

OLDHAM Team Check

KEITH ATKINSON	1	IAN WILKINSON
HUSSEIN M'BARKI	2	ANDREW SMITH
DES FOY	3	DAVID CREASFER
GARY WARNECKER	4	CARL GIBSON
MICK TAYLOR	5	NORMAN FRANCIS
DAVID TOPLISS	6	JOHN HOLMES
RAY ASHTON	7	KEVIN DICK
WALLY JONES	8	KEITH RAYNES
IAN SANDERSON	9	COLIN MOSKILL
BRUCE CLARK	10	PHIL TURNER
DAVID HOBBS	11	KEVIN RAYNE
MICK WORRALL	12	PAUL MEDLEY
TERRY FLANAGAN	13	DAVID HERON (capt)
MICK PARRISH	14	MARK CONWAY
NEIL CLAWSON	15	

LEEDS from

Referee: **FRED LINDOP** Touch Judges: J. HIND, J. C. STANTON

GEORGE HILL



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OFFICIAL PROGRAMME
50p

OLDHAM

LEEDS

Sunday, 31st August, 1986
kick off 3 p.m.



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Oldham Rugby League Football Club

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Telephone: 061-652 5244 and 061-624 4865

President: R. Hatton

Chairman: H. V. Ashworth

Vice-Chairman: K Potter

Treasurer: E. Bayliss

Committee: E. Bayliss, K. Broadbent, R. Ogden, K. Potter, M. A. Richardson, B. Bousted, David Lord

Hon. Architects: Maxiscope Ltd

Hon. Club Solicitor: A. J. Adler

General Manager: F. Myler

Hon Secretary: F. Howarth, B.A.

Coaching Staff: G. Starkey, G. Gartland

Professional Playing Staff:

A. Alexander, D. Allen, R. Ashton, K. Atkinson, I. Birkby, A. Bishop, Bridges, B. Caffery, L. Casey, L. Chadwick, C. Chisnall, Clark, Clawson, L. Cook, S. Dobb, J. Edwards, T. Flanagan, D. Foy, C. Hawkyard, D. Hobbs, C. Jones, W. Jones, P. Kirwan, P. Lord, P. Lowndes, A. McCurrie, R. Marsden, M. Morgan, P. Morris, A. Morrison, G. Munro, T. Nadiole, D. Nicholson, S. Ogburn, T. Ogden, G. Owen, M. Parrish, S. Patterson, I. Sanderson, P. Sherman, A. Taylor, M. Taylor, D. Topliss, G. Walczak, M. Worrall

Hon. Doctors: Dr Grey, Dr Johnson

Dental Surgeon: Mr N. Gibson

Hon. Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons: Mr H. Thompson, Mr D. Walker

Physiotherapist: Mr A. Bonnelle

Asst. Physiotherapist: Mr J. Walker

Lifeline: L. Bostock

Commercial Manager: T. Morley

Social Club Manager: A. Gartshore

Official Timekeeper: J. Roscoe

Groundsman: J. Walker

CLUB RECORDS

Record Victory: 67-6 v. Liverpool City, April 1959

Record Defeat: 11-67 by Hull K.R., September 1978

Record Attendance: 28,000 v Huddersfield, 24th February, 1912

Record Receipts: £9,100 v Wakefield, 24th February, 1980

Record Transfer Fee Paid: £40,000 to Featherstone for David Hobbs, February, 1985

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 points v Liverpool City, April 1959

First Game: 21st October, 1876 v Stalybridge

Highest number of points scored: Bernard Ganley, 2,881

Most Appearances: Joe Ferguson, 685

Most Tries: Pre 1900, Jack Hirst, 233. Since 1900, Alan Davies, 182

CLUB HONOURS

Rugby League Championship Play-off Winners: 1909-10, 1910-11, 1956-57

Runners-up: 1906-07, 1907-08, 1908-09, 1921-22, 1954-55

First Division Champions: 1904-05

Second Division Champions: 1963-64, 1981-82

Rugby League Challenge Cup Winners: 1898-99, 1924-25, 1926-27

Runners-up: 1906-07, 1911-12, 1923-24, 1925-26

Lancashire Cup Winners: 1907-08, 1910-11, 1913-14, 1919-20, 1924-25, 1933-34, 1956-57, 1957-58, 1958-59

