



13

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1st Round

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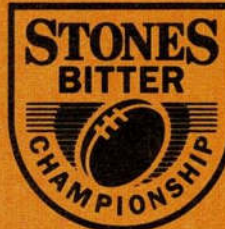
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SIMPLY THE BEST

No. 8 - BOB IRVING

Today our look back at some of the great Oldham players of the past, features the outstanding Oldham forward of the late 1960's and early 1970's . . . BOB IRVING.

Bob signed for Oldham in January, 1965, at the age of 17 and by the end of the 1964-65 season he had already made 11 appearances in the first team. Before joining Oldham, he played for the Saint Joseph's amateur club in his home town of Huddersfield. In the ensuing years many clubs, especially from the white rose county, would regret losing out on the initial Irving signature.



Bob was a classic "running" second row forward, with a good turn of pace and the strength to push off defenders and crash through tackles. After receiving the ball on the burst close to the line, there was many a full-back who would just be carried over the line as Bob completed yet another touchdown.

Representative honours soon came Bob's way, first at Great Britain Under 24 level and eventually full County and International recognition followed.

For the majority of the time Bob spent with Oldham, the form of the team was indifferent to say the least and notwithstanding the heroics of team-mates such as Martin Murphy and Ken Wilson, no trophy or medals would come to Oldham, or Irving, during this period. Indeed it is testimony to Bob's talent that, in 1969-70, when the club finished next to bottom of the League, he was still selected for the 1970 tour to Australia and New Zealand by Great Britain.

On leaving to join Wigan in September, 1973, Bob had played over 250 games for Oldham and scored over 70 tries.

As I have stated earlier, Bob Irving was a "Runner". The sort of player that excites and thrills the crowds. When in combination with a ball player in the style of Geoff Fletcher or Frank Foster, his strength and speed were utilised to devastating effect. Over the years Oldham have been blessed with some fine second row forwards such as Bob Sloman, Sid Little and Andy Goodway (Internationals all).

An esteemed list to which to add the name . . . BOB IRVING.

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CLUB HONOURS

Rugby League Championship Play-off Winners:

1909-10, 1910-11, 1956-57

Runners-up:

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

First Division Champions:

1904-05

Second Division Champions:

1963-64, 1981-82, 1987-88

Rugby League Challenge Cup Winners:

1898-99, 1924-25, 1926-27

Runners-up:

1906-07, 1911-1912, 1923-24, 1925-26

Lancashire Cup Winners:

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

Runners-up:

1908-09, 1911-12, 1918-19, 1921-22, 1954-55, 1966-67, 1968-69, 1986-87, 1989-90

Lancashire Championship Winners:

1907-08, 1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57, 1957-58

Runners-up:

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

Lancashire Shield Winners:

1975-76, 1979-80

Colts Premiership Trophy:

1979-80

Second Division Premiership:

1987-88, 1989-90

Wigan Sevens Winners:

1991-92

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Club Records:

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

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

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

Record Receipts: £37,505.50 v Wigan, 5th October, 1989

Record Transfer Fee Paid: £70,000 to Halifax for Tony Anderson, March 1990

Record Try Scorer: Reg Farrar, 49 tries, 1921-22 season

Record Goal Scorer: Bernard Ganley, 224 goals, 1957-58 season

Record Point Scorer: Bernard Ganley, 28 points v Liverpool City, April 1959

First Game: 21st October, 1876 v Stalybridge

Highest Number of Points Scored: Bernard Ganley, 2,881

Most Appearances: Joe Ferguson, 685

Most Tries: Pre 1900, Jack Hirst, 233

Since 1900, Alan Davies, 182

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FROM the BOARDROOM

by

CHAIRMAN JAMES QUINN



WHAT do YOU think about Summer Rugby? I make no apologies for continuing the debate in this column this week because I feel passionately about it and I also feel that, in the past, too many issues in Rugby League have been touched upon and then pigeon-holed.

I want to try and keep up the debate on the benefits of a season running from March to October and I would like to know your views about it. If you would like to express a view, for or against, or perhaps a "don't know", please drop me a line at the club. I cannot promise to reply but I can promise that all the points of view will be carefully monitored and considered and I will certainly take them all into account because, after all, it is the views of the paying spectators which count most of all.

I got the opportunity on a recent Boots 'N' All programme to express my views for summer rugby and I was also given the opportunity to have my say in the Oldham Evening Chronicle, the Manchester Evening News, the Rugby Leaguer, the League Express and even the free paper in the Rochdale paper, the Express.

I have written to Maurice Lindsay, the Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League and now I intend to write to every chairman of every club in the League, asking for views and encouraging support for consideration to be given to what I consider to be a very important topic for the future well-being of our game.

It is also my intention to put together a dossier of facts concerning League attendances during the recent freeze, the number of matches postponed, the number of games clubs have had to squeeze in over a given period (two a week in many instances) and the crowds on midweek evenings in mid-winter compared to Sunday afternoons.

