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RUGBY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

1909-10, 1910-11, 1956-57 Runners Up

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

FIRST DIVISION CHAMPIONS

1904-05

LANCASHIRE LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

1897-98, 1900-01, 1907-08, 1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57,

1957-58

RUGBY LEAGUE CHALLENGE CUP WINNERS

1899, 1925, 1927 Runners Up 1907, 1912, 1924, 1926

LANCASHIRE CUP WINNERS

1907, 1910, 1913, 1919, 1924, 1933, 1956, 1957, 1958

Runners Up 1908, 1911, 1918, 1921, 1954, 1966, 1968,

1986, 1989

SECOND DIVISION CHAMPIONS

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

LONDON Broncos, our visitors this evening, are no longer a struggling club in the lower divisions, but one of Super League's high flyers.

They finished fourth last year in Super League 96 behind St Helens, Wigan and Bradford Bulls, and have shown their intention to build on that by bringing in several new players from Australia and making moves for Shaun Edwards.

Whether the Edwards talks produce a signing remains to be seen, but there can be no doubting the Broncos' ambition, underlined by the acquisition of Richard Branson and his Virgin organisation to back them at their new Stoop home.

By throwing in his support for the Broncos, Richard has not only given the club national focus, but has also given the game a national identity which can only do considerable good in attempts to establish rugby league in our capital city.

Barry Maranta's development of the Broncos has been an outstanding success. You don't achieve what Barry has achieved at Broncos without a lot of hard work.

It has established our sport in the Union-dominated area, which is now waking up to Rugby League to such an extent that a lot of Union people are looking at League's skill levels and professionalism as the way forward for the 15 a side code. We welcome all the Broncos people to Oldham this evening and I guess, before the night is out, that I'll be sharing a joke or two with new chief executive, Tony Rea. The last time I spoke



to Tony was in Sydney last autumn. I was in the company of one or two Australian players when a car screamed to a halt and Tony popped his head through the window, expecting to hear nothing but Aussie accents. When he heard my voice he was clearly puzzled, although he was not as shocked as me. Without knowing he had burst upon our negotiations with Brett Goldspink, so the secret was out.

But back to tonight. The Broncos will be making their first trip to Boundary Park, determined to carry on where they left off last season when they did the double over us. But thanks to our own team building we believe we can give any Super League side a top match with the result in doubt until the end. Both the Leeds and Bradford matches prove this. We expect a smashing game this evening, so let's hope the teams deliver the goods and give the audience the entertainment it has come to expect from a Super League encounter. With the season still in its infancy, clubs are already reporting long injury lists, but

this has to be expected because Super League is tough, physical and demanding.

Clubs have to live with the problem and the Bears are no exception. We currently have several senior players on the casualty list, including centre Nathan Turner, who joined us in January from Australia and still cannot make his debut due to a foot injury. This is a big disappointment to both club and player, who has crossed the world to further his career. He has some first class references to support his skills and achievements. Hopefully he will recover soon and make a success of his new career in Super League.

Others who are waiting to return to action, for one reason or another are: Matt Munro, Jason Temu, Vince Fawcett and David Stephenson. If we ever reach that happy day when all our squad members are available at the same time we will have a formidable outfit.





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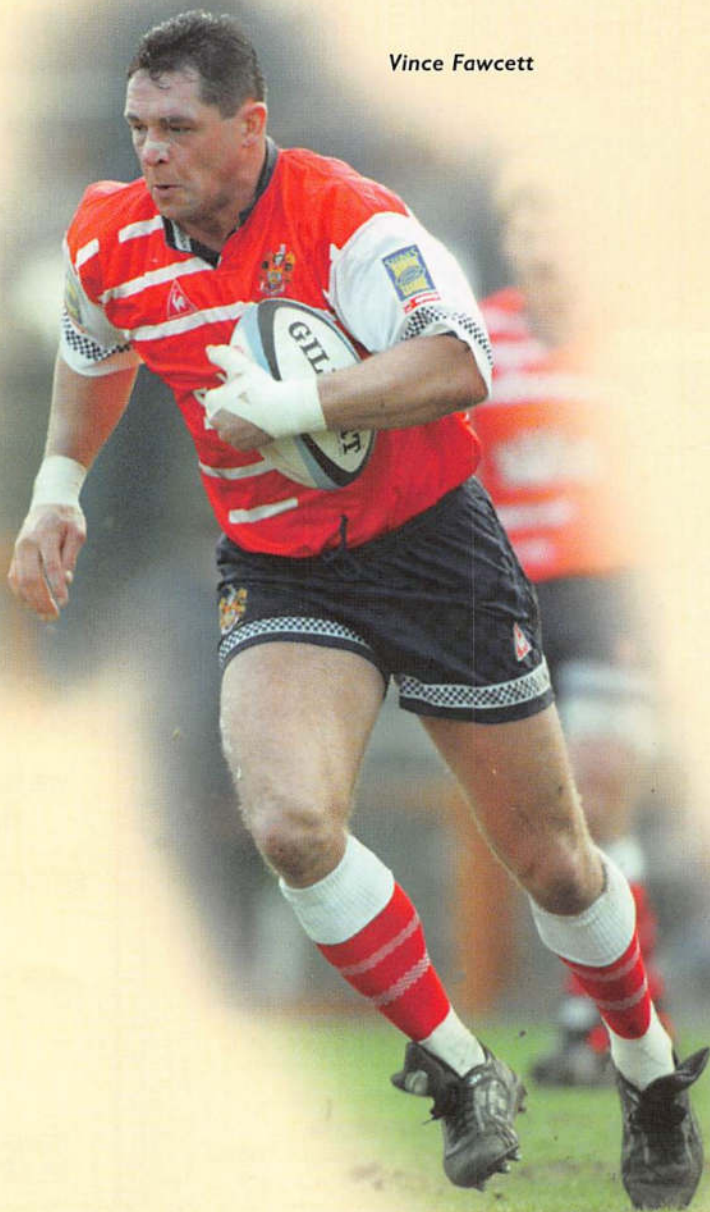
TALKING POINT

ANDY GOODWAY

Two matches and two defeats is a far from ideal start to Super League 97, especially with the huge number of injuries suffered in the last two weeks. The performance on Friday 21st March had many more positives than the opening encounter against Leeds. We cut down our error rate, the support play was much improved and the choice of kicks was hungry. The Bulls left Boundary Park very relieved to have two points in the bag. That game is now history. At the time of writing I am obviously unaware of the Good Friday result at Salford. If we played like we did against Bradford two points should be registered. One of the main sources of potential problems is the size of our squad. We picked up serious injuries to Rob Myler and his replacement David Jones to go with long term absentees, Jason Temu, Matt Munro and Vince Fawcett. Darren Abram should soon be ready, but we really cannot afford any more serious injuries. The players are starting to put in the level of performance I expect week in week out and hopes are high (injuries apart) for the rest of the season. Attendances must climb in our

new surroundings to create the right atmosphere for Super League. A winning team would certainly aid that process.