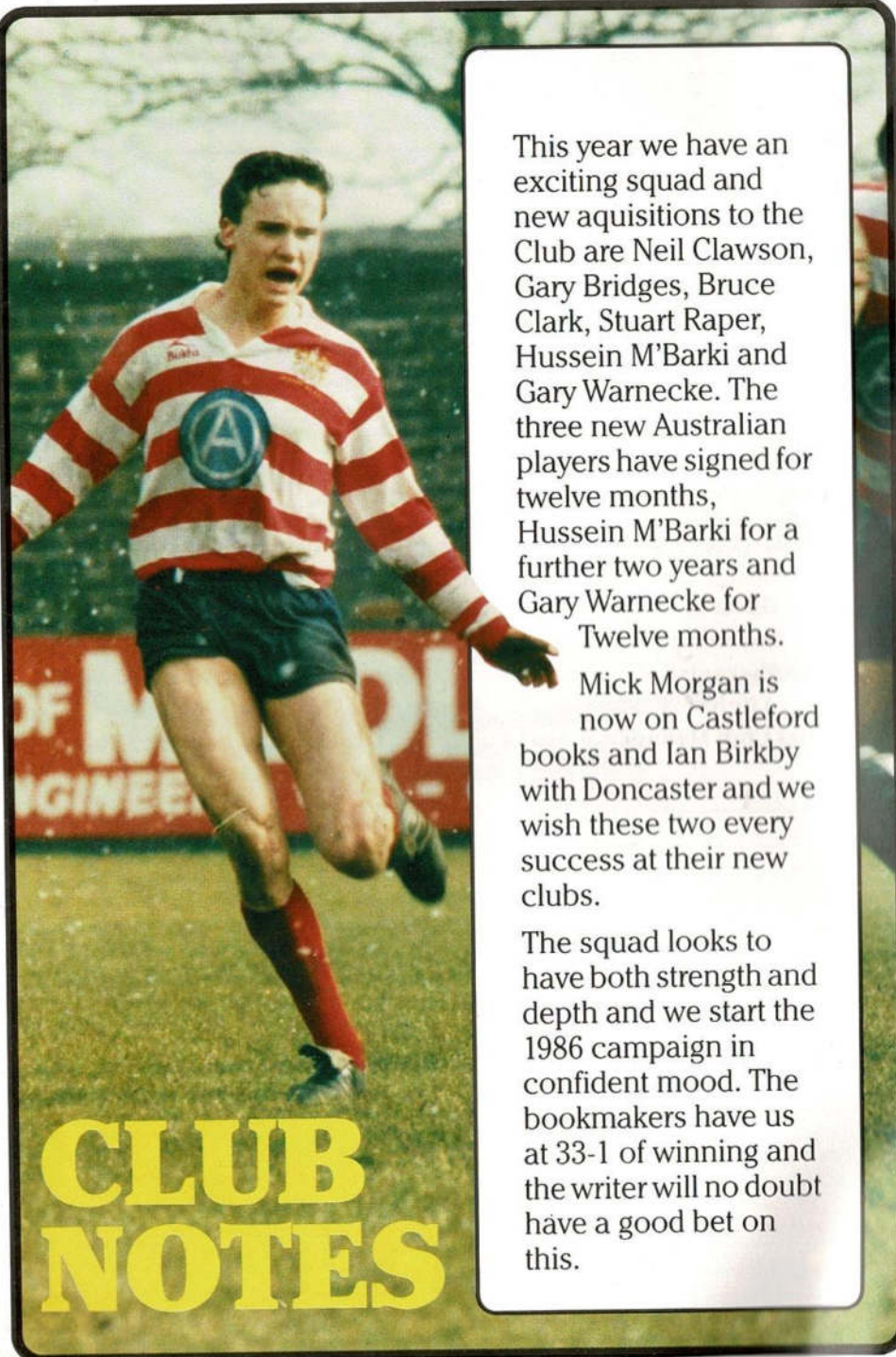
Runners-up: 1908-09, 1911-12, 1918-19, 1921-22, 1954-55, 1966-67, 19668-69

Lancashire Championship Winners: 1907-08, 1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57, 1957-58

Runners-up: 1908-09, 1910-11, 1911-12, 1919-20, 1923-24, 1954-55

Lancashire Shield Winners: 1975-76, 1979-80

Colts Premiership Trophy: 1979-80



This year we have an exciting squad and new acquisitions to the Club are Neil Clawson, Gary Bridges, Bruce Clark, Stuart Raper, Hussein M'Barki and Gary Warnecke. The three new Australian players have signed for twelve months, Hussein M'Barki for a further two years and Gary Warnecke for Twelve months.

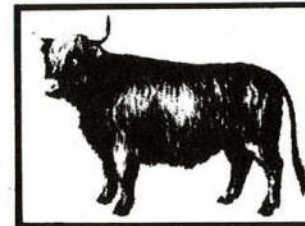
Mick Morgan is now on Castleford books and Ian Birkby with Doncaster and we wish these two every success at their new clubs.

The squad looks to have both strength and depth and we start the 1986 campaign in confident mood. The bookmakers have us at 33-1 of winning and the writer will no doubt have a good bet on this.

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Ian Sanderson	Maurice James
Bruce Clark	Tom Morley ORLFC
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LOOK AT LEEDS

It will be a new-look Leeds team that takes the field at Watersheddings this afternoon to officially open the new Stones Bitter championship. The "Lioners" came good in the second half of last season to finish sixth in the first Division behind Halifax, Wigan, St Helens, Warrington and Widness. But they have never won the First Division championship since two Divisions were introduced in 1973, and coach Peter Fox would love to put that right and see his Headingley lads become the first holders of the Stones Bitter championship. Already, though, Fox has suffered a mighty blow with the forced retirement through injury of big Jeff Grayshon, the man who followed him from Odsal to put vital strength and experience into the Leeds front-row.