It is easy to form opinions of the heart but in Rugby League, as in most walks of life, opinions on topics of the day are best formed by the head or, alternatively, by facts.

Once I have got all the facts to hand I want to go straight to the Rugby League's Board of Directors with my proposals and submit the facts in support of my case.

As I have said before I know there would be problems associated with summer rugby, but at this stage I think it would be harmful to get bogged down in detail. Let us first examine the PRINCIPLE and then we can worry about the PRACTICE once we have decided that summer rugby would be a good thing.

Some people have pointed out that there would be a problem with the change-over of seasons in the first place. We now finish about the end of April so, do we carry straight on with the new "summer" season, or do we wait almost a full year before starting the summer schedule? A year would be far too long to close down. Neither would it be a good idea to carry straight on with a summer season at the end of a winter season.

I would think we could best beat that problem by phasing in summer rugby over a period of, for example, four years, gradually putting back the start of each season year by year until the season had been shunted from September to April to a new schedule from March to October or thereabouts.

There are lots of ideas to be put forward and lots of issues to discuss in relation to summer rugby, but I want the talking to continue and I want YOU, the fans, to take part. Please think about all that has been said in relation to summer rugby over the last few weeks, then think about the cold dark nights of winter, and drop me a line with your views.

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IN TOUCH



TOP TEN TRY SCORERS:

1. Shaun Edwards (Wigan)	28
2. Alan Hunte (St. Helens)	21
Paul Newlove (Featherstone R)	21
4. Ellery Hanley (Leeds)	20
5. Greg Austin (Halifax)	19
6. Phil Ford (Salford)	18
Owen Simpson (Featherstone R)	18
8. Nick Pinkney (Ryedale-York)	17
Andy Mason (Wakefield T)	17
10. Tony Smith (Castleford)	16
David Plange (Sheffield E)	16

The 1992-93 top try scorer will receive £30 a try from Stones bitter.

TOP TEN GOAL SCORERS (Including drop goals):

1. Dean Marwood (Workington T)	107
2. Frano Botica (Wigan)	96
3. John Wasylw (Keighley C)	89
4. Gary Pearce (Ryedale-York)	76
5. Lee Crooks (Castleford)	72
6. Martin Pearson (Featherstone R)	70
7. Paul Eastwood (Hull)	67
8. Steve Gartland (Rochdale H)	63
9. Jonathan Davies (Widnes)	61
10. Steve Maguire (Whitehaven)	54
Paul Bishop (Halifax)	54
Mark Simms (Doncaster)	54

The 1992-93 top goal scorer will receive £10 a goal from Stones Bitter.

TOP TEN POINT SCORERS:

	Tries	Goals	Drop Goals	Points
1. Dean Marwood (Workington Town)	10	107	0	254
2. John Wasylw (Keighley C)	13	89	0	230
3. Frano Botica (Wigan)	9	94	2	226
4. Martin Pearson (Featherstone R)	13	70	0	192
5. Steve Gartland (Rochdale H)	12	62	1	173
6. Paul Eastwood (Hull)	7	67	0	162
7. Gary Pearce (Ryedale-York)	2	74	2	158
8. Mark Simms (Doncaster)	11	54	0	152
9. Jonathan Davies (Widnes)	7	61	0	150
10. Lee Crooks (Castleford)	1	72	0	148

POINT SCORING RUN

John Wasylw of Keighley has the current longest point scoring run. The winger has scored in 30 successive matches, starting with three goals in an 18-16 Stones Bitter Third Division home defeat of Scarborough Pirates on 17th February, 1992.

WINNING RUN

Featherstone Rovers have the current longest winning run of six matches, all in the Second Division.

MILESTONES

Daryl Powell needs one try for a career century of touchdowns for Sheffield Eagles.

Vince Gribbin is one tries short of a career century for Whitehaven.

Mark Preston of Halifax needs two tries for a career century of touchdowns.

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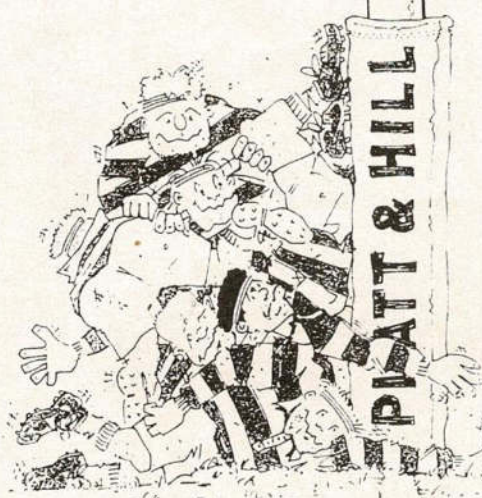
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LIFELINE IS SIMPLY THE BEST - JUST ASK CHRIS

Chris Corrigan is an Oldham fan who lives in Greenacres. He has been a Lifeline Member from the start, partly to help the club but mainly because he knows that every week he has the chance to win a top prize. He works for local firm Classic Joinery and we collect his £2.00 contribution every week. Recently, one of Chris's work-mates won our Weekly £1,000 Prize and now Chris has gone one better and scooped our £10,000 Jackpot.