Vince Fawcett



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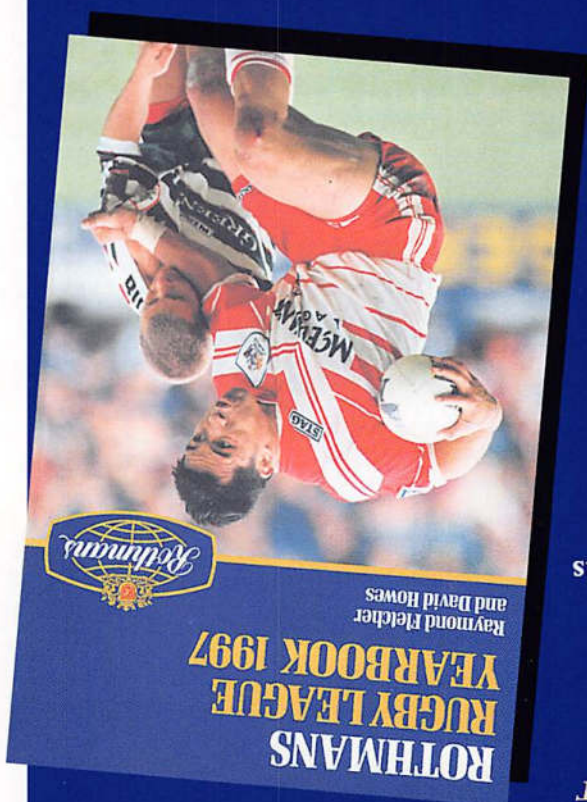
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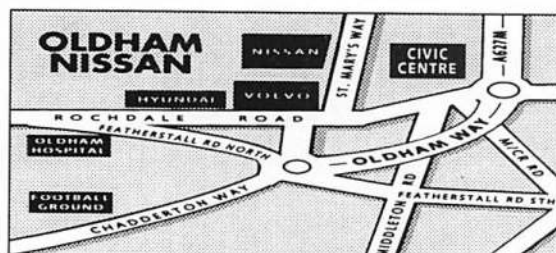
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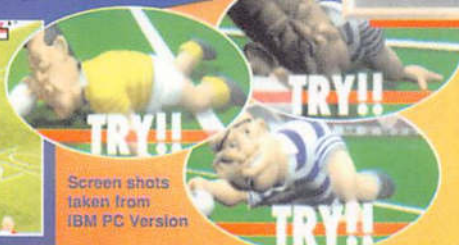
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DOWN MEMORY LANE

DON YATES

Don Yates looks back to a match from Yesteryear.

Tonight's visitors to Boundary Park are the nomadic London Broncos who have staged home games at ten venues in the capital since being formed in 1980.

They have also played under three identities, Fulham and then London Crusaders before adopting their current Broncos. No other professional club can claim such a nomadic existence but pushing them close are the club who, in 1933, became the first professional rugby league club to be based in London.

That club is the current Prescot Panthers who began life in 1922 as Wigan Highfield. They have since played under a whole series of different identities - London Highfield, Liverpool Stanley, Liverpool City, Huyton, Runcorn Highfield and just plain Highfield when they first moved to their current Hope Street ground.

They spent just one season playing in London. That side were based at the White City Stadium, now demolished but the scene of many sporting promotions such as World Championship speedway, World Cup soccer and the 1908 Olympic Games.

When London Highfield were introducing rugby league to the south, the Rugby Football League were striving to introduce the game into France. As part of the expansion programme, it was decided that a French national squad would tour England during March 1934 and included on the

six match itinerary was a game in London against Highfield.

The tour began with narrow defeats against Wigan and Leeds before the French lost 32-16 against a Rugby League XIII. St Helens winger Alf Ellaby scored four tries in that match which attracted a crowd of 11,100 to Warrington. The next match was against London Highfield under the White City floodlights. A crowd of 6,000 were attracted to a match between teams who lined up as follows:

Highfield: B.Maddocks; Jimmy Walker; Jack Maloney, H.Hunter; William Belshaw; Jack Oster; Eddie Richards; Sam Oakley, R.Stock, George Davies, Harry Woods, Mick Griffin & W.B.Welsh.

France: Jean Cassagneau (Quillan); Robert Samatan (Toulouse), Antonin Barbazanges (Roanne), Gaston Amila (Lezignan), Laurent Lambert (Avignon); Charles Mathon (Oyonnax), Joseph Carrere (Narbonne); Georges Blanc (St. Jean-De-Luz), Charles Petit (Nancy), Jean Duhau (Bordeaux), Henri Dechavanne (Roanne), Jean Galia (Toulouse) & Francoise Recaborde (Pau).

The Match began well for Highfield who went in front with a try from second-row forward Mick Griffin. However, France quickly hit back and were well on top for over an hour of the match. At half-time the tourists led 17-11 but, despite their dominance, France were unable to add to their score after the

interval although they still led 17-14 as the match moved into injury time. Then with the final move of the match, loose-forward Welsh crashed over in the corner to equalise at 17-17. Prop-forward Sam Oakley converted from the touchline to give Highfield a memorable and somewhat fortunate 19-17 victory.

France then went on to beat Hull 26-23 before losing comfortably to the powerful Salford side of that era. More importantly, the tour helped to establish the game in France although for Highfield the London adventure ended after just one season. A couple of other professional clubs played in London after Highfield but by 1938 domestic rugby league had ceased to figure on the London sporting scene. In 1980 Fullham, the forerunners of the Broncos, were founded and have promoted rugby in the capital ever since. Their current squad is as strong as any in the history of the club and they will certainly provide stiff opposition for Oldham this evening.

I'd guarantee an entertaining start to the Super League season here at Boundary Park.



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ON THIS DAY...

DON YATES

Don Yates recalls this day in history.

Saturday, 1st April 1939 was a day of contrasting emotions in rugby league circles. On that day Salford reached Wembley with an 11-2 Challenge Cup semi-final victory over Wigan. Centre Gus Risman was Salford's match winner, scoring all their points with a try and four goals. The match was staged at the Athletic Grounds, Rochdale, and attracted a crowd of 40,000. Some members of the crowd climbed onto the roof of the stand in order to get a better view. Unfortunately the roof collapsed and 17 spectators were taken to hospital. Five of those spectators were detained while two died from their injuries.

Another big cup-tie took place on this day in 1994, Good Friday 1st April. It was the Standard Cup Final in which Higginshaw defeated Waterhead 10-2 before a Watersheddings crowd of 2,390. Andy Whittaker and Peter Hadfield scored tries for Higginshaw with Danny Atherton landing a goal. Steve Wilson landed the Waterhead goal. Exactly two years ago, on Saturday 1st

April 1995, Saddleworth Rangers were knocked out of the BNFL National Cup when they lost 18-16 to West Hull at the Circle. Rangers looked to be heading for a famous victory until a late try from New Zealand stand-off Dean Subritsky shattered their cup dream.

A few years earlier, on Saturday 1st April 1899, another Humberside outfit, Hull Fc, registered their biggest ever victory. They beat Elland 86-0 in a Northern Union Cup tie. Centre Hockey Driscoll scored five tries and winger Billy Jacques a try and 13 goals.

Today's visitors London Broncos registered a runaway victory on this day in 1994, Good Friday, 1st April. They beat Highfield away 58-6 with winger Mark Johnson crossing for four tries and John Gallagher, on the other flank, scoring a try and nine goals. The same afternoon Oldham visited Salford and won a crucial relegation clash 26-23. Winger Scott Ranson's second try, deep into injury time, clinched the points for the Roughyeds. It was on the 1st April 1987 that Oldham signed prop Ian Sherratt in a player-

exchange deal which saw David Hobbs moving to Bradford Northern. It was Sherratt's first spell with Oldham before he transferred to Salford in 1989. He returned to Watersheddings two years later and remained with Oldham until moving to Wigan last December. During his two spells with the Roughyeds, Sherratt made 160 appearances and scored 12 tries.

Sunday 1st April, 1984 was a red letter day in the career of Bradford utility back Paul Loughlin. It was on this day that Loughlin made his senior rugby league debut when he turned out for St. Helens in their 31-20 home First Division victory over Oldham. Loughlin had joined Saints the previous August from Saints' colts outfit.

Finally, it was on this day in 1911, Saturday 1st April, that England defeated Wales 27-8 at North Dean, Ebbw Vale. Oldham had three players in the England line-up, centre James Lomas who landed two goals, scrum-half Tom White and second-row forward Bert Avery who scored one of the seven England tries.

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AUSTRALIA MORE THAN A TEST FOR ENGLAND

Alan Thomas, *Rugby League Correspondent*, assesses England's chances against Australia in November, and who will Joe Lydon appoint as coach to Great Britain in the forthcoming test?



Rugby League is marching to the drum beat of optimism as it heads towards the millennium. The involvement of Richard Branson at London Broncos, the appointment of M and C Saatchi to advise the Super League on marketing and earlier this week a deal with milk giant Dairy Crest, are raising the national profile of the game.

So often, however, a sport takes a giant leap when the national team fulfil the dreams of everyone by beating the best in the world.

