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1986, 1989

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1963-64, 1981-82, 1987-88

SECOND DIVISION PREMIERSHIP WINNERS

1988, 1990 Runners Up, 1992

CLUB RECORDS

RECORD VICTORY

63-0 v Goole, March 18th 1899 (Challenge Cup Rd 1)

67-6 v Liverpool City, April 4th 1959 (League)

RECORD SCORE

70-10 v Bramley, Feb 12th 1995 (Challenge Cup Rd 4)

67-6 v Liverpool City, April 4th 1959 (League)

RECORD ATTENDANCE

All Time 28,000 v Huddersfield, 4th Feb 1912

Last 20 years 11,254 v Bradford Bulls, 9th March 1997

INDIVIDUAL RECORDS

TRIES IN A SEASON

Reg Farrar 49 1921-22

TRIES IN A CAREER

Alan Davies 174 1950-61

TRIES IN A MATCH

James Miller 7 v Barry, Oct 31st 1908

GOALS IN A SEASON

Bernard Ganley 200 1957-58

GOALS IN A CAREER

Bernard Ganley 1,358 1950-61

GOALS IN A MATCH

Bernard Ganley 14 v Liverpool City, April 4th 1959

POINTS IN A SEASON

Bernard Ganley 412 1957-58

POINTS IN A CAREER

Bernard Ganley 2,761 1950-61

POINTS IN A MATCH

Abe Johnson 30 v Widnes (12 goals, 2 tries), April 9th

1928

MOST APPEARANCES

Joe Ferguson 628 Sept 1899 - April 1923

MOST CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES

Joe Lawton 134 Sept 1897 - Nov 1902

all the above records are relevant to Oldham first class fixtures only

A Message FROM THE CHAIRMAN

JIM QUINN

This evening sees the start of our Boundary Park programme in Super League 97 and it is generally believed that this is going to be a glorious summer for rugby league football in the northern hemisphere.

Competition will be far more intense than last year and not merely because newly-promoted Salford Reds have already shown in their Silk Cut Challenge Cup run that they will be a force to be reckoned with.

Most clubs have strengthened during the off season and I think we can expect far more this season from clubs like Leeds Rhinos and Paris St. Germain. Bradford Bulls, of course, come here this evening with realistic hopes of chasing a cup and league double, so perhaps this is an appropriate time to reflect on their recent visit here in the quarter-final of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

The tie produced an attendance of 11,284 which was our biggest gate for 30 years, our best in fact since we packed 18,000 fans into Watersheddings for a second-round replay against Bradford and a third round tie against Leeds in the late 1960s. There was a terrific atmosphere when the Bulls were here a fortnight ago and that was partly because Boundary Park, whilst boasting some of the finest facilities in Super League, retains a traditional character which in itself helps to create a big-buzz game.

I feel sure that the thousands of Bradford folk that were perhaps visiting Boundary Park for the first time would be more than



pleased with the facilities on offer and the comparative ease of arrival and departure.

We believe we now have use of some of the finest facilities in Super League at a ground which is ideally situated for visiting fans on the edge of the link road direct to the M62.

We were greatly encouraged by the size of the crowd at the cup-tie, but also by the large number of supportive comments of Boundary Park in stark contrast to those at Watersheddings.

Even the Bradford players were known to be delighted at the facilities and at the condition of the playing surface and Steve McNamara said as much when he attended a post-match press conference.

Watersheddings had served our club well for more than one hundred years, but it was time to move on and, thanks to the hand of friendship extended by Oldham Athletic, we can now stand up and be counted in Super League, happy in the knowledge that we have acquired the use of a Super League stadium in every sense of the word.

Boundary Park is probably one

of the few stadiums which meets most of the Framing the Future requirements and we are hoping that both home and away fans will be eager to make a return visit once they have seen what the ground has to offer.

We have also reached agreement with Oldham Rugby Union Club for the Bears to set up base camp at Manor Park to do their Super League training and conditioning.

There has always been a good relationship in Oldham between what used to be known as rival codes and those friendships can only grow deeper as a result of greater co-operation.

There is now a three-way link-up involving the Bears, Oldham Athletic and Oldham RU Club, while we are also striving to develop a relationship with Manchester Storm, the Super League ice-hockey team based at Nynex Arena.

These are positive moves that can be of mutual benefit to all concerned.





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TALKING POINT

ANDY GOODWAY

The results from week one Super League 97 perhaps show how much all the teams becoming full time has levelled out the fitness and general playing standards of the competition. Only Bradford Bulls recorded a winning margin of more than 15 points with all the other matches swinging pendulum style before final scores were recorded.

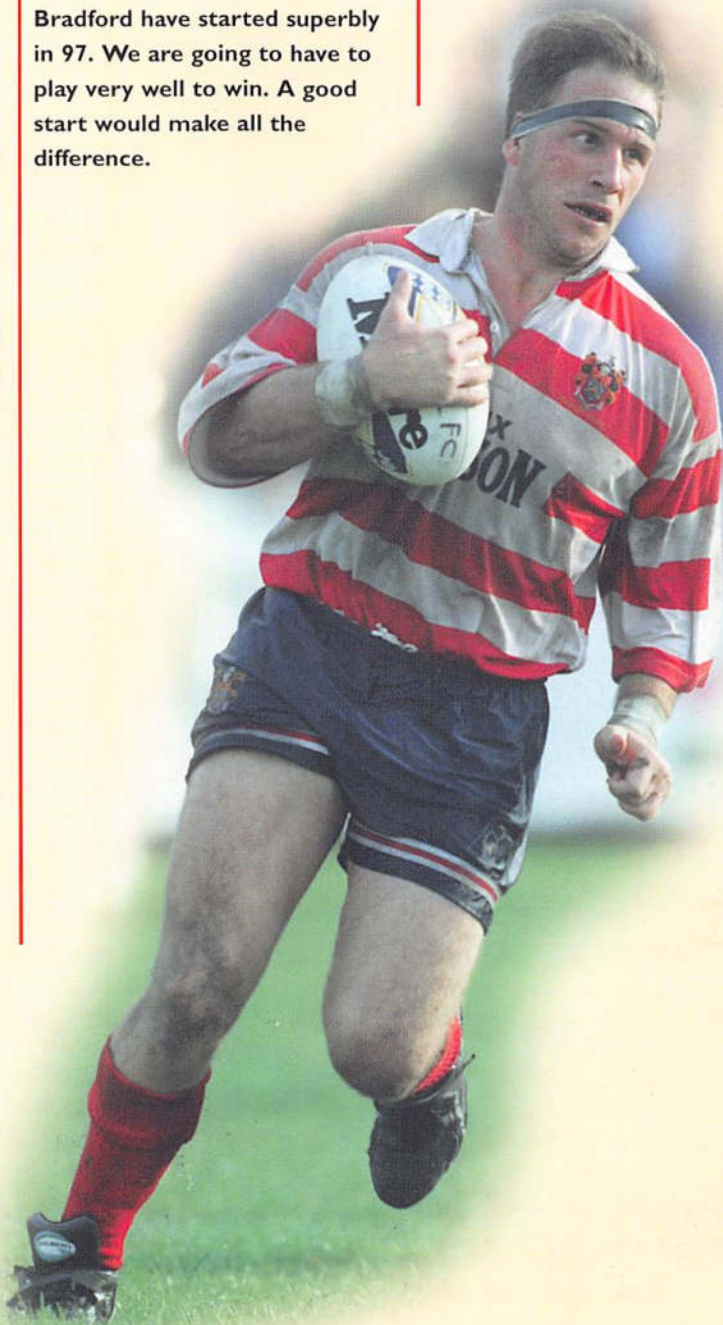
Our match against Leeds Rhinos was great for the spectators but not for coaches pulse rates. From 16-0 down after 15 minutes we should have gone in at half time only 4 points down. However we allowed Gary Mercer to score a converted try on the hooter and went in 10 points down.

With 20 minutes of the match remaining we trailed only 22-24 yet largely due to our error allowed Leeds to pull away once again.

The eventual 22-32 score did not reflect the balance of play but did reflect the amount of errors we made in our own 20. The close results throughout Super League prove that unforced errors will lose many matches this season. If we can cut down on ours we should win many too. One down side is the injuries to both starting centres Darren Abram and Vince Fawcett with groin and hamstring injuries respectively.

At the time of writing I don't know if they will be fit for this match.

Bradford have started superbly in 97. We are going to have to play very well to win. A good start would make all the difference.



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Pardon me for introducing Geoffrey Chaucer, the father of English Literature, to a rugby league

programme. His "Canterbury Tales" shot to the top of the Best Sellers list in Medieval England not just because he was a gifted writer but because he enjoyed the sponsorship from, and influence of, the elite of the London scene.

While his rivals in the North, no less gifted but blessed with their strange local dialects, floundered to make the charts as our Geoffrey did.

Similarly in rugby, the Union code, at the turn of this century firmly entrenched in the capital, made progress nationally while the breakaway League soon found itself confined to three counties.

Rugby League's faster play and more skillful individuals on the pitch mattered little outside the boundaries of those said counties, for Union has its offices in London and thereby commanded the media, the business houses, and the sphere of influence in the City. Not so today. And surely there can be few remaining who can treat with indifference what is finally happening for Rugby League in the South.

The Broncos, with prestige signings like Martin Offiah (on the pitch) and Richard Branson (off the pitch) have captured the imagination of Londoners and are rewarding the game with the publicity it deserves. The club's introduction of U18s Academy and U16s Schools teams, plus the promise of a London Schools League, is proof that, at long last, we mean business below the M62 corridor. Who knows, within a few years, we may be able to silence even those most parochials of fans in the North who bemoan the huge Aussie influx at the Stoop Memorial Ground. But how else can London provide for a top class rugby league team before

its youth policies have had time to develop and provide a ready made Home Counties material? Allowances must be made. Retail giants Tesco and McDonalds don't leave new Stores to prosper on their own. Such companies promote, assist, and, for a while, favour a vine offspring until such time as that offspring can stand alone and

Batley.

And so I hope, at last, do the Rugby Football League. Boys, girls, want to try your hand at being a Rugby League writer? Any topic on which you wish to air your views? Any player you particularly want to talk about? Then have your say on any aspect of Rugby League today, see your views published in a Super League programme, and

A PLAYERS TALE

Ray French, BBC Rugby League Correspondent

contribute to the well being of the parent body. London Broncos are attempting to do just that, and we must give them all our support.

Super League Europe have taken the bold move of locating their offices and their new Chief Executive, Colin Myler, in London. Already media coverage, merchandising, and sponsorship activity in the South have more than doubled.

Amateur clubs continue thrive either side of the Thames, while the London Student Old Boys make remarkable progress, applying for entry to the National Conference Leagues and, hopefully, proving the catalyst for second, lower divisional team in the Capital. League has finally hit the London scene at all levels and, though there is still much to be done, we have the promise of becoming a truly national sport. London Broncos command attention on B Sky B and BBC Grandstand, high profile players Martin Offiah ad Tulsen Tollett stare out at readers from the centres pages off glossy magazines, and famous names rush to be associated with what happens at the Stoop.

Why? Because it's London! Yes, old Geoffrey Chaucer knew what he was doing when he stayed at King Richards' Court and refused a 'Semi' just outside

win a copy of a BBC TV's video, "The People's Final - 100 years of the RL Challenge Cup."

If you are aged 10 years to 16 years, send us, in no more than 200 words, your views, comments, ideas on any Rugby League topic and the writer of the best article each month will have his/her work published here in the programme and receive a copy of "The People's Final". Send your 200 word article to The Editor, c/o Sports Programme Promotions, 151 Wick Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 4HH.