Chris couldn't make it to last Sunday's game, but friends and relations were there and heard Chris's name announced as the winner when Alex Givvons made the draw at half time.

Peter Young and John Watkins called round to see Chris on Monday morning to confirm the good news. Understandably Chris was absolutely delighted. Now he intends to get himself a car and also to take his family on a dream holiday to Disneyland.

Chris is at today's game to receive his cheque for Ten Thousand Pounds! Yes - Lifeline is Simply The Best - Just ask Chris!

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IT'S NOT JUST THE STAND THAT'S CREAKING IT'S JUST ST. ANNE'S OLD BOYS

Our Executive Match Sponsorship today is a bit special and certainly unique as Chairman Jim Quinn hosts a reunion for St. Anne's A.R.L.F.C. Old Boys.

Thirty-one years ago the amateurs of St. Anne's travelled to meet Hunslet in the First Round of the Rugby League Challenge Cup. In front of a crowd of 2,350 they put up a brave fight against a powerful Hunslet side. Unfortunately, there was to be no giant-killing act on this occasion, as Hunslet ran in 11 tries.

The St. Anne's team that day was: O'Connell, Tully, Lannigan, Jones, Taylor, Gartland, Patterson, Leach, Smith, Heap, Quinn, Murray, Thackeray.

We hope they enjoy their afternoon at Watersheddings.

LIFELINE WINNERS WEEK No. 15

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A WATERSHEDDINGS WELCOME TO **LONDON C.**

SHANE BUCKLEY. Winger/centre. Representative honours with Queensland U21 - 1988 and 1989, Queensland Rep side 1989-91 and Queensland residents side 1989-1991. Top try scorer last season for the London Crusaders. Shane is a problem to defences and an asset to an attacking side.

STEVE ROSOLEN. Loose forward. Representative honours for Wide Bay, Queensland Country and Brisbane. Steve came over from North Sydney and was voted Player of the Season for 1991/92 for London Crusaders. Steve is the controlling force in the forward pack this season with his vast experience and talent. One to watch for 1992/1993.

MATTHEW DRAY. Full back or five eighth. Representative honours for North Sydney 1989. Matthew is reliable under a high ball and always willing to counter attack. He's quick and the general of the back line.

DARRYL PITT. Centre. Darryl's career to date spans Norths Banyo, Fortitude Valley, Carlisle and Fulham R.L.F.C. A player who holds his first team spot for London Crusaders by being a hard attacking back. Darryl was voted Lancashire Supporters Club Player of the Year for 1991/1992 season.

CHRIS SMITH. Second Rower. Chris played for St. Mary's A.R.L.C. as well as Richmond R.U.F.C. before joining London Crusaders last season. Chris made a fantastic transition to Rugby League and is a regular first teamer with the ability to slot over goals from all over the pitch.

DANNY MULKERIN. Front/Second Rower. Danny is a strong running forward, his work rate is 100% for 80 minutes and a real grafter. A forward to watch for the 1992/93 season.

NICHOLAS HALAFIHI. Second row/loose forward. Nick played for GB students as well as Hull Colts and Sheffield Eagles where Nick was bought in October 1991. Nick is a hard-working forward with the speed to break away from the opposition and score tries.

PAUL FISHER. 22 years old. Half back//five eighth/full back. 1992 played in Queensland Residents side and won State League final with Logan City. Paul started his Crusader career with a try against the 30-10 victory over Rochdale Hornets. Certainly an impressive "general" on the pitch and an asset to the Crusaders team.

DAVID KING. Front row/second row. Played for Gold Coast Seagulls under the guidance of Wally Lewis. David has competed in the New South Wales R.L. Winfield Cup Comp. and prides himself on his strength and fitness. In his first season with the Crusaders, a try scorer extraordinaire. Crusaders' biggest asset!

IAN SIMPSON. 23 year old student at West London Institute on a P.G.C.E. Played British Colleges, British Students R.L. Representative honours, making his mark on the first team in his second season at the London Crusaders. Young player with a great future, strong in defence and keen in attack.

BARRY PEART. Centre/wing. London Crusaders "old head" - been with the club for four years. Consistent, hard-working player with the ability to create openings from strong running and determination.

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TUNKS' TALKBACK



Today we take a break from League action as we welcome London Crusaders to Watersheddings for the First Round of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

I know exactly what this competition means to the supporters of Oldham and exactly how passionately our supporters feel about reaching a Wembley Final. Well this is just the start, Round One, and a match we will be going all out to win. The Silk Cut Challenge Cup is the big one and a good run in the competition can generate much needed income for a Club like Oldham. Ross Strudwick and his team know this also and they will be hell bent on causing an upset this afternoon. We haven't met Crusaders since the first game of the season and although on that occasion we ran out winners 27-12, that result will count for nothing today in a winner take all, one-off

situation. If we are successful today and we can conjure up a home draw in the next round, then who knows maybe, just maybe . . .

