

SILK CUP

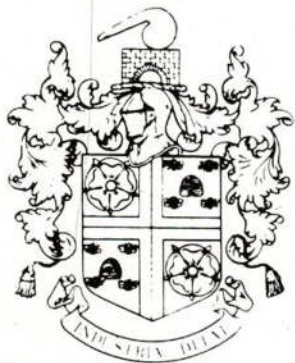
LOW TAR As defined by H.M. Government
Warning: SMOKING CAN CAUSE HEART DISEASE
Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

The Rugby Football League SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP



THIRD ROUND
Widnes v. Oldham
Sunday, 25th February, 1990
Kick-off 3 p.m.
Official Programme 70p

**WIDNES
R.L.F.C.**



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& POLYMERS

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CLUB HONOURS

Division One Champions: 1977-78,
1987-88, 1988-89.
Championship Beaten Finalists: 1935-36.
Challenge Cup Winners: 1929-30, 1936-37,
1963-64, 1974-75, 1978-79, 1980-81, 1983-84.
Beaten Finalists: 1933-34, 1949-50, 1975-76,
1976-77, 1981-82.
Lancashire League Winners: 1919-20.
Lancashire Cup Winners: 1945-46,
1974-75, 1975-76, 1976-77, 1978-79, 1979-80.
Beaten Finalists: 1928-29, 1939-40, 1955-56,
1971-72, 1981-82, 1983-84.
John Player Trophy Winners:
1975-76, 1978-79.
Beaten Finalists: 1974-75,
1977-78, 1979-80, 1983-84, 88-89.
Premiership Winners: 1979-80, 1981-82,
1982-83, 1987-88, 1988-89.
Beaten Finalists: 1977-78.
BBC2 Floodlit Trophy Winners: 1978-79.
Beaten Finalists: 1972-73, 1973-74.
Western Division Championship
Beaten Finalists: 1962-63.
Charity Shield Winners: 1988, 1989.
European & World Club Champions: 1989.

PROGRAMME

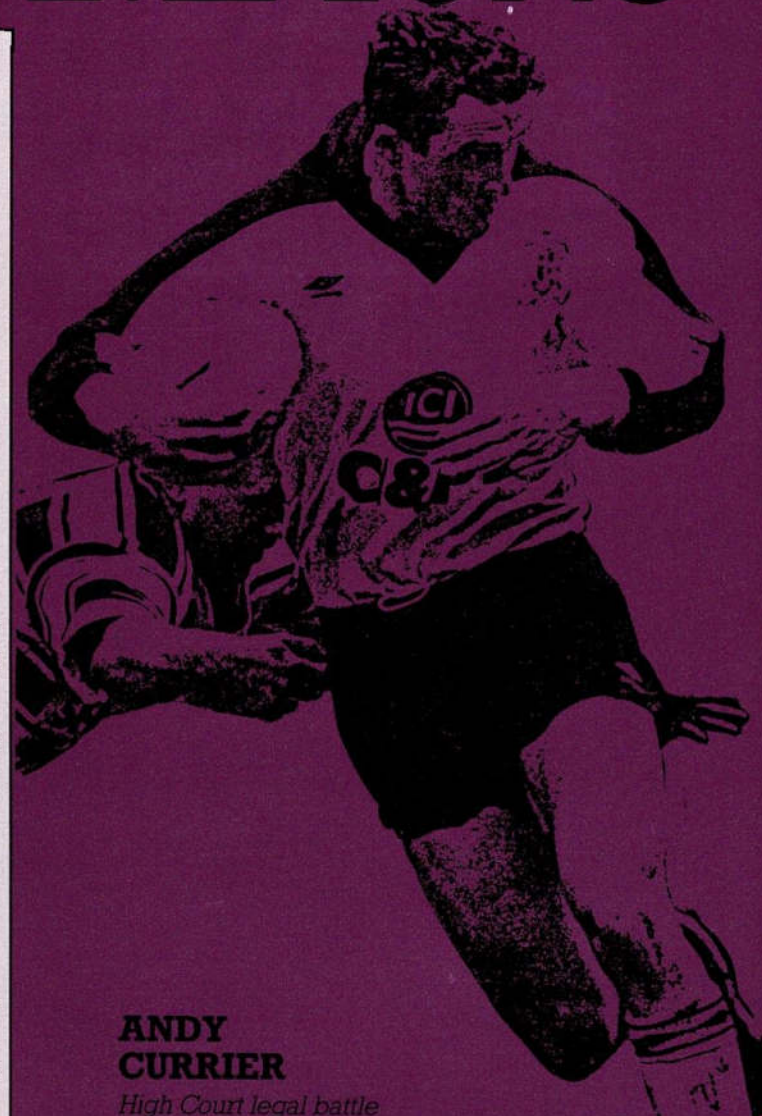
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or Widnes R.L.F.C.*



**ANDY
CURRIER**

*High Court legal battle
to lift ban.*

DOUG OUT

"Refereeing . . . rather than me!"

Doug Laughton telling the real story

It would appear that the suspensions and the crack-down in Rugby League is certainly going to last until the end of the season and possibly forever, with Dean Bell getting 10 matches.

I was quite amazed that after our game

against Hull, more people were interested in the fact that Ian Lucas had been sent-off for Wigan rather than the result, which seems a strange state of mind to me.

I am of the view that our referees are an honest bunch, a fact that was confirmed for me by John Holdsworth when he went to the Appeals Committee for Andy Currier. Sometimes in training I take on the

refereeing role, and trying to watch players on either side of me and the play of the ball at the same time is no easy task. In fact it is nigh on impossible, and as a coach in the modern day game I see more rugby than ever before, both professional and amateur.

There was an incident that happened in the Wigan game when from the kick-off it was obvious that the referee

had told Jonathan Davies to hold on a minute. I have seen in the last few weeks in the amateur game on two separate occasions the touch-judges disagreeing over the conversion.

As for the incident against Wigan, it was obvious that the referee had made a mistake. I feel that we could do with a universal signal from the referee which lets us know that he has made a mistake and we could stop the clock and start again. After all, their job is such a complex one that mistakes are inevitable—rather than me.

Today, we entertain one of the two strongest sides in the Second Division, the other one being Hull KR. The results of both Hull KR and today's visitors, Oldham, against First Division opposition this