Grayshon's sad departure from the League scene because of back trouble will leave an enormous gap in the Leeds forwards, but Headingley regulars will be hoping that Aussie Peter Smith, signed from Illawarra, will prove an adequate replacement when he arrives from Down Under soon. Two long serving Leeds stalwarts have also departed to find fresh fame and fortune with last season's champions Halifax - prop Roy Dickinson and utility back Neil Hauge. Former skipper David Ward's future is uncertain. The ex-Great Britain hooker could be at Leeds again - or at Hunslet. A Rugby League inquiry into the tug-of-war between the two clubs has taken place, but the problem was not resolved immediately. It is all-change, too, on the Aussie scene. Terry Webb is moving out and looks destined to join Hunslet, while Tony Currie and Cliff Lyons will be staying in Australia this time.

LOOK AT LEEDS

They have been succeeded by Down Under replacements Robert Morris, a hooker from New South Wales country football and the aforementioned Smith. Aware of possible back-line weaknesses following the loss of Lyons, Currie and Hauge, Leeds were also hoping to recruit another centre from Down Under and were being linked with Peter Jackson, a young, up-and-coming player from Brisbane, who is said to have a big future in the game.

There seems to be no shortage of forwards at Headingley when you think of Paul Medley, surely one of the fastest back-rowers in the game, big prop Brendan Hill, the Rayne twins, Keith and Kevin, £40,000 buy Colin Maskill, Gary Moorby, Roy Powell, youngster Richard Gunn, and club captain and loose-forward David Heron.

Mark Conway and Kevin Dick will again figure around the half-back spots, while it is rumoured that veteran John Holmes, a hero of many years of creative football for the "Lioners", could be set for a comeback after missing the whole of last season and seemingly going into retirement. Paul Gill or Ian Wilkinson will sort it out for the No.1 job, but unless the late-summer recruiting plans materialise, Leeds could be thin on the ground for centres and wings.

Andy Smith and David Creasser could well form one flank, while there will certainly be big expectations of Carl Gibson, with players like Andrew Stainland and Pat Mitchell, who once had trials here, challenging for places.



FANCY A FLUTTER?

Around the Clubs . . . with Roughyed

You can get odds of 33-1 against Oldham winning the first Stones Bitter championship, which starts today. Coral bookmakers make Wigan 2-1 favourites for the £20,000 record prize, with the Central Park glamour outfit looking for their first title success under New Zealand national coach Jimmy Lowe since 1960. Hull KR, bidding for a fourth First Division success, are second favourites at 7-2, followed by St Helens (6-1), Warrington (7-), Widnes (9-1) and current champions Halifax (10-1). Other First Division odds are Leeds (10-1), Hull (12-1), Bradford (20-1), Castleford (25-1), Leigh (33-1), Oldham (33-1), Salford (50-1), Featherstone (250-1), Barrow (500-1) and Wakefield (1,000-1).

There will be 23 referees this season graded to take charge of first-team games. There will be 12 from East of the Pennines and 11 from the West, including two from West Cumbria for the first time. They are Cliff Hodgson of Maryport, already well known, and Alex Bowman from Whitehaven who, at 28, is the youngest top graded referee since Fred Lindop hit the top 20 years ago. Fred, who takes charge today, is the League's most experienced official and is still among the officials considered for the international panel.

After today's game, Oldham travel to Thrum Hall on Wednesday night to take on champions Halifax. It will be 'Fax's first home game of the season, so there will be a big crowd to welcome the side as First Division champions, and a lot of pressure on the Oldham lads, who will be keen to deliver an early-season shock. Halifax, like Oldham, have undergone several team changes since last season, and on Wednesday we will probably come up against Joe Kilroy's full back successor - the former Australian Test star and ace goalkicker Graham Eadie. After three years out of the game, Eadie is back and has agreed to link up with his former Kangaroo team mate Chris Anderson, the Halifax coach.

The first round draw for the Grunhulle Lancashire Cup has been kind to Oldham by pairing us with Second Division champions Leigh here at Watersheddings in the first round two weeks today. Leigh have released Jeff Clarke, their Maori forward, to make way for a fourth Aussie behind half-back Mike Davis, who joined them from Fulham last season, and new signings Ian Schubert and Garry Howell, two back-row forwards.

There was a boost for Oldham when the League Council amended its laws on imports to include all overseas players, not merely Kiwis. This effectively freed Hussein M'Barki from this season's quota and allowed Frank Myler to sign 21-year-old forward Stuart Raper, son on the legendary Johnnie. If he is half as good as his dad, he'll be some player. Breaking with tradition, the Alliance League for "A" teams will be split into two this season. There are three new teams and the Divisions were decided on the positions in last season's final table. Oldham thus find themselves in Division Two, playing mainly Yorkshire opposition, apart from Swindon. Their opening fixture was against Dewsbury at Watersheddings on Friday. Nearly all our home games for the "A" team will be played on Friday nights so make a habit of making Friday night Oldham "A" night.

Salford have announced a lucrative £25,000 sponsorship deal involving an Oldham lifting gear company, Trenchman, and brewers Greenall Whitley.