Enjoy the game.

TUNKS TEASERS

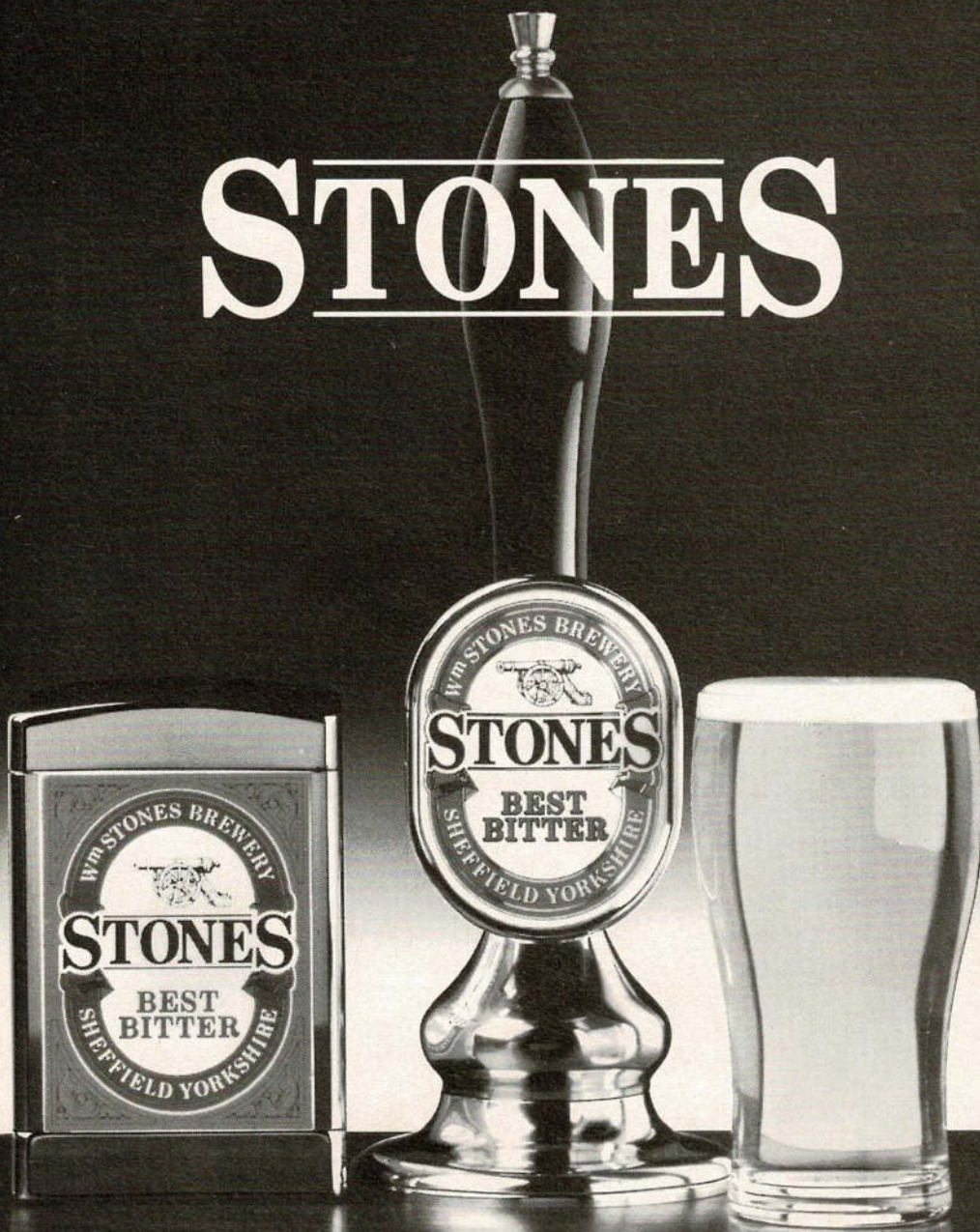
1. Which team play at Craven Park?
2. What was the venue for the 1989 Lancs Cup Final between Oldham and Warrington?
3. Which 3 teams did Oldham defeat to reach the Cup semi-final in 1960?
4. Who was the first player from a Lancashire team to win the Lance Todd Trophy?
5. Who was the only Oldham player on the 1974 tour to Australia and New Zealand?
6. Which Australian team are nicknamed "The Dragons"?
7. In what season did Featherstone join the Rugby League?
8. How many times has the Challenge Cup final ended in a draw?
9. By what name were the London Crusaders formerly known?
10. In what season were 2 divisions first used in Rugby League?

ANSWERS

1. Barrow. 2. Knowsley Road, St. Helens. 3. Huddersfield, Walney Central (Barrow).
4. Gerry Helme of Warrington in 1950. 5. Terry Clawson. 6. St. George. 7. 1921-22.
8. 3, 1910 - Leeds v. Hull, 1954 - Warrington v. Halifax and 1982 Hull v. Widnes. 9. Fulham.
10. 1902-03.