Please also state your age, full name and address and the Rugby League team you support.

The Editor's decision will be final.

So, let's have your entries as soon as possible. Ask your teacher for help if you wish but hurry. You could see your name in print and be the proud owner of the video, "The People's Final - 100 years of the Rugby league Challenge Cup.

Enjoy the excitement of Cup Final day, and thrill to the deeds of those who have tasted glory or heartache under the famous twin towers or Wembley. Robbie Paul, Bobbie Goulding, Don Fox, Jason Robinson, Alex Murphy.....

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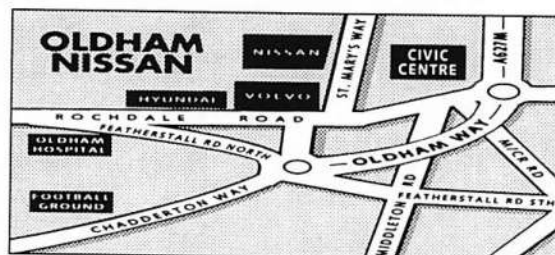
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DOWN MEMORY LANE

DON YATES

Don Yates looks back to a match from yesteryear

The revelation of the Super League era so far has been the Bradford Bulls. Excellent marketing has lead to excellent support which has encouraged excellence on the field of play, a prime example being last April's superb exhibition in the Cup Final at Wembley.

But that has not been the first occasion that Bradford have excelled under twin towers. The last time Bradford won the Challenge Cup was way back in 1949. In those days the first round was staged over two legs which was perhaps as well because Bradford opened their Cup campaign with a tricky tie against St. Helens. After losing 4-3 at home it looked as though their efforts to reach Wembley for a third consecutive year had come to an end. However they pulled off a magnificent 5-0 victory at Knowsley Road on the second leg to edge through 8-4 on aggregate.

Round Two saw Bradford overcome Castleford 11-5 and then in the quarter-finals Northern entertained Belle Vue Rangers and scraped through 8-7, winger Alan Edwards scoring both their tries.

Bradford were involved in both semi-finals, playing in one and staging the other, both with satisfactory outcomes. Northern beat Barrow 10-0 at Swinton whilst a crowd of 64,250 were attracted to Odsal for the other semi-final which resulted in an

11-10 victory for Halifax over Huddersfield. In previous rounds Halifax had beaten Hull 10-4 on aggregate, Swinton (home) 5-0 and Oldham at Watersheddings 7-2.

So the Wembley final was to be a 'needle' match between local rivals Halifax and Bradford Northern. Despite this the crowds flocked from all over the North to Wembley to establish what was then a World record rugby league attendance of 95,050.

The teams for the final were as follows:

Bradford Northern: Bill Leake; Eric Batten, Jack Kitching, Ernest Ward, Alan Edwards; Willie Davis, Donald Ward; Frank Whitcombe, Vic Darlison, Ron Greaves, Barry Tyler, Trevor Foster and Ken Traill.

Halifax: Dennis Chalkley; Arthur Daniels, Paddy Reid, Gareth Price, Johnny MacDonald; George Kenny, Stan Keilty; Mike Condon, Alvin Ackerley, John Rothwell, Des Healy, Jack Pansegrouw and Frank Mawson.

Eight of the Bradford side were playing in their third consecutive Wembley final and with nerves playing such an important part in the early exchanges it was no surprise that Northern began better. For one of the eight, however, it provided a painful experience. Winger Eric Batten broke his shoulder blade in the opening minutes but as substitutes had not been introduced into the game at that time, he continued to play

throughout the 80 minutes. Indeed he was on hand after just ten minutes to chase an Ernest Ward kick and dive over for the opening score. Ernest Ward's touchline conversion made the score 5-0 and so it remained until the hour when Ward increased the lead with a penalty. Ten minutes from time Bradford sealed victory when Trevor Foster went in under the posts and Ernest Ward's third goal took the final score to 12-0. It was a thoroughly entertaining match which thrilled the record crowd but for the following 15 years things turned sour at Odsal culminating in their closure in 1963. They have bounced back from that and are now one of the leading clubs in the game and as such should guarantee an entertaining start to the Super League season here at Boundary Park.



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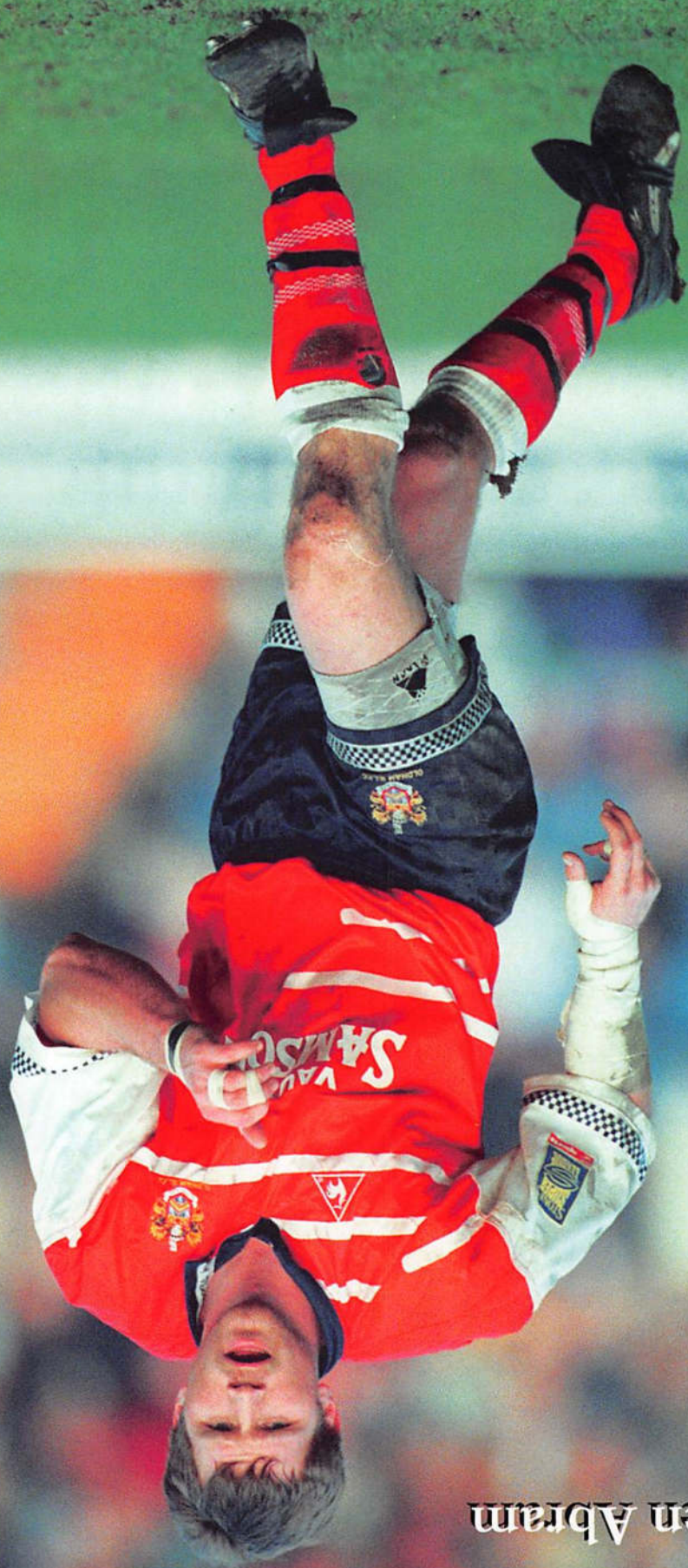
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ON THIS DAY...

DON YATES

Don Yates recalls this day in history
Although Oldham will be hoping for a bumper gate with which to start their home Super League programme for 1997, tonight's attendance is unlikely to exceed the record attendance of 1936 and 1959. It was in this day 1936 that Leeds defeated Huddersfield 10-5 in the Challenge Cup semi-final at Belle Vue, Wakefield. A crowd of 37,906 were attracted to that tie, the biggest ever to watch a match at Wakefield. Just down the road at Featherstone, on 21st March 1959, there was a crowd of 17,531 to see Rovers beat St. Helens 20-6 in a Challenge Cup quarter-final tie, the biggest crowd to watch a match at Post Office Road. The 21st March 1964 was an important date in the career of international loose-forward Dave Robinson. He had turned

professional in the previous May when he joined Swinton from Folly Lane amateurs and it was on this day in 1964 that he made his senior debut. Swinton beat Leigh 16-7 at Station Road in a match which set Robinson on a career, the highlights of which were 13 test appearances for Great Britain and two tours to Australia in 1966 and 1970. It was on this day in 1934, Wednesday 21st March, that the French national team met London Highfield at the White City Stadium. France led 17-11 at half time and that score remained until five minutes from time. Highfield then scored two tries and a touchline conversion from prop Sam Oakley in injury time snatched a 19-17 victory for the Londoners. Another representative fixture took place on this day in 1931, Saturday

21st March. The Recreation Ground, Whitehaven was the setting for a County Championship clash which saw Cumberland lose 19-12 to Glamorgan and Monmouthshire. Bradford were not represented in that match but Oldham had loose-forward Hathway in the Welsh team and forwards Lister and Ashworth in the Cumbrian pack. Lister scored a try for Cumberland who failed to win a match that season. It was on Wednesday, 21st March 1990 that Oldham pulled off a fine 42-14 Second Division victory at Hunslet. Bradford Northern pulled off an even better victory on Sunday, 21st March 1982. That day they beat Warrington 21-0 in a First Division fixture at Wilderspool.

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Last weekend was a memorable one for Rugby League in one of its newest outposts. The game has long toyed with the game in Adelaide, the delightful city that is the capital of South Australia. Winfield Cup and representative matches were taken to the City of Churches with considerable success, but it took the advent of Super League – and the need for a tenth team to complete the roster – that turned dreams into reality.

Nobody ever said that it would be easy for the Adelaide Rams, a team thrown together at short notice when it became clear that the competition would go



LOOK OUT FOR SHARKS

Dave Hadfield the Independent Rugby League correspondent continues his monitoring of the Australian Super League

ahead this year, to establish themselves.

But, so far, the side coached by former Kangaroo second-row and one-time Barrow coach Rod Reddy has performed beyond expectations. In both their first two games on the road they proved highly competitive – and the stage was thus set for their debut on the Adelaide Oval, which must now surely be one of the most picturesque grounds in rugby league, last Friday night. It was a double triumph. First of all, over 27,000 fans turned up for a match in a city which normally reserves its greatest enthusiasms for Aussie rules football. In fact, Adelaide has never been quite as one-eyed about its sporting preferences as Melbourne, but that first gate was still highly gratifying.

Better yet, the Rams won. True, it was only by a 10-8 in a tight affair against Super League's other newcomers, the Hunter Mariners, but Adelaide already

understand enough about the realities of rugby league to know that every win counts.

It was not entirely surprising that it should have been the former Test hooker Kerrod Walters – the Rams' star-name recruit from the Brisbane Broncos – who inspired victory.

Walters, one of three brothers who have formed a little dynasty at the most successful end of Aussie league over the last decade, is undoubtedly Reddy's key signing. There are a few others there who will be vaguely familiar to British fans, like Joe Iamani, who was with Bradford last season, the Papua New Guinea hooker Elias Paiyo – who was sought by both Workington and Paris last year – and his fellow Kumul, Bruce Mamando. The Rams' victory lifts them clear of the foot of the table after three rounds of matches, with only Hunter and the Canberra Raiders without a point.

