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2nd DIVISION FINAL
Old Trafford Sunday May 13th 1990

HULL K.R. v OLDHAM

KICK OFF 1.30 PM

£1.50



1st DIVISION FINAL
Old Trafford Sunday May 13th 1990

WIDNES v BRADFORD N.

KICK OFF 3.30 PM

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on Rugby
League

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Mirror

MEMO



PAUL HUGHES, Marketing Director,
Bass North Sales.

STONES BITTER WELCOME

The 1989-90 Stones Bitter Premiership Final winners will carry off a bumper £15,000 payout today – reflecting the importance of this exciting crowd-puller to the game.

And with a runners-up prize of £6,000, as well as £8,000 for the Second Division Premiership victors – and £3,000 to their runners-up – there's all to play for, this gala afternoon.

Today's Stones Bitter Premiership double-header is a traditional and fitting finale to another marvellous season of Rugby League, which has seen both shocks and surprises in the Stones Bitter Championship, but always superb rugby. Tens of thousands of fans always come to Old Trafford in expectation of an afternoon of first-class Rugby League, and this year's line-up promises to be no exception. The mid-match entertainment this year comes in the shape of marching bands as well as a women's match, which will set the scene for the First Division Final itself.

Bass continues to recognize the importance of the double-header, and the increase in prize money further lifts the prestige of the game, in this, the fourth year of Bass' sponsorship, and the first in the new £75,000 sponsorship deal.

We are delighted to host this superb event once again and mark our continuing association between Stones Bitter and Rugby League, and endorse our partnership with the Rugby League: its Council, clubs and supporters everywhere.

Good luck to this year's finalists!

Paul Hughes

STONES-BITTER PREMIERSHIP FINALS

STONES BITTER PRIZES

The 1989-90 Stones Bitter Champions, Wigan, have already received a Rugby League record £40,000 prize cheque... a 60% annual increase.

The bumper payout marks the launch of a new three-year £750,000 sponsorship of the League Championship and Premiership competitions by Bass North.

Prize money for the three other Stones Bitter titles is also increased by more than 50% with £18,000 for the Second Division Champions Hull K.R., £15,000 for today's Stones Bitter Premiership winners and £8,000 for the Second Division Premiership victors.

Half of the 1989-90 sponsorship fee of £225,000 is distributed in prizes, including runners-up awards, the remaining £112,500 being invested in the League's Capital Development Fund.

Rugby League Chairman Bob Ashby said: "The lifting of the Stones Bitter Championship Trophy has been traditionally recognised as the greatest team achievement in the 13-a-side code. This massive increase in the top prize in the Stones Bitter showcase fully reflects the honour of finishing at the top of the table after a demanding eight months campaign."

Paul Hughes, Marketing Director of Bass North said: "We are convinced that the increased prize money further lifts the prestige of the Stones Bitter Championship and Premiership and consolidates the happy partnership that exists between Bass and the Rugby League. We believe the marketing programme we have developed with the Rugby League has contributed to the growth in popularity of the game and the increased crowd attendances, and we look forward to the future with confidence."

The 1989-90 prize structure:

	1989-90
Stones Bitter Championship	40,000
Runners-up	15,000
Second Division Championship	18,000
Runners-up	7,500
Stones Bitter Premiership	15,000
Runners-up	6,000
Second Division Premiership	8,000
Runners-up	3,000

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY 112,500

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND 112,500

GRAND TOTAL 225,000

STONES BITTER RESULTS

Stones Bitter Premiership

First Round

Bradford N. 25	St. Helens 8
Leeds 24	Castleford.....18
Widnes.....18	Hull.....8
Wigan 28	Warrington 26

Semi-Final

Leeds★	Widnes★
Wigan★	Bradford N.★

Second Division Premiership

First Round

Hull K.R. 40	Fulham 6
Oldham 32	Swinton.....10
Rochdale H. 18	Dewsbury 20
Ryedale-York.....24	Halifax 7

Semi-Final

Hull K.R.★	Dewsbury★
Oldham★	Ryedale-York★

TODAY'S REGIMENTAL BAND

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding) was formed from the 33rd and 76th Regiment of Foot, both of which were raised in the 18th century. In 1853 the 33rd was granted the title of *Duke of Wellington's Regiment* by Queen Victoria, the Duke having previously commanded the Regiment for nine years.

The Regimental Band appear by kind permission of the Commanding Officer Lt Col A.D. Meek and are conducted by the Bandmaster WO1 C. North. The band have a full diary of engagements, many of which are carried out away from the Battalion. In recent years, the Regimental Band has entertained wide and varied audiences at home and abroad. Overseas visits have included tours in Canada, Central America and Kenya.

The musicians of the band have all undergone training at The Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, and are all capable of performing in many different styles. In addition to Concert and Marching Bands, the Regimental Band are able to provide smaller groups, which include Ceremonial Fanfare Trumpeters, a Bavarian Band and Dance Band.

The Corps of Drums are led by Drum Major G. Ryder. They are fully trained infantry soldiers who are also musically trained in the playing of the side-drum, bugle and fife. They frequently appear with the band and regularly feature their impressive *Drummers Beatings* during displays and concerts.

Wherever you may wander there's no taste like Stones



STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

CHAMPIONS

STONES BITTER CHAMPIONSHIP 1989-90

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wigan	26	20	0	6	699	349	40
Leeds	26	18	0	8	704	383	36
Widnes	26	16	2	8	651	423	34
Bradford N.	26	17	0	9	614	416	34
St. Helens	26	17	0	9	714	536	34
Hull	26	16	1	9	577	400	33
Castleford	26	16	0	10	703	448	32
Warrington	26	13	1	12	424	451	27
PREMIERSHIP							
Wakefield T.	26	12	1	13	502	528	25
Featherstone R.	26	10	0	16	479	652	20
Sheffield E.	26	9	1	16	517	588	19

RELEGATED

Leigh	26	9	1	16	442	642	19
Salford	26	4	1	21	421	699	9
Barrow	26	1	0	25	201	1133	2



Cup of joy ... Wigan coach John Monie (left) and skipper Ellery Hanley front the Central Park celebrations after receiving the Stones Bitter Championship Trophy and a record cheque for £40,000.

SECOND DIVISION 1989-90

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hull K.R.	28	25	0	3	1102	190	50
Rochdale H.	28	24	0	4	977	422	48
Oldham	28	24	0	4	879	325	48
PROMOTED							
Ryedale-York	28	20	1	7	653	338	41
Halifax	28	20	0	8	741	360	40
Swinton	28	20	0	8	673	405	40
Dewsbury	28	19	1	8	503	411	39
Fulham	28	16	2	10	496	488	34

PREMIERSHIP

Doncaster	28	15	2	11	533	399	32
Trafford B.	28	15	0	13	551	551	30
Huddersfield	28	14	0	14	469	441	28
Batley	28	13	0	15	466	476	26
Bramley	28	11	0	17	413	623	22
Hunslet	28	10	0	18	431	585	20
Chorley	28	10	0	18	399	618	20
Whitehaven	28	10	0	18	396	710	20
Carlisle	28	9	0	19	511	625	18
Workington T.	28	6	0	22	311	708	12
Keighley	28	6	0	22	436	837	12
Nottingham C.	28	4	0	24	323	1032	8
Runcorn H.	28	0	0	28	216	935	0



Bowled over ... Second Division champions Hull K.R. rejoice with the Stones Bitter Bowl and an £18,000 prize cheque.

FORUM

Malcolm Reilly is the man charged with leading Great Britain's British Coal touring team to Papua New Guinea and New Zealand tomorrow. The Great Britain coach heads his second tour in three years and it promises to be one of the most controversial and exciting trips outside the UK for at least a decade. The decision of the management team to place the accent on youth and the unsettled build-up because of player withdrawals and injuries has added uncertainty to a tour that was always going to be very difficult. Reilly, the former Castleford and Leeds coach, speaks frankly about the tour and the state of the British game in the latest Big Match face-to-face interview with Sunday Mirror Rugby League columnist JOHN HUXLEY.

Q: This appears to be one of the most critical tours in British Rugby League's recent history. Is that how you see it?

A: You have to bear in mind that in the highly competitive world of modern international Rugby League that every tour is, to use your words, critical. We are always anxious that we should achieve the best possible results.

We are now at a stage where, after the progress we've made in the last two years, we have seen ourselves compared with the Australians and beat New Zealand in a Test series in this country for the first time in 24 years.

The platform has been set for this autumn's British Coal series against the Kangaroos in this country but what I'm very worried about at the moment is that I don't think this tour could have come at a worse time.

I think we as a game are partially to blame and the players are partly to blame. They have been playing back-to-back seasons and it was very evident in our second encounter with the French in April that our top players were not only physically battered but mentally shattered from too much rugby.

It would have been nice through this off-season to let those kind of players have a rest and prepare for

the October and November meeting with the Australians.

Q: Do you think that our domestic season is asking too much of modern players?

A: I would certainly agree with that. There are far too many games for our top class players to remain in peak condition all the time.

As far as the Great Britain team is concerned it would be ideal if I could take them out of the system for extended periods to play a couple of games. It would be in the best interests of the lads.



A pensive Malcolm Reilly during Great Britain defeat by the revitalised French at Leeds last month.

Q: Has the fact that we won last autumn's series against the New Zealanders put more pressure on you and the tourists?

A: Obviously once you've attained something you value it and want to keep it. So it is with us. We want to keep the winning sequence going as long as we can.

The players are committed 110 per cent to Great Britain. But looking back to the second British Coal Test at Headingley our boys were simply jaded.

Q: Do you think that we've reached a position where the international Rugby League community has to say to the players back-to-back seasons are no longer a realistic proposition?

A: Not only do we have to do that, but we have to look seriously at the number of games that we ask of our

players to produce each season. You are talking about the top clubs – and it's they who have the top players and subject them to more games – in the region of 45 games each season.

The season spans nine months and that means you are playing around 36 weeks each year. And of those 36 weeks we ask our top clubs to play at least twice a week for 10 weeks. I'm sorry but in modern Rugby League you just can't do that.

It's just not practical any longer. I hate to keep quoting the Australians, but that's where they have it over us. They build up for each week's game. That kind of preparation takes time. They don't have mid-week games during the season and they made a big blunder last year when they toured New Zealand during their season.

It hit several of their top clubs badly. You could see the reasoning behind the decision as they were trying to protect their top-class players by ensuring that all their commitments were undertaken during the season and that off-season was left for rest. But it didn't work like that and many of their clubs were very critical of that decision.

We must find a way of protecting our top players. I know we are very commercially minded in Rugby League at the moment, the game has never been more bouyant, but I have a warning. If the players' performance on the park goes down, and it will do if we keep them under such constant pressure, then we risk so much of the progress that we've made in recent years. The game as a spectacle will be affected and that will make the selling of the game more difficult. We've got to be careful. You can see the problems we've had in assembling this tour party.

Q: We are asking more in terms of fitness standards of our players today. Is that part of the pressure build-up on the players?

A: If you are not mentally rested and prepared for the game then you can forget your physical preparation. Our guys are getting battered in a very long season and because our players are mentally jaded you get results like the defeat by the French at Headingley.

To expect to bring five strange faces into a squad and ask them to perform like a team was always going to be a tall order. For example, Wigan's Shaun Edwards is a first class scrum half but even he would have needed two or three games under his belt in that position at that level before he could perform to what we needed at Headingley.



Hull K.R.'s David Bishop, capped once for both Wales RU and Great Britain RL.

Q: After the defeat at Headingley you clearly changed your selection policy. What were your reasons for this?

A: We have so many good young quality players in the British game today and they need an opportunity to shine. What better opportunity than this British Coal tour.

There is a mixture of experience and youth in the party. I think the younger players will benefit from the tour. If anybody else drops out then I shall have no hesitation in bringing more youth in.

A lot of the mature club players have reached a stage when I know that they won't develop much more

and so the obvious alternative is to look at kids who have got potential and try to develop their abilities. That is one of the reasons why we chose the likes of Phil Clarke and Ian Smales.

It's nice to have that good combination of youth and experience. We've got some of the best Test footballers in the world here in Britain when they are fit. And, to be fair, we have world class players in our game but they need protecting.

Those kind of players are terrific influences. A young lad coming into the squad can be inspired by playing alongside players of such quality. It would have been nice for me to blood some of those young men alongside the likes of Ellery Hanley but his condition is so serious and he is struggling.

Q: How do you rate New Zealand and their new coach Bob Bailey?

A: I don't know much about Bob or his methods because we don't see that many video recordings of the New Zealand game. But I believe that the standard of coaching in international rugby these days is so high and the quality of the New Zealand players so good that who ever they appointed would make them a difficult proposition.

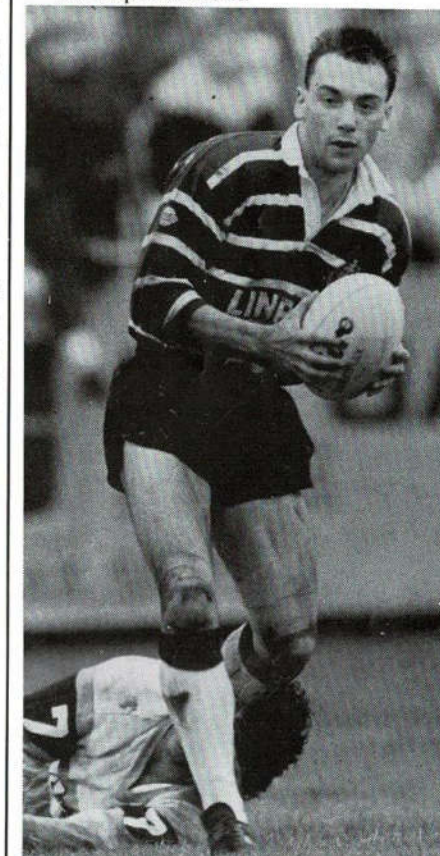
Looking at our squad at the moment you have to say that, even though we won the last series, we are going to New Zealand as the underdogs because we will be missing so many of our top players. Maybe that will be beneficial for when the Australians come over in the autumn.