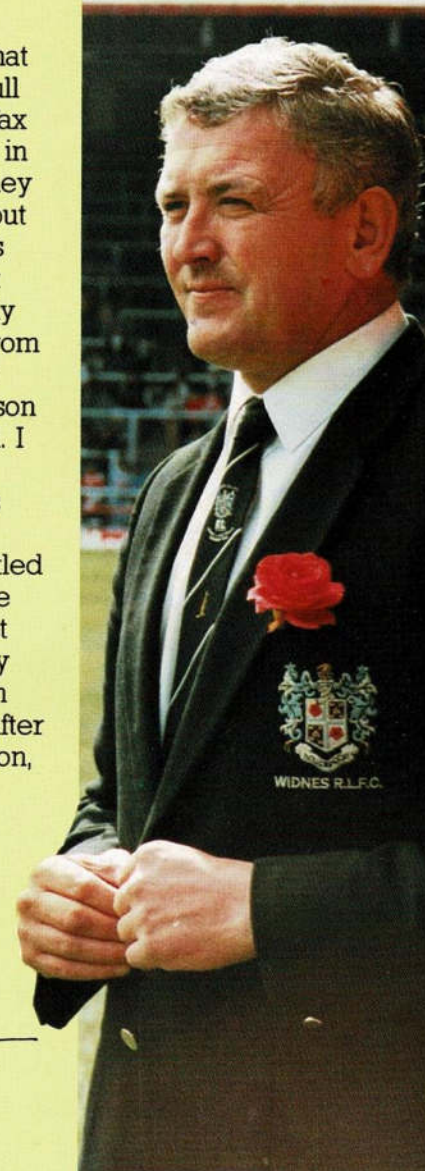
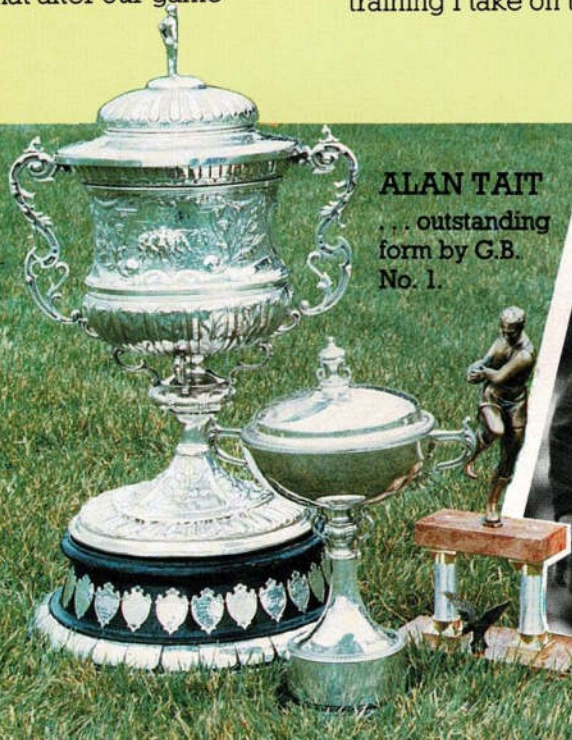
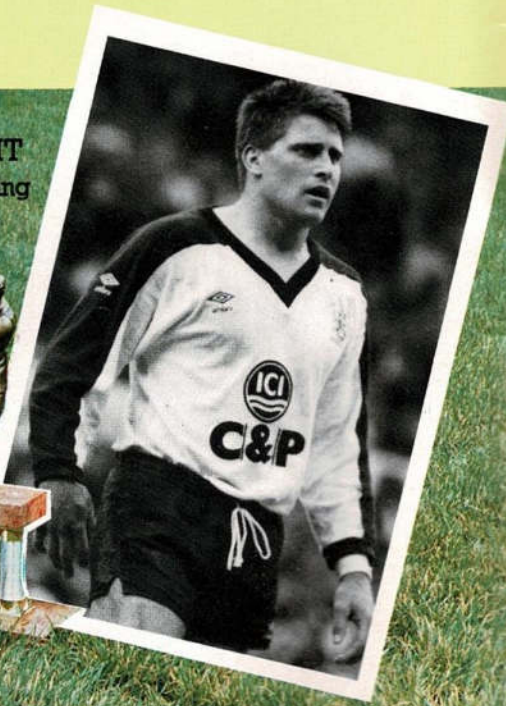
season, have been noteworthy.

Today's game promises to be an enthralling match. What is probably setting Hull KR, Oldham and Halifax above the other sides in Division Two is that they have that bit of pace out wide. Having had Des Foy under my wing at Widnes, he is certainly quick, and I am told from good sources that the other centre, Henderson has a bit of toe as well. I am hoping that we progress to the semi's because by then we could be having a settled side as our injuries are probably at the lowest this season. Both Barry Dowd after his broken leg, and Paul Hulme after his cartilage operation, are in training and should be ready for selection in the next couple of weeks.

Doug Laughton

READ DOUG EVERY MONTH
IN 'OPEN RUGBY'.

ALAN TAIT
... outstanding
form by G.B.
No. 1.



**IN
TOWN
TODAY**



TWIN TOWERS AHEAD...



OLDHAM

Make no mistake about it, today's visitors Oldham, are a Second Division side in name only. Their relegation last season was a major surprise and they look set for a quick return to the top flight having lost only two of eighteen League fixtures this term (at Halifax and Rochdale). In addition they have notched up some impressive Cup performances, defeating Barrow 46-2, St. Helens 36-6 (both away) and Wigan 19-18 in the Lancashire Cup and Salford in the Challenge Cup.

Those results have been achieved thanks to a very strong squad which includes talented and pacy threequarters such as Des Foy and John Henderson and promising young forwards like Leo Casey. Foy is a former Widnes and G.B. player and the Chemicks link is strong throughout the Watersheddings outfit, since Keith Newton, Andy Ruane, Duncan Platt and John Fieldhouse have all appeared in black and white in the past. Oldham recruits from further afield include Aussie stand-off, Brett Clark (via St. Helens) and big Maori centre, Charlie McAlister.

There is a widespread feeling throughout the town of Oldham that this is their year for Wembley, a feeling that has been fuelled by the recent success of their neighbouring soccer team. History is not on their side because of course the Roughyeds have yet to visit the famous twin towers despite having reached four semi-finals. Their most recent appearances at that stage of the competition came in 1986 when they were defeated 18-7 by Castleford at Central Park. Prior to that they lost to Hull K.R. in a second replay in 1964, to Hull in 1960 and to Widnes in 1934. However, such a sequence cannot go on forever and sooner or later Oldham will reach their goal. The Widnes job today is to try to make sure that they wait at least one more year!

THE CAPTAIN

The Oldham captain, John Cogger, returns today to a part of the world which he knows very well, because he was formerly the star player at Runcorn Highfield for three seasons.

When the Australian-born loose forward became disillusioned with Highfield last season, he chose to go to Watersheddings and he has continued to earn rave reviews there.

Basically the strengths of his game are speed, aggression and a sound kicking ability; skills which have made him the top try scorer in Division Two football this season. Formerly with Western Suberbs in Sydney, John was voted Greenalls Second Division Player of the Year in 1987.

STAR MAN



Still only 24 years old, it seems as if Michael Ford has been around the R.L. scene for an age, simply because of the impact that he made as a teenager.

A product of Oldham St. Annes A.R.L.F.C., he signed for Wigan in August 1983 and quickly became their regular scrum-half. It was as Brett Kenny's half-back partner in that classic Challenge Cup final of 1985 that Ford shot to prominence and his performance that day no doubt had a big part in the decision of Eastern Suberbs to sign him on for the summer of that year.

Whilst at Central Park he obtained G.B. caps at Colts and U-21 level, but the signing of Andy Gregory in January 1987 caused him to seek a transfer and he subsequently signed for Leigh. In 1988 he moved to Oldham and in that same year he was a surprise selection for the Tour down-under, although in the event he failed to make any of the Test sides.

THE COACH

In November 1988, the then Warrington coach, Tony Barrow, felt as though he was not receiving the full support of the Wilderspool board and so he shocked the R.L. world by walking out on the Wires.

Almost immediately he took over the vacant coaching position at Oldham and though relegation followed he has gained a great deal of popularity amongst the players and supporters of his new club.

Anyone who has heard his frequent appearances on local radio will be aware of his no-nonsense approach to the game, an attitude which he also possessed during a highly successful playing career as a centre threequarter with St. Helens and Leigh. At Hilton Park he played an influential role in that club's first ever Wembley visit in 1971. Can he do the same for Oldham?