Mal Meninga's nightmare as new

Canberra coach goes on, with a 38-26 thrashing by Canterbury, His players have leapt to Meninga's defence, shouldering most of the blame themselves, but there is an undeniable air of crisis in the Australian Capital Territory.

Up at the top, just three clubs have maximum points in what promises to be a hard-fought competition.

Brisbane did not have it all their own way in beating the Western Reds 26-16, whilst Penrith only got home against the North Queensland Cowboys by a modest 19-12.

The most assured performance by far came from the Cronulla Sharks, who mauled Auckland to the tune of 34-3 on Monday night. It still isn't coming right for John Monie and is men at the Warriors, but early season suggests that ET and the Sharks are the side to watch.

For Super League Table see Stat Attack on page 43.

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HERE AND THERE

DON YATES

Next Friday morning, Good Friday, Boundary Park stages the most prestigious match on the local amateur calendar. It is the final of the Standard Cup competition which this season features Saddleworth Rangers and Waterhead. Rangers are the current holders of the Standard Cup. They defeated Higginshaw 22 - 12 in last season's final to register a record equalling 13th Standard Cup victory. Rangers have also appeared in a record 25 finals in the 92 years of this competition. Waterhead's record is not so impressive but they have won the trophy three times from 11 cup final appearances. Their last triumph was in 1986 when they beat Mayfield 13 - 8 in the final. Next Friday's final is the fourth final involving Saddleworth and Waterhead. Rangers have won two of those three previous finals with Waterhead's success coming in 1981 when they beat Rangers 9-7. Rangers had beaten Waterhead 16 - 4 in 1976 and they repeated the feat five years ago when a

crowd of 2,780 saw Saddleworth win 22-6. Winger Harry Maher scored Waterhead's try that morning and stand-off Jon Perks landed a first half penalty. Rangers four tries came from centres Sean Cooper and Peter Gallagher, winger Paul Coates and New Zealand stand-off Tom Coates. Loose-forward Sean Whitehead landed two goals for Saddleworth before being sent-off and scrum half David John landed a goal following that dismissal. The following season, 1992-93, Waterhead gained revenge by knocking Rangers out of the competition with a 23-20 quarter-final victory in Waterhead Park. Since then, however, Rangers have had the better of the exchanges with semi-final victories both in 1995 (18-2) and last year (44-22). Saddleworth, coached by former Oldham and Great Britain back-row forward Mick Worrall, will start as slight favourites if only by virtue of their status as members of the Premier League of the National Conference League.

However, they have not had a vintage and are currently lying in the lower half of the table. Waterhead, on the other hand, have enjoyed a tremendous season under the guidance of former Saddleworth stalwart Norman Widdall. They are currently plugging away at the head of the North West Countries League, Premier Division. The championship seems to be a three way battle between Waterhead, Farnworth and Rasebridge, the Wigan outfit who have Oldham skipper Martin Crompton on their coaching staff. Waterhead's championship challenge will be put to one side next week as they concentrate on what is the Wembley of the local amateur scene. It should be a rousing final so why not make the effort to get here. It's an 11 am kick off and we guarantee that it will be a final to remember.

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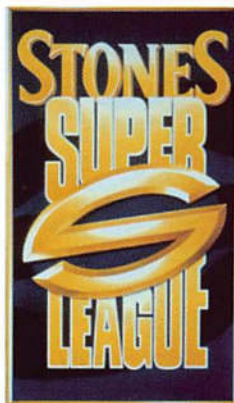
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OLDHAM Rugby League Club

working together

SUPERLEAGUE ACT II



Ian Proctor continues his review of the status of Super League clubs as they progress through the season. This week he looks at Castleford, Warrington and Halifax.

CASTLEFORD TIGERS SUPERLEAGUE ACT II

CASTLEFORD TIGERS

Castleford are earmarked for a fight against the drop, but they reckon without the pride and spirit which has kept the Tigers in top-flight football for the past 24 years. Castleford have never been relegated – and they don't intend to start now. Pre-season matches are never a reliable guide to how a side will perform when the real action starts, but coach John Joyner must have been relieved when the Tigers gained an eve-of-season boost with their friendly win against Wigan. It set them up nicely for their revenge mission with Salford at the Willows and they gave as good as they got in a game decided by Phil Coussons' try. But Joyner left the ground shaking his head after a Simon Middleton score was disallowed – the Tigers need luck and they are not getting much at the moment.

Joyner, who has given his adult life to his hometown club, believes his squad is much healthier than when they started in Super League. It will need to be, because the challenges will be that much greater for Super League's 'small town boys'. In charge for four years, Joyner presided over the break-up of the Regal Trophy-winning side which earned him Coach of the Year. Now, the likes of Blackmore, Ford, Nikau, Ellis and Kemp are just names from a successful past and it is the surviving members of that team who will

have key roles.

Skipper Lee Crooks got back on track when he joined Castleford from Leeds in 1990, but how much longer can the 33-year-old continue to produce his matchless handling skills in the summer heat? If Cas' get the best out of their prop for another year, they could surprise the doom-and-gloom merchants. Similarly, club record signing Graham Steadman is at the veteran stage of a brilliant career and this is likely to be his last season at top level. Fully fit, the hard grounds should suit his flamboyant style, but he struggled with injuries in 1996 and Cas' missed his dazzling influence.

Joyner lost Junior Paramore and Frano Botica to rugby union but will be more worried that Lions tourist Tony Smith recently requested a transfer and looks set to leave Wheldon Road.

One of the finest try-poachers in Super League, Smith is a tremendous asset on attack and defence. But Cas' insist they will get the best possible deal, with Nigel Wright mentioned in any possible transfer with Wigan. The former Wakefield starlet would be a quality acquisition for the Tigers at stand-off.

Australians Jason Lidden and Adrian Vowles have both arrived with big reputations and prop Sean McVean adds to the fierce competition for the front-row with Crooks, Dean Sampson and Nathan Sykes. Lidden

CASTLEFORD TIGERS

was a classy performer with Western Suburbs and Canterbury down under, and along with Brendon Tuuta may form a second-row.

Huddersfield hooker Lee St Hilaire and former St Helens and Swinton winger Jason Roach have their opportunity in Super League. Castleford will be hoping teenagers Danny Orr, Spencer Hargrave and Lee Bardauskas take steps towards the first-team providing competition for places to keep everyone honest. Castleford have the talent to win a majority of their home games, particularly if their passionate supporters rally round a club flying the Super League flag for all of the game's homespun clubs. Steady home wins should be enough to keep their heads above water.



Lee Crooks

Warrington's bombshell to sack ex-Great Britain hooker Martin Dermott after just three games, and to give Willie Swann and Mateaki Mafi free transfers while suspending Iestyn Harris, illustrates how hungry the club is for success. The message is clear: mediocrity will not be tolerated.

Performances like the one which brought a 10-try hammering at Odsal, and that Cup disappointment against Salford, dampened the enthusiasm for the new season. The early signs are that Wilderspool will be a place of transition in 1997. Defeat in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup always leaves a hangover and when it comes with Wembley in sight, the anguish seems more acute. Warrington's players have every right to feel their home quarter-final was 'one that got away', but the display which brought that heavy defeat at Bradford was unacceptable ... following on from a 66-14 loss at St Helens last August.

The turning point of the cup-tie came when Richard Henare was unable to ground the ball properly after looking a certain try-scorer just before the interval and Kelly Sheldford's near miss after the break resulting in a length-of-the-field Salford move which brought the

critical score to Nathan McAvo. It was all downhill from there. The Wolves had their chances against Salford and should have been well clear at the interval. Paul Hulme's early try gave them a perfect start and Warrington dominated for the first quarter, but pre-match fears about their ability to subdue the Reds pack proved well founded. It was a similar tale of men-against-boys at Odsal, where Chris Holden and Gareth Davies were making their first starting appearances in the pack. Wilderspool's injury jinx has already struck and they will lack Mark Hilton for most of the season, along with Dallas Mead. Plans for a dominant pack have been wrecked and they will have to open the chequebook or turn to promising young talent. Paul Cullen has still to pull on a jersey this season, and Lee Penny has also been missing at full back, although Nigel Vagana looks a quality asset. With Iestyn Harris under a cloud, Warrington are already stretched and Paul Darbyshire's return after a two-year absence is timely for John Dorahy. Warrington were edged out of the top four last summer, a tremendous effort given the turmoil at the end of the centenary season when Brian



Paul Sculthorpe

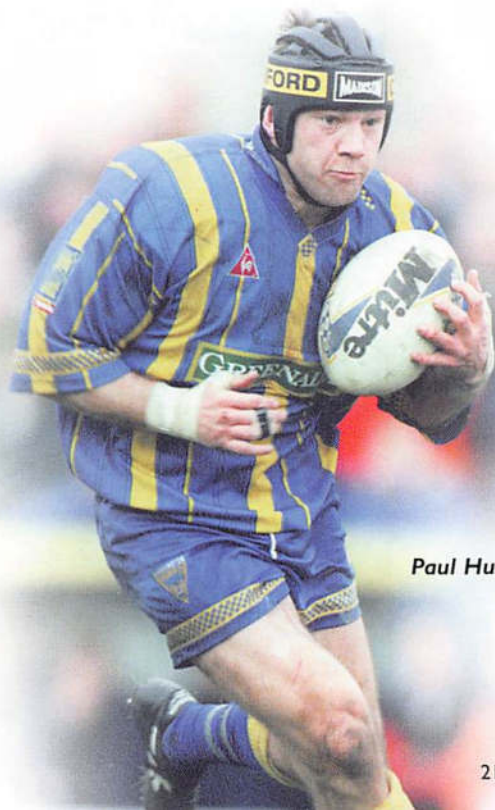
Johnson and Clive Griffiths left the club and Warrington suffered that 0-80 Regal Trophy semi-final humiliation at St Helens.

They copped another hiding at Knowsley Road bringing down the curtain on a campaign which had begun impressively with four wins in their opening five matches. It ended with four defeats in the final six games and allowed the Broncos to steal their position in the Premiership play-offs.

Tongan Salesi Finau ended on a high and will be aiming to impress, at front-row, in the company of a host of fellow New Zealanders.

The Wolves have class in their backs with Harris, if he's still around, and fellow Lions tourist Jonathan Roper capable of embarrassing any opposition, and Toa Kohe-Love, Richard Henare and Nigel Vagana having the class to become big favourites. They will be looking to Kelly Sheldford to take control of games at half-back. Warrington have the finest young forward in the business in 19-year-old Paul Sculthorpe. He was ever-present in Super League '96. He thrives on a heavy workload but the Wolves must be careful he doesn't burn himself out - he missed the Odsal defeat.

Last season's 5th-place would have been even better had Warrington reproduced their fine Wilderspool form in away matches. If they can cure travel sickness and overcome early injuries, Wolves can contest a top-four placing - but the competition will be fiercer and they have to steady the ship after the blows of the past fortnight.



Paul Hulme

JUNIOR BEARS



A Super Fast, Super Fit, Super League welcome to our new home for the 1997 season, Boundary Park to all you Junior Bears!!

Our aim is to be the Junior Super League Supporters of the Year.

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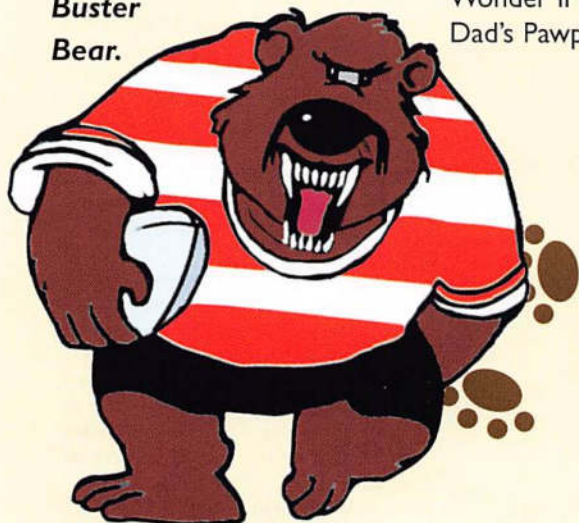
A big Junior shout for our new players Luke Goodwin, Brett Goldspink, Nathan Turner and Vince Fawcett.