Q: Looking forward to the autumn and the Australians do you think the fact that we broke their long series of Test wins is a major breakthrough?

A: We've come a long way and we've still got a long way to go working on the principle that one swallow does not constitute a summer. But we did win a series against New Zealand and that confirmed that we do have some quality players in this country. Providing we can get those quality men on the park it is a realistic proposition that we could knock the Australians over.

There is a lot of expectation and

people will be wanting us to do better than we did in the past. I think the players are becoming better prepared all the time but with room for improvement.



Featherstone Rovers full back Chris Bibb, a late tour call up.

Some of our players are now adopting a highly professional attitude to the game because they realise the rewards are there. They have tried to explore the commercial possibilities although some of them have taken it too far. But they are prepared, given the right set of circumstances, to do the job for Great Britain.

But I keep going back to what I said before. We need to protect our players by playing around 30 games a season and I would like to see the League setting short and medium term aims for the domestic game and long term for the international side. It's all related.



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STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

CONGRATULATIONS

Top Sports Columnist IAN WOOLRIDGE filed this comment from the Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final at Wembley a fortnight ago...

Realising that aliens from outer space were present, Mr Ellery Hanley, captain of Wigan Rugby League Club, put on an Oscar-worthy show in the winners' dressing room at Wembley.

He formally thanked his warriors in tones barely less ringing than Montgomery's after Alamein and then, like a vicar suddenly remembering the tea ladies, expressed gratitude to 'the back-room boys' without whom etc etc.

It was a thoroughly distinguished performance by a man whose bullet-shaped head and Death Row haircut remind you of Mike Tyson. Though mildly undermined by the subsequent rendition of two of the most cheerfully filthy rugger songs I have ever heard, it seemed to tell us a great deal about the discipline and good manners and warmth and friendliness of Rugby League.

The attendant aliens, of course, were the London-based reporters like myself who descend on Rugby League showpieces about once a decade and quite unfairly subject the game, its fans and its body politic to the kind of anthropological analysis that might be accorded some ancient nomadic tribe.

It's not meant to be patronising, but probably is. Anyway, the tribesmen never react. They are generosity incarnate. Take the Wigan dressing room. 'Come in', they yelled, until we were crammed in there like a rush-hour Tokyo tube train. My word, what a difference to my last experiences there in the soccer reign of Sir Alf Ramsey. He used to keep you freezing in the wind-tunnel outside the door until pneumonia was inevitable.

Wigan, obviously, were on top of the world, having completely rewritten the record books with their third successive League Cup victory and their ninth triumph in 16 Wembley visits.

Indeed their supremacy almost wrecked the day for any neutral observer torn between wanting to see a magnificent Wigan team at full throttle but equally hoping for a thriller. When Warrington blew a couple of early, easy kicks at goal, the latter was never on.

What remained was less a contest than a sheer exhibition of Wigan's ferocious wall-of-death tackling, some dazzling innovative try-scoring and the knowledge that, in Hanley himself, you were watching the man the players themselves have voted as currently the greatest exponent of Rugby League in the world.

Victory was inevitable and in these circumstances the conduct of the Warrington fans demanded closer scrutiny. As great expectations faded to resignation, as resignation turned to generous acknowledgement of Wigan's brilliance, they utterly refuted the psychiatrist's glib notion that violence on field provokes violence on the terraces.

No 'public place could have been safer in all England on Saturday than Wembley Stadium. Far from being some alien culture come to town, Rugby League's big day brought badly needed reassurance that huge crowds can still convene without a hint of menace.

True, it might still further distance itself from soccer by dropping that mindless dirge, You'll Never Walk Alone, from its spontaneous repertoire but, that apart, the occasion was a joyful celebration of manly sport on a glorious spring day. And that despite the fact that Wembley's Long Bar was open and doing roaring trade.

For years, of course, Rugby League has prided itself on crowd self-control and such was its application that we observers from outer space could only walk away with admiration.

We had witnessed one of the great machine-turned teams of history demolish a side that never quit. And, as Mr Hanley meant us to, we had enjoyed it in civilised company.



TRAVELEADS TOP FAN 1990

Rugby League's official Supporter of the Year — 21-year-old Graham Clay — is to spend his honeymoon in New Zealand with the 33-man Great Britain touring party.

The Bradford Northern fan has been chosen as Traveleads Top Fan 1990, his prize being a 4,000 trip Down Under to coincide with the second and third Tests against New Zealand in Auckland and Christchurch in July.

Accompanied by his June bride, Hazel, the Brighouse-based Works Study Officer will fly Air New Zealand to support the touring Lions, whilst also calling in at Rotorua and Los Angeles. The couple are pictured above with Bradford Northern hooker Brian Noble.

Graham masterminded the introduction of a team of cheerleaders at Odsal Stadium at the start of the season, choreographed by his fiancée.

Having run the Supporters Shop at Odsal Stadium for four years, Graham reformed the Bradford Northern Supporters Club as secretary; has published a history of the club; helped paint the stadium last summer; and contributed to the club programme and local newspaper.

Gary McLeod, of Leeds-based Traveleads, who are currently organising their third Great Britain tour Down Under, said: "Despite his age, Graham has already showed deep commitment and loyalty to his club, combining inventiveness and initiative with undoubted passion for Northern."



STONES BITTER PREMIERSHIP FINALS



STONES BITTER CHAMPIONSHIP MONTH-BY-MONTH

SEPTEMBER

The opening month of the season ended with Wigan leading with eight points from five matches, Warrington having won their opening four matches and reigning Champions Widnes standing in third place with three wins from three matches.

The Wire began the season in style, with Australian Greg Mackey leading them to an unexpected 18-6 Central Park victory which stunned a majority of the near-15,000 attendance.

Opening-day pride of place went to Leigh's debutant scrum half Bob Beardmore who crossed for four tries in a 42-16 home defeat of Barrow. There were also debut tries for Gerald Cordle and Paul Medley as Bradford defeated Hull at Odsal, shrugging off the eve-of-season resignation of coach Barry Seabourne, and for St. Helens' Welsh capture Jonathan Griffiths, whose impressive two-try performance took the shine off Sheffield Eagles' First Division baptism at Hillsborough.

Martin Offiah began the season in familiar style for the Champions scoring two tries in each of their victories over Salford and Hull, and completing the month with four in a 59-8 Naughton Park slaughter of Featherstone, but it was fellow Widnes winger Brimah Kebbie, also a four-try scorer against Rovers, and Wigan's Kevin Iro who led the early First Division try chart with seven apiece.

OCTOBER

As the league table began to sort itself out, Warrington edged into pole position, a point ahead of Wigan and Bradford Northern, whose caretaker coach David Hobbs was holding the fort magnificently until the arrival of Australian Ron Willey.

At the other end of the table, Barrow, Featherstone and Salford were entrenched in the bottom three, with wretched home form costing Rovers dearly. Even Barrow managed their only win of a disastrous season, gaining a 29-22 success at Post Office Road, with Aussie centre Chris Johns scoring two tries.

Salford broke their league duck at the fifth attempt, with Steve Kerry inspiring a lacklustre Willows success over Leigh, giving new coach Kevin Tamati - a successor to Kevin Ashcroft - his first taste of victory with the Red Devils.

Wigan boosted their points difference by scoring 124 in home and away meetings with Barrow, and the Central Park clash brought a five-try performance from Mark Preston, with Shaun Edwards scoring four

tries and short-term Australian signing Phil Blake landing nine goals.

Sheffield Eagles produced one of the performances of the season to thrash newly-crowned World Club Champions Widnes, at Bramall Lane, with ex-Illawarra forward Jeff Hardy scoring two tries from stand off in an amazing 31-6 home victory.

The Loiners, with David Ward having taken charge following the early-season departure of Malcolm Reilly, had started to climb the table, following a disastrous opening-day Headingley loss to Wakefield Trinity.

Veteran former Australian Test legend Ray Price made his much-heralded comeback in Wakefield's home clash with Sheffield Eagles, but it was an unhappy return, with his side losing a big lead. He had to wait four weeks for his first taste of success with his new club.

NOVEMBER

Featherstone Rovers were now in desperate trouble, along with Barrow, both sides having secured just one victory. A 35-26 defeat at Leigh, where ex-Great Britain centre David Stephenson scored his first tries for the home club, seemed to have left Rovers with much to do to avoid the drop - even at such an early stage of the season.

Barrow, too, seemed beyond redemption, and, after Cavill Heugh had scored three tries in vain, in their 62-18 defeat at St. Helens, another crushing Craven Park defeat at the hands of fellow-strugglers Salford brought the dismissal of coach Rod Reddy.

Leeds, meanwhile, had moved steadily into third place on the ladder following a month in which they did little wrong. Long-serving Leeds forward David Heron was finding a new lease of life as a stand off.

The last weekend of November saw some fabulous football with St. Helens coming back from the dead to secure a last-gasp 24-23 victory at Featherstone, teenager Gary Connolly scoring one of the tries of the season. It was a score which kept Saints in the title-reckoning, following a Paul Groves-inspired victory at Hull, and seemed the death-knell for Rovers' survival hopes - their sixth consecutive home league defeat.

DECEMBER

The Regal Trophy competition disrupted the First Division programme throughout the pre-Christmas weeks, and by the turn of the year, there was little change at the top of the Stones Bitter table.

Wigan remained there, following a crushing 38-6 Central Park defeat of Saints, watched by a Boxing Day audience of more than 27,000, while Doug Laughton's men were not giving up hope of a Championship hat-trick after try wizard Martin Offiah romped in for yet another hat-trick in their

home defeat of faltering neighbours Warrington on Boxing Day.

Hull signed Doncaster's record-breaking wingman Neil Turner, and he instantly paid dividends by scoring two tries on his debut as the Airlie Birds ended a three-match losing sequence with a vital defeat of Leigh.

Featherstone, at last, earned their first two home league points of the season, with a Boxing Day defeat of Wakefield Trinity, thus ending a five-match winning sequence by David Topliss' men, New Zealander Iva Ropati was the two-try hero, but Phil Eden helped Trinity to exact revenge on New Year's Eve, to leave Featherstone in desperate trouble, with just four points with half their league fixtures played.

JANUARY

Australian forward Cavill Heugh could not have wished for a better start to 1990 than swapping a place in the doomed Barrow side for one at title-chasing Leeds and Heugh, a member of Halifax's 1986 championship side, got off to a great start, by scoring a vital try in Leeds' defeat of Hull. Leeds had moved into second place, just two points behind Wigan, by the end of January, having taken their winning sequence to five matches with a revenge victory over a Bradford side which had eliminated them from the Wembley trail a week earlier, debutant New Zealander Mike Kuiti scoring two tries.

Wigan remained the team to beat, despite the distraction of the Regal Trophy Final and the fact that they were under-strength for many matches. They continued to set the pace, taking their unbeaten League and Cup run to 14 matches with a 30-2 defeat of Sheffield. They came to grief at the Boulevard, though, where reviving Hull produced a broken-field kicking game which tormented Wigan, who had taken a fortuitous early lead. Phil Windley and Greg Mackey excelled and Marquis Charles, another bargain basement Hull signing, from Dewsbury, scored a try in a 30-20 victory, while St. Helens and Alex Murphy parted company, after just four years together, and Shane Cooper took temporary control, being powerless to prevent his side crashing at Leigh.

FEBRUARY

Wigan and Leeds had turned the Championship into a two-horse race by the end of February, with both clubs finding scintillating form at just the right time.

Ellery Hanley and his men left things very late against Widnes, in the big showdown at Naughton Park, but, just when Martin Offiah's breathtaking late try appeared to have secured the points, ice-cool teenager Bobby Goulding popped up to land a penalty goal which brought an 11-10 victory and effectively killed Widnes' title hopes.

Leeds began the month at Knowsley Road - where new Saints coach Mike

McClennan almost saw his new charges throw a huge lead away. Eventually, two-try Phil Veivers secured a 32-26 win. Leeds went to town against hapless Barrow, running in 17 tries as they raced to a record First Division victory of 90-0, with debutant Rob Ackerman scoring two tries and Colin Maskill landing 11 goals. Sheffield suffered a similar fate at Headingley, where Garry Schofield scored two brilliant tries, just as he did to ensure a 26-14 Leeds win, from the jaws of defeat, at Leigh, at the end of the month.

A major factor in Sheffield's decline had been the loss of Bruce McGuire, the broken leg sustained by Warren Smiles and the release of Jeff Hardy to Castleford. They sought to strengthen with the acquisition of Kiwi tourists Tawere Nikau and Francis Leota. Nikau was a try-scorer as the First Division nomads ended a seven-match spell without league success, by defeating Wakefield at Barnsley's Oakwell stadium. With Featherstone taking their winning sequence to five matches, following tense home defeats of Warrington and Castleford, the situation at the foot of the table was intensifying. Leigh had come back into the equation, by losing to Castleford and Leeds.

MARCH

Wigan took an impressive stride towards

the title at the start of the month, gaining a 21-14 victory over Leeds in front of more than 23,000 at Headingley. Leeds refused to throw in the towel, even after the additional setback of an away defeat at Warrington, and John Bentley scored three tries as they got back to winning ways at Wakefield.

A hard-earned, controversial 26-20 victory at Featherstone kept Wigan on the rails, but Widnes showed the mark of champions, albeit fading ones, by going to Central Park, when all seemed lost, and inflicting only the second home defeat on the Riversiders. Great Britain full-back Alan Tait was the star, scoring three tries in a 22-8 victory.

Leigh had been pulled right back into trouble, by an embarrassing 46-0 defeat by Sheffield, at Doncaster's Tattersfield, and, not surprisingly, ended Billy Benyon's coaching reign at the club. Alex Murphy returned, for a fourth time, to Hilton Park.

