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Teams

Watersheddings Sunday November 11th. 1979.

OLDHAM

Cherry/White Loops, Blue Shorts.

1. MARTIN MURPHY
2. GEOFF MUNRO
3. BILL FRANCIS
4. STEVE LUND
5. ERIC FITZSIMMONS
6. RAY ASHTON
7. KEN GWILLIAM
8. ALAN FORSTER
9. RAY MARTLAND
10. FRED HALL
11. BOB MORDELL
12. STEVE HERBERT
13. TERRY FLANAGAN

14. PHIL WARD
- 15.

Referee: MR. K. ALLATT (Southport)
Red Flag: Mr. J. Casey (St. Helens)

BARROW

Royal Blue White 'V', White Shorts.

1. STEVE TICKLE
2. BILL FAWKES
3. NIGEL FRENCH
4. TONY WAINWRIGHT
5. CHRIS CAMILLIERI
6. IAN BALL
7. DAVID CAIRNS
8. JIM NULTY
9. JOHN MANTLE
10. EDDIE SZYMALA
11. ALAN EVANS
12. MALCOLM FLYNN
13. BOBBY IRVING
14. DENNIS HADLEY / MEL MASON
15. GRAHAM LUPTON

Yellow Flag: Mr. D. Bowes (Manchester)

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Sunday November 25th. at 3.00 p.m. DEWSBURY

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BARROW



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Bill Francis (player/coach) Bob Welding (A team coach)
Brian Gartland (Colts Coach)

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Leslie Cook - Michael Coombes - Mike Cowley - Pasquale D'Adamo - Peter Deakin -
Jim Fidler - Eric Fitzsimmons - Kevin Flanagan - Terry Flanagan - Alan Forster -
Bill Francis - Dave Fricker - Andrew Goodway - Fred Hall - Colin Hawkyard -
Steve Herbert - Keith Jackson - Clive Jones - Paddy Kerwan - Phil Larder -
Steve Littler - Steve Lund - Bob Mordell - Ray Martland - Geoff Munro -
Martin Murphy - Tony Newall - Chris O'Brien - Ian Ogden - Roger O'Mahoney -
Kevin O'Rourke - Gareth Owen - Johnny Paterson - Ian Radcliffe - Warren Ryans -
Ian Taylor - Garry Walczak - John Walls - Mike Worrall

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Commercial Manager **Social Club Manager** Kevin Wilkinson 061-624 7240

Public Relations Officer - Barbara Wilde

Groundsman: F. Brookes **Asst. Groundsman:** M. Bashforth

CLUB RECORDS

Record Victory	67-6 against Liverpool City April 59
Record defeat	11-67 by Hull K.R. Sept. 78
Record attendance	28,000 v Huddersfield Feb 24th 1912
Record receipts	£4,897 v Leeds 3rd March 1968
Record transfer fee paid	£10,650 to Workington for Ike Southward March 1959
Record transfer fee received	£11,002 : 10s from workington for Ike Southward Jan 62
Record try scorer	Reg Farrar 49 tries 1921/22 season
Record goal scorer	Bernard Ganley 224 goals 1957/58 season
Record point scorer	Bernard Ganley 28 pts v Liverpool City April 59

CLUB HONOURS

Rugby League Championship Play-off winners:	1909-10, 1910-11 and 1956-57
Runners-up:	1906-07, 1907-08, 1908-09, 1921-22 and 1954-55.
First Division Champions:	1904-05
Second Division Champions:	1963-64
Rugby League Challenge Cup winners:	1898-99, 1924-25, 1926-27
Runners-up:	1906-07, 1911-12, 1923-24 and 1925-26
Lancashire Cup winners:	1907-08, 1910-11, 1913-14, 1919-20, 1924-25, 1933-34, 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1958-59
Runners-up:	1908-09, 1911-12, 1918-19, 1921-22, 1954-55, 1966-67 and 1968-69
Lancashire Championship Winners:	1907-08, 1909-10, 1021-22, 1956-57 and 1957-58
Runners-up:	1908-09, 1910-11, 1911-12, 1919-20, 1923-24 and 1954-55
Lancashire Shield winners:	1975-76

HEY BIG SPENDER

BARROW, Rugby League's big spenders in the last two or three years, come to Watersheddings today for what could be a classic confrontation.