**Come On Come On
Come On Come On
Come On Come On
OLDHAM**

We also extend a Boundary Park Welcome (again) to the Yorkshire team of the moment, Bradford Bulls and their supporters.

Good luck in the Semis against the Rhinos

Buster Bear.



Let's start off with **Buster's Eezy Teezy.**

Who won promotion to Super League?

Who got relegated to Division I last Season?

Which Bears player toured New Zealand?

Which Bears player represented Gt Britain in the World Nines?

What nickname have Warrington adopted?

Answers in the next installment.

Congratulations to Michael (Buster) and Debbie on the birth of their little Cub Reece. Wonder if he will follow in Dad's Pawprints.

JUNIOR BEARS MASCOT

for today is

TERRI BROOKSHANK

who is 11 years old and attends Alt Primary School.

Terri's favourite Bears player is David Bradbury.

When she is not supporting the bears she enjoys going to Guides and reading.



**Be there -
see the
Bear!**

RUGBY LEAGUE PROGRAMME NOTES

MALCOLM LORD

The buzz of Wembley is just around the corner again and with Wigan out of the way, although St. Helens will still be firm favourites, there is a good chance their opponents could be one of the less so-called fashionable clubs.

Regardless of all that of course there is still the new Plate Competition and it could well be that a team like Leigh will be taking to the hallowed turf. What a great idea!

Four different sets of supporters all on the same day, a great day's entertainment and hopefully the kind of atmosphere usually

reserved for the Premiership Finals at Old Trafford. Okay playing the Silk Cut at this time of the season is a bit strange but the basic principle of the Plate as a taster to the main course I believe is a good one – and you know in recent years it has often been the case that the so called Second Billing game at Old Trafford has turned out to be the most entertaining so let's not first take it as just another curtain raiser – this will make an already splendid day really special. On a humorous note, I have only just realised that the sales of pies in the Capital will once again

drop dramatically this year, and also for the second year running we will not be able to hear Wigan supporters going into London hostelryes and arrogantly asking for "a pint of the usual". My tips for the final are St. Helens and Bradford Bulls, my outsiders Salford Reds.

Malcolm Lord
BBC GMR Talk

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No result in the first round of Super League matches caused more surprise than the victory by Paris St Germain at Sheffield Eagles, the first by the French side on English soil. Vive la différence? Of course, it was a repeat of the opening day result last season, but with a significant change. The only Frenchman at the Don Valley belonged to Sheffield –

Jean-Marc Garcia – and the cries between the PSG players were of “mate” rather than “mon ami”. Three French musketeers, Pierre Chamorin, Pascal Bomati and Fabien Devecchi, have still to arrive back at Paris. Otherwise, the team is Australian to its bootstraps. Inevitably, that means a sound, well-drilled defence, as Sheffield and,

no doubt, other teams will discover in the coming weeks. To achieve the ultimate goal of a competitive team of French players, PSG have sacrificed the notion of converting Parisians to Rugby League with a largely home-grown team of triers for a more rugged formula of Antipodean renegades and raw youth, who might be able



Adam Peters



David Lomax

to string more than the occasional victory together. Jeremy Robinson, Adam Peters, Jason Keogh et al are hardly household names in England. In Australia, they were dubbed the "wild bunch" – the players the Australian Super League did not want, or preferred to forget. What they are is good enough to give a number of English sides a run for their money, which says a lot about the relative playing strength of the Super League in this country.

Were Paris to beat Leeds Rhinos this weekend, even the fickle French media might wake up to Rugby League. The size of the crowd at the Charlety stadium, which averaged a respectable 8,000 last year, will be an indication of the preparedness of the Paris public to get behind what is a foreign team playing

"The most important aspect about PSG is the development of the game in France. For that to be achieved, the Paris team must be successful. Nothing would please us more if half the side were French, but we have to be competitive. If that means us having 21 Australians in our squad, then that's the way it is," Cove said.

"If we were to finish 11th in Super League again, we would be struggling, so it's a pressure season for us. Nothing else in June, we will be off and running. Then you can build up crowds, revenue, sponsorship and media exposure.

"If we can show people success, I'm sure we'll get them here in greater numbers. We're continuing with the policy of free tickets, which are distributed in

the world club championship this summer. Sky will show their first game at home to Hunter Mariners live on Saturday June 8. Their other opponents are Perth Western Reds, Mulholland's old club. Individuals of the calibre of David O'Donnell, the former London and Manly hooker, will ensure all opponents of a warm "French" welcome. Not that the Paris squad is overly strong, in terms of depth, for a season as intense as the one just started, in which case we could well see one or two more native Frenchmen thrown into the fray as they become available after their domestic season finishes in May.

Mercifully, we were spared last Sunday the bravado that emanated, in particular, from Jacques Fouroux, the erstwhile PSG president,

LES AUSSIES

Christopher Irvine, Rugby League correspondent for The Times, reflects on Paris St Germain's victory over Sheffield Eagles last weekend

a foreign sport in their city. Another unusual aspect about PSG is that their football manager, responsible for organising the Gallic outpost of Super League, is a woman. As club secretary for more than two years at the former London Crusaders, Yorkshire-born Rebecca Cove is familiar with selling the game to a public largely ignorant about Rugby League.

outlets throughout Paris, and people without tickets will be charged on the gate on the night, but we feel it's important to do everything we can to help build a spectator base."

The fact that most of the players and the PSG coach, Peter Mulholland were not wanted in Australia provides them with a big incentive, especially when it comes to

following that defeat of Sheffield a year ago. He described that victory as the "coming of Rugby League in France". A few weeks and few defeats later Fouroux was back in Rugby Union. Mulholland and his Australian troops will keep their feet on the ground and their backs to the wall in defence.

ACADEMY NEWS

BRIAN GARTLAND

At the time of writing these notes we are eagerly awaiting the first league game of the season which will take place at Batley Bulls on the 15th March. We have played one friendly game against Wigan at Central Park, which we won, and which hopefully will set us in a good vein for the rest of the season. My personal MOM for that game was Mark Powell, although he didn't get on the score sheet. Mark is a player who always

gives 100% both in attack and defence, a player who never shirks putting his body on the line for the sake of his team mate. Well done Mark. Our young full back Jason Brassington, who also accredited himself well in the same match, has had an accident at home severing some tendons in his thumb. We all wish Jason a speedy recovery. If there are any young players out there who fancy having a go at Academy Football and are

above 16 years of age and under 19 years, please give me a ring on 0161 652 2452



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As you start going up the hill through Stalybridge the ground is situated directly after the Hare & Hounds pub on the right hand side of the road.

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

in association with the

DAILY MIRROR

Welcome to Development News.

I was reminded of writing this report by our new Marketing Manager Abe Kerr. I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming Abe to the club and if first impressions are anything to go by, I am sure he will do a fine job for the club.

On the development side, the Oldham Schools Renault Cup competition is up and running and I am sure there are going to be some great games going to take place. We held a coaching course for school children at Hathershaw Sports Centre during half term which was well represented by Oldham

players, and I must say the players were amazed at some of the handling skills of the children who took part. There will be another coaching course taking place during this second week of the Easter Holidays from 10am to 11am starting on Tuesday 1st April to Friday 4th April, so get booked on early. Again some of the Oldham Bears Players will be in attendance.

Any girls interested in playing Tag Rugby please contact me on 0161 652 2452

Yours in Sport

BRIAN GARTLAND



Another great signing for Oldham Bears

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Oldham Bears have made another great signing. The Co-operative Bank has joined the team, ready and willing to help them reach their goal. It's sure to be a great season!

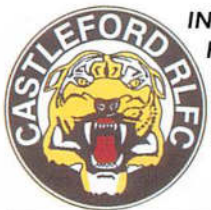
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IN THE SECOND OF HIS WEEKLY INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEN WHO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN IN SUPER LEAGUE, IAN PROCTOR TALKS TO JOHN JOYNER, COACH OF UNDER PRESSURE CASTLEFORD. HE DISCOVERED THAT SUPER LEAGUE'S 'HOMETOWN' BOYS AIM TO BEAT THE ODDS AND PROLONG A 24-YEAR LONG SPELL IN THE GAME'S TOP FLIGHT

Q SUPER LEAGUE TWO HAS BEGUN AND, FINALLY, THE ACTION STARTED. WILL YOU BE PLEASED TO SEE YOUR TEAM ON THE FIELD, HOPEFULLY ANSWERING SOME OF THE CRITICS WHO HAVE WRITTEN YOU OFF AS RELEGATION CANDIDATES?

A We're hoping to do our talking on the field because although we had a rough start, with our home defeat by Salford in the Challenge Cup, I have every confidence in the ability of the players at Wheldon Road. If they give total commitment and 100% effort on a weekend, there'll be no worries, and we saw at Salford, last Sunday, that we're only lacking a bit of luck because Simon Middleton had a perfectly good try disallowed.

Q IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT YOU WERE LESS-THAN-HAPPY WITH THE COMMITMENT OF SOME OF YOUR PLAYERS AFTER THE CUP DEFEAT?

A The commitment in the Salford cup-tie, and in the first of two pre-season friendlies with Wigan, simply wasn't there from all of the players. Some tried hard and others didn't give their all and you can't win matches like that. We had a long talk about it, and the players put it right in the home friendly against Wigan. We needed that win and we've now got to carry on in that vein. Basically, they're showing a lack of self-respect. I've no time for players who say they're going to do it for the coach or for someone else - if they can't do it for themselves, they can't do it for anybody. It's very hard to accept a lack of effort when you know players have ability. I can understand any player going through a bad patch, but there's no excuse for giving less than your best.

Q ARE YOU STILL ENJOYING THE JOB AND DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN STILL COMPETE IN SUPER LEAGUE AT A CLUB LIKE CASTLEFORD?

A I'm still enjoying it because it's all good coaching experience. I enjoyed the good times, almost immediately, as coach at Wheldon Road, winning

the Regal Trophy and taking the Coach of the Year award at the end of my first season in the job, and now times are a lot tougher. That's the nature of the job but we've got the personnel to get through and I'm sure that Castleford can make progress in this competition. We're very proud of our record of having remained in the top division throughout the past 24 years - I played all my career at the top level and I want to keep Cas' there.

A lot of people are writing us off and a lot of people don't even want us in the Super League and that's particularly disappointing when I hear certain comments from people who are

supposedly friends of ours. But they're entitled to their opinion, I guess. We know what we've got to do. The players and coaching staff at Wheldon Road are all in this together and our aim is to silence our detractors. It's always that much easier when you fight as one solid unit - and we shall do that.

Q IT'S NICE TO PROVE DOUBTERS WRONG AND A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE NOW COMPARING YOUR STATUS IN THE SUPER LEAGUE TO THAT OF WIMBLEDON IN THE FA PREMIERSHIP. IS IT A FAIR COMPARISON?

A If we can do half as well as Wimbledon have done over the past ten years, then I'll be delighted. I think we have to develop that siege mentality which has served them so well down the years because when you think the world is against you, when your backs are against the wall, you tend to come out fighting twice as hard. Only the players can do anything about Castleford's on-field progress and we've got to make sure we stick together, work hard as a unit and give that total commitment I was talking about, whether it's playing or in training.