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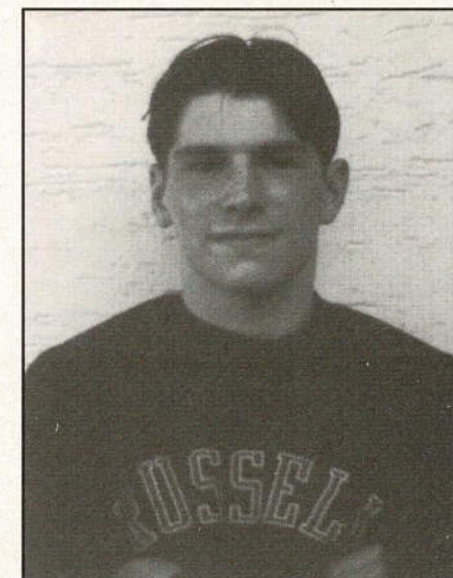
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PLAYER PROFILE

DAVID STEPHENSON



Full Name: David Andrew Stephenson.

Date of Birth: 6th October, 1973.

Birthplace: Leeds.

Height: 5 ft. 10 in.

Weight: 13 stone 7 lbs.

Favourite Drink: Coke and the odd half of lager.

Favourite Food: Pastas and Steak.

Favourite T.V. Show: Only Fools and Horses.

Favourite Music: Wally Gibson's tapes.

Hobbies: Telling lies.

Previous Clubs: Milford A.R.L.F.C. and Queens Park A.R.L.F.C.

Biggest Influence on Career so far: My family.

Favourite Player: Wally Gibson.

Favourite Ground: Watersheddings of course.

Most Difficult Opponent: Bob Marsden (Rochdale).

Most Memorable Match seen: Wigan v. Manly World Club Challenge.

Biggest Thrill: Playing for Great Britain Under 19's.

Biggest Disappointment: Getting dropped and any injuries.

Personal Ambition: To captain Great Britain and to be happy.

Person you would most like to meet: The person who stole my car.

Have you ever been mistaken for anyone famous: Fagin out of Oliver Twist.

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THE SILK CUT ROUNDS BEGIN

When Oldham RLFC play the London Crusaders today in Round One of the Silk Cut Challenge, they are carrying with them the club's hopes for Wembley.

The final play-off at Wembley has evaded Oldham to date, despite the club having achieved a place in the semi-finals twice in recent years. Now, however, Oldham has a real chance to make the game - so all the best lads!

When the two teams met for the first game of the season, Oldham beat the Crusaders. Oldham also won five out of the six games played last season against the London Crusaders. So this promises to be a great match - with Oldham looking to Wembley and the finals.

Enjoy the big day the XXXX way. Here's looking forward to Wembley!

AUSSIE DAY

STAR BILLING ON ITV

Was XXXX day a day to remember for you too? Did you follow the advice of Dusty and Merve in the last programme, donning the clobber and getting your Sheilas a sherry?

The ad., known as "Float", was filmed on location in Australia but the film crew came across some unexpected problems. The float was so long that the driver had to take a two-mile circuit round the outback just to turn the float round for the second take!

CASTLEMAINE
XXXXX

CASTLEMAINE



XXXXX



TEAM CHECK

SUNDAY, 31st JANUARY, 1993

OLDHAM

TEAM CHANGES

1. WALLY GIBSON
2. SCOTT RANSON
3. STEVE WARBURTON
4. IVA ROPATI
5. GARY CHRISTIE
6. TOMMY MARTYN
7. STEVE KERRY
8. TINY SOLOMONA
9. RICHARD RUSSELL
10. MARK SHEALS
11. BEN OLSEN
12. SHANE TUPAEA
13. RICHARD PACHNIUK
14. DAVID STEPHENSON
15. JOHN MAXWELL

PENALTIES

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

SCRUMS

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

Referee: Mr. C. STEELE

LONDON C.

TEAM CHANGES

1. S. ROSKELL
2. I. SIMPSON
3. B. PEART
4. D. PITT
5. S. BUCKLEY
6. M. RILEY
7. P. FISHER
8. N. HALAFIHI
9. D. ROTHERAM
10. D. KING
11. C. SMITH
12. C. CORCORAN
13. S. ROSOLEN
- 14.
- 15.

PENALTIES

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

SCRUMS

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

Touch Judges: Mr. D. MILBURN (Red Flag)
Mr. D. NATHAN (Yellow Flag)

But one problem they didn't have was a lack of volunteers for the ad. There were no less than 500 Aussie extras recruited on to the XXXX float. In the words of one of the extras - "It's thirsty work - enjoying XXX day!" What a job!

We have seen some real cracking ads. from those boys in Aussieland over the past year. But do you know which of the ads. "snapped up" the gold award for the best individual poster at the Campaign poster advertising awards?