British Rugby League will have that opportunity in November when the mighty Australians arrive for a three-Test series. Britain have not beaten the Aussies in a series Down Under since 1970. And anyone under the age of 50 will struggle to remember that Britain's last series success here was in 1959. Beating Australia in the series will be the biggest shot in the arm the game could receive. Fans bask in the success, club gates increase, the upward spiral continues with club shops increasing turnover and probably most importantly, national sponsors queue to get

in on the act.

Britain has achieved one-off victories against the odds in Sydney in 1988, won the first Test at Wembley in 1990 and again in 1994.

And just 17 months ago England won the opening game of the World Cup 20-16 against Australia at Wembley. But when it came to the one that mattered three weeks later it was Australia who lifted the Cup with a 16-8 success.

Because of the Super League dispute, that was an Aussie squad without Laurie Daley, Ricky Stuart, Brett Mullins, Bradley Clyde and other world class stars.

On Monday former Wigan and Great Britain star Joe Lydon was appointed the League's technical director. And one of his major responsibilities will be recommending to the League the coach who will have the task of guiding Britain against Australia.

Lydon more than most knows what it takes to achieve success. He was a member of the Lions squads down under which failed in 1984 and 1992 and here in 1986.

"Winning the Ashes is the ultimate goal. I would like to think I can guarantee success and that will put pressure on me, the coach and players. I want to put the pride back in the British game," he said.

Andy Gregory played his six Test series against the Aussies and although he was involved in one-off successes, it always rankled that he was not part of an Ashes-winning team. He felt his CV was incomplete.

Now, making a tremendous success of coaching Salford, he could get the chance to put that right, for he will surely be among the front runners to have another tilt at the Aussies. Lydon, however will not rush into the appointment. "I have an open mind on the man for the job. We have big games to come in the Super League and in the World Club Challenge. I will see how people respond to that challenge," he said. How players and coaches handle those confrontations will have a major influence on the appointments and THE big test in November.

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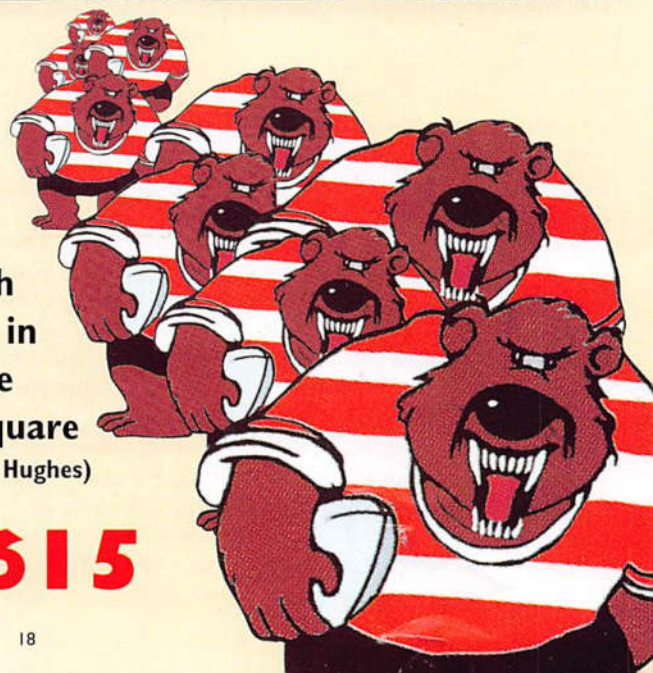
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HERE AND THERE

DON YATES

The 1996-97 amateur season has proved an excellent one for the local St. Annes club despite some inconsistent performances especially in cup competitions. The most disappointing result was the 52-10 Lancashire Cup defeat at Wigan St. Judes but home defeats against Siddal and West Bowling in the Challenge Cup and BNFL National Cup respectively were also big disappointments. However, those disappointments have been tempered by excellent league victories in their first season of Premier Conference League rugby. Woolston Rovers, Wigan St. Patricks and Leigh Miners all met with defeat when they visited Higginshaw Road while with a little luck the Saints would have won at West Hull and Beverley. Saints did win at Wigan on St. Patricks and still have an outside chance of lifting the Conference League crown. Saints have no match this coming weekend but they then face three home matches on consecutive Saturdays. West Hull visit

Higginshaw Road on April 12th, Dudley Hill the week after before Lock Lane's visit on April 26th ends Saints' home programme. All matches kick-off at 2.30pm so get along and give the Saints some support as they complete their Championship challenge. Favourites for the title are either West Hull, Woolston Rovers or Wigan St Patricks. Rovers have four matches to play, all at home, while West Hull and St Patricks still have seven matches each to play. It should be an interesting end to the season.

If we are to believe the pessimists, then Saddleworth Rangers are on the verge of relegation. By their normally high standards, it has been a frustrating season but talk of relegation has been greatly exaggerated. It has been a season of transition for the Rangers with several young and talented players breaking into the first team. The versatile Danny Tyrell is one such player and he has gone on to win BARLA under-23 honours. Sean Whitehead is

another youngster who has made enormous strides this season after moving up from the junior section. There is enough talent within the club for Rangers to repeat the glorious success of previous seasons but it will take a couple of years for that talent to gain the experience necessary to succeed in such a demanding competition. Rangers still have one home game to play. It is against Wigan St Patricks and has yet to be given a date but it should be an excellent match with which to close the season. One date which has been decided is the BNFL National Cup Final. This year's big occasion has once again been allocated to the Willows, Salford on Saturday, 24th May. The day commences at noon with the junior finals before the big match which kicks off at 3pm. Make a note of the date and look for further details in this column. It is a festival of rugby not to be missed as the cream of our amateur game winds up what has been another superb season.

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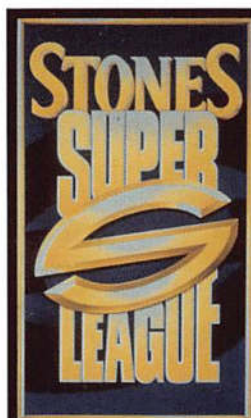


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OLDHAM Rugby League Club

working together



STAT ATTACK

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

OFFIAH AIMING FOR TOP THREE

Martin Offiah is on course to become the third top try scorer of all time. The London Broncos winger could even reach the target this season. he entered the Easter weekend programme in seventh place with 426 tries, just two behind his former Wigan and Great Britain colleague Ellery Hanley. Offiah should move easily into sixth place but will need to

regain top form to leapfrog over a trio of great wingers: Lionel Cooper (441 tries), Eric Batten (443) and third placed Alf Ellaby (446).

That must be the limit of Offiah's ambition, however, for he has no chance of displacing the top two - Billy Boston in second place with 571 and the incomparable Brian Bevan, out on his own at the top with and incredible 796!

Wherever he finishes, Offiah has already earned the right to be ranked with all the wonder wingers of the past. Since leaving Rosslyn Park Rugby Union in 1987 he has scored tries at an astonishing rate for a total of 426 in 362 club and representative matches. This is how they add up:

TRYSCORING TOTALS

	App.	Tries
Widnes	145	181
Wigan	158+1	186
London B	6	4
Britain	34*	27*
England	5	8
RL XIII	1	1
Tours**	9+2	19
Lancashire	1	0
TOTALS	359+3	426

*Including one non-Test

**Not including Test



QUIZ

1. Who holds the record for most tries in any League match?
2. Whose home ground used to be Owlerton Stadium?
3. Who raced to the fastest ever century of goals last season?
4. For which English club did Dean Bell first play?
5. When was the drop goal reduced to one point?
6. Who scored most Super League try hat-tricks last season?
7. The Jack Bentley Trophy was awarded to the man of the match in which game?
8. Who was captain of the last Championship final winning side in 1973?
9. Which soccer ground staged the first ever Britain-Australia Test match?
10. Barnsley, Newcastle, Coventry? Which has never had a senior rugby league club?

SUPER LEAGUE

Sixteen-year-old John Duffy became the youngest player in Super League when he made his debut at scrum-half for Warrington Wolves against London Broncos last weekend. A great future is predicted for young John, who will not be 17 until July 2.

