 9 O'MAHONEY, R.
- 10 OWEN, G.
- 11 HALL, F.
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- 2 DRUMMOND, D.
- 3 STACEY, M.
- 4 BILSBURY, T.
- 5 WORGAN, G.
- 6 WOODS, J.
- 7 McATEE, T.
- 8 MANTLE, J.
- 9 TAYLOR, K.
- 10 YATES, M.
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With the Amateurs ALAN BURKE

Next Sunday Lancashire begin their defence of the BARLA County Championship titles, both at youth and Open-age levels, when they will be entertaining Cumbria at Naughton Park, Widnes. Cumbria featured in the opening matches of this season's championship last weekend, when their Open-age side went down to Yorkshire by 5 pts. to 13, and their Under-18s team also fell to the white rose county by 5 pts. to 19.

Included in the Lancashire Open-age side to meet the Cumbrians will be 8 new County representatives, one of which is Waterhead's John Glover, who has thoroughly deserved his selection, by without doubt being the most consistently outstanding forward in the Oldham League this season, both for his club and for the town-team. Oldham's other Open-age representative is Dai Evans, the Saddleworth Rangers' loose-forward, who has been chosen as one of the reserves to travel, whilst 4 Saddleworth players will be taking the field for Lancashire in the Youth game. The quartet are centre Peter Grimbley, winger Tim Whittaker, prop-forward Mick Coates, and loose-forward Terry Flanagan. Terry is in fact the younger brother of Oldham forward Kevin Flanagan.

Creditable performances by these players in the games against Cumbria should mean them retaining their places for the championship deciders against Yorkshire at Bradford on February 19th, and should also put them in with a good chance of International honours later in the season.

Yesterday saw the opening matches in this season's BARLA National Cup competition, from which the two finalists qualify as the amateur game's representatives in next season's Player's No. 6 Trophy. The present holders of the National Cup are Cawoods of Hull, who of course caused a major upset earlier this season by defeating Halifax in the Player's competition. The team have in fact recently created another shock by changing their name to West Hull Recs, which was the original name of the club and which was changed to Cawoods just two seasons ago due to sponsorship by a local firm.

Sponsorship is coming more and more into amateur rugby league, both at national and local levels. The Oldham Amateur Rugby League have already obtained a match sponsor for the Standard Cup Final on Good Friday morning, with local textile firm Frank Knowles & Co., agreeing to cover the match expenses, and with the programme and match-ball also being sponsored by other organisations. The semi-finals of the competition are to be played on February 18th, and with there then being a 6 week interval before the Final, it is hoped that the programme for the match will be on sale at least a fortnight before the game.

The draw for the semi-finals of the Standard Cup was made earlier this week, but at the time of the draw three of the quarter-finals had not been

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With the Amateurs

resolved. The Salem-Saddleworth "A" encounter was scheduled for yesterday, whilst the all-First Division clashes, between Ferranti and Saddleworth Rangers, which will be played at Bower Lane, Hollinwood, and between Mayfield and Saint Anne's, to be played at Firgrove in Rochdale, will take place next Saturday.

Both of these delayed Standard Cup quarter-final ties will kick-off at 2.30 p.m., and the winners of the matches will join Manchester side Langworthy Juniors in the semi-finals. Mayfield and Saint Anne's will be facing each other for the first time this season, but the Ferranti-Saddleworth game will bring the two sides together for the third time this term, with the visitors attempting to add a Standard Cup victory to their Pennine League Division One double.

BARLA have now published a brochure containing photographs, reports and comments of that historic youth tour, and for anyone interested in having a copy, the brochure can be obtained, priced 50p, form: BARLA Headquarters, Britannic Building, 3, Upperhead Row, Huddersfield.

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MAN IN THE MIDDLE

Grade One referee Billy Thompson of Linthwaite, Huddersfield, who is regarded as the World's Number one Official takes charge of this afternoon's match. Forty-four years old Mr. Thompson has been a Grade One official since 1967 in which time he has refereed 15 major cup finals and 16 full inter-nationals including World Championship matches in Britain in 1970, France in 1975 and Australasia last summer when he was chosen to referee the World Championship Grand Final. Mr. Thompson, who was Trumanns Steel Referee of the Year last season, is married with three daughters and works as an engineer with David Brown Tractors.

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- 2 ELLIOTT, M.
- 3 LARDER, P.
- 4 PATERSON, J.
- 5 O'BRIEN, C.
- 6 BLAIR, J.
- 7 BATES, A.
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Referee:

W. THOMPSON (Huddersfield)

Leigh

- 1 GRIMSHAW, S.
- 2 DRUMMOND, D.
- 3 STACEY, M.
- 4 BILSBURY, T.
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Sunday 29th January 1978

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