APRIL

Leeds' refusal to concede the title was a testimony to the new-found spirit that David Ward had brought back to Headingley, and it was never better illustrated than on April 1, when they took St. Helens apart, despite the dismissal of David Cruickshank after only four minutes. With Phil Ford scoring

three tries and Garry Schofield reaching new heights in his more involved role of stand-off, Leeds gained an incredible 50-14 victory which meant that if they won at Central Park, the following Tuesday, the First Division title could be theirs for a first time.

Wigan struck first, with Mark Preston scoring two early tries, including a replica of the interception he had scored in the Headingley clash the previous month. But Leeds characterised their season with a second-half fightback, and were still battling when the hooter sounded and left them four points adrift, at 16-12.

Wigan duly became worthy Champions when, after the weakened side suffered a Good Friday hiccup at St. Helens, two-try Andy Goodway led the procession in a 34-6 home defeat over Leigh, condemning Alex Murphy's men to a spell in Second Division football in 1990-91.

That result came as a relief to Sheffield and Featherstone, who were both awaiting the outcome, after losing their final games against Hull and Leeds respectively.

With top four and top eight places in doubt right until the last match of the season, and the battle to avoid relegation equally complicated, there was something at stake in virtually every one of the 182 First Division fixtures which took place in 1989-90. *AN IAN PROCTOR REVIEW*



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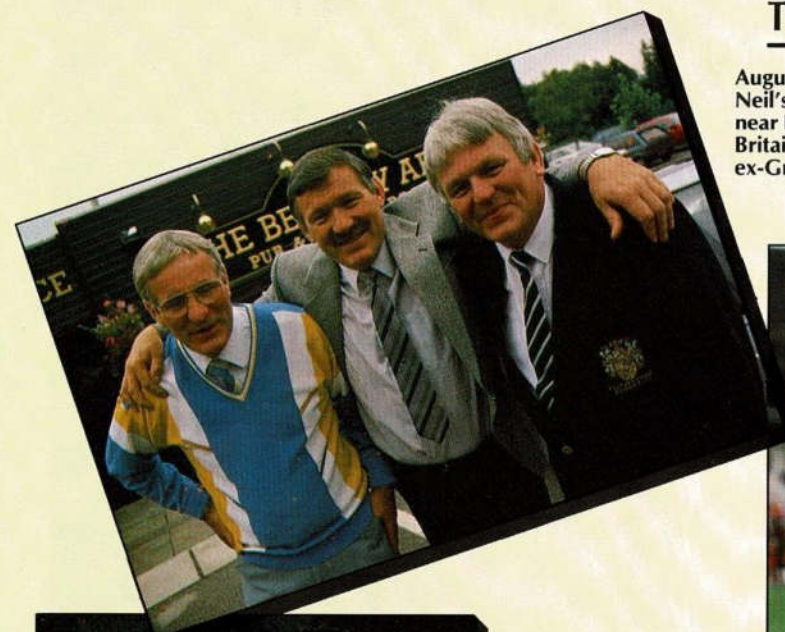
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STONES • PREMIERSHIP
FINALS

THAT WAS THE SEASON, THAT WAS

August 1989 . . . The famous Fox brothers gather to celebrate Neil's inclusion in the Rugby League Hall of Fame at Oulton, near Leeds. The holder of the MBE is flanked by former Great Britain star Don (left) and ex-Great Britain Coach Peter.



August 1989 . . . The new-style CIS Insurance Charity Shield is hoisted for the first time by Widnes Skipper Kurt Sorensen after the Chemics' triumph over Wigan at Liverpool FC's Anfield Stadium.

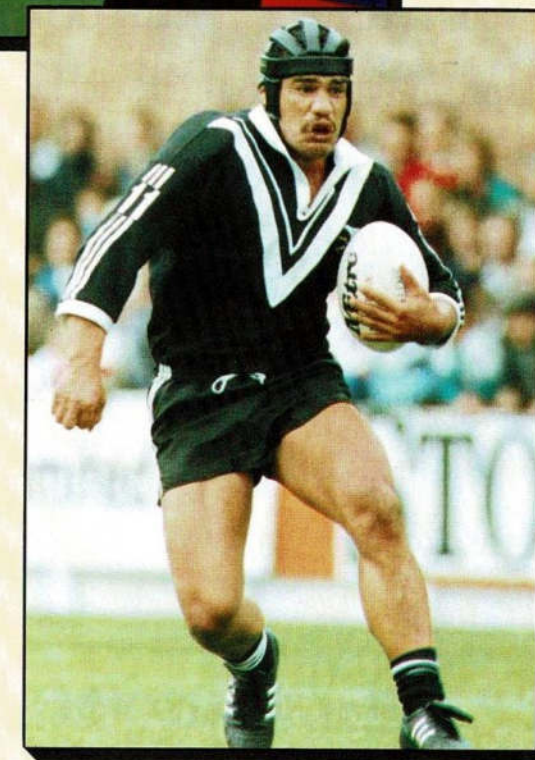


**September 1989 ...
Yorkshire Coach
Peter Fox and
Captain David Hobbs
celebrate the
record-breaking**

White Rose triumph over arch rivals Lancashire at Wigan, Yorkshire's fifth successive Rodstock War of the Roses triumph.



October 1989 . . . On top of the world, that's the Hulme brothers — Paul (left) and David — of Widnes as the Chemics stage a tremendous comeback to lift the Foster's World Club Challenge Trophy from the grasp of Sydney Premiers Canberra Raiders in front of a 30,000 plus Old Trafford crowd.



October 1989 . . . The Kiwis arrive in Britain for a 12-match tour, suffering their first Test series defeat for 24 years despite the obvious commitment of the likes of Sam Stewart.

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CHEMICS

ALAN TAIT

Current Harry Sunderland Trophy holder, having starred in last season's 18-10 Premiership Final defeat of Hull, also appearing as a substitute in the 1988 meeting with St. Helens, scoring a try in a 38-14 success. Has scored 15 tries and two drop goals this season, including a hat-trick against Wigan at Central Park. Started the season with a CIS Insurance Charity Shield success over Wigan at Anfield in August, firing a drop goal, and also appeared in the Foster's World Club Championship defeat of Canberra here at Old Trafford in October. Made the first of six Great Britain appearances in the Test against France at Wigan in January 1989, taking the Man of the Match award. Took his tally of Test caps to six this season with two appearances against both New Zealand and France. Selected for the 1990 Lions tour to PNG and New Zealand.

JONATHAN DAVIES

After a fine season in which he has scored 16 tries and 94 goals for a tally of 252 points, the former Welsh RU captain has earned his first honour in League, selection for the Lions tour to PNG and New Zealand. Signed from Llanelli RUFC in January 1989, made a substitute debut in a home defeat of Salford that month and full debut against Oldham, which brought a first League try and five goals. Totalled 123 points in his debut season, including three goals in the 1989 Premiership final and two tries and five goals in the rout of French club St. Esteve in a European Championship meeting in June. Began this season with seven tries in his first seven games, including efforts in the Charity Shield defeat of Wigan, at Anfield, and one against Canberra, at Old Trafford.

ANDY CURRIER

Former Halton Hornets junior signed by Widnes in July 1983, scored a long-distance try in the Premiership success over Hull last May, having kicked four goals in the 1988 Old Trafford defeat of St. Helens the previous year. Outstanding for Sydney Grand Finalists Balmain last summer, kicking three goals in their Grand Final clash with Balmain. Last season's leading points scorer, 289, made up of 19 tries and 107 goals, injuries and suspensions have hampered him this season, scoring 11 tries and 37 goals. Made a 1989 Great Britain Test debut against New Zealand here at Old Trafford. A member of the 1988 Lions tour party, having made two 1984 appearances at Under-21 level.

DARREN WRIGHT

Outstanding in Widnes' 1988 Premiership defeat of St. Helens, scoring two tries, the former Leigh junior also scored a try in the 1989 Old Trafford defeat of Hull. Was a spectacular scorer, too, in the World Club Championship defeat of Canberra here at Old Trafford last October. A tour replacement with the 1988 Lions party. Totals eight tries this season, including a hat-trick in the 52-20 home defeat of Sheffield Eagles, following his 12 in 33 appearances in 1987-88 and 18 in 38 appearances last term. Signed in March 1985, made a try-scoring Under-21 debut against France at St. Jean de Luz in March 1987.

MARTIN OFFIAH

Has topped the league chart in each of his three seasons as a professional, scoring 44 in 1987-88; a further 60 tries last term; with 45 tries, prior to this afternoon's Final. Signed in 1987 from Rosslyn Park RU, gaining Lancashire and Great Britain selection in his debut season. The scorer of 19 tries in 11 tour appearances in 1988 and voted Lions Man of Steel. A try-scorer in last season's Premiership Final defeat of Hull, has also scored on each of his last five Test

appearances this season to take his Test record to nine tries in 12 appearances. Selected for the Lions summer tour of PNG and New Zealand, guested for Eastern Suburbs last summer scoring nine tries.

TONY MYLER

Appearing in his fourth Premiership Final for Widnes, having helped them to success against Hull in 1982, 1983 and 1989, taking the Harry Sunderland Award for a breathtaking, try-scoring stand-off performance in the 22-10 Headingley success in 1983. A substitute against Hull in last year's Old Trafford showpiece, the former Great Britain stand-off has been dogged by injury, earning a deserved benefit this season. Made a test debut against France at Carcassonne in 1983 and amassed 14 caps up to 1986. Toured Down Under with the 1984 Lions, appearing in home series against New Zealand in 1985 and Australia in 1986. Was a success with Balmain in Sydney, lifting the Panasonic Cup in 1986.

DAVID HULME

Appears in a sixth major final for Widnes this afternoon, including his fourth in the Premiership, gaining winners medals in 1983, 1988 and 1989. Took the Harry Sunderland Trophy for a two-try display in the 1988 defeat of St. Helens, one of 16 tries in that 1987-88 Championship triumph, adding 13 last season and a further nine in 1989-90. Voted 1989 First Division Player of the Year, starred on the 1988 Lions tour and gained his eighth Great Britain cap this season, appearing in all three Tests against New Zealand. Signed by Widnes from Halton Hornets in August 1980, making a full debut against Castleford in November 1981. Gained GB Under-21 selection and made a Lancashire debut against PNG in 1987.

PAUL HULME

Featured in the British Coal Test series defeat of New Zealand, deputising in second and third Tests at hooker, for a fifth cap. Outstanding utility player, a product of Halton Hornets, has served Widnes as a half back, back rower and hooker, and was at scrum half in last year's Premiership Final, having worn the number 12 jersey against Saints in 1988. Made a Lancashire debut at loose forward against Yorkshire at Headingley in September, 1988 and was selected as hooker for this season's clash at Central Park. Scorer of seven tries in 34 appearances in 1987-88, adding three last season, and eight in 1989-90.

KURT SORENSEN

Skipped Widnes to their Stones Bitter Championship/Premiership doubles of 1987-88 and 1988-89, the long-serving New Zealand Test forward made his full Test debut against Wales in the 1975 World Cup. Captain and assistant-coach of the Chemics, arriving in England after Sydney duty with Cronulla and Eastern Suburbs and an earlier stint with Wigan, as a teenager, in 1976-77. Scored a 1988 Premiership Final try against St. Helens and has five touchdowns to his credit this season. Appeared in the 1988 World Cup Final against Australia in Auckland and took his Kiwi Test tally to 27 in Carcassonne last November, despite a four-year Test absence between 1978 and 1982.

PHIL MCKENZIE

A try-scorer in the 1988 Premiership Final defeat of St. Helens, arrived in England three seasons ago from Illawarra area of Australia to play for Rochdale Hornets. Tallied 19 tries in 32 appearances for Hornets, before joining Widnes. Scored a further 11 tries in 1986-87 and totalled 12 tries in 1987-88. As Widnes retained their title in 1988-89, the fast-supporting Australian scored nine tries in 41 appearances and he scored his 11th of this season in the Premiership semi-final defeat of Leeds at Headingley.

MIKE O'NEILL

Possibly his swansong for Widnes after being

transfer-listed and approached by promoted Rochdale Hornets. His 12th major final of a 12-year Naughton Park career, including a record five previous Premiership Finals in 1980, 1982, 1983, 1988 and 1989. A teenage substitute in Widnes' 1979 Wembley defeat of Wakefield Trinity, enjoyed a benefit season at Naughton Park in 1988-89. A 1984 Lions tourist, his three Great Britain caps came against Australia at Leeds in 1982, and versus France — in Carcassonne and Hull — in 1983. Also holds three Under-24 caps and has appeared nine times for Lancashire.

DEREK PYKE

Has made only one previous major final appearance in a long and distinguished career, substituting for Andy Currier in last year's Premiership Final. Excelled for Widnes in their CIS Charity Shield defeat of Wigan at Anfield last August. The former Leigh skipper joined Widnes in a part-exchange deal with Harry Pinner in January 1988. Voted Second Division Player of the Year in 1986, having earlier been a member of the Leigh team which won the First Division Championship in 1981-82 season. Played more than 200 games for Leigh and appeared for Lancashire against Yorkshire in 1986, against Papua New Guinea in 1987 and Yorkshire last season.

JOE GRIMA

Set to make it four Old Trafford Premiership appearances in four years, having scored a try in Swinton's Division Two success over Hunslet in the inaugural doubleheader in 1987, before appearing in Widnes' 1988 and 1989 victories over St. Helens and Hull. A substitute in the semi-final defeat of Leeds, the tough-tackling New Zealander has fought his way back into contention at Widnes after a long suspension threatened his Naughton Park career. An eve-of-Cup-deadline signing in January 1988, came to England from the Ponsonby club. Scorer of seven tries in 38 appearances last season, his only score this term was in the opening-day defeat of Salford.