Q YOU'VE SIGNED FIVE PLAYERS TO STRENGTHEN THE SQUAD IN THE OFF-SEASON. ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE NEW RECRUITS AND THE DEPTH OF YOUR SQUAD?

A They've all settled in well and they have helped contribute new ideas but we haven't seen anything like the best of them, on the field, yet. I am sure that will come, particularly with the overseas imports because we've been well-

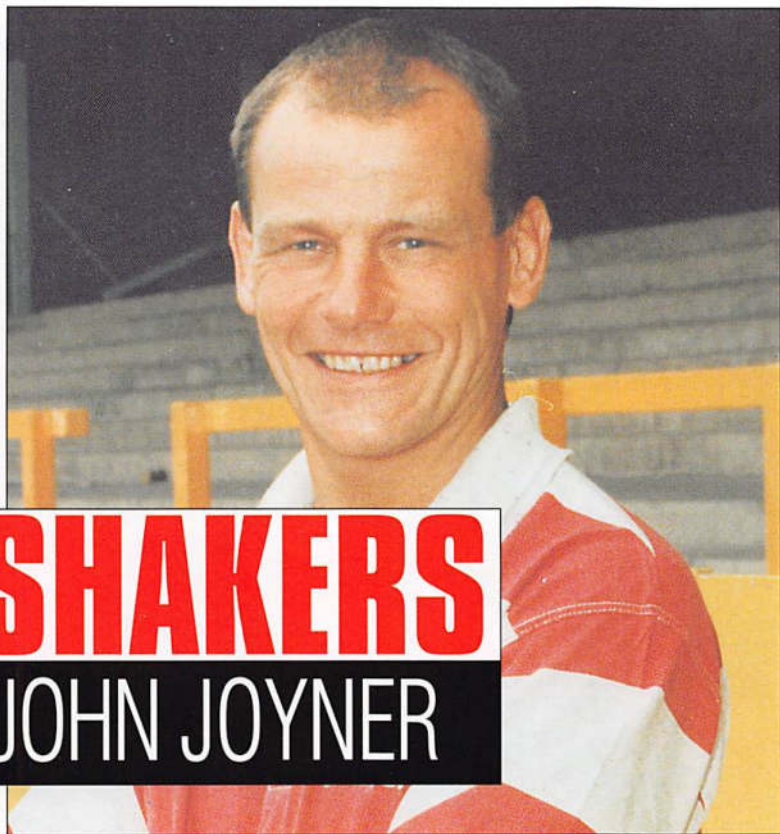
MOVERS & ONE-TO-ONE -

served by a succession of Australians at the club, down the years.

I'm confident Jason Lidden, Adrian Vowles and Sean McVean can follow in the footsteps of such as Paul Khan, Jamie Sandy, Ian French, Jeff Hardy, Gary Belcher, Bob Lindner, Chris Johns, Michael Beattie and Ron Gibbs. All of those players gave great service to the Tigers and the fans appreciated their efforts. I'm sure it will be the same this season.

Q TONY SMITH'S TRANSFER REQUEST MUST CONCERN YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE SET TO LOSE ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL PLAYER. WHAT'S YOUR VIEW OF THE SITUATION?

A It's disappointing, naturally, because Tony sees his future elsewhere. That's his prerogative but we've just got to get on with working with the players who are keen to represent Castleford. In youngster Danny Orr, we have a skilful, enthusiastic half-back who's determined to do well for this club. He'll never let us down and he'll give 100%, just as Tony Smith always has. I'd like to see Tony remain with the club, but if he wishes to move on, then we have to get the best possible deal for Castleford. Any deal will have to be right for Castleford before we release him because Tony's contract still has the best part of a year to run.



SHAKERS

JOHN JOYNER

Q WILL YOU BE ABLE TO USE ANY INCOMING TRANSFER FEE TO SIGN NEW PLAYERS YOURSELF?

A We're constantly on the look-out for players and there have been assurances that some of the money from any possible outgoing transfers will be used to strengthen the squad. It's vital to have the depth of squad to compete in Super League.

Q YOU'VE DONE EVERYTHING IN YOUR LONG SPELL AT THE CLUB, BOTH AS A PLAYER AND COACH, WAS IT DISHEARTENING WHEN YOU SAW THE BREAK-UP OF A SIDE LIKE THE ONE WHICH SWEEP CASTLEFORD TO THEIR 1994 REGAL TROPHY SUCCESS OVER WIGAN?

A You do get despondent from time to time, Ian, but can't let it get you down for long. There's no time for self-pity in this job, because you always have another match to focus upon. Of course, it's been disappointing to lose a succession of world-class players like Blackmore, Nikau, Kemp and Ford, but that's the name of the game in rugby league. There's nothing we can do about that. We've simply got to get on with

things as they stand and try and bring back those happy days.

Q COACHING REALLY IS A TIME-CONSUMING JOB, THESE DAYS, WITH ALL THE DIFFERENT FACETS INVOLVED. HOW DEMANDING IS IT IN 1997?

A There aren't enough hours in the day, really, and most clubs employ two or three full-time coaching staff to encompass all the demands of the job. You're preparing your players (possibly trying to oversee all three teams at first-team, Alliance and Academy levels), and looking at videos/matches involving your forthcoming opponents. Junior development is a vitally important area for a club like Castleford, the media demands are greater than ever before, you have a duty to promote and project the club and there are plenty of other tasks. But we're in the game because we love it and I'm still enjoying the experience. I look at it this way - the harder we work, the greater the rewards.

Q HOW EASY IS IT TO PERSUADE A LOCAL LAD TO PLAY FOR CASTLEFORD, THESE DAYS?

A It's unfair to judge everyone the same because it depends on the

individual. There are still some local juniors whose sole aim is to pull on the Castleford jersey and that's heartwarming. I turned down bigger offers to play for Castleford, when I was a kid, and it's pleasing that that attitude still prevails in the 1990s. But some youngsters will follow the money and that's fine although it's not always the best policy.

Youngsters coming to Wheldon Road know they will get their chance and that's not always the case at other so-called 'bigger' clubs. What I say to them is to make sure they're happy in their choice of club, because if they have faith in their ability, the big money will come further down the line.

We have introduced a scouting and youth development system and it will probably bear fruit further down the track, but it's that much harder, nowadays, with all the other clubs raiding junior clubs in the area. The local Under-16s schools team is red hot at the moment, and the scouts are there in force ... from Leeds, Bradford, Wigan ... it is hard but we've signed five or six from the team and believe we've got the pick of them.

Q YOU'VE NEVER HAD ANY CAUSE TO REGRET JOINING CASTLEFORD, REMAINING A ONE-CLUB MAN FOR 25 YEARS. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR TIME AT WHELDON ROAD?

A Being the captain of the Challenge Cup winning team in 1986 has to be at the top of the list, because I was very proud to lead my hometown team to victory, against the odds, in that Wembley final against Hull KR. Also, on a personal level, making my Great Britain debut in the Second Test defeat of Australia, at Odsal in 1978, was very special and then going on to make three tours down under to Australia. As coach, the Regal Trophy triumph, three years ago, gave me enormous personal satisfaction.

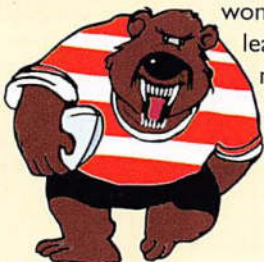
Q WHO POINTED YOU THE WAY TOWARDS A COACHING CAREER?

A Darryl Van de Velde was a great influence, during his time here, as I came to the end of my career, and I learned more about the job from him than anyone else. But at the end of the day, you have to be your own man and that's what I always try to be. Going into coaching was just a natural progression for me.

Tonight Bradford pay their second visit to Boundary Park within a fortnight and they will hope to continue their winning sequence in Oldham after beating the Roughyeds on their past three visits to the town. Tonight's match is the 93rd clash between these two clubs with Bradford having the better record. They have won 51 matches, Oldham have won 38 and three games have been drawn. Seventy one of those matches have been league encounters with Oldham registering 31 league victories and Bradford 40.

When Oldham visited Odsal last July, they fell to their biggest defeat of the season, 56-0, as Robbie Paul skipped over for a hattrick of tries. It was also Oldham's biggest ever defeat against Bradford. Oldham's biggest home defeat against Bradford came in March 1993 when Northern won a Challenge Cup-Tie at Watersheddings by 42-4. Oldham's biggest victory over Bradford was registered way back in January 1922 when they won a league match 41-5, but their biggest win at Odsal came much more recently. That was in March 1991 when Oldham

won a league match by 37-10.



Brett Goldspink is tackled by Jeremy Donougher and Bernard Dwyer

RESULTS OF OLDHAM-BRADFORD MATCHES DURING THE PAST TEN SEASONS

(League matches except where stated)

1987 - 88	Oldham 22	Bradford 6 (Regal Trophy)
1988 - 89	Oldham 14	Bradford 30
	Bradford 30	Oldham 10
1989 - 90	Did not meet	
1990 - 91	Oldham 16	Bradford 18
	Bradford 10	Oldham 37
1991 - 92	Did not meet	
1992 - 93	Oldham 4	Bradford 42 (Challenge Cup)
1993 - 94	Oldham 20	Bradford 24
	Bradford 48	Oldham 16
1994 - 95	Oldham 32	Bradford 12
	Bradford 36	Oldham 14
1995 - 96	Oldham 24	Bradford 30
	Bradford 14	Oldham 10
1996	Oldham 10	Bradford 30
	Bradford 56	Oldham 0
1997	Oldham 12	Bradford 38 (Challenge Cup)

GAGEMENTS

YATES

DETAILS OF BRADFORD'S LAST VISIT TO BOUNDARY PARK

Sunday, 9th March 1997

Challenge Cup Quarter Final

OLDHAM 12 BRADFORD 38

half-time 6-18

attendance 11,284

Oldham Tries Darren Abram & Joe Faimalo
Goals Francis Maloney (2)

Bradford Tries Paul Loughlin, Stuart Spruce, Danny Peacock, Robbie Paul & Glen Tomlinson (2)

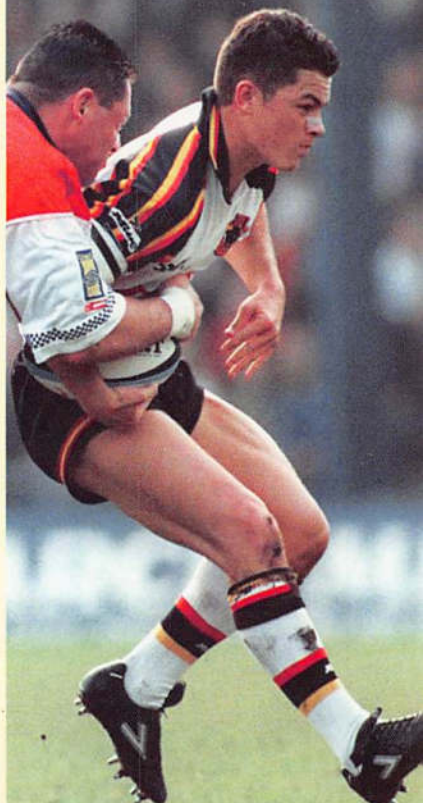
Goals Steve McNamara (7)

Oldham : PAUL ATCHESON; SCOTT RANSON; DARREN ABRAM, VINCE FAWCETT, ROB MYLER, FRANCIS MALONEY, MARTIN CROMPTON, IAN GILDART, CHRIS McKINNEY, BRETT GOLDSPIK, GARY LORD, DAVID BRADBURY & HOWARD HILL.