The game has all the hallmarks of a real thriller with both teams hell bent for promotion, Barrow the clear leaders, and Oldham still the only unbeaten side in the Second Division.

The men from Furness have scored nearly 200 points in their eight league games, following their 42-10 triumph over Batley last week-end, and are second only to Featherstone as the Second Division's highest scorers.

Their only defeat was at Featherstone, incidentally, and that alone is an indication of the size of the task that confronts Oldham today.

Barrow were perhaps the forerunners of many clubs in cashing in on the lottery boom. A year or two ago they began to pull in lots of money and have never been afraid of spending it in the never-ending quest to take quality players to Craven Park.

In the early days of the lottery boom David Hill and later Eddie Barton left Watersheddings to try their luck at Barrow and since then the Craven club has taken a steady stream of players from League and Union -- to the north-west frontier.

In the early days of the lottery boom David Hill and later Eddie Barton left Watersheddings to try their luck at Barrow and since then the Craven Park club has taken a steady stream of players from League and Union to the north-west frontier.

From League, Barrow have signed, among others, scrum-half Jimmy Nulty from Wigan, stand-off Mel Mason, Hill and Barton from Oldham, Keith Wills, a forward from Huyton, John Mantle from Leigh, Tommy Gainford from up the coast at Whitehaven, Howard Allen, who spent years with Workington and then had a spell at Blackpool, and, more recently, Bob Irving from Salford and Tony Wainwright from Rochdale.

Wainwright cost Barrow about £10,000 only a few weeks ago and both he and Irving will be keen to do especially well at Watersheddings -- the scene of so many of their earlier triumphs.

Barrow have been just as ambitious in their quest for Union Players and are likely to have several in their side today.

Steve Tickle, the former Waterloo and Lancashire full back, was the first of many Union signings and was followed by high-scoring backs Ian Ball and Nigel French from the London area and Welshmen Chris Camilleri and Alan Evans.

Camilleri, snapped up from Cardiff, had played for Wales "B" and is a speedy winger while Ball is proving one of the most prolific scorers in the game, both as try and goal scorer.

Evans is a big prop from the Valleys and French is doing well in the centre spot. He is, incidentally, a close friend and former college mate of our own recent R U signing, Bob Mordell.

Throw in the fact that Oldham fans will always have fond memories of Frank Foster, now Barrow's coach, and today's game has everything it takes to prove a classic encounter.

The 2nd. issue of 'OPEN RUGBY' is now on sale at the club. Price 35p.

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JUST THE START

By Roger Halstead

(Oldham Evening Chronicle).

OLDHAM could pick up a lucrative and profitable return for their headline-catching signing of England RU flanker Bob Mordell.

In terms of hard cash it is not easy to be accurate in assessing just how much Mordell will have cost ambitious Oldham.

The popular figure thrown around is £14,000. not only is this unconfirmed, but it is an assessment of the value of the total contract rather than the signing-on fee.

I believe the contract to be worth slightly more than £14,000 in total, though to realise the maximum Mordell has probably to attain international status in his new code.

It can be reasonably assumed, I think, that he will have picked up less than half the contract total as a signing-on fee, for surrendering his amateur status, with the rest to follow in stage payments.

So how can Oldham recoup? To start with they have an international player – albeit from the other code – who has already proven himself against the best the Union world has to offer.

He has shown, even in League, that he can handle expertly, tackle stoutly and run strongly – and he has proved that despite his limited knowledge of League technique.

Any signing is a gamble but given a fair degree of luck Mordell can prove a very good capture indeed.

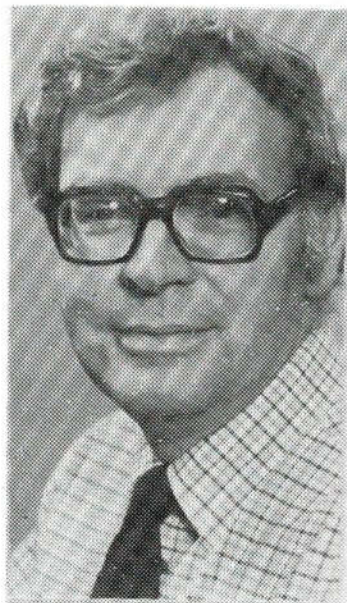
For considerably less than what a top-class League forward might have cost they have signed a player who has already paid back a chunk of his fee in the amount of publicity he has attracted.