RICHARD EYRES

The former BARLA Youth tourist appears in his fourth major final for Widnes, his third consecutive Stones Bitter Premiership Final. Joined the Lions party mid-way through the 1988 tour, has one Test appearance for Great Britain, against France in 1989. Made a Lancashire debut as substitute against Yorkshire at Leeds in September 1988 and named in the side again this season. Joined Widnes in August 1984 from the Widnes Tigers nursery, making a try-scoring debut at home to Leigh the following month.

EMOSI KOLOTO

Captured from the Wellington RU club in New Zealand after impressing coach Doug Laughton in a TV match against the Welsh tourists, has shrugged off a serious injury to regain last season's exciting form. Three tries this term including one in the Premiership defeat of last season's finalists Hull. Scored seven tries in 30 appearances as Widnes retained their title in 1988-89. Regarded as unlucky to miss selection for the Kiwis tour, after opening this season with tries against Salford and Carlisle.

LES HOLLIDAY

Was in the Swinton side which won the first-ever Second Division Premiership in 1987, skipping the Lions and landing a vital drop goal in the 27-10 defeat of Hunslet. A 1988 transfer to First Division Halifax brought the skilful back rower to prominence and he appeared in their beaten Wembley side against Wigan, narrowly missing selection for the Lions tour to Australasia, being named in the stand-by squad. Outstanding for Halifax in this season's Regal Trophy Final, joined Widnes in March for £100,000. Named in the Lions tour party to PNG and New Zealand, was forced to pull out for personal reasons. One Cumbria cap, against Australia in 1986.

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STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

NORTHERN

IAN WILKINSON

From Hemsworth amateur club, the full back originally joined Leeds in December 1980 and played in consecutive John Player Finals for the Lions in 1983 and 1984. A 1988 Lions tourist after a tremendous debut season at Halifax had brought 14 tries in 30 appearances and a Wembley debut against Wigan. Made just six tour appearances without making the Test side. Has two caps for Yorkshire against Lancashire in 1986 and 1987. Joined Northern last season, scoring five tries in 12 matches, plus three touchdowns this term.

GERALD CORDLE

Signed in the summer from Cardiff RU club, the strong-running winger has scored 32 tries in his debut season, including one on his Great Britain debut against France at Headingley last month. A try-scorer in his Bradford debut against Hull, including two tries in the Yorkshire Cup Final defeat of Featherstone at Leeds in November, a four try feat in Regal Trophy football against Keighley and a Silk Cut Cup hat-trick at Fulham. Has scored six tries in his last six matches, including one in Premiership football against St. Helens.

STEVE MCGOWAN

A former Leeds Colts player, this long-striding centre was outstanding last season, topping the Northern try list for the first time with 21 in 34 appearances, after scoring 14 in 1987-88. Has again scored 14 touchdowns this season, gaining a second Yorkshire Cup winners medal, having also starred in the replayed 1987 County Cup success against Castleford. The subject of a determined transfer bid from Hull in the summer, is set to join the North Sydney club after today's Final, only his third since signing for Northern in May 1983.

TONY MARCHANT

Joined Northern in an exchange deal with Castleford at the turn of the year, with Great Britain Under-21 international Neil Roebuck going to Wheldon Road. Has rediscovered the form which made him a Great Britain cap in 1986 when he scored a try in the 24-10 defeat of France at Wigan, before appearing in First and Second Tests against Australia. A try-scorer in Castleford's Wembley defeat of Hull K.R. four years ago, also appeared in their 1984 Premiership Final against the Robins at Headingley. Had a guest spell with top Brisbane outfit Wynnum-Manly, alongside Wally Lewis and Gene Miles, in the summer of 1986. Scorer of 11 tries for Northern.

RICHARD FRANCIS

Graduate of the Colts and Alliance set-up at Odsal, since signing professional forms from Hunslet Parkside in July 1983. Scorer of nine tries this term. Regarded as one of the fastest wingmen, showed his pace to good effect in defensive duties in the memorable Stones Bitter Premiership semi-final defeat of Wigan. Helped Northern to Yorkshire Cup success in his first major final against Featherstone in November 1989.

ROGER SIMPSON

Product of the Moldgreen amateur club in Huddersfield, joining Northern in August 1984. Earned Great Britain Colts honours, his pace serving Northern in centre, stand off and wing berths. The scorer of nine tries in 30 appearances last season, has eight tries to his credit this term. Outstanding since the switch to stand off,

following the return to Sydney of Aussie Ivan Henjak. Helped Northern to Yorkshire Cup Final success from left centre against Featherstone in November 1989.

PAUL HARKIN

Veteran of three previous Premiership Finals with Hull K.R., scoring a try in the 11-7 defeat of Hull in 1981; earning a second winners medal against Castleford three years later; and a runners-up medal, as substitute, against St. Helens in 1985. Outstanding in the 9-0 Premiership semi-final defeat of Wigan, scoring his seventh try of the season and landing two precious drop goals to take his tally for the season to 12. His big match pedigree is reflected in four Man of the Match awards in major finals, including consecutive John Player Finals in 1985 and 1986 for the Robins; and two White Rose Trophy-winning efforts for Northern in 1987 and last November, when his two-try display ensured a 20-14 defeat of Featherstone at Headingley. Gained his solitary Great Britain cap as a substitute against France in Perpignan in March 1985, having appeared once at Under-24 level four years previously.

KELVIN SKERRETT

The Northern Player of the Year and now an automatic member of the Great Britain squad, having appeared throughout the three-Test British Coal series against New Zealand and against France at Perpignan and Leeds. Signed from Hunslet in 1987. Made his second Yorkshire appearance against Lancashire in September 1989, and was outstanding in the British Coal series against the Kiwis, after being a non-playing member of the international squad last season. Helped Northern to victory in his only two previous major finals, the 1987 and 1989 Yorkshire Cup Finals against Castleford and Featherstone. Selected for the summer Lions tour to Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

BRIAN NOBLE

Captain of the 1984 Lions tour party at 23, but overlooked at Test level since. Made a Test debut against Australia at Headingley in 1982, the first of 11 caps including seven on that Lions tour. Also has representative honours for Yorkshire and at GB Under-24 level. Received a deserved benefit last season for loyal service in over 250 matches for the Odsal club, and has worked hard to reclaim his place from the industrious Glenn Barraclough in the second half of the season. His only three previous finals for Northern were in Yorkshire Cup football — in 1981, 1987 and 1989 — plus First Division Championship triumphs of 1979-80 and 1980-81.

DAVID HOBBS

Currently player-coach at Odsal, doing a tremendous job since succeeding Ron Willey after the disappointing Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-final defeat at home to Warrington. Has seen his side win nine of their last 10 matches to reach Old Trafford for the first time. Set to appear in his fifth major final, following on from a two-try, Lance Todd Trophy-winning display for Featherstone Rovers at Wembley in 1983; a 1986 Lancashire Cup Final for Oldham; and two Yorkshire Cup wins with Northern. Has 10 Great Britain caps, including two British Coal Tests against the Kiwis this season. Remains the only ever-present in the Yorkshire pack for five consecutive Rodstock War of the Roses defeats over Lancashire since 1985. An accurate goalkicker with 104 to his credit this season, including a drop-goal in the Premiership semi-final defeat of Wigan, when Northern nipped Wigan for the first time since Hull K.R. beat them 8-0 in March 1988, and for the first time at Central

Park in over 11 years, Castleford winning 13-0 in January 1979.

PAUL MEDLEY

Former Great Britain and Lions tour forward, who gained a second consecutive Yorkshire Cup medal in Northern's defeat of Featherstone in November, after scoring a try in Leeds' 33-12 Final defeat of Castleford in 1988. Joined Halifax from Leeds in January 1989 in an exchange deal for Paul Dixon, but played just six matches at Thrum Hall, scoring one try. A Great Britain tourist in 1988, after making a Man of the Match Test debut against PNG in 1987, his four caps also include 1988 Tests against France and the Kumuls. A former GB Colts and Under-21 international, recalled to the Yorkshire side this season, scoring a try in the record 56-12 defeat of Lancashire. Northern's costliest signing at £110,000, he has scored 13 tries this season and this will be the fourth major final of his career.

KARL FAIRBANK

Tremendous club form has brought him back into the international reckoning after a two-year exile, appearing in his first full Test for Great Britain against France at Headingley last month. Previously appeared as a substitute in the 1987 clash with PNG at Wigan and toured with the 1988 Lions. Now makes a second tour — to PNG and New Zealand in the summer — after replacing Widnes forward Les Holliday. One of five League-playing brothers, is a renowned try-scorer, totalling 15 tries in 35 appearances in 1987-88; adding another 20 in 34 appearances last season; and a further 11 this season.

KEITH MUMBY

Made his debut as a 16-year-old in 1973, scoring a try and 12 goals against Doncaster. Seventeen years on, has established club records for appearances, goals and points aggregates, winning the club's Player of the Year award seven times. A member of the First Division title-winning sides of 1980 and 1981, the only survivor from their last Premiership Final, against Widnes at Swinton in 1980. That was his third Premiership Final, having kicked two goals in their 1978 defeat of Widnes and been a member of the side which lost to Leeds in 1979. Appeared in nine major finals, including Northern's last three Yorkshire Cup winning sides in 1978, 1987 and 1989. Toured Australasia in 1979 and 1984, totalling 11 Great Britain appearances, two for England, nine for Yorkshire and six at Under-24 level. After playing the majority of his career at full back, has done a sterling job in centre, stand off and loose forward positions.

DAVID COOPER

Signed from Bramley RU in March 1989, the goalkicking centre made his first team debut as a substitute in the meeting with New Zealand in October with a full debut in the 14-13 home defeat of Leeds the following month. Opened his scoring account in the dramatic 19-18 Good Friday defeat of Wakefield Trinity, landing three goals and a drop goal. Appeared for Northern in the 1990 Slalom Lager Alliance Challenge Cup Final against Hull.

CRAIG RICHARDS

Young forward signing from local amateur club Queensbury in September 1987, making one substitute's appearance in 1988-89. Made a full debut at prop when an under-strength Northern side met the 1989 Kiwis at Odsal in October. Has alternated between prop and second row berths in his subsequent first-team appearances. Highly regarded by coach David Hobbs, was Northern's outstanding forward in their Slalom Lager Alliance Cup Final defeat by Hull last month.

STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

LINE UP

Hull K.R.

Red and White jersey
Coach: **ROGER MILLWARD, MBE**

DAVID LIGHTFOOT	1
GARRY CLARK	2
MIKE FLETCHER	3
GREG AUSTIN	4
ANTHONY SULLIVAN	5
MIKE SMITH, Capt.	6
WAYNE PARKER	7
BRYAN NIEBLING	8
CHRIS RUDD	9
ASUQUO EMA	10
DES HARRISON	11
ANDY THOMPSON	12
PAUL LYMAN	13
JIMMY IRVINE	14
DAVID BISHOP	15

Oldham

Blue and White jersey
Coach: **TONY BARROW**

DUNCAN PLATT	1
RICHARD IRVING	2
DES FOY	3
JOHN HENDERSON	4
PAUL LORD	5
BRETT CLARK	6
MIKE FORD, Capt.	7
LEO CASEY	8
ANDY RUANE	9
JOHN FIELDHOUSE	10
PAUL ROUND	11
CHARLIE McALISTER	12
RICHARD RUSSELL	13
TOMMY MARTYN	14
KEITH NEWTON	15

Scrum

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

Penalties

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

TOM BERGIN TROPHY

This afternoon's adjudged Man of the Match, chosen by the Press, will receive the Tom Bergin Trophy and prize money, sponsored by Stones Bitter.

Referee: **ROBIN WHITFIELD, Widnes**

Touch Judges:

JOE CHAMBERLAIN, Warrington (Yellow flag) JOHN O'CONNOR, Huddersfield (Red flag)

Scrum

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

Penalties

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

LINE UP

Widnes

Black and White jersey
Coach: **DOUG LAUGHTON**

ALAN TAIT	1
JONATHAN DAVIES	2
ANDY CURRIER	3
DARREN WRIGHT	4
MARTIN OFFIAH	5
DAVID HULME	6
PAUL HULME	7
KURT SORENSEN, Capt.	8
PHIL MCKENZIE	9
MIKE O'NEILL	10
RICHARD EYRES	11
EMOSI KOLOTO	12
LES HOLLIDAY	13
TONY MYLER	14
JOE GRIMA	15

Bradford Northern

Red, Amber, Black and White jersey
Coach: **DAVID HOBBS**

IAN WILKINSON	1
GERALD CORDLE	2
STEVE McGOWAN	3
TONY MARCHANT	4
RICHARD FRANCIS	5
RICHARD SIMPSON	6
PAUL HARKIN	7
KELVIN SKERRETT	8
BRIAN NOBLE	9
DAVID HOBBS, Capt.	10
PAUL MEDLEY	11
KARL FAIRBANK	12
KEITH MUMBY	13

Scrum

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

Penalties

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

HARRY SUNDERLAND TROPHY

This afternoon's adjudged Man of the Match, chosen by the Press, will receive the Harry Sunderland Trophy and prize money, sponsored by Stones Bitter.

Referee: **COLIN MORRIS, Huddersfield**

Touch Judges:

TONY BROWN, St. Helens (Yellow flag)

STAN JACKSON, Wakefield (Red flag)

Scrum

1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20

Penalties

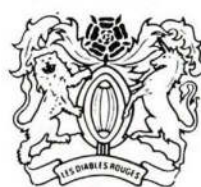
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SUPERCALL

STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

THE ROBINS

Second Division Champions Hull K.R., more accustomed to contesting the main event on Premiership Final day after appearing three times in five years between 1981 and 1985, are delighted just to be back on the Big-Match stage for the first time since losing by a point to Castleford at Wembley in 1986. The Robins have been a model of free-scoring consistency throughout a campaign which has seen them lift the Stones Bitter Second Division Championship Bowl for the first time, reclaiming the top flight status which they lost after 14 unbroken seasons, 12 months ago.