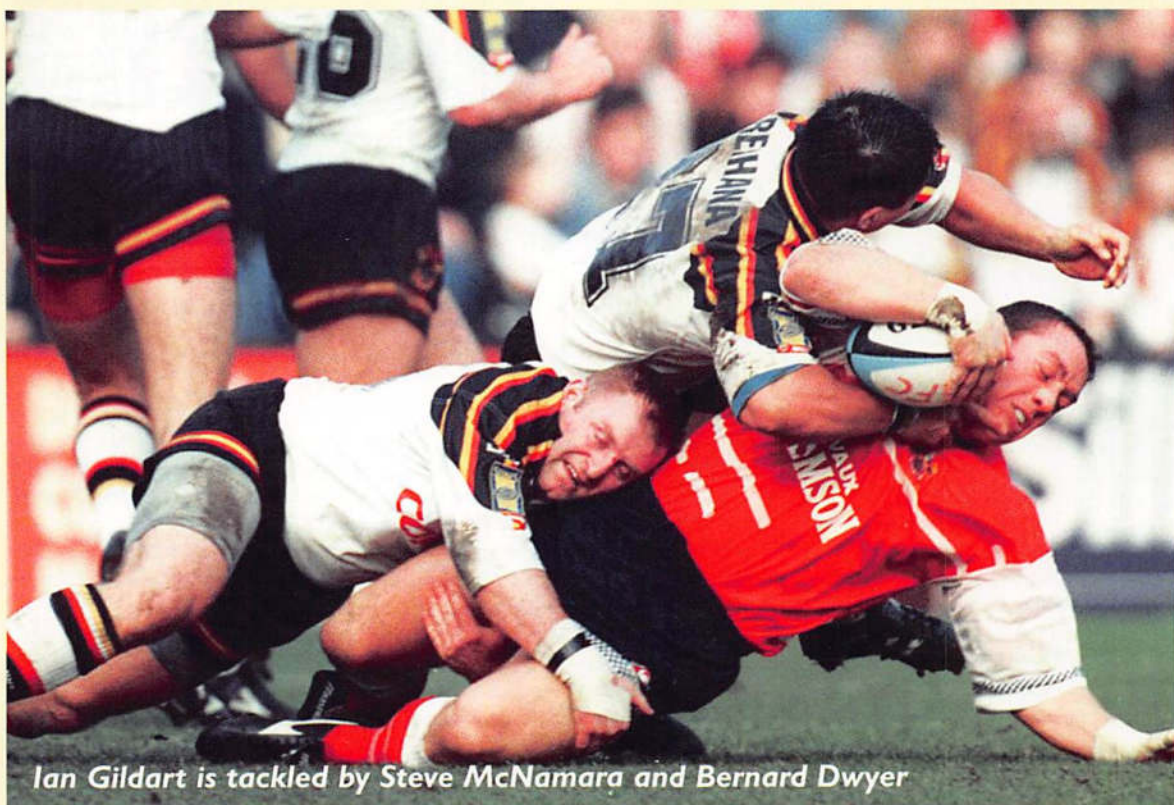
Substitutes : LUKE GOODWIN, JON CLARKE, PAUL DAVIDSON & JOE FAIMALO.

Bradford : STUART SPRUCE, JOHN SCALES, GRAEME BRADLEY, DANNY PEACOCK, PAUL LOUGHLIN, ROBBIE PUAL, GLEN TOMLINSON, BRAIN McDERMOTT, JAMES LOWES, TAHI REIHANA, JEREMY DONOUGH, BERNARD DWYER & STEVE McNAMARA.

Substitutes : PAUL COOK, PAUL MEDLEY, WARREN JOWITT & SONNY NICKLE.



Robbie Paul is tackled by Vince Fawcett



Ian Gildart is tackled by Steve McNamara and Bernard Dwyer

Just for the record, Stuart Cummings doesn't have a dubious parentage, he isn't blind, and he does understand the rules of Rugby League. He even knows his on side from his off side.

But none of this stops fans, coaches and club officials having a pop at him at most games he takes charge of.

So it's a good job that Stuart, like most refs, has a hide like the proverbial rhino. "I am not saying the stick doesn't get to me, but you have just got to live with it," says Stuart, widely recognised as one of the most respected whistlers in the game.

"As long as you know in your own head that you are correct then you can live with yourself."

Which is why Stuart loves having the Sky TV cameras

PE teacher Stuart, 36, said: "The standard of discipline among players these days is very good. They are professional and are the ones you work with week in and week out so they get to know you. Refereeing at this level is more a case of man management, knowing what is the correct thing to do at the most appropriate time."

Players' wage packets may be light years better than the referee's fee of £140 per game.

But compare the similarities between the time they both have to put in and you can understand why Stuart is one of a growing band who want referees to become full-time professionals. He said: "They say we're not full-time now but we are really, even though we also have other full-time jobs. We train six times a week and put in a lot of work attending meetings and in recruiting people and developing the game."

Stuart's typical weekly training

thanks to his three-year-old daughter Sophie.

"I'll spend time with Sophie and it's not until about 9am when I iron my kit that I start focusing on the match.

"I might watch a few videos of the teams I'll be refereeing just to refresh my memory on any moves they may have, so I can anticipate where I should be."

After an 'exotic' early lunch of jam sandwiches, Stuart meets up with his touch judges for the day to travel to the game.

"It's good for us to travel together because we are all working as a team. I like to arrive about 90 minutes before the game, have a look at the pitch, get changed and then relax until about 20 minutes before the game when I'll warm up.

"Some people say I am too relaxed, but that's just the way I am. Hopefully the game goes well and then it's just a case of filling in a score sheet but not, as



at his games. That way he says fans realise that his decisions are usually right because, unlike their view from the stands, he has the advantage of being bang on top of the action.

"They say the TV cameras put more pressure on referees, but I think it's the opposite. I think they're wonderful." Surprisingly the people who give Stuart and his fellow masochists-in-black the least grief are the players themselves.

Association, of which he is President; Tuesdays – circuit training and anaerobic work; Wednesdays – group training session at Rugby League HQ in Leeds with Director of Coaching Greg McCallum; Thursdays – weights session; Fridays – sprint work; Saturdays – three mile jog to loosen up for Sunday match. His match day routine also always follows a set pattern, starting with an early morning call of about 6.30am

THE WHISTLE BLOWERS

Julie Stott, Rugby League Correspondent of The Sport, gets the referee's view from Stuart Cummings, the man in charge of last year's Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final and the 1995 World Cup Final.

schedule, which is always fitted in at night after work, is: Mondays – skills training with the Lancashire Referees

most people think we do, a match report."

So what's Stuart's worst moment in refereeing? "Easy," he says, "sending off the wrong player in the Halifax Wigan game last year. I'll never let that happen again."

Stuart, however, wouldn't mind a repeat of one of his funniest moments. "I could hear a lot of crowd noise at one particular game and couldn't work out what had happened. Then I heard my touch judge telling me there was a streaker on the pitch and I should have a look at her. It was the best call I have ever had!"



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The Bear Facts Super League '97

Rd	Date	Team	Venue	Time	Score	Att
1	Sun 16th March	Leeds Rhinos	A	3pm		11,516
2	Fri 21st March	Bradford Bulls	H	7.30		
3	Fri 28th March	Salford Reds	(A)	3pm		
4	Tues 1st April	London Broncos	(H)	7.30pm		
5	Sun 6th April	Warrington Wolves	(A)	3pm		
6	Sun 13th April	Paris St Germain (BSKYB)	(H)	6.35pm		
7	Sun 20th April	Wigan Warriors	(A)	3pm		
8	Sun 27th April	Halifax Blue Sox	(H)	3pm		
9	Sun 11th May	Sheffield Eagles	(A)	3.15pm		
10	Sun 18th May	Leeds Rhinos	(H)	3pm		
11	Fri 23rd May	Bradford Bulls	(A)	7.30pm		
12	Mon 26th May	Salford Reds	(H)	3pm		
13	Fri 30th May	Castleford	(H)	3pm		
14	Sun 29th June	St Helens	(H)	3pm		
15	Wed 2nd July	London Broncos	(A)	7.30pm		
16	Sun 6th July	Sheffield Eagles	(H)	3pm		
17	Sun 13th July	Castleford Tigers	(A)	3.30pm		
18	Sat 19th July	Queensland Cowboys	(H)			
19	Sat 26th July	Adelaide Rams	(H)			
20	Sun 10th Aug	St Helens	(A)	6pm		
21	Sun 17th Aug	Halifax Blue Sox	(H)	3pm		
22	Fri 22nd Aug	Wigan Warriors	(H)	7.30pm		
23	Mon 25th Aug	Paris St Germain	(A)			
24	Sun 31st Aug	Warrington Wolves	(H)	3pm		

OLDHAM BEARS RLFC SUPER LEAGUE SQUAD



Number 1
Paul Atcheson



Number 2
Scott Ranson



Number 3
Darren Abram



Number 4
Paul Topping



Number 5
Rob Myler



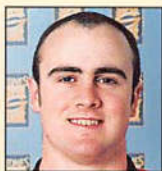
Number 6
Frank Maloney



Number 7
Martin Cronin



Number 15
Paul Davidson



Number 16
Howard Hill



Number 17
Paul Crook



Number 18
Mike Neal



Number 19
Chris McKinney



Number 20
Afi Leuila



Number 21
Jim Cowie

1	Paul Atcheson
2	Scott Ranson
3	Darren Abram
4	Paul Topping
5	Rob Myler
6	Francis Maloney
7	Martin Crompton
8	Ian Gildart
9	John Clarke
10	Jason Temu
11	Gary Lord
12	Joe Faimalo
13	David Bradbury
14	Matt Munro
15	Paul Davidson
16	Howard Hill
17	Paul Crook
18	Mike Neal
19	Chris McKinney
20	Afi Leuila
21	Jim Cowan
22	Vince Fawcett
23	Brett Goldspink
24	Nathan Turner
25	Paul Deacon
26	Luke Goodwin
27	David Stephenson



Number 8
Ian Gildart



Number 9
John Clarke



Number 10
Jason Temu



Number 11
Gary Lord



Number 12
Joe Faimalo



Number 13
David Bradbury



Number 14
Matt Munro



Number 22
Vince Fawcett



Number 23
Brett Goldspink



Number 24
Nathan Turner



Number 25
Paul Deacon



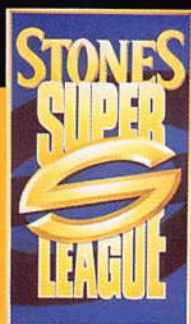
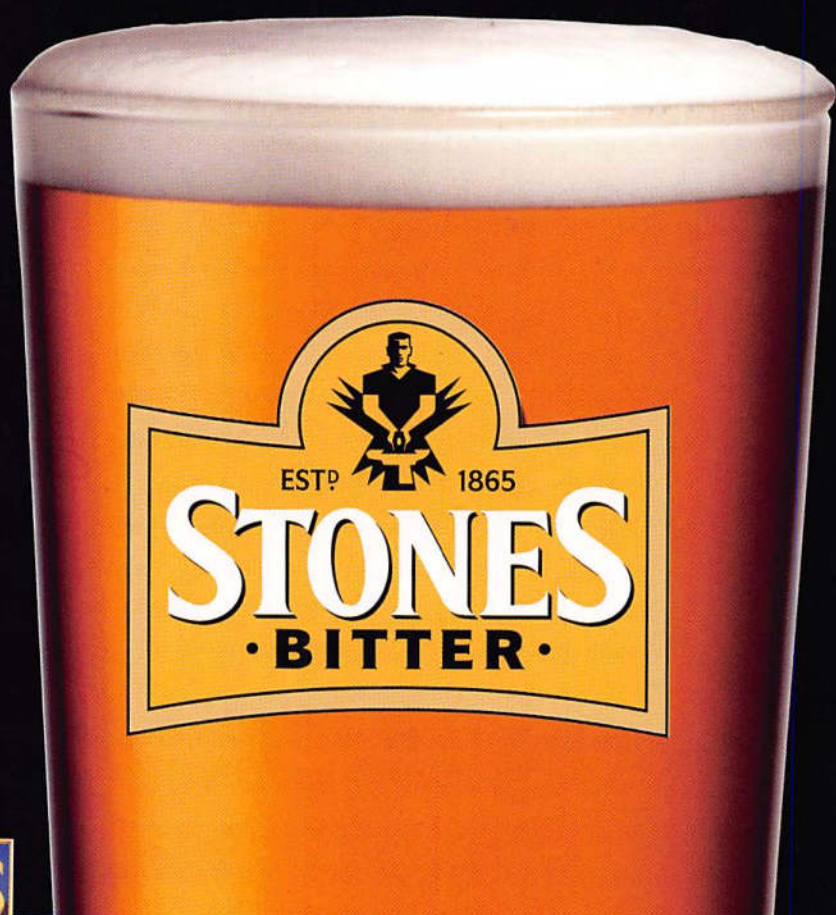
Number 26
Luke Goodwin