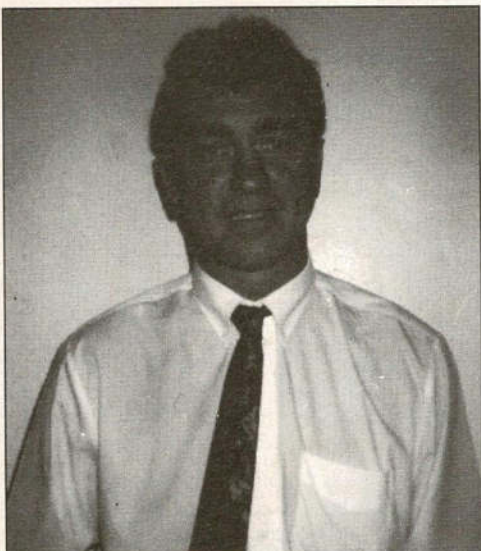
Well, it was the famous croc shot, shown below, with its unexpected "bite"! Well done to those that got it right. It's no wonder that the XXXX ads. are so memorable is it?



Pictured below is a still from the latest Castlemaine XXXX TV ad, "Float", described as the "longest XXXX you'll ever have", as it ran for almost two minutes - but only on 26th January.



CASTLEMAINE
XXXXX



'A' TEAM ROUND UP

with COACH JOHN PRINCE

On a wet night with gale force winds, our promotion hopes seem to have disappeared, as we suffered a 30-20 defeat away to Leigh on Thursday, 21st January, 1993. Playing in the worst conditions that I have ever seen, on a mud-heap of a pitch and against a gale force wind, we took a heavy pounding in the first half to turn round losing by 18 to 4. Our only points coming from two Mark Hudspith penalty goals.

Within 10 minutes of the second half we had reduced the arrears to 18-16, with tries from Steve Heaton and Jamie Bloem, plus two Mark Hudspith goals. We continued to pound the Leigh line and had two tries disallowed. Then, with the sin-binning of Sean Devine, Leigh took advantage of our silly defensive slips to gain a commanding 30-16 lead, before we replied with a late try from Michael Edwards, to make the final score 20-30.

THIS PAGE IS SPONSORED BY BILL AND BRENDA ROGERS

We now seem too far behind to have any chance of promotion, however, we will keep plugging away to obtain the highest position possible.

By the time you read these notes we will have played Wigan at home in the Second Round of the Alliance Cup. Our next home Alliance fixture is on Wednesday, 3rd February, 1993 against Swinton, kick-off 7.30 p.m.

Meanwhile, a big thank you goes to Bill and Brenda Rogers for their kind Sponsorship of the Wigan game.

Remember, sponsorship of team matches is available at very reasonable cost. Details can be obtained by ringing Judy Campbell on 061-624 4865.

YOUNGERS ALLIANCE FIXTURES SECOND DIVISION 1992/93



Saturday, 29.8.92	Sheffield Eagles	H 20-33 (L)	1.00 p.m.
Saturday, 5.9.92	Carlisle	A 28-18 (W)	12.00 p.m.
Saturday, 12.9.92	Keighley	A 28-24 (W)	2.30 p.m.
Saturday, 19.9.92	Salford	H 10-31 (L)	1.00 p.m.
Friday, 25.9.92	Ryedale York	A 14-22 (L)	7.30 p.m.
Saturday 3.10.92	Carlisle (Lancs C.C. Shield)	H 26-20 (W)	1.00 p.m.
Friday 9.10.92	Leigh	H 16-19 (L)	7.30 p.m.
Friday 16.10.92	Wigan (LS 2)	H 4-34 (L)	7.30 p.m.
Friday, 29.10.92	Salford	A 6-42 (L)	7.30 p.m.
Friday, 6.11.92	Doncaster (Cup)	H 64-8 (W)	7.30 p.m.
Saturday, 14.11.92	Carlisle	H 40-12 (W)	1.00 p.m.
Friday, 20.11.92	Huddersfield	A 28-18 (W)	7.30 p.m.
Saturday, 28.11.92	Workington (Cup2)	A 16-26 (L)	
Saturday, 5.12.92	Hemel Hempstead	H 58-10 (W)	1.00 p.m.
Saturday, 12.12.92	Swinton	H	1.00 p.m.
Friday, 18.12.92	Bramley	A	7.30 p.m.
Saturday, 2.1.93	Swinton	H	1.30 p.m.
Friday, 15.1.93	Hunslet	H 50-10 (W)	1.00 p.m.
Thursday, 21.1.93	Leigh	A 20-30 (L)	7.30 p.m.
Saturday, 6.2.93	Dewsbury	A	2.00 p.m.
Saturday, 13.2.93	Workington	H	1.00 p.m.
Saturday, 20.2.93	Hemel Hempstead	A	2.30 p.m.
Saturday, 27.2.93	Doncaster	H	1.00 p.m.
Saturday, 6.3.93	London Crusaders	H	1.00 p.m.
Saturday, 20.3.93	Workington	A	2.30 p.m.
Saturday, 27.3.93	Huddersfield	H	1.00 p.m.

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SKIPPERS' SPOT

with OLDHAM CAPTAIN
RICHARD RUSSELL

With two more League games against Rochdale and Swinton out of the way. We have almost clinched promotion and now aim to fight Featherstone all the way.