Quite a few great players began



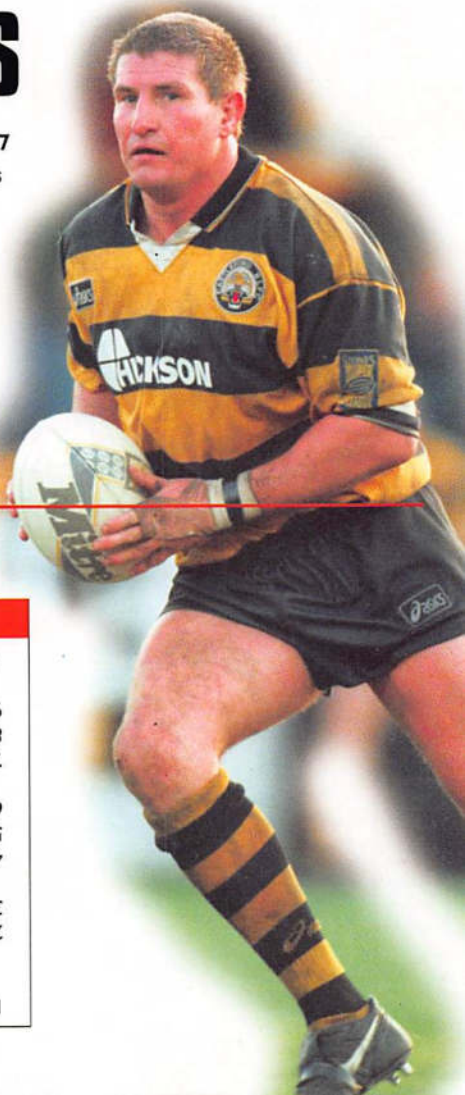
SPRUCE UP FOR TRIES

Tries in five successive Super League matches have confirmed Stuart Spruce's arrival as one of the best attacking full-backs in the game. The Bradford Bulls star touched down in the last three league matches of last season and has been a scorer in both matches this term for a total of seven tries in the sequence.

NO STOPPING CROOKS

Great to see Lee Crooks is still going strong in his 18th season of top flight rugby. No one can match the veteran Castleford's Remarkable record of never having played outside the old Division One or Super League since his debut as a 17-year-old Hull forward on 30 November 1980.

Crooks moved to Leeds in 1987 and on to Castleford two years later. His 18 years at the top include three British Lions tours and spells of Australian club rugby. Unparalleled consistency.



THE YOUNGEST

their senior careers as 16-year-olds, among them the greatest scrum-half of all-time – Alex Murphy. But the youngest first grade player of all was Harold Edmondson, who was a mere 15 years 81 days when he first played stand-off for Bramley in 1916.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Lionel Cooper (Huddersfield) with 10 against Keighley in 1951
2. Sheffield Eagles
3. Bobbie Goulding in St Helens' 17th match
4. Carlisle
5. 1974
6. Paul Newlove (St Helens) - three
7. Charity Shield
8. Mick Stephenson (Dewsbury)
9. Park Royal, Queens Park
10. Barnsley Rangers

JUNIOR BEARS

Hello again Junior Bears, Buster here .

Thanks again for all the good wishes.

Did you see the "Ice Bears" on the Super League Show? I spotted your banner Juniors, which reminds me that you are all on holiday for two weeks over Easter so instead of being bored and eating lots of eggs I have asked you all to design a banner for me. How are they doing?

Don't forget closing date is the 7th April!

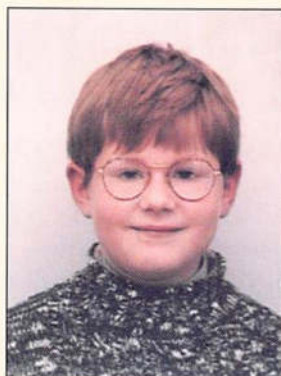
Did you enjoy our opening league game against the Bulls, Bullman didn't ret

I'd loved to have heard all your Junior Bears growl if that try had been given.

Let's do it again today as we welcome our visitors London Broncos to Boundary Park. At the time of writing these notes they are still trying to

sign Shaun Edwards. Who knows, perhaps he will be playing on April 1st. I heard you all shouting for the Bears and saw your banner too. Now I know where to give you Juniors a special wave. But you will have to growl...**REALLY LOUD!!!**

**DON'T FORGET
- COME ON OLDHAM.**



Welcome to our mascot for the day who is Nick Watterson. Nick is eight years old and attends Leesfield Junior School. His favourite player is Francis Maloney and his hobbies include going to cubs, playing chess and rugby.

How did you get on with my Eezy Teezy?

Here are the answers:

- A Salford Red;
- B Workington Town;
- C David Bradbury;
- D Martin Crompton;
- E Warrington Wolves.

HOW ABOUT THESE:

- A** Which two sides will meet in the Plate final at Wembley?
- B** Who had a try disallowed against the Bulls in our first Super League match?
- C** Which former Oldham players scored tries for St Helens in the Silk Cup semi-final against Salford?

**Be there -
see the
Bear!**

RUGBY LEAGUE PROGRAMME NOTES

MALCOLM LORD

What a great start to the Super League. There were some marvellous closely-fought games. Bradford Bulls had a resounding success on the Friday night and over 15,000 turned out to witness it.

I hope it continues because this is the year we must get it right. No more shooting ourselves in the foot and playing into the hands of our other friends in the other code. We now have the stadiums and the product, the Championship could be far closer than it has been previously in all

positions, and I am delighted with the start.

The semi-finals of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup and the Plate competition are soon upon us and the draw, I am sure, surprised no one.

St Helens must be favourites against Salford Reds but you can never take anything for granted these days, while in the other semi-final Bradford Bulls will be much fancied to make it a repeat of last year's final with a win over Leeds Rhinos, who still have not quite got things right.

Whoever wins, these are exciting time, with Paris St Germain getting their first victory on English soil, Prescott Panthers at last winning a few games and soon, of course, the visit of the Aussies.

It really does promise to be a great summer - let's hope it lives up to expectations.

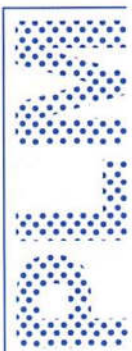
Malcolm Lord
BBC G.M.R. Talk.

OLDHAM HOTLINE

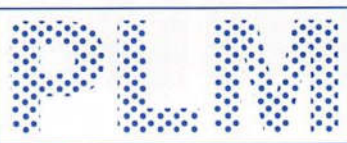


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***“The reserve game competition in Australia is very tough. You’ve only got to look at the likes of London and Paris, who have brought players not wanted there, over here and how competitive they are.*”**

Two weeks into the season and thoughts are inevitably turning to the forthcoming, midsummer madness. Whoever devised the World Club Championship, an opportunity for the great, the good and the bad to all strut about on a global stage, deserves a pat on the back swiftly followed by a slap around the face. Never before has Rugby League displayed such vision, or daring. Never before has a sport that specialises in tortured logic come up with something quite so convoluted, or so gloriously irrelevant as the group

Helens v Penrith.

We must ignore the labyrinthine complexities of the pool system, the contrivance of four European quarter-finalists being guaranteed no matter what, and trust that it is not a case of our sides getting to the knockout stages – when the World Club Championship gets going for real – on the basis that the best losers get through. It would be an embarrassment for European sides to make the last eight after bombing in all six pool matches.

As a giant movable feast for all Super League clubs, the

Super League next year, as recent reports from Australia have suggested we are likely to see an abbreviated version of the trans-global jamboree next year.

The original concept of the top four from each league playing off is what we will probably boil down to after 60 pool matches and hundreds of thousands of air miles. There is a danger, too, in all this of being too pessimistic and fearing the worst. Are the ten Australasian teams as good as they are cracked up to be? Under the swifter play-the-

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

stages that dominate six weeks of the calendar in June and July/August. The only justification, it seems, are to provide us with gourmet nights like Bradford Bulls v Cronulla, Brisbane Broncos v Wigan (remember 1994 at ANZ Stadium?) and St

World Club Championship should be savoured as a one-off, a unique chance for the 12 teams to see how they can cope against half of Australia’s finest. If the other half – the rival Australian Rugby League – is to finally throw its lot in with the

ball interpretation now being applied throughout Planet Super League, defences Down Under don’t appear in some cases to be as tough to crack as they used to be. When Andy Platt arrived at Salford from his two-year sojourn at Auckland

Warriors, he came armed with some grim warnings about the gulf in playing standards. He has revised some of these since then, no doubt partly on the basis of Salford's successful start to the season. Although he doesn't see a British side winning the World Club Championship, he disagrees with the notion of ritual slaughters and red faces all round.