The influx of Aussie players into our game shows no sign of drying up despite the fact that many of the Sydney and Brisbane players will be here with the Kangaroos in October. Latest club to recruit are St Helens who were expected to land two Sydney stars in half-back Brett Clarke of Wests and prop Pat Jarvis of St George.

OLDHAM 86

KEITH ATKINSON: Full-Back. Product of Oldham Rugby Amateur League. Came into the side at full-back at the end of last season and produced some very fine games. One for the future.

HUSSEIN M'BARKI: Wing. El Morrocan International Rugby Union player, signed for Fulham in 1981, later signed for Warrington, but only stayed for one season before joining Oldham last season. Versatile player, can play in most positions in the back line.

DES FOY: Centre. Local boy made good. Selected to tour in 1984 played in the 1st Test against Australia. Product of Saddleworth Rangers. Started his career with Widnes. One of the fastest centres in the game.

GARY WANNECKIE: Centre. Australian born spending his second season with Oldham, very durable player not missing a game last season. Played Western Suburb in Sydney before joining Oldham. Player with plenty of talent.

MICK TAYLOR: Wing. A former Huddersfield junior signed for Oldham 1982-83 season. Developed into a very sound player both in attack and defence.

DAVID TOPLISS: Stand-Off. In many people's eyes, one of the all time greats, a player of many talents, perhaps his greatest gift is the way he reads the game, a talent not in abundance in our game at the moment. Previous clubs Wakefield and Hull F.C.

RAY ASHTON: Scrum-Half. Product of the Widnes area. Signed for Oldham along with Flanagan, Goodway and Worrell which formed in the late 70's one of the best Colts sides ever produced. Ray toured in 1984, but due to a back injury did not play many games. Since his recovery however he has come back to form and has played a big part in keeping Oldham at the Rugby map.

WALLY JONES: Prop. Most under rated player in the game. Tremendous worker both in attack and defence, always willing to take on the opposing team in his own 25. Product of Warrington, Rochdale, Blackpool.

IAN SANDERSON: Hooker. Came into the side through the suspension of Alan McCurrie the start of last season and kept the number nine spot throughout the season. Named Young Player of the Year, also selected for Lancashire, but the game was called off due to the weather but if he keeps up the form of last season, will surely be in the reckoning for the County side this season. Product of the Leigh Amateur League.

DAVID HOBBS: Oldhams record buy cost £40,000, but you won't find a fan in Oldham who would begrudge a penny spent. Named Player of the Year last season. Previous club, Featherstone Rovers. Honours, Great Britain, Yorkshire, Toured Australia in 1984.

NEIL CLAWSON: Second Row. Son of Terry Clawson, played along side David Hobbs at Featherstone. Signed during the close season, Neil will prove to be a very cheap buy for this day and age. Standing at Six feet 3 inches will prove a very formidable partnership alongside Mick Worrall

MICK WORRAL: Second Row. Member of the 1984 Touring team Mick turned out to be one of the successes of the tour, only to be injured late on the tour. On returning from Australia he also picked up another knee injury which limited his appearances with Oldham. He was also injured in the St Helens game (Charity) last season and missed most of the early part of the season, but thankfully finished the season in great style. One of the best forwards in the game on his day.

TERRY FLANAGAN: Signed while only sixteen years old. Proved a very good signing over the years although still in his early twenties as earned every honour in the game, shows good ball skills and along with his tackling qualities as proved to be a very formidable player.

SUPPORTERS CLUB NEWS

President Mr D. Blackburn, Chairman Mr D. Pilkington, Vice Chairman Miss A. Collinge, Treasurer Mr T. Heywood, Secretary Mrs J. Pilkington, Committee Members: G. Brown, L. Chadderton, S. Collinge, E. Crowther, S. Doran, J. Gallagher, I. Gallagher, H. Heywood, M. Morgan, I. Pilkington, M. Pilkington, D. Pilkington, J. Sagar, L. Wolstencroft

The supporters club and committee would like to welcome all our friends and supporters from Leeds for today's match. We hope for a good clean entertaining game, we also invite all home and away supporters to use the canteens situated around the ground.

The souvenir shop behind the main stand will be open for sale of old replica shirts etc. throughout the match.

SUPPORTERS CLUB

Away Coaches to Halifax. Wednesday, 3rd September.
To leave Social Club at 6.15 p.m. Adults £2.70, Juniors £2.00

AWAY BY CAR

M62 Junction 24. A629 to A646 Kings Cross. Turn Right A58 ¼ mile Queens Road ¼ mile + rd Gibbett St. ¼ mile Right Thrum Hall Lane

SUPPORTERS CLUB

Away to Warrington. Sunday, 7th September.
To leave Social Club at 1.30 p.m. Adults £2.70, Juniors £2.00

AWAY BY CAR

M62 Junction 9. A49 Warrington Sign Whitechurch A49 - Wilderspool Cause Way then 1st Left ground

Subscriptions now due for 1986-87 season.

Membership Adult/Junior £1.00

Name

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Age under 14. Contact Joe Gallagher for ballboys/girls, home games 1st and A team matches. Pay at any Canteen Souvenir Shop. Diary for 1986-87 season.