The game against Rochdale was a physically tough encounter as one would expect of a local derby. Playing against the wind and the run of play. We found ourselves 12-0 down after thirty minutes. We began our fight back with strong runs from the three big S's - Sheals, Solomona and Sherratt to go in at half-time trailing 8-12.

Our second half performance was satisfying in both attack and defence and the team showed much more determination and character.

Today's game against London Crusaders starts our campaign to reach the twin towers and the Final of the Challenge Cup. Which I'm sure is the dream of every Oldham fan and player. It will be a big game for Ben Olsen against his former club and they will also be giving 100% trying to knock us out in the First Round.

So please carry on with your tremendous support and hopefully we will be needing you again in the Second Round.

Enjoy the game.



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NEXT HOME GAME

Sunday, 21.2.93
OLDHAM v. CARLISLE
 K.O. 3.00 p.m.

AS AT 25th JANUARY, 1993

LEAGUE TABLE

STONES BITTER 2ND DIVISION 1992/93

THIS PAGE IS SPONSORED BY IRENE AND HELEN CALOW

BACK PAGES

by MICHAEL TURNER

Once again the R.L. Challenge Cup ties are upon us and the main question on the mind of all supporters is, will the Wigan dominance of the competition be broken at last?

One really has to admire the sheer talent and professionalism of the men from Central Park, as they set off in search of their Sixth Consecutive Challenge Cup victory.

Of course, up until the recent Wigan success, the record for the number of consecutive Challenge Cup Final appearances belonged to Oldham. This was back in the pre-Wembley days of the 1920's, when the trophy was won in 1925 and 1927 and the club were beaten finalists in 1924 and 1926.

In all, the club has reached the final on seven occasions, starting with the famous victory over Hunslet in 1899, when the Cup came to Lancashire for the first time. The match was played at Fallowfield, Manchester and the winning score was 19-9.

The next time the final was reached was in 1907, when Oldham finished second best to Warrington in the match played at Broughton. The score was 17-3 and one of the star players for the "Wires" was Sam Lees Jnr. who had, ironically, been signed from Oldham earlier in the season.

The biggest upset concerning Oldham in a final came in 1912, when the "Roughyeds" were red-hot favourites to win but, alas, went down 8-5 to a workmanlike Dewsbury side at Headingley.

So it was on to the 1920's when the club became real Challenge Cup specialists. In 1924, the final was lost to Wigan at Rochdale by 21-4, but the following year, Hull K.R. were defeated at Headingley by 16-3. Oldham made it three finals in a row, losing out 9-3 to Swinton again at Rochdale but revenge was soon forthcoming and in the 1927 final at Wigan, Oldham defeated the "Lions" by 26-7.

PHOTO FEATURE - Sadly the 1927 victory remains the last appearance of Oldham in a Challenge Cup Final. However, in spite of having some dreadful luck in the competition, I don't hold with the view that the club is destined never to reach Wembley and it won't be too long before the Cup is once more being photographed on the "Sheddings" steps, as in 1927.

R.L. Challenge Cup Winners 1927

Back Row: C. Marsden (Trainer), A. Brough, S. Rix, H. J. Comm, E. Foote.
Second Row: A. J. Higgs, R. Marlor, J. M. Scaife, J. Reade, A. Baker, F. W. Ashworth, T. E. Holliday.
Seated: J. Jeremiah, R. Jones, R. Sloman (Capt.), G. Hesketh, A. Johnson.



I am currently researching for a book covering the complete playing records and history of OLDHAM RLFC. If anyone has any old material connected with the club (photos, programmes etc) I would be very interested in viewing such items. Please contact: Michael Turner, 158 Balfour Street, Oldham OL4 1NS. Tel: 061-620 6005

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OLDHAM

ClubCall

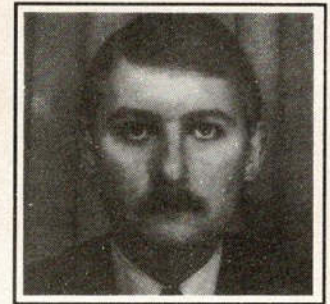
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QUOTE - UNQUOTE

with CLUBCALLS GED MASON



This afternoon sees the end of a marathon month for the players, and the start of the possible road to Wembley.

With one of two First Division teams having to go out at the First Round stage due to the draw, could it be the year a Second Division team reaches the Twin Towers?

Featherstone will fancy their chances today against St. Helens and if Tunksy's side win today and get a favourable second round draw maybe it could be Oldham's year, certainly the bank manager would be happy.

After today's Cup game it's another big game next Sunday at Post Office Road against Featherstone. As always there will be coverage "live" from the game next weekend.

What have our guests had to say on Clubcall over the last few days. I asked Steve Kerry if he now thought promotion was a certainty? "Not yet, Hornets don't worry me but I'd be happier if we can beat Huddersfield once more, you never know with Murphy in charge of a team. Beat them once again and I think we'll be O.K."