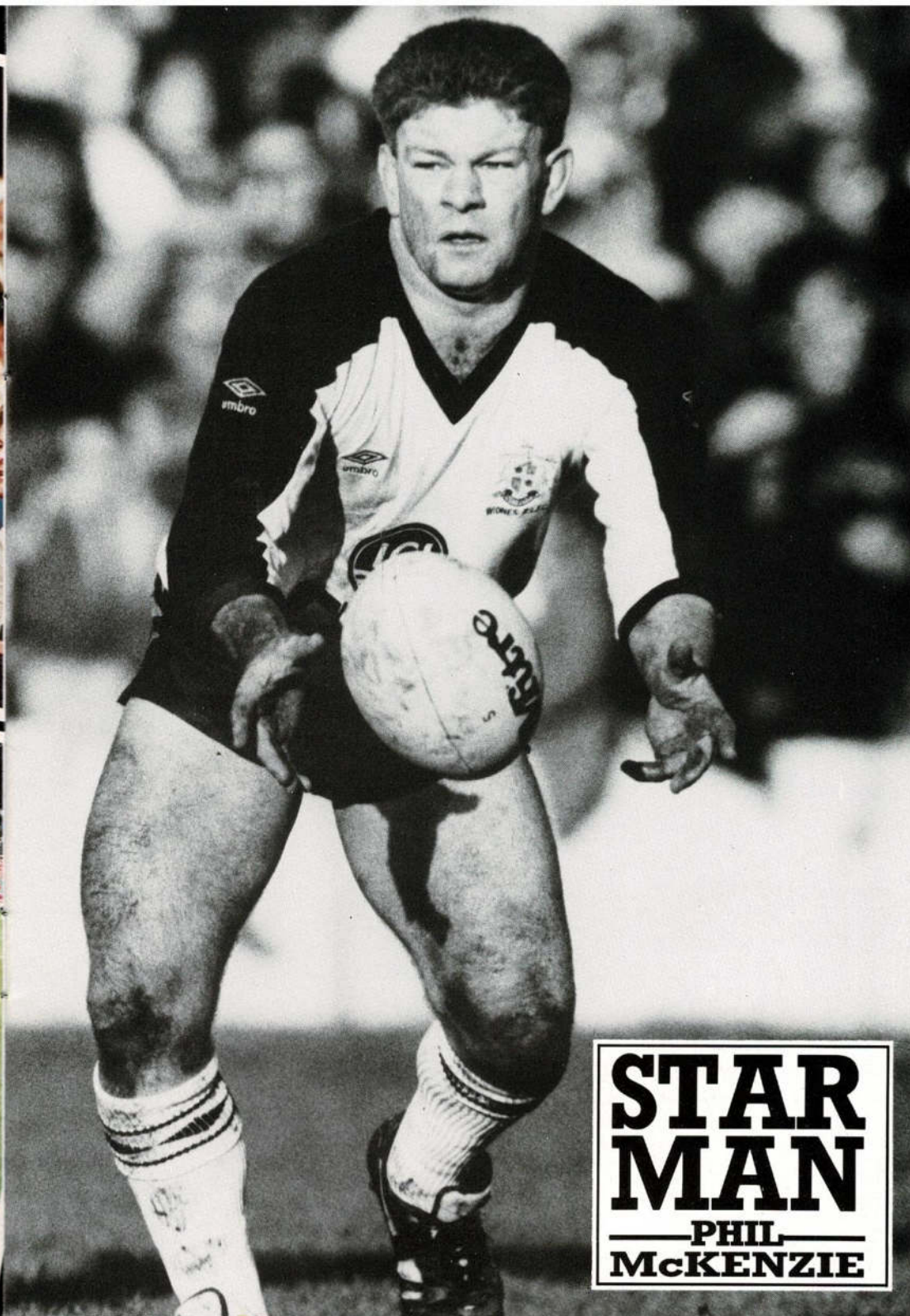
TONY BARROW'S TOP TEAM

1. Hampson (Wigan)
2. Ford (Leeds), 3. Schofield (Leeds), 4. Lydon (Wigan), 5. Offiah (Widnes)
6. Woods (Warrington), 7. Gregory (Wigan)
8. Ward (Castleford), 9. McKenzie (Widnes), 10. Davidson (Warrington)
11. Miller (Hull K.R.), 12. Gregory (Warrington)
13. Hanley (Wigan)

Courtesy of The Rothmans Year Book.

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Wit, wisdom and loadsa Wonga!

INSIDE

EXCLUSIVE

GARY STAYS WITH THE NEIGHBOURS

Kiwi scrum-half Gary Freeman will **not** be turning out for the Chemics next season, but I understand that it won't be for the want of trying by the Widnes club. It seems a deal was agreed in principle before he returned down under in December, but then a Sydney club offered him extra wonga (three times as much in fact!). As they say, money talks, and it's persuasive!

It's a terrible admission I know, but I do take more than a passing interest in soccer, and so I was very impressed with Oldham Athletic's recent 6 goal haul in the semi-final of the Littlewoods Cup. Ex-West Ham manager, Lou Macari, told me afterwards that the odds against that happening were 1000-1!

I have just read a report of a robbery at the home of Mike Burton, the former England Rugby Union player. Tickets for a recent match at Twickenham between England and Wales were stolen and then offered back for a ransom demand of £100,000. How many tickets did Burton have at his home to receive such a large ransom demand I ask myself. Funny thing is, I was offered a ticket but I declined the invitation as I had promised to take the mother-in-law shopping for the day!

Thank goodness the League acted quickly in overruling Rochdale's ambitious attempt of claiming B.T. as one of their own, again I could see another tribunal looming on the horizon with Widnes losing out once again. When you lose a tribunal hearing your faith in justice becomes a little distorted to say the least. I dreaded opening the morning paper to read that Widnes had lost Offiah to Runcorn over some small technicality because Martin got off the train there. Or John Devereux to St. Helens because his stolen car was found there!

It was absolutely no consolation at all for me to learn that the touch judge involved in the 'Darren Wright Affair' has since been downgraded by Mr. Lindop, after all, we don't get our two points back do we? Surely the system must be wrong when a minor official can virtually dictate the course of the Championship battle.

Talking to an ex G.B. international the other week, he points out that touch judges were originally told to look out for off-the-ball fouls which the ref might miss which is fair enough. But they don't. They follow the ball, which means we have three referees (at least two of which are unqualified for the job) and nobody carrying out the touchjudge role... over to you, Fred.

In the last round of the Cup, Rochdale put up a tremendous struggle, and no wonder... very reliable sources tell me that the Hornets were on £1,000 a man. There's no shortage of cash at Spotland these days.

I wonder if the Roughyeds are on that sort of brass today?

On Sunday night I saw the wife, Mona, wandering around the lounge with the TV aerial in her hands as I tried to make contact with YTV. Eventually, I found it and we sat back to watch the Hull match. The incident when Tim Wilby was sent off for elbowing Phil McKenzie was not caught by the camera on top of the popular stand, but there was no re-running of the incident or looking at it from other angles—take note Ray and Alex.

Following the game the cameras were in the Widnes dressing-room as David Watkins presented Martin Offiah with his Man-of-the-Match award. Mona was really upset to see that the camera shots were only from the waist upwards as she has not yet taped over the video of the Wigan game.

The final credits showed Martin running in his hat-trick to the strains of Katrina and the Waves 'Walking on Sunshine', quite appropriate don't you think?

The 3D Xray scan is becoming quite a hit with the lads, with Tony Myler, Mossy and J.D. all taking advantage of modern technology.

A Bristol consultancy has offered the Chemics cut price examinations, to sort out long standing injuries.

J.D. has certainly done the rounds with his hamstringing problem... London—Lillishall, next stop Lourdes?