"Of course, it's going to be difficult for any British side. I still think there is a gap. I wouldn't say it's immense, and it's not because there are better players in the southern hemisphere. It's just that if there are one or two injuries in a position, there is usually a third player of equal standard to slot in," Platt said.

"The reserve game competition in Australia is very tough. You've only got to look at the likes of London and Paris, who have brought players not wanted there over here and how

competitive they are. But we have a good chance, I'd say, of turning some teams over here. I think with them travelling, English referees and the conditions, they'll find it extremely difficult.

"As a concept, the World Club Championship presents us with more opportunities than it does for the Aussies. They basically know how

they stand in the game, whereas we don't. It's the chance to measure ourselves and get out to Australia to see how the club structures work over there and learn from them.

"We've got North Queensland and Adelaide

explain how difficult it was for Salford to emerge into the quarter finals from pool B, before he, like me, was defeated by the ifs, buts, hows and whys of qualification. It might take a mathematician to fathom how it all operates, but not a genius to work out that it will be good fun and well worth the wait.



Rams at the Willows in the second series of matches. It's a time when the Aussies are coming to the end of their season and I can see us catching them out. It's going to be hard away, but they're far from unbeatable at home."

At this point Platt began to

ACADEMY NEWS

BRIAN GARTLAND

Our Academy got their season under way on Sunday but unfortunately ended up on the losing end of a 24-18 scoreline after leading until the last minute when they scored from what seemed a forward pass.

Swinton must be very pleased with themselves after being behind for the majority of the game and we have only ourselves to blame for some glaring errors in the second half. Outstanding in the Oldham team and MoM in my opinion was Dale

Aldred who scored some good tries and was a constant thorn in Swinton's side. Wendell Willis, who deputised for the injured Jason Brassington, was also outstanding on his debut. Getting away from the rugby front all our academy would like to wish Brenda Rogers, one of our sponsors, a speedy recovery from her recent illness.

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AWAY FROM THE DEN

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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

Oldham Bears' cubs under 9's played Ryland in the curtain raiser to St Helens' Challenge Cup semi-final against Salford and won. The match was played before a large crowd and the players loved every minute of it. The cubs were represented by players from St Anne's, Saddleworth and Waterhead. I must thank

Carol Kelly for her help in organising this event. Next week the team will be represented by players from Royton Tigers, Sale Hornets, Shaw Tigers and Watershedding Wanderers and they will play before the Leeds and Bradford semi-final.

Good luck Boys and have a great day.

B. Gartland

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IN THE LATEST OF HIS WEEKLY INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEN WHO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN IN SUPER LEAGUE, SKY'S IAN PROCTOR MEETS THE LEEDS CHIEF EXECUTIVE/TEAM MANAGER GARY HETHERINGTON.



Q GARY, WHEN DID THE SEEMINGLY UNTHINKABLE IDEA OF YOU LEAVING SHEFFIELD ORIGINATE ?

A The seeds were sown, remarkably enough, when I was in Glasgow for the Scotland-Ireland international at Partick Thistle last August. In the early hours of the morning, several of us were discussing the plight of Leeds, who were just completing a disastrous season, and I was asked whether I fancied taking the job of working there on the football side. A telephone conversation with Alf Davies ensued and he invited me to talk to the board of directors. At the same time, Paul Caddick was talking to Leeds about taking over the Headingley complex, whereas my interest was solely in taking over the rugby franchise. Alf Davies was instrumental in putting the two of us together and Paul we decided to take over the club together. So, here we are, in charge of the whole complex, having taken over some fairly heavy debts. Things moved with surprising speed and I'm very happy to be at Headingley..

Q HOW DID ALL THIS AFFECT YOUR MANAGEMENT ROLE ON THE LIONS TOUR TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC ?

A I very nearly withdrew from the tour, because I doubted whether the secret could be kept for such a length of time. The only people who knew were a few Leeds officials, my wife Kath and Phil Larder. He'd been on the point of taking over at Huddersfield but I

wanted to offer him the job of succeeding me as coach of Sheffield - I wanted to leave the Eagles in good hands. The last thing I wanted was for the news to break and to be on the other side of the world, without being able to tell the staff at Sheffield, personally, about my move. Remarkably, the secret was kept for all but the final week of the tour, and that's when I came home at short notice and made the announcement that I was moving to Leeds.

Q THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD MUST HAVE BEEN STUNNED TO REALISE THAT THEIR FOUNDER AND DRIVING FORCE WAS LEAVING FOR PASTURES NEW ?

A I never felt that I wanted to leave Sheffield, but for the first time in 12 years I knew the club could do well without me. It was purely the size and appeal of the challenge at Leeds which made me think long and hard about taking over at Headingley and, in truth, I probably needed a fresh challenge. I'd reached a sense of fulfilment with Sheffield in that we were a strong club, didn't owe any money, were trading well, had a good playing staff, a good youth policy and a very committed, competent, hard-working backroom staff. The only disappointment was that we didn't get the support on the Don Valley terraces that I felt we deserved. But there's no doubt that Sheffield can go from strength to strength with proper investment - there had been no investment from day one of the operation, previously.

Q LEEDS PRESENTS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT CHALLENGE TO THE ONE AT SHEFFIELD, WITH THE DEMANDS OF THE SUPPORTERS BEING GREATER. BUT THE LATENT SUPPORT FOR THE RHINOS IS MASSIVE ISN'T IT ?

A Being a former Leeds player who enjoyed my time at Headingley and knowing rugby

league like I do, it was clear that they'd been under-achievers for some time, yet their support had remained solid. All the ingredients are here: a big city, a fabulous stadium, large, loyal supporter-base. They are rugby people in Leeds and a winning Leeds team will attract big support. But achieving what the fans want is not going to be easy, it's not something which will happen overnight.

Q COMING TO THE CLUB, YOU KNEW THAT A BIG INVESTMENT IN PLAYERS WAS NEEDED. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE WORK YOU DID IN PRE-SEASON ?

We've brought in nine players and thirteen have left Headingley. Now, we've got a young side full of potential. All of them have their best days ahead of them and they're all highly motivated by the challenge of achieving success

MOVERS ONE-TO-ONE

with Leeds. The great legacy of Doug Laughton's time at Headingley is that he left some great young players to work with. If you look back in history, the Leeds teams which have won things have contained a large nucleus of local players - we've got that again, and I'm confident we're going in the right way.

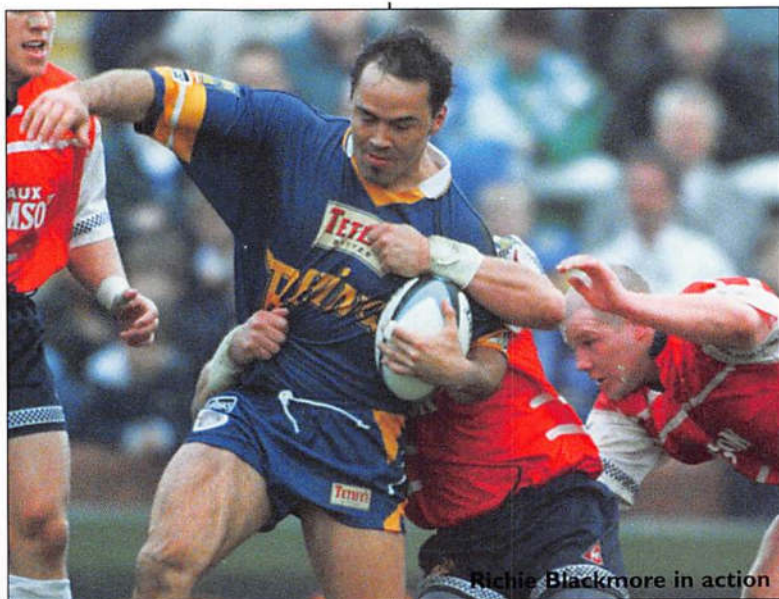
Q YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A 'HANDS-ON' OPERATOR. ARE YOU FINDING IT EASY COMBINING THE ROLES OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FOOTBALL MANAGER ?