Tommy Martyn was our Guest directly after last Sunday's win over Hornets. "The team seems to be improving every week, Peter has been looking for the right balance I think he has now found that balance and apart from injuries seems to know his best line-up".

Steve Warburton, with his injury problems behind him, "Yes, I've had my problems mainly with the concussion and then ligament trouble, it's just great at the moment to get a run in the team."

I then asked Steve about the prospect of a good Cup run, "Well, obviously we want to go as far as possible in the Cup but the League is the priority, it would be good to come up against one or two First Division sides and see what we could do against them."

So things looking very good as we enter February, stay with Clubcall for all the latest both on and off the field.

Yours in Sport,

GED MASON

0898 12 15 80

ROGER HALSTEAD looks at PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS

Surprisingly, this is only the second time Oldham and London Crusaders have met this season. The last time was on the opening day of the season on 30th August, when Oldham won 27-12, thanks to an accomplished first-half performance.

The teams lined up as follows:

OLDHAM: Tyrer, Ranson, Cocker, Ropati, Maxwell; Martyn, Devine; Sheals, Bates, McDermott, Meadows, Tupaea, Russell. Subs: Olsen, Solomona.

CRUSADERS: Dray, Atkinson, Pitt, Roskall, Buckley; Corcoran, Winstanley; Mulkerin, Workman, Rotheram, Halafihi, Smith, Rosolen. Subs: Gilbert, Whiteley.

The referee was Paul Volante of Castleford and the attendance was 2,248.

Halafihi and Atkinson scored tries for Crusaders with Smith and Pitt each landing a goal.

For Oldham, Tommy Martyn kicked five goals and a drop goal, while tries were scored by Stuart Cocker (2), Mark Meadows and Sean Devine.

Cocker was signed to sniff out tries and he obliged with a couple on his debut. Iva Ropati, the other centre, made many long breaks on the way to landing the Man of the Match Award.

By following Martyn all over the meadow, Cocker scored tries in the 20th and 80th minutes, but the alarming drop in the standard of performance after half-time was a worrying feature. Oldham were well in control in the first half, when Mark Meadows had a tremendous spell as a second-row runner, dashing into the gaps off a stream of passes from skipper Richard Russell.

Martyn's kicking game kept London pinned in their own quarter and although the visitors tried to play more football in one match than they did in six last season, Oldham were in command.

London's fight-back in the second half was as dramatic as it was unexpected. Sean Tupaea was given a rest at half time and with him went Oldham's defensive pattern.

Within four minutes, London had cut Oldham's lead to one point and for the next 25 minutes Oldham struggled badly. They missed Tupaea on defence and the injured Martyn on attack and the game was wide open until the last 10 minutes when the home side, strengthened by the return of Martyn, ran in 14 points to breathe easily for the first time in the second half.

Even the try that killed of Crusaders was a fluke, Martyn, Sheals and Maxwell all hacking on a loose ball, before Devine was awarded a dubious-looking touchdown.

At that, London heads dropped and Martyn capitalised on yet another handling error, to send Cocker dancing in for his second on the stroke of full time.



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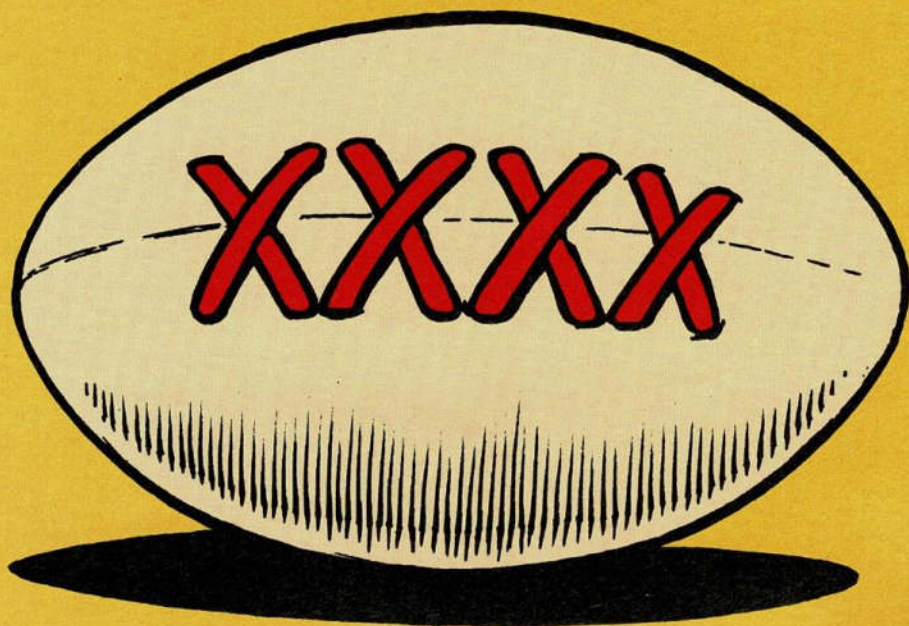
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