Roger Millward's trophy haul is among the most impressive in the game – nine successes, including a win in each of the domestic competitions, during his 13-year coaching tenure. But the task of guiding the club back into the Stones Bitter Championship was something of a personal duty for the former Great Britain skipper. This time last year, the men from the east side of Hull were despondent at finishing at the foot of the Championship table, having won only six of their 26 fixtures. The Robins faced a daunting rebuilding programme on and off the field, as they left their famous Craven Park venue for a new site on the Greatfield Estate.

Promotion, as favourites Halifax have discovered to their cost this season, is far from guaranteed for any club in the increasingly competitive 21-team Second Division competition. But consistency has been the name of the game for Hull K.R. and they are worthy Champions.

Millward's recruiting campaign began even before last season's fate was known, with the acquisition of Whitehaven and Cumbrian county full back David Lightfoot; Carlisle's skilful Cumbria prop Colin Armstrong; Hunslet's Jimmy Irvine; ex-Under 21 international Paul Lyman from Featherstone Rovers; and Halifax's Under-21 international half back Steve Robinson. Signalling the start of a new era, it also confirmed the break-up of a great side which has brought the club its finest moments.

Additionally, Millward increasingly looked to the club's own, highly-successful production line by introducing such as pacy wingman Anthony Sullivan; hard-working back-row forward Andy Thompson; back-rower Paul Speckman; Paul Fletcher and Lee Richardson to a side who offered little resistance in the fight to avoid relegation, winning just one of their last eleven matches.

Sullivan, following in father Clive's illustrious footsteps, has even bettered his dad's best try-scoring season, grabbing 34 tries, including five in a home rout of Keighley. He added to his laurels by scoring a try on his Great Britain Under-21 debut against France at Doncaster in February and was short-listed, alongside Wigan's Denis Betts and Bobby Goulding, as the Stones Bitter Young Player of the Year.

Thompson has impressed former Kangaroo tourist Bryan Niebling as much as anyone at the new Craven Park stadium, this season, while the improved form of Irvine – a member of Hunslet's beaten side against Swinton at Old Trafford three years ago – Lightfoot, 13-try Lyman and another signing from Cumbria, ex-Workington forward Paul Vannett can only augur well for the rigours which lie ahead in the Stones Bitter Championship.

But Millward's Championship-winners owe just as much to the superb example set by their experienced campaigners. The links with a glorious past are still evident. Mike Smith, a model of consistency for over 15 years, has led the side immaculately throughout a demanding 28-match season in which Rovers have lost just three times and amassed 1,102 league points. The durable double Lions tourist, who scored tries in Rovers' Premiership triumphs in 1981 and 1984, recently created a new appearance record for his hometown club.

Another player with fond memories of their glory days of the 80s is ex-Great Britain wingman Garry Clark. The 1984 Lions tourist has scored 20 tries this season, including a hat-trick in a 54-4 home defeat of Nottingham City. He gained his three Test caps in the First Division Championship-winning days of 1984 and 1985.

Nine-try hooker Chris Rudd understudied former Great Britain skipper David Watkinson for much of the 80s and has recovered from an horrific motor accident a couple of seasons ago. Alongside Rudd has been former Australian Test prop Niebling, a shrewd and popular recruit from the Brisbane Broncos club last summer, experienced Zook Ema and the up-and-coming Armstrong.

A 1986 Kangaroo tourist, Niebling gained 10 Australian Test caps between 1984 and 1987, and played much of his club football for Valleys and Redcliffe in Brisbane. He was acknowledged as one of Queensland's finest forwards of the past decade in a recent poll Down Under and has been a model of consistency for

Hull Kingston. Another Australian recruit, former Manly utility back Greg Austin, has been an unqualified success in the centre forging a prolific left-flank partnership with Sullivan. Previously with Rochdale Hornets and Salford, Austin has revelled in the table-topping side and includes three hat-tricks in a 38-try tally.

Former Pontypool and Wales Rugby Union star David Bishop has crowned a magnificent season by becoming the club's 26th Great Britain international, making a brief substitute's appearance against France at Headingley last month. Bishop, scorer of 19 tries including hat-tricks against Bramley and Whitehaven and one of three nominations for the Stones Bitter Second Division Player of the Year award, has also been included in the Lions touring party to Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

Former Great Britain Under-21 international centre Mike Fletcher has shattered a host of Rovers scoring records during the course of his most consistent season for the club. Fletcher has bettered George Fairbairn's former goalkicking record (166) and Steve Hubbard's 366-point seasonal tally, and needs a score today to join the 11 players in history who have played and scored in every match in a season. Another former Great Britain Under-21 international, half-back Wayne Parker, has made a welcome return after serious injury problems, while such as long-serving forward Des Harrison has lent stability to their pack.

Rovers began their challenge for promotion by winning 13 of their opening 14 league matches, scoring 152 points in their first three games of the season, and won 12 of their final 13 matches to claim the title, despite a hiccup, losing 2-3 against Dewsbury at Crown Flatt. The only other side to defeat Millward's men were Oldham, who completed a double with a 12-4 victory at Watersheddings in September and became the only side to take league points from Craven Park with a 9-6 January triumph.

In Cup football, Rovers have shown their First Division pedigree without having any luck. In the John Smith's Yorkshire Cup, after trouncing Bramley, they were undone by a Graham Steadman try hat-trick at Wheldon Road. In the first round of the Regal Trophy, Rovers led St. Helens for much of the first half, until the controversial dismissal of free-scoring Mike Fletcher, later exonerated by the disciplinary committee. On the road to Wembley, no side gave eventual winners Wigan a bigger fright than Hull K.R., who were pipped 6-4 on home soil.

STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

THE ROUGHYEDS

Oldham travel down the road to Old Trafford for their second Division Two Premiership Final in three seasons looking for consolation after a season in which they came so close to winning the Grunhalls Lager Lancashire Cup and reaching Wembley for the first time in their history. But each time, Tony Barrow's men were denied by Warrington, and they desperately want victory in today's Premiership Final to add gloss to a season in which they have rarely looked like failing in their major aim of returning to the Stones Bitter Championship. Only uncharacteristic end-of-season slip-ups at Workington, 14-21, and Swinton, 12-15, cost them a fourth Second Division Championship triumph.

This afternoon's Oldham line-up is certain to show wholesale changes to that which won a scintillating Final against Featherstone Rovers here at Old Trafford two years ago. No more than five of that cup-winning unit remain in contention for a place in Barrow's team this afternoon. In that 1988 showpiece, the Roughyeds built a commanding 22-0 lead inside the first 32 minutes, only to be forced to hold off a determined Featherstone Rovers comeback which seemed set to succeed. After going 26-22 in arrears, Man of the Match, former Great Britain centre Des Foy, made the break which brought the equalising try for Kevin Meadows, allowing Charlie McAlister to kick the match-winning points in a 28-26 victory.

New Zealander McAlister remains one of the most popular Oldham players, having scored eight tries and 16 goals this term, while Foy has returned to the club following a brief, unhappy spell with Newcastle Knights in Australia. Foy's tally of 10 tries, includes a five-try spree in the home defeat of Hunslet. Mike Ford is another survivor from 1988, continuing to look one of the best scrum halves in the business, having benefitted from the experience of touring Australasia with the 1988 Lions party. Former St. Helens and Great Britain Under-21 back rower Paul Round, a makeshift winger in the Final two years ago, is back in his more familiar second row position these days, scoring two impressive tries in the all-important Easter Monday defeat of neighbouring promotion-rivals Rochdale Hornets.

Richard Irving was a substitute for Mick Burke in that Final. The ex-Moldgreen winger has scored 14 tries, including one

in the Lancashire Cup Final at Knowsley Road and Oldham's solitary effort in the Cup semi-final defeat at the hands of Warrington. A leading try-scorer for Oldham, and one of three contenders for the Second Division Player of the year award he won whilst with Runcorn Highfield three years ago, is dynamic Australian loose forward John Cogger. His 24 tries include a hat-trick at home to Hunslet.

Ex-Leigh centre John Henderson has recovered from an early-season injury to score 16 tries, including two in the first round Premiership victory over last season's finalists Swinton. Winger Paul Lord has weighed in with 25 touchdowns in Oldham's fifth promotion-winning season since the re-introduction of two division football in 1973.

Several of Oldham's experienced cup-fighting unit – 11 wins in 14 cup-ties this season – have previous experience of the Premiership Final atmosphere, mostly in the main event.

Duncan Platt was at Old Trafford two years ago as a member of the Widnes side which eclipsed St. Helens 38-14 in the Premiership Final. Platt landed a goal as the Chemics completed a Championship Premiership double and has kicked more than 120 goals for Oldham in his most consistent season to date. Play-anywhere former Wigan star Richard Russell was a substitute in the Riversiders' 8-0 Premiership Final defeat of Warrington in 1987. Russell, an outstanding utility back whilst at Central Park and a former Great Britain Colts and Under-21 player, has operated with equal success as hooker or loose forward this season, scoring eight tries.

Second-rower Shaun Allen substituted for the great Mal Meninga, when St. Helens defeated Hull K.R. in the 1985 Premiership Final and again made a substitution in their 1988 bid for the trophy against Widnes. Former Great Britain front or backrow forward John Fieldhouse arrived at Watersheddings via spells with Warrington, Widnes and St. Helens, and includes a 1988 Premiership Final at Old Trafford among four major finals. Fieldhouse's career has also brought him seven Great Britain caps, including one at Old Trafford in the First Test against the Australian touring team, four years ago.

Fifteen-try Australian Brett Clark has reproduced the form that made him such a shrewd St. Helens capture from Western Suburbs four seasons ago, when he appeared in the Wembley Cup Final. Ex-Leeds prop-forward John Fairbank came to Oldham in a 1988 deal which

took Test front rower Hugh Waddell to Headingley. He has matured into an outstanding forward in his own right, showing the form that won him amateur international honours. Andy Ruane arrived at Oldham after spells with Widnes and Rochdale Hornets and was a stalwart performer in last season's desperate fight against relegation, scoring four tries and 15 goals. This season, in competition with Russell, he has scored eight tries.

Big-hearted prop Leo Casey has found consistency and such impressive form that he was being mentioned as a possible Lions tourist. Keith Newton is another former Widnes player who has responded to the regular opportunity of first-team football. The undoubted highlight of the second-rower's impressive season was the scoring of Oldham's match-winning Cup quarter-final try – one of seven in 1989-90 – against his former Widnes colleagues.

While Barrow has leaned heavily on experience in the quest for an instant return to the Stones Bitter Championship, he has also blooded some of the finest young prospects in the game – such as teenagers Tommy Martyn, Neil Flanagan and Trevor Croston, with his son Tony, Chris Joynt and Richard Blackman also waiting in the wings. And, with an eye on the future, the man who led Warrington to 1986 Premiership success has strengthened his squad with the acquisition of Halifax's match-winning Australian utility back Tony Anderson and the loan signing of Bramley's flying wingman Peter Lewis.

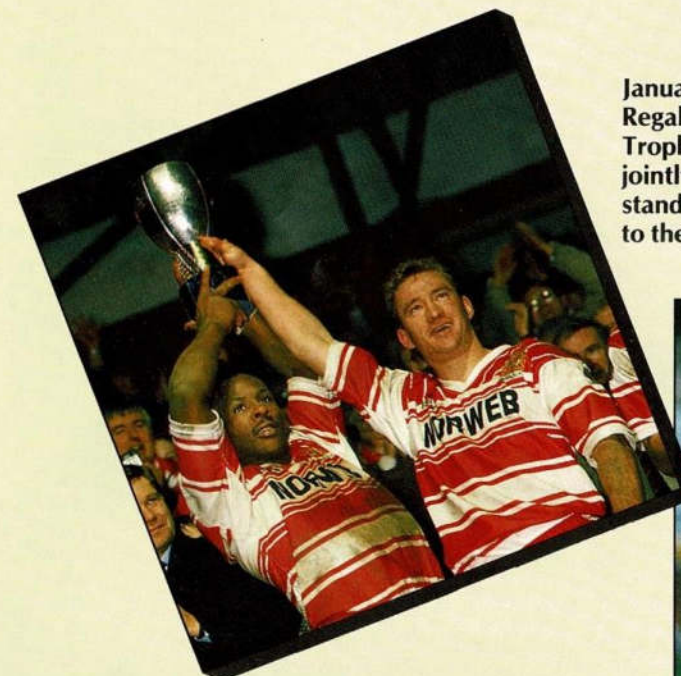
Oldham's season began with a defeat at Halifax in only their second match, but then strung nine consecutive victories together before Christmas, before falling at neighbouring Rochdale. Revenge came with an emphatic 30-2 Easter Monday defeat of Allan Agar's men, to signal that they were over an unsteady period which had brought two defeats in their previous three league matches, having previously won 12 successive Division Two matches.

The Roughyeds won all 14 Division Two matches at the Watersheddings, including crushing victories over Chorley (66-16), Runcorn (60-2) and Fulham (52-4), with an 84-points extravaganza with Keighley (50-34) for good measure. But Barrow and his men realise that the season will be recalled as another *if only* campaign... unless they can complete a hat-trick of successes over the Rovers of Hull, this afternoon, and take some silverware back to the remarkably loyal Watersheddings faithful.

STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

THAT WAS THE SEASON, THAT WAS

January 1990... The first-ever presentation of the Regal Trophy, formerly the John Player Special Trophy, goes to Wigan, the new pot being held aloft jointly by fit-again skipper Ellery Hanley (left) and his stand-in Dean Bell, who led the Riversiders through to the third round replay.



March 1990... Britain travel to Perpignan to gain a hard-earned 8-4 triumph over the revitalised French, led by British Coal Man of the Match Kelvin Skerrett.



April 1990... Coach and Captain on a lap of honour as Wigan duo John Monie (left) and Ellery Hanley celebrate the Riversiders' Stones Bitter Championship Trophy Bowl.



April 1990... Coach and Captain share the glory as Roger Millward MBE (right) and Mike Smith show off the Stones Bitter Second Division Championship Bowl.