Finally we would like to thank Wino's Ashcroft St for the Donation of a prize in the Ladies Fun Run.

Playing Record

	App	Gls	DG	T	Pts	Total App
H. M'BARKI	34	—	—	7	28	34
G. WARNECKE	32	—	—	14	56	32
R. ASHTON	31	4	4	6	36	200
P. KIRWAN	31	—	—	6	24	128
D. HOBBS	30	61	3	4	141	32
M. TAYLOR	30	—	—	6	24	87
I. SANDERSON	29	—	—	4	16	32
T. FLANAGAN	28	—	—	2	8	207
W. JONES	28	—	—	—	—	97
M. GRAHAM	27	—	—	21	84	27
D. FOY	26	—	—	10	40	121
M. PARRISH	25	22	—	3	56	194
M. MORGAN	24	—	—	2	8	96
G. LIDDIARD	21	—	—	4	16	21
M. WORRALL	21	15	—	3	42	140
P. LOWDNES	20	—	—	1	4	40
D. LIDDIARD	15	—	—	12	48	15
D. TOPLISS	15	—	—	3	12	15
J. EDWARDS	11	—	—	1	4	11
C. HAWKYARD	9	—	—	—	—	117
T. NADIOLA	9	—	—	—	—	45
K. ATKINSON	7	1	—	1	6	7
A. MORRISON	6	—	—	—	—	6
J. OGBURN	6	—	—	—	—	6
P. SHERMAN	4	—	—	2	8	9
I. BIRKBY	3	—	—	1	4	44
L. CASEY	3	—	—	—	—	3
D. FINCH	3	—	—	—	—	3
A. TAYLOR	3	—	—	—	—	77
B. CAFFERY	2	3	—	—	6	116
C. CHISNALL	2	—	—	—	—	9
R. MARSDEN	2	—	—	—	—	3
L. COOKE	1	—	—	—	—	16
G. MUNRO	1	—	—	—	—	205
T. OGDEN	1	—	—	—	—	19

The R.F.L. Championship Roll of Honour

CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP
1901-1902 Broughton Rangers	Salford
* 1902-03 Halifax	Salford
* 1903-04 Bradford	Salford
1904-05 Oldham	Bradford
1905-06 Leigh	Hunslet
1906-07 Halifax	Oldham
1907-08 Hunslet	Oldham
1908-09 Wigan	Oldham
1909-10 Oldham	Wigan
1910-11 Oldham	Wigan
1911-12 Huddersfield	Wigan
1912-13 Huddersfield	Wigan
1913-14 Salford	Huddersfield
1914-15 Huddersfield	Leeds
1919-20 Hull	Huddersfield
1920-21 Hull	Hull Kingston Rovers
1921-22 Wigan	Oldham
1922-23 Hull Kingston Rovers	Huddersfield
1923-24 Batley	Wigan
1924-25 Hull Kingston Rovers	Swinton
1925-26 Wigan	Warrington
1926-27 Swinton	St Helens R.
1927-28 Swinton	Featherstone Rovers
1928-29 Huddersfield	Leeds
1929-30 Huddersfield	Leeds
1930-31 Swinton	Leeds
1931-32 St Helens	Huddersfield
1932-33 Salford	Swinton
1933-34 Wigan	Salford
1934-35 Swinton	Warrington
1935-36 Hull	Widnes
1936-37 Salford	Warrington
1937-38 Hunslet	Leeds
1938-39 Salford	Castleford
1945-46 Wigan	Huddersfield
1946-47 Wigan	Dewsbury
1947-48 Warrington	Bradford Northern
1948-49 Huddersfield	Warrington
1949-50 Wigan	Huddersfield
1950-51 Workington Town	Warrington
1951-52 Wigan	Bradford Northern
1952-53 St Helens	Halifax
1953-54 Warrington	Halifax
1954-55 Warrington	Oldham
1955-56 Hull	Halifax
1956-57 Oldham	Hull
1957-58 Hull	Workington Town
1958-59 St Helens	Hunslet
1959-60 Wigan	Wakefield Trinity
1960-61 Leeds	Warrington
1961-62 Huddersfield	Wakefield Trinity
* 1962-63 Swinton	St Helens
* 1963-64 Swinton	Wigan
1964-65 Halifax	St Helens
1965-66 St Helens	Halifax
1966-67 Wakefield Trinity	St Helens
1967-68 Wakefield Trinity	Hull Kingston Rovers
1968-69 Leeds	Castleford
1969-70 St Helens	Leeds
1970-71 St Helens	Wigan
1971-71 Leeds	St Helens
1972-73 Dewsbury	Leeds
* 1973-74 Salford	St Helens
* 1974-75 St Helens	Wigan
* 1975-76 Salford	Featherstone Rovers
* 1976-77 Featherstone Rovers	St Helens
* 1977-78 Widnes	Bradford Northern
* 1978-79 Hull Kingston Rovers	Warrington
* 1979-80 Bradford Northern	Widnes
* 1980-81 Bradford Northern	Warrington
* 1981-82 Leigh	Hull
* 1982-83 Hull	Hull Kingston Rovers
* 1983-84 Hull Kingston Rovers	Hull
* 1984-85 Hull Kingston Rovers	St Helens
* 1985-86 Halifax	Wigan