Number 27
David Stephenson



THE SEASONS GREETINGS

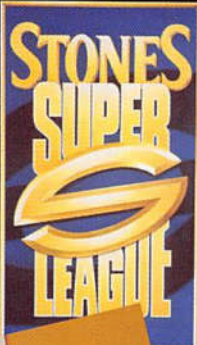


TASTE THE ACTION



STONES COMMENTARY

IN ASSOCIATION WITH STONES BITTER



Sponsors welcome new season

As we embark on the new season, Stones is delighted to welcome you to the second year of its sponsorship of the Stones Super League.

The Stones Super League last year was marked by some explosive action on the pitch and significantly increased attendances. The 1996 season put the sport on a world stage where it belongs, as St. Helens clinched the Stones Super League title from Wigan on the last day of the season.

1997 is sure to be a truly exciting season as St. Helens try to replicate their success closely contested by rivals Wigan, Bradford Bulls and London Broncos. Newly promoted Salford Reds should not be underestimated as they set out to make their mark on the Stones Super League.

The forthcoming season provides us at Stones with the opportunity to build on the success of 1996, support will continue for the prestigious Stones Gold Awards and the Stones Premiership Finals at Old Trafford on Sunday, September 28th.

I am sure you will join me in wishing all of the teams the best of luck for the 1997 Stones Super League season.

Richard Thompson

Sponsorship Manager Bass Brewers Ltd.

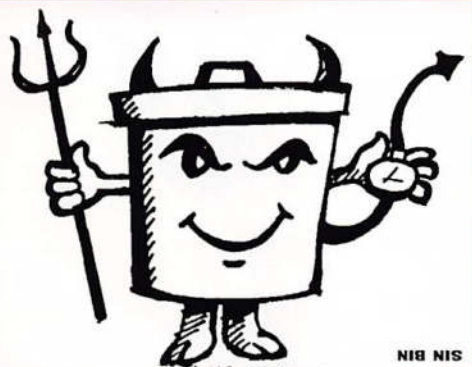


the Great Stones Giveaway

To mark the kick off of the season, we have 20 limited edition Stones Super League T-shirts to give away. All you have to do is answer the simple question below and complete the coupon provided or send the answer with your name and address on a postcard to the promotional address. There are 20 T-shirts to be won:

Who came 3rd in the Stones Super League title in '96?

WHAT AM I ?



Send your entry to: The Stones Super League T-shirt competition, PO Box 56 Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5UU, to arrive no later than 07.04.97. Winners will be informed by 14th April. To obtain a list of winners please send an SAE to the promotional address.

Answer:

Name:

Address:

Daytime Tel:

PLAYER PROFILE

PAUL ATCHESON



NAME::	PAUL ATHERTON
DATE OF BIRTH:	17 - 5 - 73
BIRTHPLACE:	ORMS KIRK
HEIGHT:	6'3"
WEIGHT:	15' 7
NICKNAME AT CLUB:	PATCH
OCCUPATION:	PROFESSIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYER
HOME:	UPHOLLAND
CAR:	ESCORT
MARRIED:	NO
CHILDREN:	NO

WHAT WAS YOUR AMBITION AS A CHILD?

TO PLAY PROFESSIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

WHO WAS YOUR BOYHOOD HERO?

HARRY PINNER

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST THRILL IN RUGBY?

WINNING EURO CHAMPIONSHIP WITH WALES IN 1995

WHICH PRESENT-DAY PLAYER DO YOU ADMIRE MOST?

JONATHAN DAVIES

WHO IS THE GREATEST PLAYER THERE HAS EVER BEEN?

BRETT KENNY

WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

WINNING

IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY, WHAT IS THE FIRST THING THAT YOU WOULD BUY?

A VILLA IN FLORIDA

WHAT IS YOUR BEST QUALITY?

PERSONALITY

WHAT IS YOUR WORST QUALITY?

NONE

WHAT OTHER SPORTS AND HOBBIES DO YOU HAVE?

GOLF, WEIGHT TRAINING, MOUNTAIN BIKEING

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PHOBIA?

DROWNING

WHICH FAMOUS PERSON WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET?

BILLY CONNOLLY

WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

MY GIRLFRIEND

DO YOU HAVE AN UNUSUAL FOOD THAT IMPROVES YOUR GAME?

PASTA

FAVOURITE T.V PROGRAMME?

STAR TREK - NEXT GENERATION

FAVOURITE POP STAR?:

SEAL

FAVOURITE FOOD?

CHICKEN

FAVOURITE DRINK?

T-MAX



ALLIANCE NEWS

This season is one of transition for the Alliance as for the rest of the club. The bulk of our home matches are to be played a small distance from Oldham at Stalybridge Celtic F.C. The facilities at the soccer stadium are first class, making the small trek across Tameside to reach the venue thoroughly worthwhile. So far this season, watching the A-Team will have been a rewarding sight for fans. We have played and beaten three of the biggest names in Rugby names in Rugby League, St. Helens, Bradford and Leeds. By the time you read this we will have played Wigan in the Alliance cup semi at Stalybridge on

Thursday March 20th and hopefully have booked a place in the final.

The results in the cup against St. Helens and Bradford were closely contested with eight points the margin against Saints and two points against the Hulls (18 - 16). In the Bradford match a new back three combination of Paul Deacon, new signing Luke Goodwin and Paul Crook at loose forward familiarised themselves. Although the match was tight the Bears were always in control. The combination proved to be devastating against Leeds in the first league match on Thursday 13th March, seing the opposition open at

will. Goodwin and Crook scored a brace each, capitalising on the efforts of a marauding pack of which Tony Nuttall was outstanding.

The alliance need your support so mark the dates in your diary and come and see the boys at our new home. The directions are on page 26.

ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

1997

MARCH

THURSDAY 13th	LEEDS RHINOS	(H) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 20th	BRADFORD BULLS	(A) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 27th	SLAFORD REDS	(H) 7.30pm

APRIL

THURSDAY 3rd	WARRINGTON WOLVES	(H) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 10th	HULL	(A) 8.00pm
THURSDAY 17th	WIGAN WARRIORS	(H) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 24th	HALIFAX BLUE SOX	(A) 7.30pm

MAY

THURSDAY 8th	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	(H) 7.30pm
WEDNESDAY 14th	LEEDS RHINOS	(A) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 22nd	BRADFORD BULLS	(H) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 29th	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	(A) 7.30pm

JUNE

THURSDAY 5th	HULL KINGSTON ROVERS	(H) 7.30pm
FRIDAY 20th	SALFORD REDS	(A) 8.00pm
THURSDAY 26th	St HELENS	(A) 7.30pm

JULY

THURSDAY 3rd	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	(A)
7.30pm		
THURSDAY 10th	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	(H) 7.30pm
FRIDAY 18th	HULL KINGSTON ROVERS	(A) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 31st	HULL	(H) 8.00pm

AUGUST

THURSDAY 7th	St HELENS	(H) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 14th	HALIFAX BLUE SOX	(H) 7.30pm
WEDNESDAY 20th	WIGAN WARRIORS	(A) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 28th	WARRINGTON WOLVES	(A) 7.30pm

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WANTED EDITOR FOR OLDHAM BEARS

SUPERMAG

If you would like the opportunity to write and edit the Oldham Bears Supermag please contact Abe Kerr on the number below. You will need to have basic computer and keyboard skills and a good standard of literacy



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Oldham Bears, Bear House, 52 Union Street, Oldham OL1 1DJ

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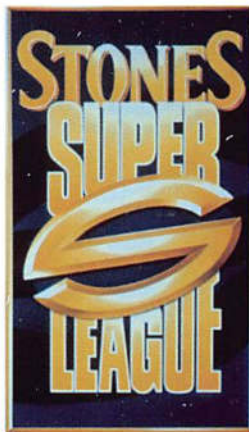
BIG MATCH RAFFLE

*Thank you to
everyone who
bought one of our
Big Match Raffle
Tickets.*

*A special thank you
to **Frank Pullen** of
Lees Village Service
Station who sold
several tickets and
to **Ray Hicks** of the
Three Crowns Pub
for drawing our
raffle.*

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STAT ATTACK

Ray Fletcher, Rugby League Statistician,
Co-author of the Rothmans Rugby League Yearbook

ROSKELL CHASES BRONCOS' RECORD

Scott Roskell is set to break the London Broncos' tries in a career record after only five years at the club. The Australian centre or winger needs just four tries to beat Hussein M'Barki's 74 spread out over a decade in two spells at the club in the 1980s.

Roskell's 71 tries have been rattled up in 118 matches, while M'Barki's came in a club record 162 appearances. Included in Roskell's total is a match best of four touchdowns at Bramley in

1995, a club record shared with six other players. He has scored four other hat-tricks.

A former Runaway Bay and New South Wales Country representative, Roskell made his London debut in a 27-12 League defeat at Oldham on 30 August 1992.

SEASON-BY-SEASON RECORD

	App	T
1992-92	24+1	10
1993-94	334	21
1994-95	31	23
1995-96	9+4	5
1996	13	7
1997	3	5
TOTALS	113	71

SUPER LEAGUE CROWD BOOM

What a tremendous start to the new Super League season! The average attendance of 9,022 was the best for an opening weekend of top division matches since the old league set-up was scrapped 24 years ago. It just beat last season's 9,009 which heralded in the new Super League era.

And the 54,136 total at this year's six-match programme was the most for any Super League weekend. It was headed by the 15,070 who saw Bradford Bull's Friday night defeat of Warrington Wolves – the biggest for an opening fixture at Odsal Stadium for more than 40 years.

QUIZ

- Which club links Sonny Nickle, Kelvin Skerrett and James Lowes?
- Who is the only British forward to score a try in each Test of a three-match series?
- Which club was the last to complete a League double in a season over Wigan?
- Who won at Wembley with a front row of Beevers, McCallion and Neller?
- Who was the top try scorer overseas player in Super League last season?
- Who was Great Britain's top try scorer on last year's tour?
- Who were the last winners of the County Cups?
- Who was the last non-Wigan player to win the Harry Sunderland Trophy?
- Who holds the Super League points in a match record?
- Which clubs produced Super League's highest score draw of 24-24?