He is a "name" signing to create interest among the public.

But the biggest spin-off of all could come from his contacts in and knowledge of the Union code up and down the country.

When Steve Tickle signed for Barrow it seemed only weeks before Ian Ball and Nigel French followed the Waterloo man to Craven Park.

Mordell is bound to give Oldham first-hand knowledge of the top men in Union and I believe his signing could well be the forerunner for others from the south of England.



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ALEX RULES, O.K.

By Alex Givvons
(RL Grade I Referee)

Some further interesting points from the recently issued "International Laws Of The Game & Notes On The Laws" priced 50p.

SECTION 11 PARA 9 - "BALL STEALING"

The ball may be "stolen" only in a "one-one" situation. It is illegal for the ball to be "stolen" in a tackle made by more than one player.

This is the law operating in Gt. Britain, the international law allows ball stealing (if a player is not effectively tackled), say in a two-to-one situation.

SECTION 4 PARA 2 - "SUBSTITUTES"

The use of two substitutes shall be permitted provided their names are made known to the Referee prior to the kick-off. These two substitutes may be used once only, and the players in the original thirteen whom they replaced may be used as substitutes "but once only".

The international law does not allow the extra substitution stating, "A player once replaced shall take no further part in the game".

Coaches are advised to carefully watch their substitutes. There is a case whereby a Referee can allow only three substitutes as follows:- No. 15 replaces No. 12.

No. 14 replaces No. 15

No. 15 is therefore "finished", No. 12 remains the sole sub. This combination is unlikely, but can happen because of the nature of the injury, the time between injuries, also the state of the game and the coaches need to have thirteen players on the field.

SECTION 16 PARA 9d - "BALL COMING INTO CONTACT WITH REFEREE"

The international laws allow the Referee to stop play if play is "irregularly" affected by the ball or the player coming into contact with the Referee.

The Gt. Britain law states that play "shall" stop if the ball comes into contact with the Referee.

QUESTIONS:-

(1) A player in his opponents goal area running to put the ball down behind the posts for a try, is impeded by an encroaching spectator and loses the ball. "Decision".

(2) Red player kicks ahead and an offside colleague scores a try. "Decision".

(3) Red player kicks out from the halfway line, it is caught by an opponent with one foot on the touch line. "Decision".

(4) Red player jumps to reach a high pass. He cannot get two hands to it, so reaches with one hand, taps it forward and catches it before it reaches the ground. "Decision".

(4) Penalty to Blues. Deliberate knock forward.

(3) Penalty to Blues at half way line.

Where caught if in field of play.

(2) Penalty to Blues. (a) 5 yds line if ball is over try line. (b)

(1) Try, at point of contact.

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OLDHAM R.L.F.C.

SUPPORTERS CLUB NOTES

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Our next away game is on 18th November at Swinton, coach leaves the club at 2 p.m.

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CLUB NEWS

WELCOME, BOB MORDELL !

Oldham captured the headlines with the signing of Bob Mordell, the Rugby Union forward who played in the last home game against Bramley as A N Other.

We had been interested in the Rosslyn Park, Middlesex and England flank forward for several weeks and the deal was virtually clinched within hours of Bob playing his last game of Union for London Districts against the All Blacks.

A deputation from Watersheddings, composed of vice-chairman Jack Bowden, treasurer Keith Broadbent, committee man Frank Diskin and players coach Bill Francis watched the All Blacks game and later had long talks with the player.

The following day Mordell travelled north, trained at Watersheddings and signed the forms that make him a Rugby League professional.

On the Friday morning, less than 48 hours after the Twickenham game against the tourists, we announced his signing.

So much has already been written and said about the capture – and about Bob himself – that it is pointless to repeat it all here.

Suffice to say that both club and player were very well pleased with the deal that was struck and that we all extend to Bob and his wife the very best of wishes for a long stay at Oldham and a happy and successful "convert" to the League code.

* * *

Our win at Huddersfield last Sunday – Oldham's first there for several years – kept intact our record as the only unbeaten Second Division side.