* First Division

OLDHAM RUGBY LEAGUE FIXTURES 1986-87

SEPTEMBER

Wed 3	Halifax	7:30
Sun 7	Warrington	3:00
Sun 14	County Cup Comp	
Sun 21	Hull K.R.	3:00
Sun 28	Leigh	3:30

OCTOBER

Sun 5	Widnes	3:00
Sun 19	Featherstone	3:00
Sun 26	Wakefield	3:30

NOVEMBER

Sun 2	Barrow	3:00
Tues 4	Australia	7:30
Sun 9	Hull K.R.	3:00
Sun 16	St Helens	3:00
Sun 23	Bradford	3:30
Sun 30	JPS Trophy (1)	

DECEMBER

Sun 7	JPS Trophy (2)	
Sun 14	Warrington	3:00
Sun 21	St Helens	3:00
Fri 26	Salford	3:00

NEXT HOME MATCH

LEIGH

Friday, 12th September
Lancashire Cup 1st round

JANUARY

Thur 1	Leeds	3:00
Sun 4	Hull	3:00
Sun 11	Wakefield	3:00
Sun 18	Widnes	3:00
Sun 25	Halifax	3:00

FEBRUARY

Sun 1	Silk Cut Cup (1)	
Sun 8	Wigan	3:00
Sun 15	Silk Cut Cup (2)	
Sun 22	Hull	3:00

MARCH

Sun 1	Castleford	3:30
Sun 8	Featherstone	3:30
Sun 15	Bradford	3:00
Sun 29	Castleford	3:00

APRIL

Sun 5	Barrow	2:30
Sun 12	Leigh	3:00
Fri 17	Salford	3:00
Mon 20	Wigan	3:00

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HALIFAX	30	19	6	5	499	365	44
WIGAN	30	20	3	7	776	300	43
ST. HELENS	30	20	2	8	729	503	42
WARRINGTON	30	20	1	9	665	393	41
WIDNES	30	19	3	8	520	454	41
LEEDS	30	15	3	12	554	518	33
HULL K.R.	30	16	1	13	507	500	33
HULL	30	15	2	13	616	508	32
OLDHAM	30	13	4	13	524	539	30
SALFORD	30	14	0	16	508	561	28
CASTLEFORD	30	12	1	17	551	585	25
BRADFORD N.	30	11	1	18	447	473	23
FEATHERSTONE R.	30	9	3	18	419	616	21
YORK	30	9	0	21	413	592	18
SWINTON	30	8	0	22	371	648	16
DEWSBURY	30	5	0	25	323	847	10

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RODSTOCK WAR OF THE ROSES

The second annual Rodstock war of the Roses between Yorkshire and Lancashire on County Origin basis, will be staged at Headingley, Leeds, on Wednesday, 17th September, kick-off 7.30 p.m.

The Rodstock War of the Roses is the last big match before Great Britain Coach, Maurice Bamford, announces his team for the first Whitbread Trophy Bitter Test at Old Trafford on Saturday, 25th October

Yorkshire Coach, Peter Fox, and Lancashire Coach, Alex Murphy, name their sides on 8th September to contest the Rodstock Trophy, won last year by underdogs Yorkshire.

A curtain raiser between Yorkshire and Lancashire Under 11s will be staged at 6.30 p.m.

Seat tickets priced £4.00 can be bought in advance from Leeds R.L.F.C. Headingley, Leeds.

WHITBREAD TROPHY BITTER TESTS

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The 1986 Whitbread Trophy Bitter Test time table is:

Saturday, 25th October, at Old Trafford, Manchester.

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Saturday, 8th November, at Elland Road, Leeds.

Kick off 2.15 p.m.

Saturday, 22nd November, at Central Park, Wigan.

Kick off 2.15 p.m.

Seat tickets are priced at £8.00, £7.00 and £6.00 for the First and Second Tests and £7.00 only for the Third Test

Seat tickets can be obtained from each of the three Test venues plus tickets for all three Tests are available from:

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AROUND THE LEAGUE

Record Prize for Champions

A record Rugby League champions prize of £20,000 and a first ever end of season Premiership double header are the main features of the new Stones Bitter sponsorship showcase.

The League's biggest purse will be handed over along with the Stones Bitter championship trophy in a £60,000 prize structure which, for the first time, includes runners-up cash prizes.

The inaugural final of the Second Division top-eight premiership competition will be staged in a double bill with the premiership final on Sunday, 17th May in a "two for the price of one" climax to the campaign.

These major innovations highlight the first season of a three-year £400,000 championship and premiership sponsorship campaign.