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STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

PREMIERSHIP ROLL OF HONOUR

Year	Winners	Runner-up	Venue	Attendance	Receipts
1975	Leeds.....26	St. Helens.....11	Wigan.....	14,531	£7,795
1976	St. Helens.....15	Salford.....2	Swinton.....	18,082	£13,138
1977	St. Helens.....32	Warrington.....20	Swinton.....	11,178	£11,626
1978	Bradford N. 17	Widnes.....8	Swinton.....	16,813	£18,677
1979	Leeds.....24	Bradford N. 2	Huddersfield.....	19,486	£21,291
1980	Widnes.....19	Bradford N. 5	Swinton.....	10,215	£13,665
1981	Hull K.R. 11	Hull.....7	Leeds.....	29,448	£47,529
1982	Widnes.....23	Hull.....8	Leeds.....	12,100	£23,749
1983	Widnes.....22	Hull.....10	Leeds.....	17,813	£34,145
1984	Hull K.R. 18	Castleford.....10	Leeds.....	12,515	£31,769
1985	St. Helens.....36	Hull K.R. 16	Elland Rd, Leeds.....	15,518	£46,950
1986	Warrington.....38	Halifax.....10	Elland Rd, Leeds.....	13,683	£50,879
1987	Wigan.....8	Widnes.....0	Old Trafford, Man.....	38,756	£165,166
1988	Widnes.....38	St. Helens.....14	Old Trafford, Man.....	35,252	£232,298
1989	Widnes.....18	Hull.....10	Old Trafford, Man.....	40,194	£264,242

PREMIERSHIP RECORDS

First Staged 1975 ALL ROUNDS TEAM

Highest Score:
Hull K.R. 54 v. Leeds 0.....1984
(Also widest margin)
Biggest attendance:
40,194 Widnes v. Hull
Final at Old Trafford.....1989

INDIVIDUAL

Most goals: 9 by Andy Gregory (Widnes)
v. Leeds.....Round 1 1982
Most points: 22 (7g, 2t) by John Dorahy
(Hull K.R.) v. Leeds.....Round 1 1984
Most tries: 4 by David Hall (Hull K.R.)
v. Castleford.....Round 1 1983
4 by Phil Ford (Wigan)
v. Hull.....Round 1 1985
4 by Ellery Hanley (Wigan)
v. Hull K.R.....Round 1 1986

PREMIERSHIP FINAL RECORDS TEAM

Most final appearances:
6 by Widnes
Most wins: 5 by Widnes
Highest score: Warrington 38 v. Halifax 10
(widest margin).....1986
Biggest attendance:
40,194 Widnes v. Hull
(at Old Trafford, Manchester).....1989

INDIVIDUAL

Most tries:
No player has scored 3 or more
Most goals: 8 by Kevin Dick (Leeds)
v. Bradford N. 1979
Most points:
17 (7g, 1t) by Geoff Pimblett (St. Helens)
v. Warrington.....1977

HISTORY

With the reintroduction of two divisions in
1973-74 there was no longer a need for a play-
off to decide the championship.

However, it was decided to continue the
tradition of an end-of-season play-off, the
winners to receive the newly instituted
Premiership Trophy.

In the first season of the Premiership,
1974-75, the top 12 Division One clubs and the
top four from Division Two went into a first
round draw, the luck of the draw operating
through to the final, played on a neutral venue.

The following season the play-off was
reduced to the top eight clubs in the First
Division, the ties being decided on a merit
basis i.e. 1st v. 8th, 2nd v. 7th etc. At the semi-
final stage the highest placed clubs had the
option of when to play at home in the two-
legged tie.

In 1978-79 the two-leg system was
suspended because of fixture congestion and
the higher placed clubs had home advantage
right through to the neutrally staged final.

Two legs returned the following season, but
were finally abolished from 1980-81.

A Second Division Premiership tournament
was introduced for the first time in 1986-87.

THE HARRY SUNDERLAND TROPHY ROLL OF HONOUR

Year	Winner	Team	Position
1965	Terry Fogerty	Halifax (v. St. Helens)	Second row
1966	Albert Halsall	St. Helens (v. Halifax)	Prop
1967	Ray Owen	Wakefield T. (v. St. Helens)	Scrum half
1968	Gary Cooper	Wakefield T. (v. Hull K.R.)	Full back
1969	Bev Risman	Leeds (v. Castleford)	Full back
1970	Frank Myler	St. Helens (v. Leeds)	Stand off
1971	Bill Ashurst	Wigan (v. St. Helens)	Second row
1972	Terry Clawson	Leeds (v. St. Helens)	Prop
1973	Mick Stephenson	Dewsbury (v. Leeds)	Hooker
1974	Barry Philbin	Warrington (v. St. Helens)	Loose forward
1975	Mel Mason	Leeds (v. St. Helens)	Stand off
1976	George Nicholls	St. Helens (v. Salford)	Second row
1977	Geoff Pimblett	St. Helens (v. Warrington)	Full back
1978	Bob Haigh	Bradford N. (v. Widnes)	Loose forward
1979	Kevin Dick	Leeds (v. Bradford N.)	Stand off
1980	Mal Aspey	Widnes (v. Bradford N.)	Centre
1981	Len Casey	Hull K.R. (v. Hull)	Second row
1982	Mick Burke	Widnes (v. Hull)	Full back
1983	Tony Myler	Widnes (v. Hull)	Stand off
1984	John Dorahy	Hull K.R. (v. Castleford)	Stand off
1985	Harry Pinner	St. Helens (v. Hull K.R.)	Loose forward
1986	Les Boyd	Warrington (v. Halifax)	Prop
1987	Joe Lydon	Wigan (v. Warrington)	Winger
1988	David Hulme	Widnes (v. St. Helens)	Scrum half
1989	Alan Tait	Widnes (v. Hull)	Full back



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STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

TOP SCORERS

TOP TEN TRY SCORERS

1. Martin Offiah (Widnes) 45
2. Greg Austin (Hull K.R.) 38
3. Anthony Sullivan (Hull K.R.) 35
4. Mark Preston (Wigan).....33
5. Gerald Cordle (Bradford N.) 32
6. Steve Larder (Castleford) 29
7. Paul Lord (Oldham) 28
8. Shaun Edwards (Wigan).....26
- Andy Goodway (Wigan).....26
10. John Cogger (Oldham).....24
- Wilf George (Halifax) 24
- Owen Simpson (Keighley).....24
- Mark Lord (Rochdale H.) 24
- St. John Ellis (Castleford) 24

The 1989-90 Top Try Scorer receives £25 a try from Stones Bitter.

TOP TEN GOAL SCORERS

1. Mike Fletcher (Hull K.R.) 195
2. Paul Loughlin (St. Helens) 145
3. Duncan Platt (Oldham) 125
4. Colin Maskill (Leeds) 114
5. Mark Conway (Wakefield T.).....107
6. David Hobbs (Bradford N.) 104
7. Paul Eastwood (Hull) 101
8. Mark Aston (Sheffield E) 99
9. Steve Turner (Rochdale H) 98
10. Jonathan Davies (Widnes) 94

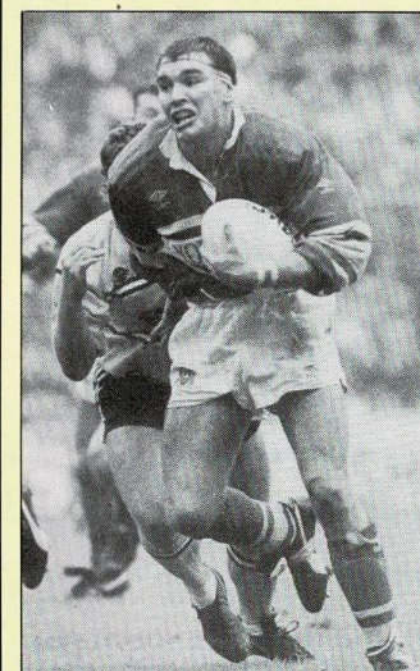
The 1989-90 Top Goal Scorer receives £5 a goal from Stones Bitter.

TOP FIVE POINTS SCORERS

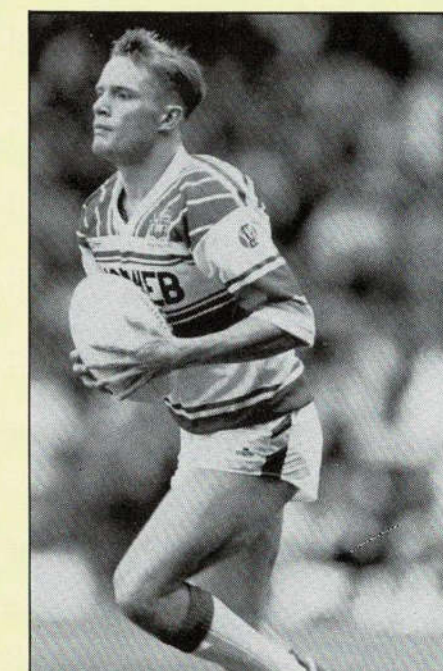
	Tries	Goals	Drop Goals	Points
1. Mike Fletcher (Hull K.R.)	13	195	0	442
2. Paul Loughlin (St. Helens)	17	145	0	359
3. Paul Eastwood (Hull)	22	101	0	290
4. Duncan Platt (Oldham)	8	124	1	281
5. Colin Maskill (Leeds)	7	114	0	256



Martin Offiah, the league's leading try scorer for the third successive season.



Leeds' top marksman Colin Maskill, only the second-ever hooker to top the century mark of goalkicks.



Wigan winger Mark Preston, who past the 30 tries in a season barrier for the first time.

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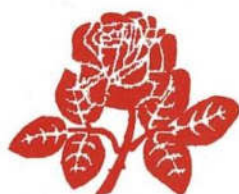
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STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

AWARD

The adjudged Man of the Match in the Stones Bitter Second Division Premiership Final will again receive the Tom Bergin Trophy. **ROBERT GATE** meets the man in whose honour the individual match award is presented...

Man of the Match awards abound in Rugby League and much interest is focussed on the recipients of such awards particularly in the sport's biggest games. The Lance Todd and Harry Sunderland Trophies have long been the most coveted individual match awards in the game. The former has been awarded to the outstanding player in the Challenge Cup Final since 1946 and the latter to his counterpart in the Championship/Premiership Final since 1965.

Recent years have seen two more match awards for major games instituted. The Charity Shield award, the Jack Bentley Trophy, commemorates the late *Daily Express* Rugby League writer whilst the most recently inaugurated award honours the current Chairman of the Rugby League Writers Association, Tom Bergin.

Today will see the fourth presentation of the Tom Bergin Trophy which goes to the best player in the Stones Bitter Second Division Premiership Final. The three previous winners have been Gary Ainsworth (Swinton), Des Foy (Oldham) and Mark Aston (Sheffield Eagles).

Few Rugby League writers have enjoyed such a long and distinguished career as Bergin and it was testimony to his high standing in the profession that his colleagues in the Rugby League Writers Association should band together to honour their chairman by inaugurating the Tom Bergin Trophy in 1987. Bergin admits to being "flabbergasted" by their action. The trophy is presented at the Association's Annual Dinner in November along with the Harry Sunderland Trophy and the Association's own Award of Merit, in memory of Arthur Brooks, of the *Daily Mirror*.

Bergin was co-opted on to the Association's committee in its foundation year 1962 and has been

Chairman since 1976. The prime movers in the Association's establishment had been Tom Longworth, Joe Humphreys, Harold Mather and Bentley.

Bergin's career in journalism began when he left De La Salle College in 1929 and joined *The Salford City Reporter*. Two years later when Arthur Beecroft left the paper Bergin became the Rugby League reporter, a post he filled for over half a century. In those pre-war years most journalists operated under noms de plume. The *Reporter* in common with many other papers, liked to give its sports writers classical identities and so Bergin became *Ajax* whilst *Nestor* covered Broughton Rangers and *Leonard* dealt with Swinton.

Amongst his earliest influences were the great *Guardian* writers Neville Cardus and Howard Spring. The Rugby League writers he most aspired to emulate, however, were Ernest Cawthorne of *The Evening News* and *The News Chronicle's* Tom Longworth, who also operated as *Lanyork* and *Red Rose*. He has much good to say of today's generation of scribes many of whom he has helped along the way.

Bergin has been fortunate to cover the Salford club in times of great glory in the pre-war years and latterly in the '70s when some wonderfully entertaining rugby was on offer and the Championship won in 1974 and 1976.

He was present on the day Gus Risman joined Salford and has remained a friend to the greatest of Red Devils ever since. He is unstinting in his praise of Risman as the greatest player he has seen. Risman was the complete all-round athlete, perfectly conditioned and supremely imaginative, the ideal leader of a great team.

That team must have been a pleasure

to chronicle containing as it did such fine players as Emlyn Jenkins, Jack Feetham, Barney Hudson, Billy Watkins and Alan Edwards, one of the most spectacular players Tom ever saw. He recalls one of Edwards' finest tries in a match at Widnes when the scrawny, but superb, winger received the ball inside his own 25 and beat most of the Widnes team in a run which never took him more than six inches from the touchline. Another of Edwards' scores which he recalls with pleasure came in a game against Halifax when Edwards beat the famous All Black full-back George Nepia so consummately that Nepia clapped the lithe winger all the way back to the kick off.

In later years Bergin regarded David Watkins as a shining personality with that indefinable touch of magic and certainly the best sevens player he has ever seen. Away from Salford players, he regards Alex Murphy as perhaps the greatest of players in his experience.

By the time war broke out in 1939 Tom Bergin had become sports editor at the *Reporter* and by 1947 he had risen to the joint position of editor and general manager of the paper, a post he held until retirement in 1977. His retirement lasted just a week until he returned as sports editor! Final retirement had to wait until 1983 — 54 years in the business.