On the Thursday before that match our "A" team beat Leigh "A" at Watersheddings – the only side to have beaten our reserve team this season – to enable us to retain top spot in the Lancashire Combination.

And when the colts came from behind to beat Hunslet on the Saturday our under-19 side kept top place in the colts league.

People are now beginning to sit up and take notice of what is happening at Watersheddings. "A unique treble" was how it was described in the Sunday People.

Incidentally, our "A" team has been drawn to play St. Helens in the second round of the Lancashire Shield on a two-leg, home-and-away basis.

These ties have to be played by the end of December and when dates are fixed they will be announced in the Press.

* * *

Two of our players have come off the transfer list in the past fortnight. Winger Geoff Munro, on at £4,000, and prop Ian Taylor, listed at £2,500, both made requests to have their names struck from the "open to offers" list and the club was happy to oblige.

Both players now want to stay at Watersheddings and the club is happy to see them getting stuck in and battling for their places.

Scrum-half Ian Radcliffe, however, has gone to Huyton on loan. Ian lives in Liverpool and he was listed at £3,000 at his own request a few weeks ago.

* * *

Down to work on our multi-gym for new signing Bob Mordell.



On a sad note may we take this opportunity of recording the tragic and sudden death, at 48, of our former player-coach and full back Frank Dyson.

Frank collapsed last week at his public house in Huddersfield and died later the same evening in hospital. His death will prove a bitter blow not only to the Huddersfield club, but also to the Rugby League. He was a Council member and had only recently been reappointed manager of the British under-24 team.

He will always be remembered at Oldham for the way in which he led us to Second Division championship success in season 1963-4 and to the semi-finals of the Challenge Cup, where we met Hull K R in those epic battles.

On behalf of all Watersheddings supporters we extend to Frank's widow and dependants the very deepest sympathy in their terrible loss.

Alan Forster, seen here on the break, had a magnificent match at Huddersfield against his former club.



OLDHAM ACTION



Fartown flare-up
Forwards of both sides clash during our 12-3 win at Huddersfield last Sunday.

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TOM WEBB's YESTERYEAR

We are attempting to give all the Oldham R.L.F.C. results since the club started in 1876. In the following tables the letters M, G, T, stand for Minors, Goals, and Tries.

Minors are dead balls (DB), touch in goals (TIG), and touch downs (TD). Dead balls occurred when the attacking side either kicked or carried the ball over the dead line and a touch down was when the defending side made the ball dead.

In the early Rugby Union days, a goal counted more than any number of tries and on one occasion Oldham 'A' scored eight tries but lost because the opposition dropped one goal.

Unfortunately the full match details are incomplete for the 1980's. Any details would be welcomed by the programme editor or by me, Tom Webb of 3 Haggate Crescent, Royton, Oldham, OL2 5NF., as I am researching the history of the club.

1876 / 77

DATE	OPPONENTS	VENUE	OLDHAM			OPPONENTS			RESULT
			M	G	T	M	G	T	
1876									
October 21st.	STALYBRIDGE	HOME	4 TD	-	1	1 TD	2	1	Lost
October 28th.	CHEETHAM HILL	AWAY	1 DB	-	3	1 TD	1	1	Lost
November 11th.	FREE WARDS (2nd)	WITHINGTON	1 TD	-	-	1 TD	-	-	Lost
November 18th.	ROCHDALE HORNETS (2nd)	AWAY	2 TD	-	-	2 TD	-	-	Draw
November 25th.	WHITWORTH RANGERS	HOME	1 TD	-	-	1 TIG	-	-	Draw
December 9th.	BIRCH (2nd)	HOME	NIL	-	-	2 TIG	1	-	Lost
December 16th.	BRIDGEWATER	AWAY							Draw
December 23rd.	CHEETHAM	PATRICKROFT	1 TIG	-	-	7 TD	1	4	Lost
December 30th.	STRETFORD	AWAY	-	-	1	1 TD	-	-	Won
1877									
January 6th.	CHEETHAM	HOME	2 TD	1	1	1 TD	1	-	Won
January 13th.	ROVERS	AWAY	1 TD	-	-	3 TD	-	2	Lost
January 20th.	WEASTE	FALLOWFIELD	9 TD	4	5	NIL	-	-	Won
January 27th.	ROCHDALE HORNETS (2nd)	HOME	-	2	-	1 TD	-	-	Won
February 3rd.	BIRCH (2nd.)	AWAY	2 TD	-	1	2 TIG	-	-	Won
February 17th.	CAVENDISH	HOME	2 TD	-	4	2 TIG	-	-	Won
February 24th.	STALYBRIDGE	AWAY	4 TD	-	1	1 TD	-	-	Won
'A' TEAM	1876								
November 4th.	ST. CHAD'S, ROCHDALE	HOME	2 TD	-	-	10 TD	-	3	Lost