STEADMAN TARGETS 2000 POINTS

Castleford Tigers veteran Graham Steadman is now in his 17th season as a pro and needs only ten points for a career total of 2,000. The 35-year-old stand-off or full-back has scored 828 points for Castleford, 350 Featherstone Rovers and 762 York plus 50 in representative matches. His 1,990 points come from 237 tries and 549 goals, including 28 drop goals, in a

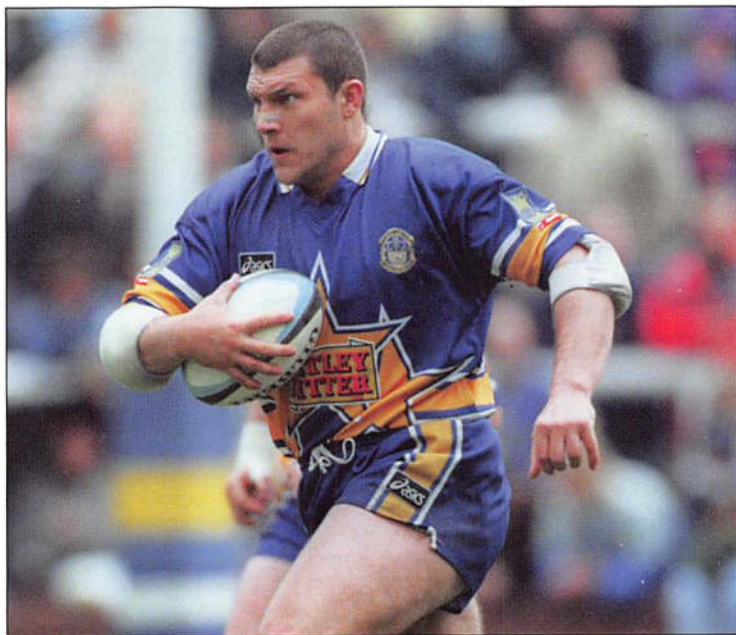
total of 431 appearances. He still holds the York record of 318 points in a season. It is generally believed that Steadman began his senior career with York, but in fact he made his pro debut as an unnamed trialist for Huddersfield against Dewsbury on 21 March 1982. Three days later he played the first of two trialist matches for York before signing for them.

PROP RECORD

Barrie McDermott's recent try hat-trick for Leeds Rhinos raised the query: "What's the match record for a prop?"

It was actually set by another Leeds prop, 84 years ago! Fred Webster charged in for eight tries when Leeds ended Coventry's brief existence with a club record 102-0 victory. In fact, the eight tries are still the most by any forward.

Former Wales Rugby Union international Tommy David is credited with most tries by a prop in a season - 26 for Cardiff City in 1982-83.



AUSTRALIAN SUPER LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	Pts For	Pts Agst	Pts
Cronulla Sharks	3	3	0	0	73	24	6
Brisbane Broncos	3	3	0	0	68	30	6
Penrith Panthers	3	3	0	0	82	52	6
Canterbury Bulldogs	3	2	1	0	70	55	4
North Queensland	3	1	2	0	56	57	2
Perth Reds	3	1	2	0	58	76	2
Adelaide Rams	3	1	2	0	38	60	2
Auckland Warriors	3	1	2	0	28	62	2
Hunter Mariners	3	0	3	0	38	48	0
Canberra Raiders	3	0	3	0	50	97	0

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. All have played for Hunslet.
2. Denis Betts against New Zealand last year.
3. Castleford in 1989-90.
4. Halifax in 1987.
5. Henry Paul with 20.
6. Karlie Hammond with five.
7. Wigan (Lancashire) and Wakefield Trinity in 1992.
8. Chris Joynt (St Helens) in 1992.
9. Greg Barwick with 28 for London Broncos.
10. Paris St Germain and Oldham Bears.

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OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

ROGER HALSTEAD

From top to bottom, it's going to be tough in Super League in 1997.

Bradford Bulls look bigger and stronger than last year most shrewd judges believe Matthew Elliott will prove a worthy successor to Brian Smith. St. Helens clearly mean business judging by their relentless pursuit of a certain Iestyn Harris, while Wigan can never be written off despite all the Central Park upheavals of recent weeks.

You can put your shirt on Leeds Rhinos doing far better than last year: either that, or Gary Hetherington isn't the bloke I always thought him to be. While London Broncos, having taken Richard Branson on board, will be disappointed if they do no more than match last summer's achievements.

Phil Larder and John Kear look the perfect partnership to take Sheffield Eagles into a bright new future and prove that there is life after Gary after all.

Over in France, Peter Mulholland will have a squad full of Australians with which to try and improve the fortunes of Paris St. Germain.

Mulholland is no mug. He has served his apprenticeship in Sydney, rising through the coaching ranks at St. Gregory's College, Campbelltown and Western Suburbs and he will be desperate to prove that he was harshly treated by Perth Western Reds.

Take away Workington Town and pencil in Salford Reds and you

have another reason for believing that Super League '97 will have most coaches sweating on results going their way as each round unfolds.

With respect to the Cumbrians it was evident in the opening weeks of the 1996 campaign that most coaches could sleep easily in the knowledge that Town looked certain to face the chop. The battle to avoid relegation will not be so clearly defined this time.



Iestyn Harris

Indeed, newly-promoted Salford are being widely tipped to finish in the top half dozen. They are sure to start well, but whether they can sustain a serious challenge as the weeks turn into months is open to debate.

That leaves Oldham, Castleford, Halifax and Warrington to take into account.

Take away the top three or four and the rest are of a similar standard, but I disagree with the bookies who seem to think Andy Goodway's boys and Paris will be scrapping it out at the bottom. The Bears are notoriously slow starters, but I expect them to cause a few upsets when Jason Temu and Matt Munro return from injury in about a month's time.

Like several teams, the difference between a modestly successful season and a distinctly depressing one, for the Bears, could hinge on the extent of the contribution from their season's imports.

The debut of Nathan Turner is still awaited, while there are high hopes of Luke Goodwin, whose late arrival due to work permit problems means that we have not yet seen him at his best. Brett Goldspink, at prop, has shown that he is big, strong and partial to rolling up his sleeves. They are qualities the Bears will need in abundance as they face up to the challenges that lie ahead.

Today's Officials

Referee:

R. A. Smith

Reserve Referee:

A. Burke

Touch Judges:

R. Southward & N. Byers

In Goal Touch Judges:

K. Taylor & K. Leyland

SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

PENALTIES

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

OLDHAM BEARS v

FRIDAY MARCH 21th

OLDHAM BEARS

	Team	T	G	DG
1	Paul Atcheson	☐	☐	☐
2	Scott Ranson	☐	☐	☐
3	Darren Abram	☐	☐	☐
5	Rob Myler	☐	☐	☐
6	Francis Maloney	☐	☐	☐
7	Martin Crompton	☐	☐	☐
8	Ian Gildart	☐	☐	☐
9	John Clarke	☐	☐	☐
11	Gary Lord	☐	☐	☐
12	Joe Faimalo	☐	☐	☐
13	David Bradbury	☐	☐	☐
14	Matt Munro	☐	☐	☐
15	Paul Davidson	☐	☐	☐
20	Afi Leuila	☐	☐	☐
22	Vince Fawcett	☐	☐	☐
23	Brett Goldspink	☐	☐	☐
26	Luke Goodwin	☐	☐	☐



BRADFORD BULLS

997 KICK-OFF 7.30pm



BRADFORD BULLS

		Team	T	G	DG
1	Robbie Paul	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	Glen Tomlinson	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	Graeme Bradley	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	Jon Scales	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	Danny Peacock	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	Paul Cook	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Nathan Graham	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Jeremy Donougher	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	Paul Medley	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Sonny Nickle	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	Warren Jowitt	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	Matt Calland	☐	☐	☐	☐
22	Brian McDermott	☐	☐	☐	☐
23	Bernard Dwyer	☐	☐	☐	☐
24	Paul Loughlin	☐	☐	☐	☐
25	James Lowes	☐	☐	☐	☐
26	Steve McNamara	☐	☐	☐	☐
27	Tahi Reihana	☐	☐	☐	☐
28	Stuart Spruce	☐	☐	☐	☐

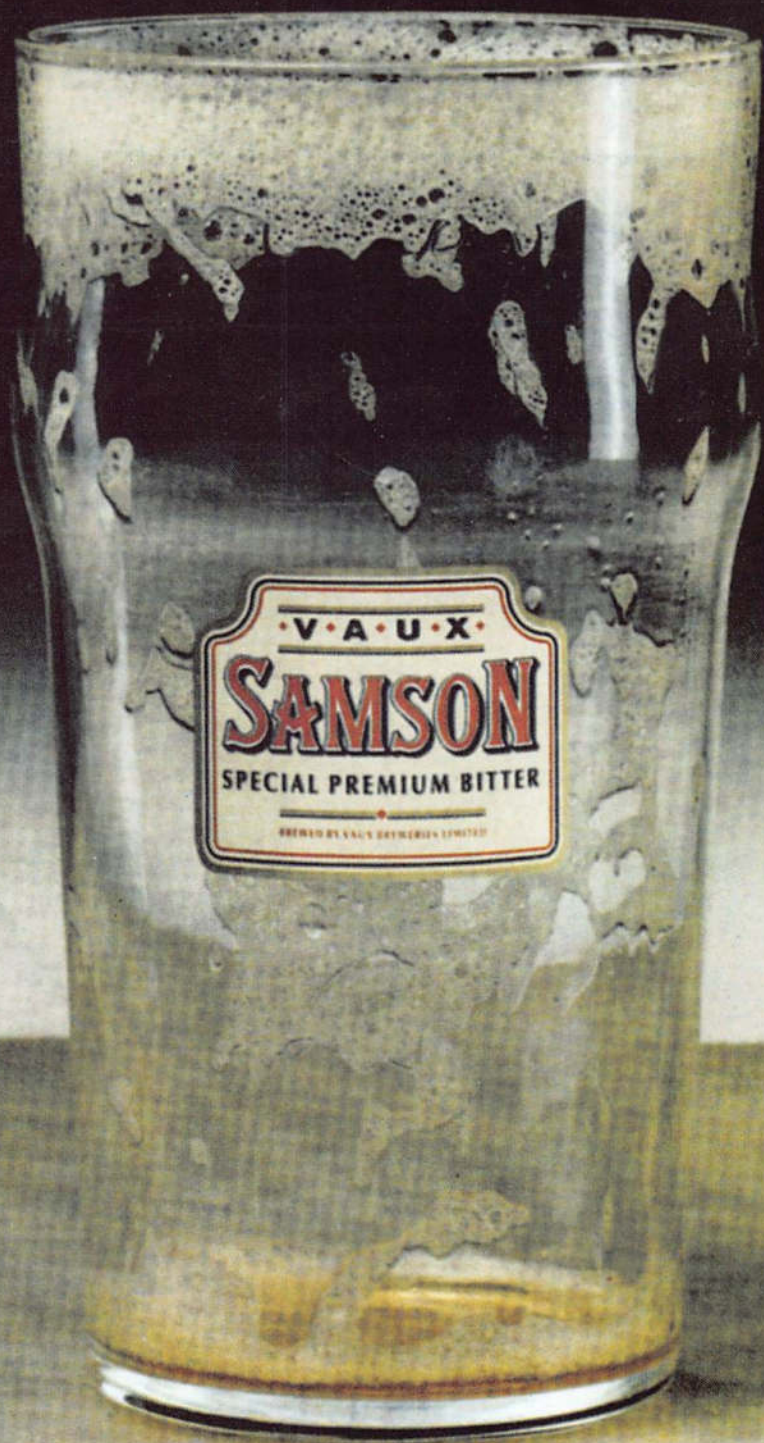
SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

PENALTIES

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24





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