Bergin's contribution to the City of Salford was recognised in 1977 when he was awarded an honorary MA by Salford University, a richly deserved honour which he shares with David Watkins and Albert Finney. The Salford Council also honoured him with a medallion for services to the city.

The Tom Bergin Trophy is certainly a fitting memorial to one of the game's most respected men of letters.

SECOND DIVISION PREMIERSHIP ROLL OF HONOUR

Year	Winners	Runners-up	Venue
1987	Swinton	27 Hunslet	10 Old Trafford, Manchester
1988	Oldham	28 Featherstone R.	26 Old Trafford, Manchester
1989	Sheffield E.	43 Swinton	18 Old Trafford, Manchester

SECOND DIVISION PREMIERSHIP MAN OF THE MATCH

Year	Winner	Team	Position
1987	Gary Ainsworth	Swinton (v. Hunslet)	Hooker
1988	Des Foy	Oldham (v. Featherstone R.)	Centre
1989	Mark Aston	Sheffield E. (v. Swinton)	Stand off



STONES PREMIERSHIP FINALS



WOMEN

Rugby League's claim to fame is that the 13-a-side code is "The Man's Game for all the Family". Not any longer, Ladies Rugby League is one of the fastest growing sectors of the amateur game, as **TREVOR WATSON**, of the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, reports...

Imagine asking the woman in your life what she would like for Christmas or her birthday and being told: "A pair of Peter Sterling shoulder pads."

TOP OF THE LEAGUE



It may seem far fetched, but it's becoming a strong possibility that a rapidly growing number of long-suffering men will get this reply from their loved ones as LARLA becomes more established.

LARLA may sound like part of the chorus for a pop song, but it stands for Ladies Amateur Rugby League Association and has the full backing of its male counterpart, hence today's mid-Premiership game between the women of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

There are eight teams already competing in the Women's league at present and organisers are hoping that the figure — no pun meant — will increase to around 16 for next season, including one from as far afield as Fulham.

Things like mentioning the pun have been part of the trouble for the women's game. No-one has taken them seriously until they have actually seen a match. Then the quality of the tackling, often hard and low, and the handling ability of the players have been eye-openers. There is still, of course, the nudge-nudge attitude from male spectators but they are gradually being won over and LARLA has successfully staged two Cup finals in addition to the League fixtures.

The teams play anything from 13 down to nine-a-side, usually the numbers are 11 or nine. Players train hard and a group from the Guiseley area in

Yorkshire are regular visitors to Headingley, where they work out with the tackling bags. The local team, Guiseley Angels, is one of the most successful in the League. They recently won a thrilling Cup Final against Halifax 18-12 at Heworth before a crowd of around 300.

Guiseley were founder members of the League. They were formed after a charity match between men and women, when the males wore wellington boots, suspenders and stockings. Rumour has it that some were unwilling to take the latter off, but that's another story!

Their secretary is David Clayton, who is also secretary of LARLA and his daughter, Tracy, is a member of the Angels team.

David said: "The girls all take it

very seriously and train hard. They like to wear shoulder pads for protection and it gives them confidence, particularly on the hard grounds. "We realise what some people might say, but those who come along to watch are often pleasantly surprised."

Tracy added: "Sometimes we get hurt. There is the occasional black eye and we have had the odd broken leg, but usually it's just bruises. Boy friends are surprised to find we play rugby, but they have to accept it."

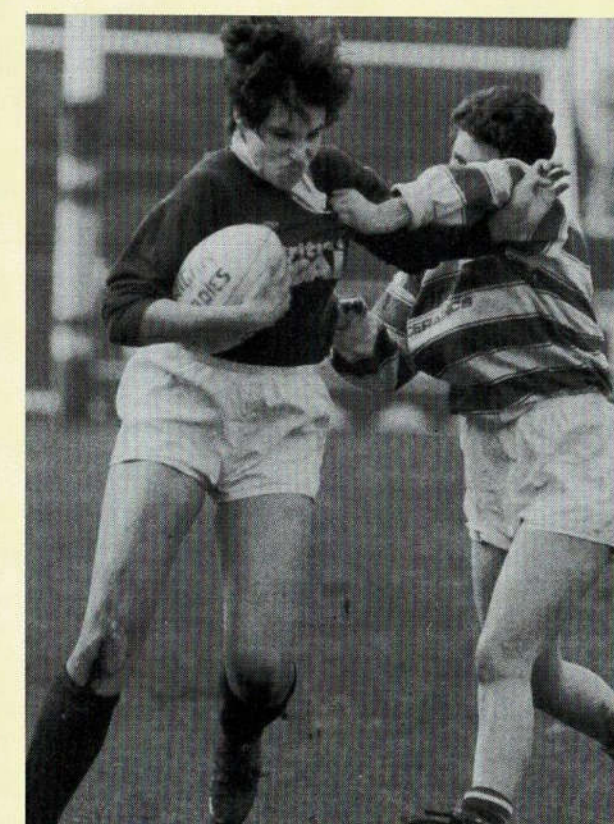
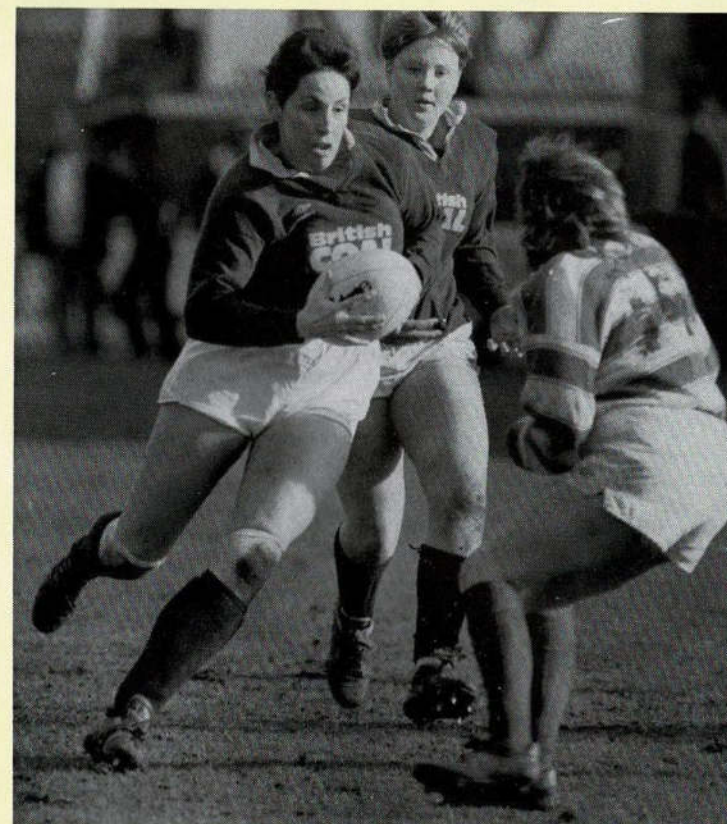
Eat your hearts out Jeff and Paul Grayshon, but the Guiseley team also includes a mother and daughter in the pack in Barbara and Kathy Hemsley. Kathy is just 15 and was the first to play. Her mother went along to watch the team train and decided to join in

to keep fit and finished up playing. No prizes for guessing the topic of that particular household during the winter.

The girls are mainly in office jobs, but their commitment to the game is total, after all no one enjoys getting knocked about.

Traditionalists may not like the idea, but there are internationals at soccer and cricket and in many other sports and the British Amateur RL Association are giving full backing by providing development officers for women's rugby in all areas.

Many players went into Rugby League encouraged by the enthusiasm of their mother for the code. Who knows? In years to come we may be talking about Andrea Gregory, Jo Lydon or Martine Offiah.



Guiseley must be unique in that they have a mother and daughter in their team in Barbara and Kathy Hemsley, from Calverley, Pudsey. Daughter Kathy (right), is only 15, but has been playing for more than a year. Her enthusiasm persuaded Barbara (left) to go along to train in order to keep fit, but finished up playing and the pair are in the pack together. Photo: *Yorkshire Evening Post*.



STONES PREMIERSHIP FINALS



SECOND DIVISION MONTH-BY-MONTH

SEPTEMBER

The early-season leaders in the fight for promotion came from unexpected quarters... Ryedale-York, Rochdale Hornets, Fulham and Batley holding the top four places, with the Londoners, revelling under new manager Ross Strudwick, taking maximum points from their first four games.

At Rochdale, newly-installed coach Allan Agar had spent wisely in the off-season, but John Woods and his men were not quite ready for the stiff opening challenge at Halifax. Batley were the biggest surprise. Wooden spoonists two years previously, they opened with victories over Nottingham and Runcorn, losing at home to Ryedale-York, before gaining an emphatic Mount Pleasant victory over struggling Bramley.

The three relegated sides - Halifax, Oldham and Hull K.R. - were the bookmakers favourites for a return to the top flight, but Halifax's home clash with Oldham ensured a titanic start to the season. The vagaries of the fixture system in a 21-team league left both Halifax and the Robins with matches in hand on teams above.

Halifax took points from Rochdale and Oldham, in front of amazing crowds totalling more than 15,000. More than 1,000 saw Trafford Borough's opening match against neighbours Swinton, but the 'Lions' ensured there was to be no fairytale result for the Altrincham-based side.

OCTOBER

Rochdale's challenge was growing more impressive and they led the table having put together seven successive victories, following that opening setback at Halifax. But it was the size, and style, of their wins which made them more than just pretenders.

Huddersfield maintained their fine start to the season, under Nigel Stephenson, and it was a teenage Australian full back named Wally Gibson who was hitting the headlines. Batley's fine start had continued with thrilling away victories at Hunslet and Keighley, but defeats at the hands of Oldham and Swinton illustrated that they were top-eight, rather than top-three contenders.

With Scott Ranson continuing his free-

scoring ways, Swinton stayed in the promotion race, although they were outclassed at Hull K.R., where Mike Fletcher kicked seven goals in what was to prove an outstanding personal season. Runcorn remained rooted to the foot of the table, after eight matches, with Nottingham's first victory coming at their expense. Carlisle lost their sixth successive match at Hunslet.

NOVEMBER

Rochdale and Oldham each showed just one defeat from eleven matches, and Hull K.R. with a match in hand, had lost just once, at Oldham. The Robins enjoyed great success in a vital month for them, crushing improving Fulham 44-0, and New Zealand forward Tony Botica scoring two tries in the 20-6 victory which stunned the Thrum Hall faithful.

Rochdale were showing no mercy in their march to the top of the table, and a 92-0 defeat of Runcorn equalled Leigh's record Division Two score, set in 1986. Steve Turner led the way with a try and 14 goals, and there were three hat-tricks in the 16-try spree. Runcorn almost ended their long losing sequence at home to Bramley, but, leading until the final minute, eventually lost out 11-12 to a Calvin Hopkins try, goaled by Steve Carroll.

DECEMBER

Halifax's promotion hopes were severely hindered during December, as their successes in reaching the Regal Trophy final left them with a heavy backlog of matches. While they concentrated on Cup glory their rivals, Rochdale, Hull K.R. and Oldham, were stealing a march in the promotion race. Hornets showed that they were genuine contenders in gaining their most impressive, and important, victory of the season, a Boxing Day derby defeat of Oldham. This came after Bramley had surprisingly ruffled a few feathers by becoming the first team to win at Spotland, 25-18, the previous week.

Hull K.R., growing more impressive each week, were the new league leaders, including a 60-6 away win at Fulham among their victories with the free-scoring former Under 21 international Mike Fletcher helping himself to 28 points. Batley, the season's surprise team, maintained their unexpected challenge with an outstanding Boxing Day defeat of

neighbours Dewsbury. But, not to be overshadowed, Maurice Bamford's men avenged matters with a 22-8 victory at Crown Flatt on New Year's Eve.

JANUARY

Ryedale-York opened the promotion race dramatically in the new year, inflicting an 18-14 defeat upon a Halifax side preparing for the following week's Regal Trophy Final against Wigan. A further setback for the fading Thrum Hallers, came with a 16-24 defeat at Dewsbury. Suddenly, the First Division was looking out of reach.

Ryedale-York, with Kiwi tourist David Watson in tremendous form, confirmed their own promotion potential with subsequent victories over Carlisle, 52-14, with Watson scoring four tries and Runcorn, this a hard-earned 27-24 Canal Street struggle.

John Woods took his new Second Division try-scoring record to 13 consecutive matches, while Oldham, beaten Lancashire Cup finalists, enjoyed one of their most successful periods, their 9-6 victory at Hull K.R. making them the first side to take league points from Rovers' new stadium. Big victories over Bramley and Chorley kept them on the trail of the Robins and the Hornets.

Runcorn remained without success after 18 matches, with Nottingham City having gained their only victories at the Merseysiders' expense, while one of the most distressing aspects of the season was the lack-lustre form of the three Cumbrian sides. Workington and Carlisle were firmly entrenched in the bottom four and Whitehaven were able to draw only token consolation from the fact that their modest season had been improved with derby successes against both Town and Carlisle.

FEBRUARY

The promotion places were now almost assured for leaders Rochdale, Hull K.R. and Oldham, each of whom had shown the required season-long consistency. Each of them emphasised their growing superiority over the rest of the field with massive victories. Hornets, beaten by York at Monk's Cross and made to struggle for a 10-8 win at Dewsbury, kept top spot with a 70-20 defeat of Nottingham, their 17th win in 20 matches. Kiwis Dean Lonergan and Mark Nixon had played key roles in

helping Hornets to ensure top flight status for the first time since 1979. Oldham matched Hornets' scoring spree by gaining their biggest victory of the season, a 66-16 defeat of Chorley, while Hull K.R. showed their scoring prowess with a 66-10 defeat of Keighley and a 46-2 victory at Whitehaven.

The battle for Premiership places was hotting up too, with Doncaster, Batley, Huddersfield, Trafford Borough and Fulham all tied on eighth place.