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COLTS CORNER

Three more wins have restored Oldham colts to top spot in the under-19 league. The first was a 17-16 win at Hull, followed by a 37-16 triumph at Wakefield and, here at Watersheddings last Saturday, came the 19-13 victory over Hunslet.

Four goals by Mick Worrall, rapidly building himself a reputation as an accurate goal kicker and superb touch finger, plus tries by Paul Willis, John Walls and Andrew Goodway clinched victory at Humberside.

The following week's game against St. Helens was called off by Saints and Bramley, our close rivals and title contenders, took advantage to go to the top of the table.

But Oldham's win at Wakefield while Bramley were going down at Hull KR put our boys back on top. Hat-tricks by stand-off Ray Ashton and centre John Walls were highlights of the win at Trinity. And so to Hunslet - a real scare in the opening stages when the Yorkshire boys romped in for three tries, two of them gifts.

Hunslet led 13-4 at one stage, but a new-look side minus several of our teenage professionals really got stuck into their task and, once they had settled, proceeded to score another 15 points without reply.

With Worrall again in kicking form - he landed five - Hunslet were never in contention in the second-half and Oldham twice crossed their line through scrum-half David Taylor and right-winger Stephen Dobb to back up a brilliant solo effort by young stand-off Des Foy before the break. Several of our players are in the running for the Lancashire colts side to meet Yorkshire at Bramley on Friday, November 16th.

The inter-county clash was to have been played on the Saturday but because of the second John Player Trophy semi-final at Headingley that day the colts clash has been switched to the Friday night.

The Lancashire team had still not been named when these notes were written but several Oldham players performed well in the first of two trials against Rochdale "A" at the Athletic Grounds. The youngsters beat an experienced Hornets side 33-10 and Paddy Kirwan, Steve Littler, Pasquale D'Adamo and Mick Worrall all played leading roles.

Scrum-half Kirwan scored two tries and made another for D'Adamo while Worrall also scored as the colts cut loose in the second half.

It is pleasing to note that some of our colts are already thrusting their way through to the senior side. Ashton and Terry Flanagan have forced their way in and Kirwan was the sub back at Huddersfield - his first appearance in the senior 15.



Ray Ashton touches down for a spectacular solo try in the last home game against Bramley - a try that many fans said was reminiscent of Frank Pitchford!

COLTS FIXTURES

1979

Aug. 18	Leigh	A
25	Bradford	H
Sept. 1	Leeds	A
8	Bramley	H
15	Castleford	A
29	Leeds	H
Oct. 6	Widnes	A
13	Hull	A
20	St. Helens	H
27	Wakefield	A
Nov. 3	Hunslet	H
10	Bradford	A
17	Salford	H
24	Hunslet	A
Dec. 1	Widnes	H
8	St. Helens	A
29	Leigh	H

F. A. 1980

Jan. 5	Salford	A
12	Bramley	A
19	Hull	H
26	Dewsbury	A
Feb. 2	Rochdale	A
9	Cup-First Round	
16	Hull KR	H
23	Cup-2nd Round	
March 1	Castleford	H
8	Hull KR	A
22	Dewsbury	H
29	Wakefield	H
April 5	Rochdale	H



The Oldham club recently distributed kit costing around £2,500 to local amateur clubs who run youth sides. At the front of the picture are John Burke, secretary of the local League, and Oldham chairman Ray Hatton.

JOE GALLAGHER

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RUGBY LEAGUE GAINS SUPPORT

By Brian Batty

Daily Mail

Soccer's loss could be Rugby League's gain – even if only slight – on the attendance front of the two codes.

With three months of the 'winter' sports under our belts it has been surprising to see the fall in Soccer crowds in all four divisions.

And equally surprising, in view of such events, to record that Rugby League has seen a rise in gates if only on a small scale.