The other night I was in my local when two regulars were discussing the third round draw of the Cup. One chap said: "Who have Widnes got", "Oldham at home" came the reply. "I hope it isn't a draw then", "Why", "Because Oldham have not been beaten on their plastic pitch for 33 games, so Widnes will have no chance of winning there!", wonderful stuff! I just smiled and reached for my notebook.

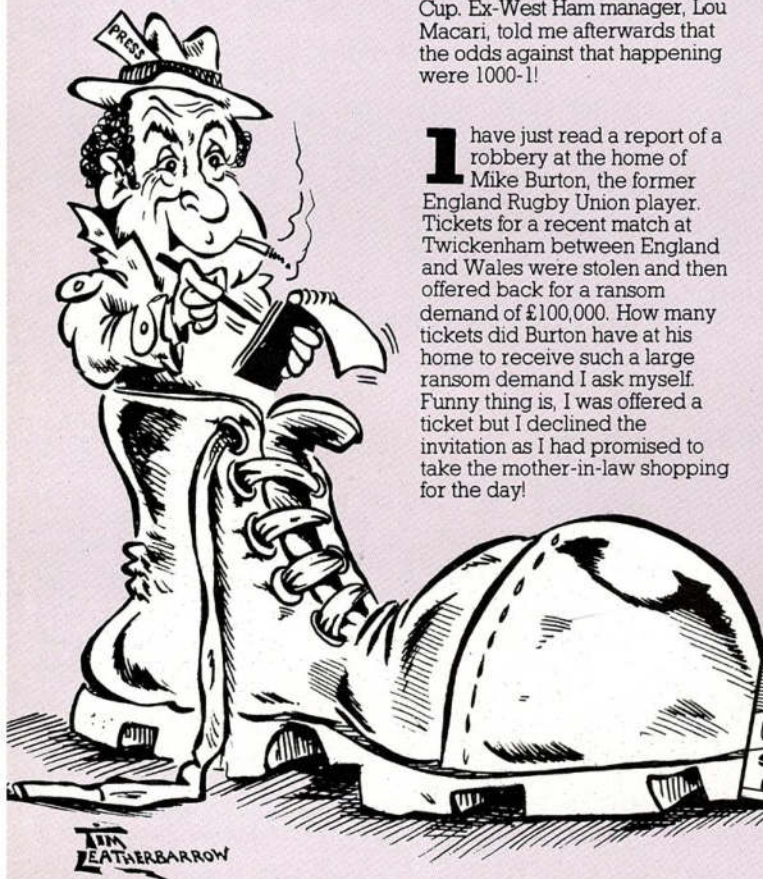
Abolish the sending-off of players! That seemed the crazy idea from Australia not so long ago.

But perhaps it's not so daft after all. The controversy over referees dismissing players for debatable trips and head tackles suggests a rethink.

Why not book the players but leave it to the Disciplinary Committee and videos to decide their fate?

FROM

WILLIAM BOOT



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WEMBLEY LEGEND

CHIEFY...

THE KEITH ELWELL INTERVIEW

This week's interview is with the former Widnes and Great Britain hooker, Keith Elwell who is still heavily involved in the game as player/coach with amateur side IBIS. Keith played in all seven of Widnes' Wembley appearances between 1975 and 1984.

Keith's most memorable games are the first and last finals in which he played. "The first game against Warrington in 1975 seemed to be over in five minutes! I remember being very nervous beforehand as the thought of actually playing at Wembley was awesome. In 1984 Wigan were so hyped up and had flown in prop-forward Kerry Helmsley from Australian side Balmain especially for the final, but he and his fellow countryman Mark Cannon failed to impress. Perhaps it was the fact that both of these victories were against teams coached by Alex Murphy that makes them my favourites.

"The 1981 victory over Hull Kingston Rovers was probably the game in which we played the best football. We got off to a tremendous start with that try from Mick Burke and then Mick George crossed for a second. We knew then that it was going to be our day and we were able to sit back and relax a little. The final try from Andy Gregory heralded the start of the evening's celebrations!

"Things were a lot different the following year when we took on the other Humberside giants, Hull. After a good lead we let them back into the game and when the final hooter went we all felt so flat. There were 80,000 people there and we had nothing to show for our efforts, it was a real anti-climax. We then took on Hull in the Premiership Final and had a good victory which only served to fire them up for the replay at Elland Road.

"With regards to the defeats in 1976 and 1977 against St. Helens and Leeds respectively, the least said about them the better! I've never even bothered watching recordings of them.



Keith with the 1978 Championship winning team.

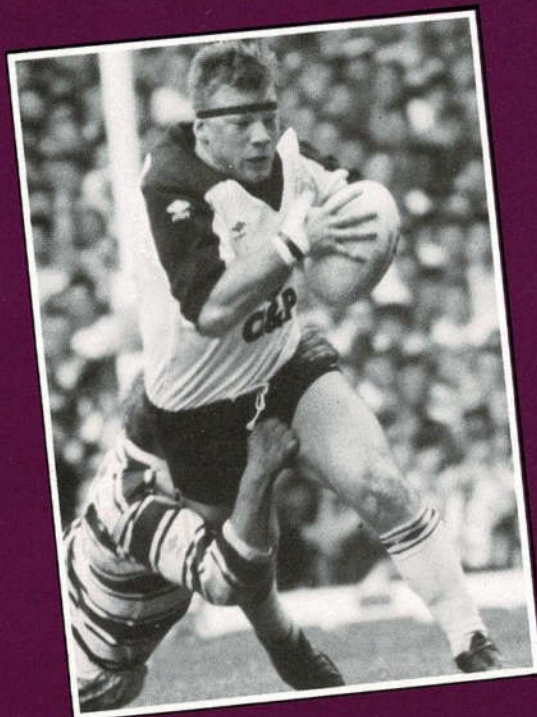
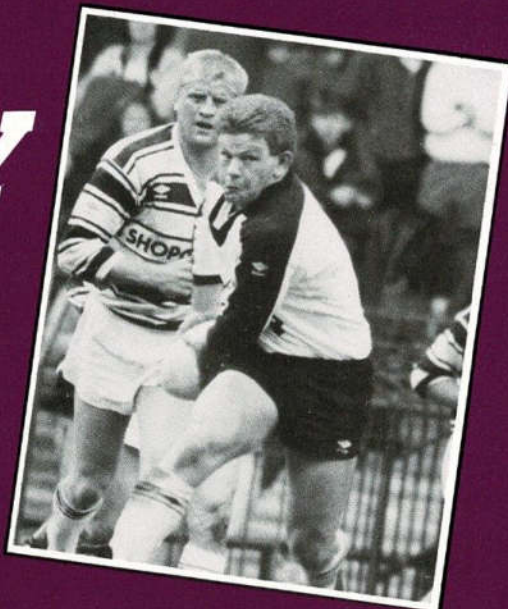
"Turning to today's quarter-final tie it seems that lady luck is starting to shine on Widnes with this being the third consecutive home match and the third against Second Division opposition as well. Having said that, Oldham are a very good side and have already beaten Wigan and St. Helen's this season. They have some very good players like ex-Widnes stars John Fieldhouse, Keith Newton, Duncan Platt, Andy Ruane and Des Foy. They also have a great player in captain and loose-forward John Cogger who is renowned for his try-scoring abilities and in his days with Runcorn was linked on several occasions with Widnes. Nowadays I'm heavily involved on the amateur side of the game with IBIS and we're also on the lookout for a piece of silverware at the end of the season. We have got a great bunch of lads down there who work very much for each other and this team-work plus some exceptional tackling has seen us through some tough games in recent weeks, including two very good wins against Winwick and Nutgrove. We're joint top of the Division and have a tough run-in, but I'd rather have it that way."