MARCH

One of the crucial matches of the season took place at Spotland, where Rochdale avenged their opening-day defeat by Halifax, to effectively ensure promotion and consign the Regal Trophy finalists to another season in Division Two. Oldham had levelled matters with Hornets at the top of the table, taking their winning sequence to 16 league and Cup matches, and conjuring realistic hopes of a Wembley promotion double. Hull K.R., with matches in hand, were still title contenders, as Under-21 international Anthony Sullivan made it 16 tries in a six-match scoring sequence, in their defeat of Trafford at Moss Lane.

Included in this sequence was a hat-trick as Rovers annihilated Whitehaven 92-10.

Ryedale York defeated Swinton 18-10 in a match which virtually clinched a top-four spot for the second successive season. It also ended the Lions' fading hopes of breaking into the promotion race with a late run, under new coach Jim Crellin. Fulham made it five wins in six matches, to keep in contention for a place in the Premiership Play Offs for the first time, Dewsbury's 9-8 win at Workington was their fourth in five matches, and Carlisle celebrated the arrival of New Zealand coach Cameron Bell with a club record 60-0 away victory over Nottingham at the Harvey Haddon Stadium. That was a result which brought the curtain down on Lee Greenwood's spell in charge at Nottingham, and the City players welcomed new boss Mel Wibberley by ending a 13-match losing sequence, with a 29-22 defeat of Keighley. It left poor Runcorn six points adrift at the foot of the table.

APRIL

All three of the leading teams suffered an attack of nerves in the run-in towards the title, with Hull K.R. eventually finishing

two points ahead of Rochdale, whose points difference was ever so slightly superior to Oldham's.

The Robins looked to have ruined their Championship aspirations when Chris Wilkinson's drop-goal gave 12-man Dewsbury a surprise 3-2 success over them at Crown Flatt. But, showing champion resilience and class, they bounced back to win a tricky fixture at Ryedale-York and crush Hunslet 58-6.

Oldham lost the title at the death, suffering two defeats in their last four matches of the campaign, including an unexpected post-cup semi-final setback at Derwent Park and then lost hopes of the title by going down to Swinton on Good Friday.

Fulham held on to take the eighth Premiership placing, with Dewsbury finishing with a flourish, remaining unbeaten in nine of their last 10 league matches. Runcorn, sadly, completed the season without a point from 28 matches, to become the first team since Liverpool City in 1906-07 to end a league season without a point. It completed a twelve-month turn-around for coach Dave Chisnall, who had been at Wembley with St. Helens just a year previously.

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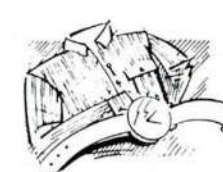
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STONES PREMIERSHIP FINALS



RUSSIAN ROULETTE

The Russians have invaded Rugby League...nearly 90 Soviets have just returned home after a week-long teach-in in Britain, culminating in three games in Leeds and Wigan. BRIAN BATTY, of the Daily Mail, reports on Glasnost in Rugby League with exclusive pictures by ANDREW VARLEY...

With a Blackpool holiday camp as their base, the Soviet Union's top rugby league players have launched their bid to compete in the 1995 World Cup.

As temperatures soared into the high seventies last week, Moscow seemed far away while the new recruits got down to the business of learning the finer points of the 13-a-side code.



The 90 Soviet pioneers take a break from training at their Pontins holiday camp base in Blackpool.



Head to head... National Director of Coaching Phil Larder conducts an educational session through the female translator, a feature of the week-long teach-in.

Vladimir Georgiyev was one of a 90-strong party of players, referees and officials spending a week at the Pontins camp after sampling the heady atmosphere of Wembley.

Georgiyev, a 24-year old forward with the Tiraspol club, was eager to learn as the English coaches and referees, with a little help from some translators, put the 60 players through their paces.

"This is a wonderful opportunity", said Georgiyev. Wembley was an unbelievable experience - so much excitement and all those fans singing. Wigan's Ellery Hanley was fantastic.

"I am sure the game is going to become popular back home. We are anxious to do well and want to play at international level one day".



Edvar Taturyan, formerly one of rugby union's top administrators in the Soviet Union, has switched codes after 15 years to become full-time organiser for rugby league in his country, with an office in Moscow.

He said: "I decided to switch to league a year and a half ago after watching videos of English games. We now have three zones playing in Moscow, Leningrad and Tiraspol.

"We recently had a crowd of 8,000 to watch one of our finals when prize money was £10,000 sponsored by the Soviet space programme and scientific research.

"The accent now in Russia is on professional sport and league has so much more to offer. I am confident that in three years time we will be able to produce an international side and be ready for the World Cup in 1995."

League spokesman David Howes said: "While the Soviets have paid their own way here, we are financing their stay. Even though the players have little cash with them, they are loving every minute and enjoying the food although some of them have the most enormous appetites.

Up and under... Russian defence policy in action under the watchful eye of Coach Kevin Tamati: (left).

"They play against a Leeds Alliance side and meet a Wigan select side at Central Park on Saturday."

Phil Larder, the league's national coaching director, said he was impressed by the enthusiasm and strength of the visitors. "There is a big contingent of former rugby union players but they are adapting well to league," he said. "They have got a long way to go and this teach-in will be vital."

With three Soviet referees also working at the training with the help of translators, league controller Fred Lindop had one of the most difficult tasks but he said: "The referees that have come over are no mugs. They are well versed in the laws and are going to do a great job."

Former New Zealand Test star Kevin Tamati (Salford coach) and Graham Starkey, formerly in charge at Wigan, Oldham and Rochdale Hornets are among a team of coaches working with the visitors.



Members of the National Press at the official media conference featuring, from the left, Phil Larder, Edvar Taturyan and Moscow player Victor Kudiyen plus, in the background the compulsory translator.



STONES · PREMIERSHIP FINALS

ALTERNATIVE AWARDS

The race is not to the swift, according to Ecclesiastes, nor the battle to the strong. Exactly where Wigan fit into that scheme of things is a moot point, but even those at the Central Park school of excellence would readily admit that it takes much more than one team to make a season.

Everyone has their part to play, from the high-fliers to the lowliest under-achievers, from the glamour merchants of Sydney to the grass-roots supporters of Alliance rugby in Barrow and Doncaster. The pity is that recognition is awarded to so few.

So here, by way of redressing the balance, is that most fresh and original formula for end-of-season fillers, The Alternative Awards List, as presented by Paul Wilson, of The Independent.

Try Of The Season:

Mark Preston's second at Wembley.

Tackle Of The Season:

Gary Connolly's on Joe Lydon at Old Trafford.

Find Of The Season:

Bobby Goulding.

(I thought these were supposed to be alternative awards, so far they have all involved Wigan. Ed.) Good point.

Boy Scout Award for Honesty

Mike Ford, of Oldham, who not only admitted the try he created in the last minute of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final probably was offside, but confessed he would have willingly traded promotion for another appearance at Wembley.

Courage Above And Beyond The Call Of Duty:

Shaun Edwards at Wembley.

Courage Verging On Foolhardiness:

The man from the Daily Mail who, at a press conference prior to the World Club Challenge match at Old Trafford, asked Mal Meninga if he was heavier now than ever before.

Foolhardiness:

Ray Price.

Plain Speaking Award:

Doug Laughton, for achieving the

considerable feat of silencing Peter Fox at the Rodstock War of Roses press conference with a short burst of Anglo-Saxon.

Last Laugh Award:

Peter Fox after War of Roses game.

Most Original Motivational Speech:

Alex Murphy, then St. Helens coach, on eve of Kiwi visit – "I feel like jumping in a big hole".

Most Unoriginal Coaching Appointment:

Leigh.

Campaign For Plain English Award:

Mike McClennan.

Warped Sense Of Humour Award:

Whoever billeted the 90 visiting Soviets at a holiday camp in Blackpool, then sent along Fred Lindop as entertainments manager.

Off-Colour Joke Award:

David Oxley, asked if British players would be able to guest for Soviet clubs: "I don't see why not, it would certainly give a new meaning to our disciplinary procedure."

Best Nickname:

Emmerdale-York.

Most Predictable Nickname:

Lurpak, New Zealand butter, etc. for Steve Hampson.

Misplaced Confidence (1):

Mike Gregory, Great Britain captain – "We want to beat New Zealand 3-0, anything less won't really be good enough to impress the Aussies."

Misplaced Confidence (2):

Mal Reilly, all that time ago in September – "I'm very excited about the form of Tony Myler and the number of new players coming through. For the first time in ages we have strength in depth, a large pool of quality players which should keep Great Britain going for a couple of years at least."

This Sporting Life Award:

John Bentley of Leeds, who not only sports a Richard Harris/Frank Machin haircut, but barges opposing wingers into perimeter fences with all the bad grace of David Storey's anti-hero.

Consistency Award:

Runcorn Highfield.

Inconsistency Award:

Anyone who favours a Silk Cut Challenge Cup preliminary round in

which teams of the calibre of Leeds and Castleford can be eliminated, then complains that Wigan never get a game at Wembley.

Unexpected Income from Rugby League (1):

Ellery Hanley's London clinic.

Unexpected Income from Rugby League (2):

Andy Currier's barrister.

Spare Me The Details Award:

Stephen Ball, Batley chairman – "The club was 60 years behind the times. One trip to Whitehaven, for instance, was enough to convince me we needed a coach with a toilet at the back."

Over-used Fact (1):

Dennis Trembath, the Kiwi man-mountain in the Dewsbury pack, was the bloke who missed the bob in the New Zealand team's spectacular Olympic bobsleigh failure.

Over-used Fact (2):

Barrow find it easier to attract players from Auckland or Brisbane than from Manchester or Leeds.

Over-used Fact (3):

Salford have a good team on paper.

Over-used Fact (4):

You either love Wally Lewis or you hate him.

Most Tiresome Publicity Stunt:

Huddersfield Go For Guscott.

Most Tiresome Stunt:

Wally Lewis's bungy-jump.

Biggest Disappointment:

Australian elastic.

Understatement of Season:

Brian Johnson after Wembley – "Some of Wigan's injuries cannot be as serious as has been made out."

Colemanball:

Alex Murphy at half-time at Wembley – "Warrington must score again if they are going to win this game".

Vogue Sentence:

Eight Matches.

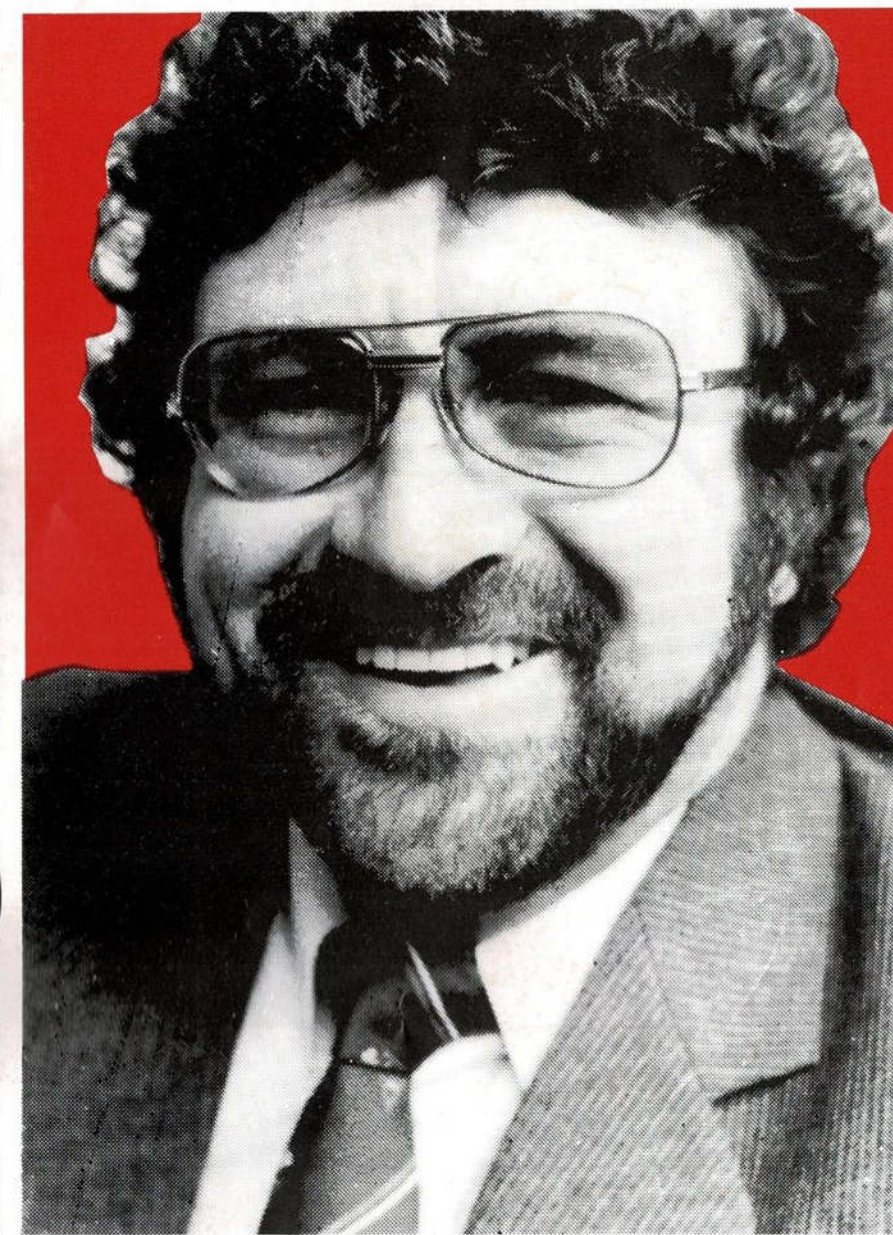
Best Response:

Gary 'Great Bloke' Hetherington – "I didn't make a high tackle, a 5ft 4ins player ran into me."

Tip for next season:

France.

ROBBIE



ON RUGBY LEAGUE

Read John Robinson in

THE People