It is looking as if the regrowth of the game, helped by the tour of the attractive Australian side last season, is continuing.

When I returned from Great Britain's tour of Australia there was widespread concern that the test whitewash would be reflected by a fall in interest for a time in the game in this country.

League Official David Howes was among those who voiced this fear but as he is now happy to admit: 'After fearing some sort of backlash from fans disappointed by the test results, this has not materialised.'

There was also a lot of top quality players missing at the start of the season even into September so clubs were fielding 'A' teamers in considerable numbers.

These factors left us prepared to accept a temporary drop but we are pleased to report that gates are up, if only marginally.

We study the Soccer crowds every week. We like to make comparisons in towns and cities where both codes are played. It gives us an idea of the competition we face in these areas.

Hull and Bradford are two cases in point and both are doing well for Rugby league. Some people say how can you be satisfied at small gates of 3,000 in some cases but if these are showing an increase then it is in the right direction.

We have already had three gates of 10,000 plus in the First Division within six weeks.

Since 1973 when we brought back two divisions only once have we had more than 10,000 crowds in League games in a season.

Humberside clubs are showing the way with Hull drawing almost 17,000 for the derby with Rovers while Bradford and Widnes keep on pulling in top attendances.

David Howes adds: "We know the areas we have to tackle, improvement on grounds with onus on clubs and players to make sure the football is entertaining."

'The League policy is that there are better times ahead.'



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First team fixtures 1979/80 Oldham Rugby League Football Club

Date	Opponent	Venue	K.O.	F. A.
Aug. 19	County Cup Swinton	Away		22-15
Aug. 26	Warrington 2nd round	Home		6-34
Sept. 2	Doncaster	Away		25-0
Sept. 9	Huyton	Home	3.00 p.m.	15-3
Sept. 16	John Player Leeds	Home		7-31
Sept. 19	B.B.C. St. Helens			9-20
Sept. 23	Batley	Away		17-17
Sept. 30	John Player 2nd Round			
Oct. 7	Featherstone	Home	3.00 p.m.	23-22
Oct. 14	Whitehaven	Away		13-13
Oct. 21	Bramley	Home	3.00 p.m.	22-9
Oct. 28	Halifax	Home		P
Nov. 4	Huddersfield	Away		12-3
Nov. 11	Barrow	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Nov. 18	Swinton	Away		
Nov. 25	Dewsbury	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Dec. 2	Huyton	Away		
Dec. 9	Batley	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Dec. 16	Dewsbury	Away		
Dec. 26	Rochdale	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Dec. 30	Featherstone	Away		
Jan. 6	Swinton	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Jan. 13	Keighley	Away		
Jan. 20				
Jan. 27	Huddersfield	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Feb. 3	Challenge Cup 1st Round			
Feb. 17				
Feb. 24	Challenge Cup 2nd round			
Mar. 2	Barrow	Away		
Mar. 9	Whitehaven	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Mar. 16	Keighley	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Mar. 23	Halifax	Away		
Mar. 30	Doncaster	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Apr. 6				
Apr. 13				
Apr. 20	Bramley	Away		
Apr. 27				

'A' Team Fixtures 1979/80 Oldham Rugby League Football Club.

Date	Opponent	Venue	K.O.	F. A.
Sept. 1	Workington	Home	3.00 p.m.	15-12
Sept. 7	Leigh	Away	7.30 p.m.	5-13
Sept. 13	Blackpool	Home	7.30 p.m.	25-23
Sept. 21	Warrington	Away	7.30 p.m.	18-10
Oct. 6	Workington	Away	2.30 p.m.	P
Oct. 18	Wigan	Home	7.30 p.m.	18-17
Oct. 26	Wigan	Away	7.30 p.m.	25-15
Nov. 1	Leigh	Home	7.30 p.m.	16-3
Nov. 10	Barrow	Away	2.30 p.m.	
Nov. 15	Swinton	Home	7.30 p.m.	
Nov. 24	Rochdale	Away	3.00 p.m.	
Nov. 29	St. Helens	Home	7.30 p.m.	
Dec. 7	Widnes	Away	7.30 p.m.	
Dec. 15	Whitehaven	Away	3.00 p.m.	
Dec. 20	Rochdale	Home	7.30 p.m.	
Jan. 4	St. Helens	Away	7.30 p.m.	
Jan. 10	Swinton	Away	7.30 p.m.	
Jan. 17	Widnes	Home	7.30 p.m.	
Jan. 19	Whitehaven	Home	3.00 p.m.	
Jan. 26				
Feb. 2				
Feb. 9				
Feb. 14	Warrington	Home	7.30 p.m.	
Feb. 23				
Mar. 1	Barrow	Home	2.30 p.m.	
Mar. 12	Salford	Away	7.30 p.m.	
Mar. 15	Blackpool	Away	3.00 p.m.	
Mar. 20	Salford	Home	7.30 p.m.	