With a helping from lady luck it would be great to see both Widnes and IBIS picking up their respective trophies in April!

THE WEEKLY NEWS

For all that's best in Rugby League Action

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TWO GAMES AWAY FROM WEMBLEY



A PREVIEW OF THE 3RD ROUND TIES

QUARTER-FINAL LINE-UP

Bradford Northern v. Warrington

A clash of the respective county champions, but the "Wire" have failed to live up to their sizzling form early in the season up to the Lancashire Cup. Their form of late suggests a revival and nobody will be more determined than their skipper Mike Gregory together with Des Drummond in their bid to get to Wembley for the first time.

Bradford's results at the Odsal are very impressive on paper, just one defeat by the odd point against Wigan. Northern have added pace and experience to their side this season and are proving a very difficult side to beat.

Prediction . . . If the going is heavy I expect Bradford's big pack to dominate the game. If it is dry, Warrington will give them a run for their money. Scoreline—Bradford 12 pts Warrington 8 pts.

Wakefield Trinity v. Wigan

Wakefield, under coach David Topliss, are the surprise packet of the First Division this season. Looks like the gamble of bringing over Aussie Ray Price is paying off, Wakefield have had a settled side for a few weeks which brings continuity, as their results suggest.

Wigan need little introduction, often described as "still the team to beat", even with the loss of the suspended Dean Bell they still look a very formidable outfit, strong in every department.

Prediction . . . (You will all know the result of this one by now, being played on Saturday). Topliss played for Oldham in Wigan's last defeat in this competition in 1986-87 a good omen? you never know. It should be a hard



Andy Platt . . . leading the Wigan charge.

Photo. courtesy Open Rugby.

game but I take John Monies men to march into their third successive semi-final. Scoreline—Wakefield 6 pts Wigan 16 pts.

St. Helens v. Whitehaven

Whitehaven the team every other quarter-finalist wanted, but it was Saints "copping" the 500-1 outsiders with a home draw thrown in as well. Whitehaven under new coach Eric Fitzsimmonds have strung some good results together of late, Kelly Sheldford the Kiwi international stand-off is playing his part in this revitalised "Haven" team.

St. Helens are coming good at the moment and if new coach Mike McClellan can tighten up a shaky defence, Saints can play an important part in the rest of the season.

Prediction . . . Whitehaven will pull out everything for the first twenty minutes or so, and will take the game to Saints, but fitness and pace should tell in the end. Scoreline—St. Helens 30 pts Whitehaven 6 pts.

CHEMICS FACT FILE

★ Man-of-the-Match
T Try G Goal
● Top Tackler
P Substitute Played
Home Games in **Bold**

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FIXTURES

1989-1990

Result Att.



AUGUST

Sun. 27 Wigan (CS) Anfield W 27-22 17,263 TaitDG Kebbie T Davies T5G Wright★ Offiah T Myler Hulme D. T Sorensen Hulme P. Grima O'Neill● Koloto Eyres Marsh Pyke P

SEPTEMBER

Sun. 3 Salford H W 46-18 8,121 Tait Kebbie T Davies T7G Wright Offiah 2T Myler Hulme D.★ Sorensen T Hulme P. T Pyke O'Neill● Koloto T Eyres Marsh Grima T P

Sun. 10 Hull A W 26-11 8,298 Tait Kebbie T Davies 3G Marsh Offiah 2T Myler T Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie Pyke O'Neill T● Koloto★ Eyres Moriarty Grima P

Sun. 17 Carlisle (Grunhalls LC Rd 1) A W 46-6 5,800 Tait Kebbie 4T★ Dowd Davies 2T5G Offiah T Myler Hulme D. O'Neill McKenzie T Pyke● O'Neill Hulme P. Koloto T Eyres Moriarty P

Sun. 24 Featherstone Rovers H W 59-8 8,008 TaitDG Kebbie 4T Davies T9G Wright Offiah 4T Myler T Hulme D. Grima McKenzie T Pyke●● O'Neill Hulme P. Koloto Eyres Wright P Grima P

Wed. 27 Leigh (Grunhalls LC Rd 2) A W 34-12 6,798 Tait 2T Kebbie Currier Davies T5G Offiah 2T Myler★ Hulme D. T Sorensen McKenzie Pyke● Hulme P. O'Neill Eyres Marsh Pyke P

OCTOBER

Wed. 4 Canberra Raiders Old Traff W 30-18 30,786 Tait Currier Davies T3G Wright T Offiah 2T Myler Hulme D.★ Grima McKenzie Pyke Sorensen Hulme P. T● Eyres T Dowd P Moriarty P

Sun. 8 Sheffield Eagles A L 6-31 8,650 Tait Kebbie Currier Davies G Wright Offiah Offiah Myler Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie T Pyke● Sorensen Hulme P. Eyres★ Dowd P Moriarty P

Tue. 10 Warrington (Grun. LC (S-F) ... A L 6-28 10,500 Dowd★ Currier T Davies G Wright Offiah Offiah Myler Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie Pyke● Smith Hulme P. Eyres Devereux P Moriarty P

Sun. 15 Wakefield Trinity H W 30-12 6,488 Tait Currier T Davies 5G Wright Offiah 3T Myler Hulme D. Grima★ McKenzie Pyke● O'Neill● Hulme P. T Eyres Devereux P Moriarty P

Tue. 31 Salford A W 28-16 4,950 Marsh Kebbie T Currier 2T Wright Offiah T Davies 4G Hulme P.● Grima Smith T Pyke O'Neill Moriarty★ McKenzie Devereux Critchley P

NOVEMBER

Sun. 5 New Zealand H L 18-26 9,905 Tait T Kebbie T Currier Wright Offiah Davies G Hulme D.★ Grima McKenzie Pyke O'Neill T Sorensen Hulme P.● Devereux P Moriarty P

Sun. 12 Leigh H L 16-18 7,104 Tait T Kebbie Currier Davies 4G Devereux Offiah 2T Myler Hulme D. Pyke Grima★ O'Neill T Moriarty Critchley● Marsh P Smith P

Sun. 19 Leeds A L 12-26 14,071 Tait Kebbie Currier T Devereux T Offiah Offiah Hulme D. Hulme P. Sorensen T McKenzie Grima O'Neill● Smith Eyres Marsh Critchley P

DECEMBER

Sun. 3 Nottingham City (Reg. T. Rd 1) A W 48-18 2,246 Davies T3G★ Kebbie 3T Currier T3G Tait Offiah 2T Myler Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie T Grima O'Neill Hulme P. T● Eyres Marsh P Smith P

Sat. 9 Wigan (Regal Trophy (Rd 2) ... A L 0-18 11,211 Tait Kebbie Currier Devereux Offiah Offiah Myler Hulme D.●★ Sorensen McKenzie● Grima O'Neill Hulme P. Smith● Eyres Marsh P Smith P

Sun. 17 Barrow A W 34-4 2,400 Tait T Devereux T Currier 7G Wright Offiah Offiah Myler Hulme D. T Sorensen 2T★ McKenzie● Grima O'Neill Tuavao Eyres R. Eyres A. P Critchley P

Thu. 21 Barrow H W 48-0 3,791 Tait T Devereux 2T★ Currier T6G Wright Offiah T Myler Hulme D. T Sorensen McKenzie 2T Smith Hulme P. Eyres R. Critchley T Eyres T Davies P Marsh

Tue. 26 Warrington H W 32-20 10,179 Tait Devereux 2T Currier 4G Wright Offiah 3T Myler Hulme D. Sorensen★ McKenzie Ashurst Critchley● Smith Eyres T