Hard work has never bothered me and I'm enjoying combining the two roles at Leeds because it's fascinating, really. Just as we brought in new players, the back-

room staff had to be re-organised and we're a tight-knit bunch. Dean Bell, Paul Fletcher and Damien McGrath are doing a good job on the coaching front and we've got experts in Australian Rudi Meir and Texan Edgar Curtis behind them. I like to think my experience is helping. The two roles are wide and varied, but very interesting.

Q NO REGRETS ABOUT LEAVING SHEFFIELD EAGLES BEHIND ?

A No. The more I thought about the Leeds opportunity, the more it appealed to me and, after having a family holiday before going on the Lions tour, I knew it was what I wanted to do. Sheffield Eagles will always be dear to my heart, having started them from scratch in 1984, but leaving was that much easier because of the quality of people still at the club. They'll come good, I'm sure of that, and the game needs a strong Sheffield because they're a big-city club capable of attracting large support. I'm more concerned with



Richie Blackmore in action

Sheffield, I'm afraid, most of the people wouldn't have known who he was. That's the difference. Similarly, we have just started a monthly sporting luncheon club, at Leeds, something I did at Sheffield eight or nine years ago. At Sheffield, we started with nine

Q YOU'D SEEN THE PROBLEMS THAT LEEDS ENCOUNTERED LAST YEAR. HOW ARE YOU DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY ?

A The important thing is that any future success is dependant upon the foundations we put down now. In the past, Leeds, and several other clubs, have tried to short-circuit things by trying to buy short-term success, if you look at the team which lost at Wembley in 1994 and 1995, it was packed with star names but the foundations weren't right and they were found wanting when times got tough.

There was no real future to that team, sadly, and while they were winning matches, albeit matches other than major cup finals, the business was operating unsuccessfully and, inevitably, that led to huge problems further down the line, culminating in the heavy debts encountered last year. My immediate priority, even before signing players, was to get the management right and we've done that. Then, we brought nine players to the club, all of whom are excited about the future at Leeds. There has been a complete culture change at the club and the atmosphere at Headingley and spirit within the dressing-room augurs well for the future of this great club.

& SHAKERS

- GARY HETHERINGTON

attracting support for Leeds, now, and we're heading in the right direction after winning our opening five matches of 1997. The Cup semi-final with Bradford is a major game which, if we win, could really set our season alight and indicate to the Leeds public that we mean business, again.

Q WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES OF THE RESPECTIVE SHEFFIELD AND LEEDS JOBS ?

A I can illustrate that best by giving two examples. When Leeds signed Kiwi international Richie Blackmore it was headline news and really made the people of the city sit up and take notice. It spelt a message to the public and they responded because Richies arrival generated season ticket sales. In

members and an audience of about 30 and built it up over a long period of time. At Leeds, we had nearly 200 guests for the first luncheon and we've barely scratched the surface. That illustrates the difference between the two cities.

A successful Leeds team is capable of generating enormous support and there's an expectation about the club that is almost tangible. There are eleven different departments at Headingley, so that gives an idea of the size of the operation, but my priority, upon arriving, was the team and major surgery was needed to give us a chance of improvement in 1997.

Oldham have met the Broncos under their various guises on 20 previous occasions with Oldham winning 12 times, the Londoners seven and one match drawn. Sixteen of those matches have been league fixtures with Oldham winning eight, London seven and one match drawn. Oldham's biggest home victory over the Londoners came in February 1990 when Fulham lost at Watersheddings 52-4. Centre John Henderson scored four tries in that match. Another centre, Charlie McAllister, led the way when Oldham registered their biggest win in the capital. That was in November 1989 when the Roughyeds won 40-10 in Chiswick. London's biggest win in Oldham came in December 1991 when the Crusaders won 10-0 at Watersheddings but their best win in London came in a more recent match. It was in October 1995 on the eve of the World Cup final when the Broncos played their match at The Valley, Charlton and hammered Oldham 46-14.



GAGEMENTS

YATES



DETAILS OF THE BRONCOS LAST VISIT TO OLDHAM

Sunday 11th August 1996

Super League

At Watersheddings

OLDHAM 14 LONDON BRONCOS 22

Half time 4 - 6 Attendance 2,327

Oldham tries: Adrian Belle, Martin Crompton & Paul Davidson.
Goals: Francis Maloney.

Broncos tries: David Krause, Martin Offiah (2) & Tony Mestrov.
Goals: Greg Barwick (3)

Oldham: PAUL ATCHESON; ADRIAN BELLE, PAUL TOPPING, DARREN ABRAM, PAUL STEVENS; FRANCIS MALONEY, MARTIN CROMPTON; IAN GILDART, GARY BURNS, JASON TEMU, GARY LORD, JOE FAIMALO & DAVID BRADBURY

Substitutes: PAUL CROOK, REECE GUY, MATT MUNRO & PAUL DAVIDSON.

Broncos: TONY MARTIN; SCOTT ROSKELL, DAVID KRAUSE, GREG BARWICK, MARTIN OFFIAH, TULSEN TOLLETT, KEVIN LANGER; PETER GILL, TONY RAE, RUSSELL BAWDEN, STEVE ROSOLEN; DARREN SHAW & TONY MESTROV.

Substitutes: BERNARD CARROLL, DARYLL PITT, LEO DYNEVOR & MARK MAGUIRE.

RESULTS OF OLDHAM vs. LONDON MATCHES DURING THE PAST TEN SEASONS

(League matches except where indicated)

1987 - 88	Oldham 36	Fullham 8 (Regal Trophy)
1988 - 89	Did not meet	
1989 - 90	Oldham 52	Fulham 4
	Fulham 10	Oldham 40
1990 - 91	Did not meet	
1991 - 92	Oldham 16	London Crusaders 10 (Regal Trophy)
	Oldham 16	London Crusaders 4
	London Crusaders 20	Oldham 23
	Oldham 0	London Crusaders 10
	London Crusaders 8	Oldham 10
	Oldham 22	London Crusaders 14
		(Divisional Premiership)
1992 - 93	Oldham 27	London Crusaders 12
	London Crusaders 20	Oldham 20
	Oldham 20	London Crusaders 27
	London Crusaders 30	Oldham 18
	Oldham 34	London Crusaders 6 (Challenge Cup)
1993 - 94	Did not meet	
1994 - 95	Did not meet	
1995 - 96	Oldham 19	London Broncos 8
	London Broncos 46	Oldham 14
1996	London Broncos 28	Oldham 22
	Oldham 14	London Broncos 22

LET'S HEAR IT FOR **BRITISH COACHES**

Ray French, *BBC Rugby League Correspondent*

British coaches are fighting back. And Salford supremo, Andy Gregory, is leading the charge against the invasion from overseas.

In the Eighties, former Wigan bosses, Kiwi Graham Lowe and Aussie John Monie slipped past customs at Heathrow, pocketed all our silverware, and then flew out for even bigger jobs Down Under.

Spurred on by the success of their fellow countrymen, John Dorahy, Steve Simms, Gerry Jack, Mike McClennan, Brian Smith, Peter Tunks, Matthew Willott, Graeme West, Dean Bell, Old Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all were soon offering their services. And bringing considerable success to the clubs who employed them.

The British coach was out to grass or sent 'Below Stairs' to eke out a living in the lower reaches of the First and Second Divisions. Not anymore!

According to Andy Gregory, not before time too.

"I've learned a lot about rugby league from overseas coaches and John Monie and Graham Lowe did a great job at Wigan.

Daryl Van de Velde brought a lot to Castleford, while there was nobody better at man management than Jon Monie.