Of the 1986-87 sponsorship fee of £210,000, 50% will be invested in the League's capital development fund for ground improvements, the remainder will be distributed as follows:

First Division champions £20,000 - Runners-up £8,000

Second Division champions £10,000 - Runners-up £4,000

Premiership winners £9,000 - Runners-up £3,500

Second Division Premiership winners £4,000 - Runners-up £1,500

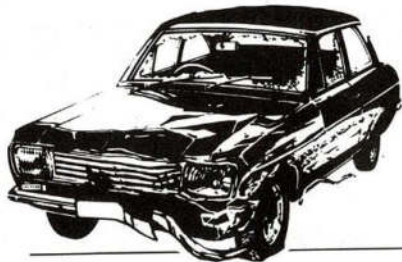
Eight teams therefore, will receive Stones Bitter League and premiership prize money - five more than last year when Slalom Lager was on the the name of the competition.

Says new League Chairman David Wigham "The introduction of the Second Division premiership, the expansion of the prize structure to 50% of the sponsorship fee plus runners-up awards are part of the positive, forward-looking policy adapted by the League."

"The aim is to provide greater incentives for clubs while maintaining a central fund for development of grounds particularly in respect of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act."

"Increased incentives are open to all clubs, emphasised by last season's seven major titles being shared by six different clubs - Halifax, Leigh, Castleford, Warrington, Hull KR and Wigan twice."

The Stones Bitter championship is streamlined to 14 clubs for the start of the 1987-88 season. To accommodate the reduction of two clubs, there will be a promotion and relegation format four-down and two-up in the present season, thereafter reverting to a three-up and three-down.



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CLUB PROFILE

The 1986-87 season for Oldham Rugby League Football Club is going to be a turning point in many ways. The Club has spent a lot of money on refurbishing the V.I.P. Lounges with the assistance of Matthew Brown's brewers.

We are making every effort to build a new stand for the start of the 1987-88 season. One exciting thing about it is that the council are helping us by setting up a working party and have helped to finance Ground Safety work for this year.

We are looking at all ways of making money to enable us to better conditions at the Watersheddings and over the next 12 months these alterations and developments will become apparent.

May we take this opportunity of welcoming everyone back to Watersheddings and may we also welcome our visitors from Leeds.

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THE EDITOR TALKING

Here We Go... To a Bright New Future

The Secretary General of the Rugby Football League David Oxley told club officials and members of the Press at the pre-season Stones Bitter lunch that there was a time, in days long ago, when Rugby League enjoyed a close season. This was no longer the case. The summer of 86 had been a desperately busy time for the League and the clubs and with barely a break on the administrative side, we were now on the threshold of another season. He was talking of the game in general, but he could so easily have been pin-pointing Oldham such has been the enormous amount of work that has gone on here during the summer months. The League Secretary also said that the aftermath of the Bradford fire disaster had provided our game with its biggest crisis since its formation in 1895, but the League clubs were facing up to the problems and challenges and looking forward to what should be a terrific season, highlighted by the visit of the Australian tourists in the autumn.

We are also facing up to problems and challenges... and we are certainly looking forward to a bright new future as a limited liability company with a board of directors and shareholders. Without progress you stagnate and there is no doubt that Rugby League football as it approaches its centenary in 1995 is all about enterprise, investment, commercialism, and major sponsorship. Big business is now involved in the higher echelons of our game and it is of great significance that authorities such as the Rugby Football League and the local Council are 100 per cent behind our move to change from a members' club to a limited company.

The truth is that we have no alternative. The members realise this and have already made a "moral commitment" to approve the big decision soon. Protracted discussions on the limited company issue have taken up much of the summer months and, hopefully, will soon provide us with the historic day when the changeover takes place. But that has been one of the many crucial decisions made in the past few months, all of them with the good of the club as the underlying theme and the crucial need to see the club into the big-time commercially. There was the decision to enter into a major deal with Blackburn brewers Matthew Brown, already well known in League circles for their recent Slalom Lager sponsorship. The link-up can only benefit both parties as, hopefully, will our new association with Nike, the sports wear manufacturers.

Talks have also been going on in great detail with the local authority regarding both short-term and long-term plans for the development of Watersheddings. The work that has had to be done on the ground during the summer has been enormous, and the club is indebted to the local authority for the help it has received short term and the interest that has been generated at the town hall for the future development of the stadium which has a soft spot in the hearts of so many Oldhamers, both young and old. A steering committee comprising local authority and club officials has been set up, and recently the club commercial manager Tom Morley enjoyed a fact-finding mission to Watford soccer club to examine a scheme at Vicarage Road that has also involved local authority backing.

Finally, there was the club's decision to lease out the social club and we can only reiterate that this was done with the club's best interests at heart. The future, we are sure, will show the wisdom of our move, not only providing a guaranteed source of income but allowing for the upgrading of the social club and assisting in the overall growth of interest in the Oldham RL Club. On the field, too, we have much to look forward to. Aussies Gary Bridge, Bruce Clark, and Stuart Raper should be with us soon, we have signed Neil Clawson from Featherstone, David Topliss is back with us, and Graham Starkey has been entitled to help with the training and coaching and form a three-man backroom team with Frank Myler and Brian Gartland.

Here we go then at the start of a brand new season. It has been a traumatic summer in many ways... but faith, hope and sheer hard work have brought us up to the starting gun once more. Now its up to the players to run the race!