1990

JANUARY

Mon. 1 St. Helens A W 18-8 12,375 Tait T★ Devereux Currier Wright Davies 2T3G Myler Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie Ashurst Critchley Smith● Eyres Marsh P Moriarty P

Sun. 7 Leeds H L 8-20 10,231 Tait T Devereux Currier 2G Wright Offiah Offiah Myler● Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie★ Ashurst Critchley P Hulme P. T Eyres Critchley P Moriarty P

Wed. 17 Bradford Northern A L 6-16 5,722 Davies G Currier Tait Wright Offiah Offiah Hulme D. Hulme P. T Sorensen McKenzie★ Grima O'Neill● Myler Eyres Smith P Moriarty P

Sat. 20 Castleford A W 30-22 5,135 Tait★ Devereux Currier T3G Wright Offiah 4T Offiah T Myler Hulme D. Hulme P. T Sorensen McKenzie Grima O'Neill● Moriarty Critchley Eyres● Smith P Moriarty P

Sun. 28 Batley (Silk Cut CC Rd 1) H W 26-10 5,702 Tait TG★ Devereux T Currier 2G Wright Offiah T Offiah T Myler Hulme D. T Sorensen McKenzie Grima O'Neill● Moriarty Critchley Eyres● Smith P Moriarty P

FEBRUARY

Sat. 3 Wigan H L 10-11 9,452 Tait Devereux Marsh T Wright Offiah T Davies G McKenzie● Sorensen★ McCurrie Grima Smith Moriarty O'Neill T● Moriarty● Koloto Eyres Smith P Ashurst P

Sun. 11 Rochdale H. (Silk Cut CC Rd 2) ... H W 22-16 6,939 Tait Devereux T Davies T3G Wright Offiah T Offiah T Myler Hulme D. Sorensen McKenzie Grima O'Neill Moriarty● Koloto Eyres Smith P Koloto P

Sun. 18 Hull H W 30-12 7,356 Tait T★ Devereux Davies 3G Wright Offiah 3T Myler Hulme D. Grima McKenzie T O'Neill Moriarty● Koloto Eyres Smith P Pyke P

MARCH

Sun. 4 Wakefield Trinity A Sat. 10 Silk Cut CC (S-F1) A

Sun. 11 Bradford Northern H Sun. 18 Leigh A

Sat. 24 Wigan A Sat. 31 Silk Cut CC (S-F2) A

APRIL

Sun. 1 Sheffield Eagles H GF 13 Warrington A

EM 16 St. Helens H Sat. 28 Silk Cut CC Final H

MAY

Sun. 13 Stones Bitter Prem. ... Old Traff. To be re-arranged: Featherstone Rovers (A).

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WEMBLEY MYSTERY?

IT'S always been a mystery to me why Oldham and Swinton for that matter have never been to Wembley.

When you look back at some of the great names, who have graced the red and white hoops—especially in the 50s—it is all the more puzzling.

Oldham have appeared in only four semi-finals—since finals were switched to Wembley—and I suppose the nearest they got was in 1964.

They drew 5-5 with Hull KR at Leeds, and then in the replay at Swinton were leading 17-14 in extra time when the game was abandoned due to bad light.

That was in the days before floodlights, of course. Everyone at the time except the Rugby League, realised that the kick-off time was far too late if extra time were needed. And, almost inevitably, it was.

In the third game, Hull KR ran out 12-2 victors at Huddersfield and qualified to meet Widnes at Wembley.

If Oldham had got through, they could have created history which would still stand today—as the

only Division Two side to get to a Wembley final.

They can of course achieve that feat this year if they win today and what a great weekend it would be for the people of the East Lancashire town with Oldham Athletic almost certainly going to be in the Littlewoods Cup final the day after the Challenge Cup final.

Hull KR fans still claim that Widnes could not have beaten Rovers 13-5 in the final had the Robins' star forward John Taylor not been suspended two days before the final.

There were few packs who could boast better players than Derek Turner—later to lead Wakefield to three Wembley wins in four years—Sid Little, Charlie Winslade and Jack Keith. Around that time Ron Rowbottom, who was in the Widnes Wembley side of 1950, appeared in their front row on occasions too.

It's strange how certain games stick in your mind. Back in 1958 I have vivid memories of Cracknell and Davies absolutely destroying Widnes 44-8. I wrote at the time 'I wasn't sure whether I was watching Oldham or Harlem

Globetrotters'.

Yet for all those great players, Oldham managed to only win one major trophy—the Championship. And they nearly lost that.

Former Widnes player, Colin Hutton, whose last minute goal gave Hull a 10-9 win over Halifax in 1956, nearly did it again the following year—but this time Oldham escaped with a 15-14 victory.

For the record, Oldham's other Challenge Cup semi-final defeat came in 1934, by 7-4 against Widnes and 12-9 against Hull in 1960—both games at Station Road. Recently they went down to Castleford 18-7 at Wigan in 1986—the only time a team that put them out in a semi, has won the cup.

Naturally, Widnes fans would be delighted to see their favourites back at Wembley for the first time in six years, but I wonder how many realise that Mike O'Neill is the only player to have started a final there.

Tony Myler and David Hulme have both made one appearances as substitutes. I'd like to see them reach the final again for Tony's sake.

1950's Lancashire team featuring Frank Pitchford (front left) and Alan Davies (front right).



What the papers said:

Offiah the irreplaceable gem

By Paul Wilson

Widnes 30
Hull 12

THE EXCELLENT William Boot column in yesterday's Naughton Park programme contained a plea to Widnes not to sell Martin Offiah, the League's leading try scorer, to Wigan.

According to the North Cheshire grapevine, Widnes might be prepared to release the former Rosslyn Park wing in exchange for Andy Gregory or Ellery Hanley plus a

substantial amount of cash. Widnes could only be short-changed in such a deal, however. Not only would they lose a prolific 23-year-old with five or six years more to offer than either Wigan player, they would also be deprived of one of the few performers capable of singlehandedly turning the mediocre into the memorable.

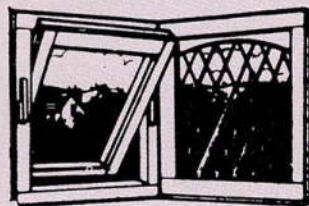
"The Independent"
Monday, 19th February, 1990.

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SUPPORTERS' CLUB NEWS

If things have gone to plan, the new electronic scoreboard will be in use this afternoon. The 'hand over' will be performed by the Supporters' Club Queen, Tracey Woodhouse, and Chairman Alan Rae. They are there purely to represent you, the supporters, who over the years, have bought tickets, attended cabaret evenings, and purchased snacks from the bars on the ground. The proceeds of all this, has gone to finance the new board, and when the cost is £31,000 plus, it certainly is hard work. As you are probably aware, it will take another couple of years to pay for it completely, so your continued support is vital. However, you surely are entitled to feel great satisfaction in knowing you have helped to purchase something that will eventually bring more revenue into the club.

I wonder how long it is since we had three home games in the Challenge Cup? I must admit, I can't remember it happening before. All the same it makes a pleasant change.

In the Hull programme, I was reading Kurt's article and it came over very plain that he aches to play at Wembley, and it certainly shows in the way he has played in the two previous rounds. Let us hope this is the year he gets his wish. Surely it would be an injustice to a truly great player if he misses out.

Come on you great Widnes fans, get behind the lads this afternoon, and lift them to a great win.

Audrey Spencer.