But we need to see more British coaches in charge of our top Super League teams. I'm a new coach at 35 years of age and still learning all the trade but I've been given the

opportunity to show what I can do.

We need to encourage more from the grassroots of the game to complete the coaching courses and apply for the top jobs. And we need to encourage the club chairmen to employ them."

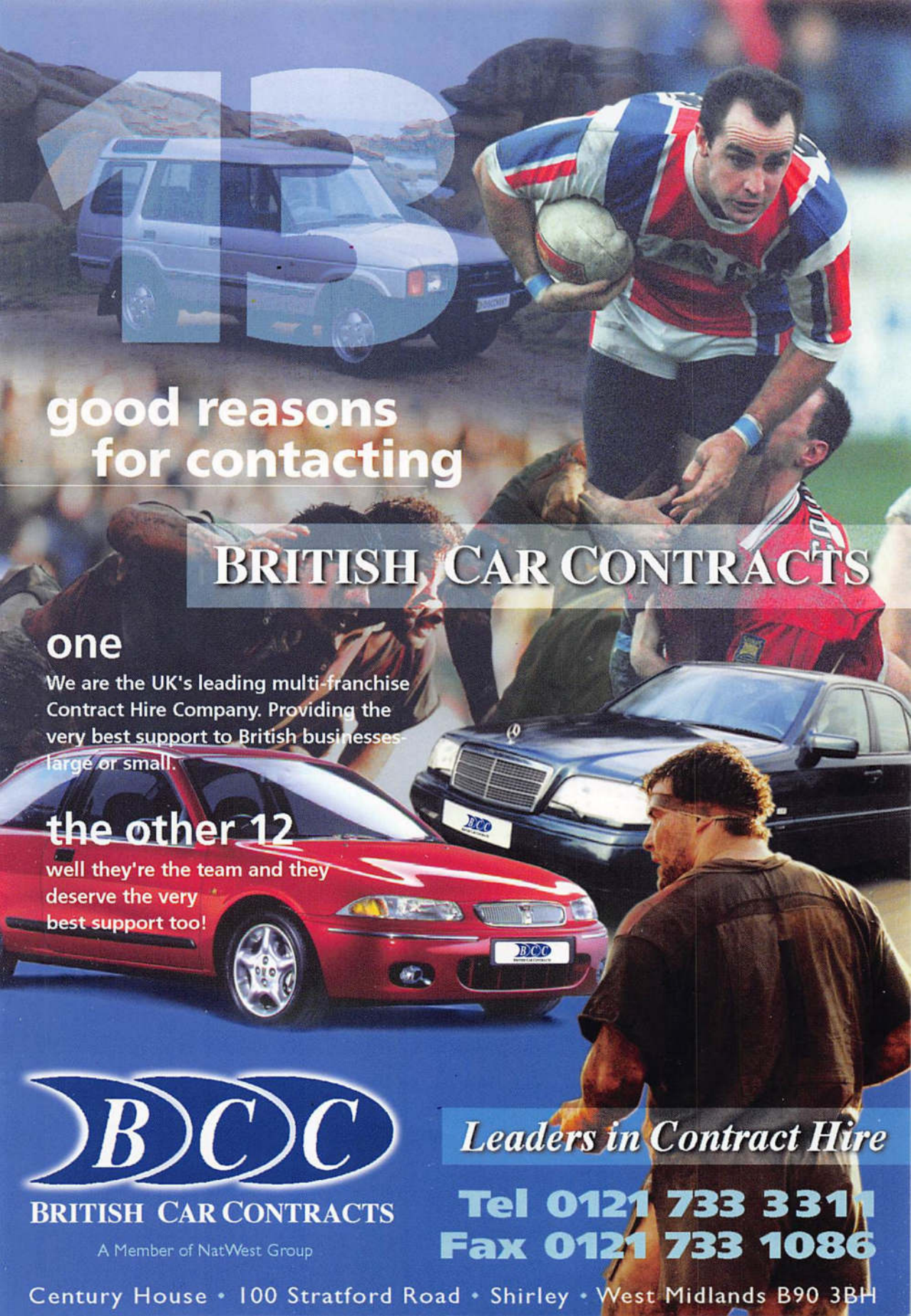
Few would argue against the coaching prowess of a Shaun McRae, a Matthew Elliott, or a Graeme West and even fewer would argue a return to the days when a British coach considered a good night's training session consisted of half a dozen laps around the pitch, followed by a game of 'touch and pass' rugby. But, while acknowledging the input of ideas, conditioning, weights training, game plans, and fitness work of our overseas friends we must encourage the 'Best of British' to succeed at the highest levels. Their apprenticeships have been served, now is the time to do battle. In the often tough, cruel world of Super League, Castleford's John Joyner,



**Andy Gregory –
Still learning at 35**

Oldham's Andy Goodway, Sheffield's Phil Larder, Wigan's Eric Hughes, Halifax's John Pendlebury and Salford's Andy Gregory are now head to head with their six counterparts from Down Under in the elite division.

Six British coaches, seeking to emulate the deeds of Castleford's Mal Reilly and Widnes' Doug Laughton, the last British coaches to triumph in the Challenge Cup and the Championship eleven and nine years ago. Will it be Britain's year? We'll know in September.



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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		

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Number 1
Paul Atcheson



Number 2
Scott Ranson



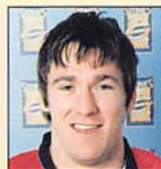
Number 3
Darren Abram



Number 4
Paul Topping



Number 5
Rob Myler



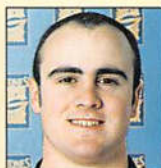
Number 6
Francis Maloney



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

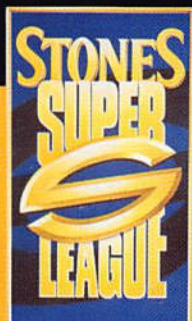
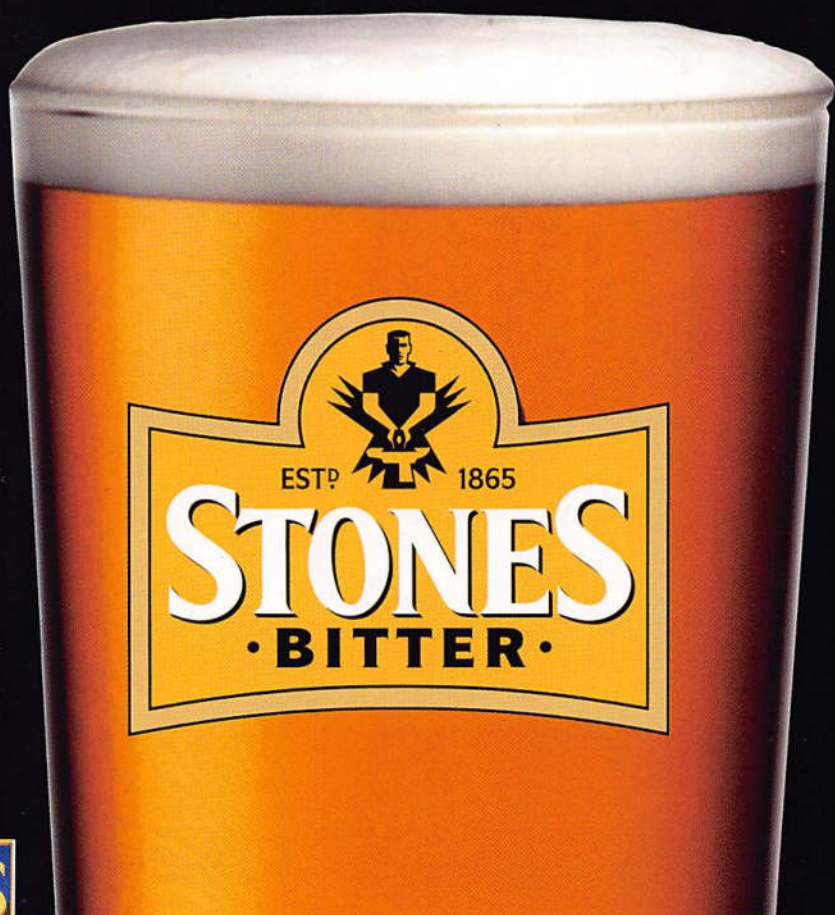
Number 25
Paul Deacon

Number 26
Luke Goodwin

Number 27
David Stephenson



THE SEASONS GREETINGS



TASTE THE ACTION



STONES COMMENTARY

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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.