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AMATEURS RECEIVE PROFESSIONAL BACKING

By Alan Burke
Public Relations Officer,
Oldham Amateur Rugby League.

One of the most generous donations made recently by a professional Rugby League club to the amateur game must surely be that of the Oldham senior club, who at a social evening last month gave full sets of playing kit, costing in the region of £2,000, to each of the six amateur teams in the town who currently organise Rugby League at youth level. With Watersheddings now becoming much more financially stable due to the successful lottery started last season, it was especially pleasing to see that the Oldham club were once again willing to give assistance to the town's amateurs, and therefore further strengthen the good relationship which has always existed between the club and the amateur game, both at local and national levels.

Only a couple of seasons ago, Saddleworth Rangers were the only Oldham based amateur side to be running a youth team, but the recent upsurge of interest in the town in both amateur and schoolboy Rugby League at youth

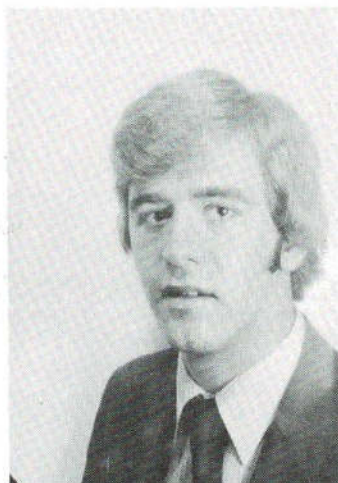
Only a couple of seasons ago, Saddleworth Rangers were the only Oldham based amateur side to be running a youth team, but the recent upsurge of interest in the town in both amateur and schoolboy Rugby League soon saw

Saint Anne's and Waterhead also form such sides. Fitton Hill, Salem Hornets, and Shaw, also now have thriving junior teams, while only last Sunday, Ferranti played their first ever game at Under-17 level. The Rochdale and Oldham Youth League was formed last season and accomodates teams at Under-15 and Under-17 age-groups, while many clubs are finding that they are now having to cater for boys between the ages of eleven and nineteen.

Oldham Chairman, Ray Hatton, said that he hoped that the donation of the playing kit to the amateurs would go part of the way to helping them maintain their already high standards and attract even more boys into the game, and that this could possibly be the first of many such awards to them. The Oldham Amateur Rugby League secretary, John Burke, conveyed the League's gratitude to the Oldham senior club for the donation, and also stated that he hoped that it would be the ambition of every youngster in the town who plays Amateur Rugby League to eventually turn professional, and play for the Watersheddings club.

Fred Howarth, the Saint Anne's second-row forward, made a fine start to his International career last Sunday when he scored a try and was a close second for the Man-of-the-Match award in his debut for Great Britain, who defeated the touring Papua New Guinea side at Hull by 28 points to 12. Fred must now have a excellent chance of further representative honours later in the season, firstly for Lancashire in the BARLA County Championship, and again for Great Britain when they entertain France in April. Congratulations also to Steve Topham (Saint Anne's), Tony Ogden (Higginshaw), and Kevin Byrne (Saddleworth), on their selection for the Lancashire Youth side, as well as to Waterhead who have won through to the Final of the first ever John Player Amateur Sevens competition. Waterhead will face either Garden Gate (Leeds) or National Dock Labour Board (Hull), that match to be played next Sunday, with the winners of the tournament receiving £500 plus the new trophy, and with the runners-up being awarded £300.

FOR ALL THE LOCAL AMATEUR RUGBY LEAGUE NEWS:
BBC RADIO MANCHESTER (206 medium wave; 95.1 vhf)
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