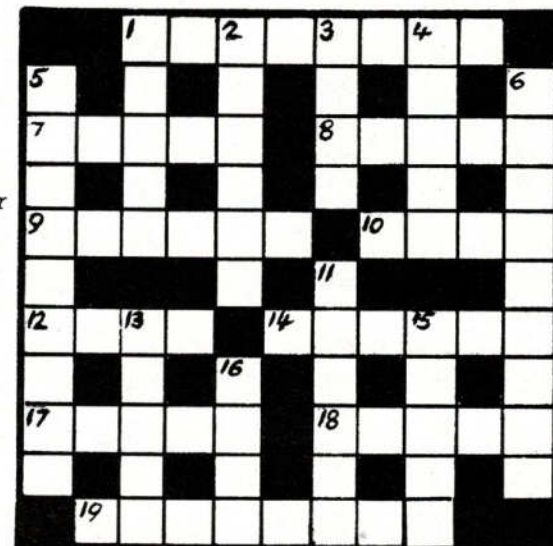
Chemics QUIZCORNER

Across:

1. Surname of law-like Wigan winger Dave (8).
7. Surname of nomadic England-prop Brian who was sent-off in 1920 Wembley-semi v. Hull (5).
8. Colin, our assistant-coach (5).
9. The form in which a transfer-seeking player may put in his written request? (6).
10. — Grayshon, old warhorse still playing at Post Office Road (4).
12. Direction or maybe a nickname for one player from Mr. Offiah's summer club in Aussie! (4).
14. Surname of one of our '84 Wembley-pros (6).
17. Surname of Wigan back—sub. for Stuart Wright v. Widnes in 1971 Lancs. Cup final (5).
18. J.D.'s first Welsh R.U. club (5).
19. He's the only man ever sent off at Wembley (3,5).

Down:

1. The power of the top sides? (5).
2. Remember infamous Welsh R.U. forward Paul —, who later played R.L. at Cardiff? (6).
3. The Wembley ones you wear on your head? (4).
4. Saints player Ken is big-sounding! (5).
5. Ell burns up in change for one cup (9).
6. Griff hits out at Saints No. 7 (9).
11. Mark —, Wigan's Aussie No. 6 v. Widnes at Wembley, 1984 (6).
13. — Nickle, Eagles star-forward (6).
15. Surname of our 1981 Wembley captain (5).
16. Could be a word to describe 'legend', of which we have had many (4).



QUIZ

1. Which team knocked Oldham out of three competitions during 1987-88?
2. Who was named Man-of-the-Match in the 1988 Second Division Premiership final?
3. Name the four overseas players in Oldham's 1988 Second Division Premiership final team.
4. Which Oldham player captained Great Britain Under-24's in 1983?
5. For which two players did Oldham reportedly pay transfer fees of £65,000 in 1987-88?

Round
Warrington, 2. Des Foy, 3. Mal Graham, Charlie McAlister, Peter Walsh, Gary Warnock, 4. Terry Flanagan, 5. Mike Ford, Paul

ANSWERS:

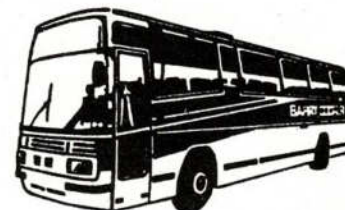
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CASHMAKER VIPs

Cashmaker January prize winners were Mr. & Mrs. Foy of 52, Southway, Widnes, who won a super VIP day out plus £200 prize money.

They were picked up from their home in a white Rolls-Royce and taken to Hillcrest Hotel for a champagne lunch. Then picked up from Hillcrest and taken to Naughton Park and given VP seats to watch Widnes v. Hull.

After the match they were entertained in the Sponsors Lounge with a buffet and free drinks. Later they were taken into the Boardroom and presented with their £200 cash prize.

Finally, they were picked up at Naughton Park by Rolls-Royce and taken home.

Mr. and Mrs. Foy, senior

citizens, were given a framed photograph to remember their day out at Naughton Park, courtesy of Cashmaker.



SLALOM — LAGER —

RUGBY
LEAGUE
ALLIANCE

The 'A' team's 16-14 victory over Trafford Borough last Wednesday evening saw them through to the third round of the Slalom Lager Alliance Challenge Cup. The victory was more conclusive than the scoreline might suggest, although the dismissal of Chris Ashurst, ten minutes from the end cast a shadow on proceedings.

Man-of-the-Match against Trafford was the former BARLA Great Britain full-back Eddie Harrison who put in a brave display, along with Andy Eyres and Lee Harvey.

It was not such a pleasing result the week before when we took on Hunslet at Partown. On a heavy pitch the 'home' side, who are currently bottom of the League, ran-out winners 24-14. The game heralded the return of Derek Pyke who had a good game as did youngster Steve Wynne.

This season has not been a memorable one for the 'A' team with first team call-ups, injuries and the inclusion of a whole host of trialists playing havoc with any chances Colin Tyrer had of picking a steady side. However, having picked-up half a dozen

good players from the Widnes Amateur League and signing some exciting young players from the area, namely Stuart Spruce (Widnes Tigers), Mark Sarsfield (Leigh Miners), Stephen Wynne (Golborne/Parkside) and of course Steve McCurrie there is now the platform on which to build for the future.

It's not all been doom and gloom, however, in the pack forwards Chris Ashurst and Darren Whitfield have put in some exceptional performances, while in the backs, winger Lee Harvey has started to recapture the form he showed as a youngster and David Marsh continues to impress.

Over the Christmas period a number of the Alliance squad were drafted into the first team following the problems with injury and suspension. All performed admirably as the Chemics defeated Barrow, Warrington and St. Helens.

Jason Critchley's impressive performances in both the Alliance and first team won him a call-up for the Great Britain U-21 trip to France last month, but he was omitted from the return fixture at Doncaster as coach Malcolm Reilly decided to look at other promising youngsters.

On the subject of 'promising youngsters' Steve McCurrie was hitting the headlines prior to the game with Wigan when he made his debut at the tender age of 16, following two 'A' team games. Earlier this season he captained the Cumbrian U-17 side in the

REVIEW



David Marsh.

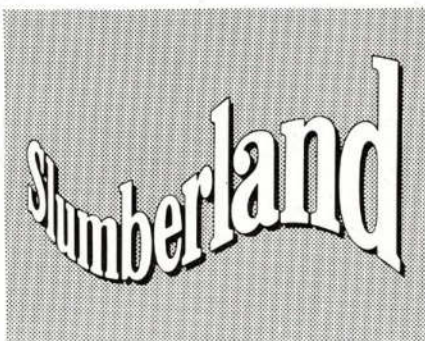
BARLA County Championship and also played Rugby Union for Vale of Lune 1st XV. He certainly has the pedigree to become a great footballer and let's hope he's making the same kind of headlines on his 18th birthday as another Widnes youngster did a few weeks ago!

REMAINING FIXTURES

3/3/90	H	Carlisle
9/3/90	A	Swinton
16/3/90	A	St. Helen's
23/3/90	H	Wigan
30/3/90	A	Halifax
12/4/90	H	Warrington
20/4/90	H	Oldham

To be arranged: — Featherstone (A), Castleford (H), Slalom Lager Challenge Cup 3.