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COMMERCIAL CORNER

A lot of supporters have been watching the activities of the Commercial Department with great interest and some have been worried during the closed season about the directions the club has been taking. The situation at Watersheddings is that the financial is precarious and unpopular decisions have had to be made to make it pay its way. However you will be able to see some of the changes made this season. I would like to hear from anyone who would like to help us with fund-raising and from any ladies who would like to run fund-raising evenings. We hope you like the new programme and would like to hear your comments. See you at the next game.

Niall T. Morley (Commercial Manager)

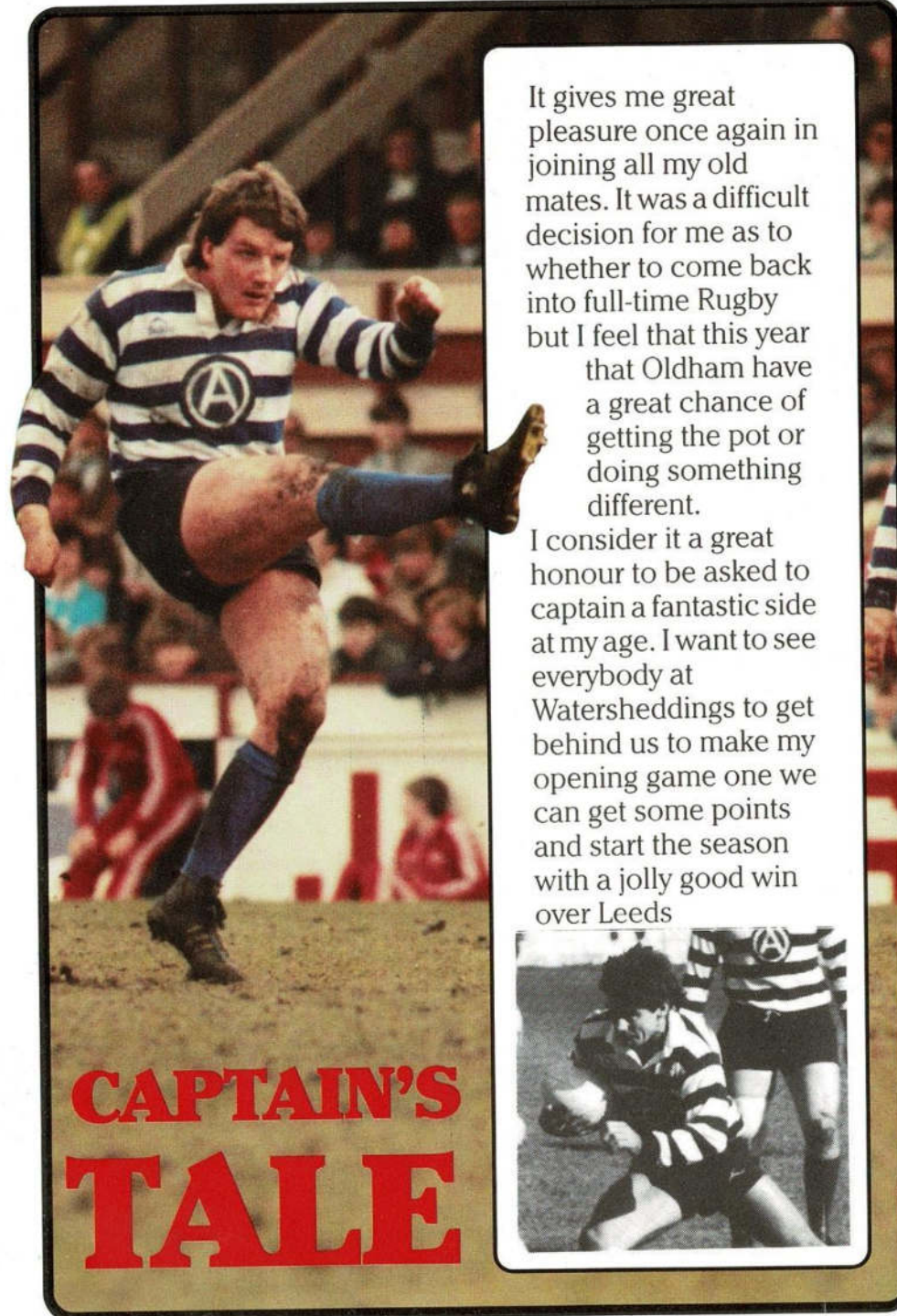
LIFELINE

Last weeks £1,000 winner was NO.1283, M Crowley.

We have a lot of new exciting things coming in Lifeline and the new foreign players will be helping with promotion work and any suggestions regarding promotion to be forwarded to us.

If you are not already a member of the Lifeline society why not join now. Telephone 626 4501

Les Bostock (Lifeline Manager)



It gives me great pleasure once again in joining all my old mates. It was a difficult decision for me as to whether to come back into full-time Rugby but I feel that this year that Oldham have a great chance of getting the pot or doing something different.

I consider it a great honour to be asked to captain a fantastic side at my age. I want to see everybody at Watersheddings to get behind us to make my opening game one we can get some points and start the season with a jolly good win over Leeds

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