Oldham RLFC's Biggest Supporters

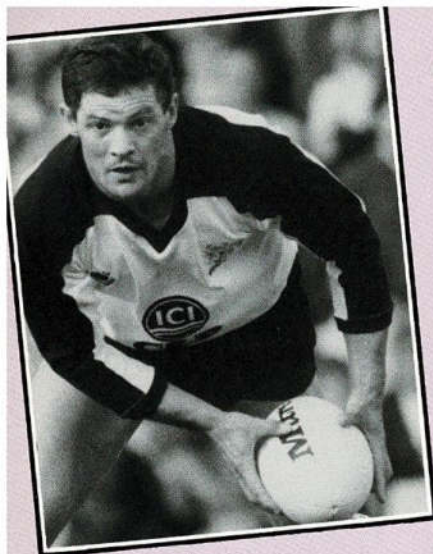


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"I would have signed up for just a new blazer"

me down to Naughton Park for talks. Our John came with me and I duly signed for the Chemics in December 1978. I had achieved my boyhood ambition to sign for Widnes. They could have offered me just a new blazer and I would have signed for them."

From such an inauspicious start Tony began to rise through the ranks during the coming seasons with perhaps one of his greatest memories coming in 1982 when he was named in the fifteen to take on the mighty Hull F.C.

"I was disappointed at being named as substitute, even though I had played reasonably well in previous League and Cup games. Walking out at Wembley was a moment that I will never forget, the roar and clapping from the fans made my nerves completely disappear. I played in the second half, owing to an injury to Mick Burke at full-back, my first ever game in that position. When Stuart Wright intercepted the ball and went nearly the full length of the field to put Widnes 14 points to 4 up, I thought "this is it", a winners medal at Wembley."

As we all know, that time it was not to be.

Successive seasons saw many trophies coming to Naughton Park and Tony starring for Great Britain both at home and abroad. 1986 saw Tony take part in the ill fated Ashes series against the Aussies.

"I played in all three Test matches, the first at Old Trafford in front of a 50,000 crowd was a fantastic feeling, although we were beaten in all three games, pride was restored to a degree with a performance that must have heartened all the supporters who had followed us through the Test series."

After a long and successful career and having played with many great players in many great teams, Tony's comments about the current Widnes side are tribute indeed.

"This present Widnes side is the greatest team I have ever had the privilege to play alongside at any level. There is so much power and pace it is frightening what we can achieve and I want very much to be a part of it. I would like to finish my career at Widnes. I have never thought otherwise."



Over the last decade or so, few players have demonstrated as much footballing ability or provided as much pure excitement for the spectator as Tony Myler.

He has been involved in many bruising, but none the less, exciting battles for both Widnes, his home town club, and his country, that have brought him fame and fortune both here and down under.

Even probably Tony could not have predicted what was to come way back in 1978.

"I was approaching 18-years-old and a few clubs, including St. Helens and Wigan, had shown an interest in me. However, during a series of games that I played for Lancashire Youth, I was approached by Doug Laughton, who invited

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THERE was limited action on the amateur front last weekend with most of the North West clubs taking part in their various town competitions. Widnes, however, choose to play their competition in April and May on weekday evenings, details of this year's tournament will be announced soon.

In the second round replay of the BNFL National Cup, St. Bede's went down 16-6 away to St. Jude's, while in the Premier Division of the Burtonwood Brewery North West Counties Cup, Farnworth lost ground on the leaders, Parkside, when they went down 10-7 at Crofields.

The Division One 'derby' between West Bank and St. Marie's went the way of the 'visitors' who won 42-6 with this month's Image Windows Player of the Month, Paul Ellis, amongst the try scorers.

In Division Two, Widnes Tigers have been making the headlines for the wrong sort of reasons, with The Independent the latest paper to write about their disciplinary problems. However, the Club has, hopefully, sorted itself out and last Saturday's victory over Greater Manchester Police was just the tonic they needed. In the Alliance League, Simms Cross had a close 8-6 win over Rose Bridge, Dennis Ruane scoring all of his side's points, while in the Second Division, West Bank defeated Rylands 26-6.

This forthcoming Wednesday, the postponed Halton DDA British Coal League fixture takes place between Halton and Bradford. Both teams are unbeaten in the group, having each won four out of four matches. It should be a thrilling game and the tie kicks-off at 7.30 p.m.

Team of the Month

Selections based on current playing form.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Liam McMullen | Simms Cross |
| 2. Ray Caldwell | St. Maries |
| 3. Ste McGuinness | Widnes Tigers |
| 4. Mick Sheeran | Farnworth ROB |
| 5. Andy Abbott | Appleton Park |
| 6. Tony Yates | Lowerhouse |
| 7. Neil Mellor | IBIS |
| 8. Paul Cleaver | Widnes Albert |
| 9. Carl Ogburn | Simms Cross |
| 10. Tony Hill | St. Bede's |
| 11. Ray Pye | West Bank |
| 12. Peter Ratcliffe | West Bank |
| 13. Paul Ellis | St. Maries |
| 14. Darren Clayton | Runcorn |
| 15. Arthur Buck | St. Maries |

Player of the Month—PAUL ELLIS—St. Maries.

CHEMICS JUNIORS IN ACTION

At their February meeting, the committee of the Chemics Juniors in action are debating the format for the 1990 coaching school, which usually takes place in the third school term. There are bound to be changes in the format, because its very popularity has caused a logistical problem in ensuring that children are suitably catered for. If anybody has any suggestions for the format, or any other comments, then please contact the Chairman, Frank Cookson on 051-424 8341, or the Secretary, Tom Bebbington on 051-420 8494 before the last Thursday in February.

Meanwhile, Committeeman Dave Mulvey continues to organise half-time exhibition matches from each of the Junior Clubs in the town, using the younger age groups to show how the skills levels are being developed at a very early age by the coaches in the clubs.

All Schools and Junior Club Secretaries—Don't forget the Chemics Juniors in Action coaching aids (tackle shields, discs and balls) are available on short term loan by contacting: Roger Harrison, St. Michael's School, 051-424 4468.

Some readers may not like this in view of what Bobby "did" to Widnes the other week, but here goes... Bobby was the scrum-half with Widnes

Schoolboys when they last went to Wembley in 1983. When he heard that the schoolboys were once again going, he immediately contacted me to offer some financial assistance, remembering the experience that he had had. As if this generosity wasn't enough, he then presented his first Great Britain (Under-21's) tie to the present Widnes Schoolboys scrum-half, when the boys came across Bobby on one of their collection nights. Thanks Bobby. Who says that everything about Wigan is bad?

A nice story about Bobby is that when he was being interviewed as an eleven-year-old on the Wembley turf, the interviewer, commenting on the way Widnes played, remarked that Widnes "Kick a lot". (The Schoolboys had

in fact used Bobby's superb tactical kicking to good effect throughout the season). Bobby, however, took the interviewer to mean that Widnes were a dirty side, who kicked the opposition, and I swear that it was only the presence of the teachers and Rugby League officials that prevented Bobby exacting immediate retribution on the interviewer—probably using the microphone! By the way, the interviewer was from Wigan! As a follow-up to this, during that Wembley match, in which Widnes Schoolboys defeated Dewsbury by 15 pts to 1pt, the first Widnes try was scored by centre Neil Mullarkey who followed up a beautifully judged kick by none other than Bobby Goulding!

Roger Harrison.



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TOP TACKLE

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THIS WEEK'S TOP TEN TACKLERS

	GAMES	TACKLES
1. Phil McKenzie	26	517
2. Mike O'Neill	19	450
3. David Hulme	26	423
4. Richie Eyres	21	406
5. Paul Hulme	19	393
6. Tony Myler	22	378
7. Kurt Sorensen	21	345
8. Derek Pyke	15	299
9. David Smith	17	289
10. Joe Grima	22	283

Top Tackler against Hull, Paul Moriarty, with 25 tackles... he's at No. 11 with a total of 247 from 18 games.

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