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N18 N18

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Answer:

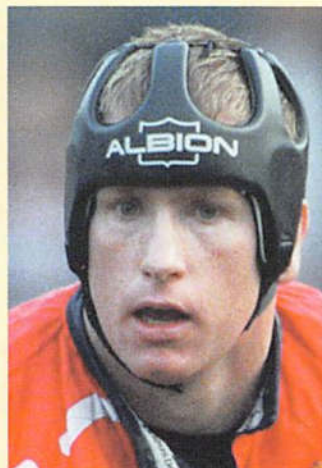
Name:

Address:

Daytime Tel:

PLAYER PROFILE

MARTIN CROMPTON



NAME:	MARTIN CROMPTON
DATE OF BIRTH:	27 - 9 - 69
BIRTHPLACE:	BULINGE HOSPITAL, WIGAN
HEIGHT:	5'10
WEIGHT:	14 STONE
NICKNAME AT CLUB:	CRUNCH
OCCUPATION:	PROFESSIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYER
HOME:	WIGAN
CAR:	HYUNDAI
MARRIED:	YES
CHILDREN:	1 SON - JOE

WHAT WAS YOUR AMBITION AS A CHILD:	TO PLAY RL AS A PROFFESIONAL
WHO WAS YOUR BOYHOOD HERO:	BRETT KENNY
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST THRILL IN RUGBY?	PLAYING AT WEMBLEY AND PLAYING IN WORLD NINES FOR GB
WHICH PRESENT DAY PLAYER DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST?	GARY CONNOLLY
WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?	GETTING PAID FOR SOMETHING YOU ENJOY.
IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY, WHAT IS THE FIRST THING THAT YOU WOULD BUY?	BIG SPORTS CAR AND YACHT
WHAT IS YOUR BEST QUALITY?	SENSE OF HUMOUR
WHAT IS YOUR WORST QUALITY?	NO PATIENCE
WHAT OTHER SPORT AND HOBBIES DO YOU HAVE?	GOLF AND SNOOKER
WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PHOBIA?	FLYING
WHICH FAMOUS PERSON WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET?	ROBERT DE NIRO
WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?	SON - JOE
DO YOU HAVE AN UNUSUAL FOOD THAT IMPROVES YOUR GAME?	PASTA
FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME?	ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES
FAVOURITE POP STAR?	MICHAEL JACKSON
FAVOURITE FOOD?	SPAGHETTI BOLOGONESE
FAVOURITE DRINK?	BUDWEISER!

ALLIANCE NEWS

PADDY KINSON

The spirit of the team over the last few weeks has been superb, and it's clear how much the players have been enjoying their game. I've been pleased with the overall level of commitment from everybody, but Danny Guest, Gary Burns, and Tony Nuttall deserve a special mention together with winger David Jones who plays like an extra forward. After such a good start it was disappointing to lose the semi final clash 3-2 against Wigan. As last year as soon as first team players are injured, the overall squad begins to look weak

particularly when the Alliance team and first team play on consecutive days. With players such as Craig Baker, Neil Melking and Carl Switzer playing their first full game of the season it was a tremendous effort to stop a Wigan side from scoring a try. The game was end to end and a terrific advert for Rugby League, with both sides going within inches of scoring tries. In the end it was won by a Wigan drop goal yet we still had the opportunity in the dying minutes when Cowans broke clear and only needed to draw the full back

to send Simon Siabic clear to the posts. Frustratingly Jimmy didn't pass but it must be said he had a tremendous game together with the whole of the squad.

The return from suspension of David Stephenson and Mike Neal over the next two weeks should give us a boost to maintain the momentum and get back to winning ways.

ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

1997

MARCH

THURSDAY 13th	LEEDS RHINOS	(H) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 20th	BRADFORD BULLS	(A) 7.30pm
THURSDAY 27th	SALFORD 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)
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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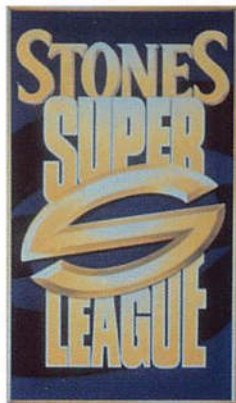
*Thank you to
everyone who
bought one of our
Big Match Raffle
Tickets.*

*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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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 Oldham Bears and Paris St Germain.

OLDHAM BEARS

SUPERLEAGUE ACT II

The Bears surpassed themselves, and the hopes of even their most ardent supporters, by finishing 8th on the Super League table in 1996. It equalled their finish in the 1995/96 campaign, which had been their highest league placing since 1984/85. But three defeats in their opening three matches in 1997 have left coach Andy Goodway deliberating his future at the club. The former GB international was clearly upset after watching his side lose 26-35 to newly-promoted Salford, on Good Friday, and was due to discuss the situation with chairman Jim Quinn as this programme went to print. Nine wins and a draw from 22 matches, last season, represented a tremendous achievement by Goodway's modestly-assembled Oldham squad. But the signs are that it will be much harder to maintain such a lofty placing in the months ahead.

There are no easy pickings in Super League second time around and Tuesday's home meeting with London really is an important occasion for the beleaguered Bears. Only four clubs finished below Oldham in 1996 and three of them - Leeds, Castleford and Paris - have strengthened significantly ahead of the new season. Salford, who replaced relegated Workington, have already shown they are more than capable of matching the rest, and so Oldham will have to battle harder than ever for the points.

The Bears have used their overseas contacts to acquire Australians Brett Goldspink and Luke Goodwin (both sons of former Kangaroo tourists) and hard-running former Leeds and Workington centre Vince Fawcett has been signed to add pace and

power to the back!

line, after a spell with Parramatta. Back-rower Matt Munro is in his second spell at the club.

The worry for many fans is that, after swapping Watersheddings for the soccer venue at Boundary Park, Oldham may initially attract greater numbers of spectators, but, ultimately, jeopardise their hopes of remaining in the Super League. It always been a struggle for the Bears, on a ground where they never seemed comfortable last season, and the mental attitude of the players has to be positive if the new surroundings are not to become a burden to them.

Oldham won five of their eleven 'home' matches in 1996, but only one of those victories came at Boundary Park - against a Paris side which failed to win on their travels all year. Worryingly, the Bears were swamped by Wigan (56-16) and St Helens (54-18) in other games at the soccer ground and the home Cup quarter-final against Bradford brought another one-sided scoreline in favour of the opposition.

In fairness, the Bears ran the Bulls very close in the Super League game at Boundary Park, last Friday, and a continuation of that wholehearted effort should be good enough to get them their first winning money soon. They need to return to winning ways against London but it will be a difficult task against a buoyant side containing the newly-signed Shaun Edwards.

Oldham suffered a blow in losing big-hitting front-rower Jason Temu, at the start of the season, because he gave the side such authority when the going got tough at close

OLDHAM BEARS



Andrew Patmore

quarters. Coupled with release of Ian Sherratt to Wigan, it leaves them exposed if injuries should strike Brett Goldspink or Ian Gildart, who have been their props in the opening games.

Munro, who arrived along with centre Andrew Patmore a year ago, will be competing with Joe Faimalo, Gary Lord, Howard Hill and tourist David Bradbury for the back-row positions. Bradbury came along nicely in New Zealand and Oldham hope to reap the benefit of that experience, although several clubs have been watching his progress. Welsh international Paul Atcheson has been an exceptional signing from Wigan, good, solid pros like Darren Abram, Paul Topping, Scott Ranson, Rob Myler and fit-again Afi Leuila have done a tremendous job in helping the Bears to become established among the elite. Now, the addition of Goodwin adds a touch of class to the three-quarter line after the release of Adrian Belle to Huddersfield.

Half-backs Martin Crompton and Francis Maloney may lack genuine pace, but both are quick-thinking players who work well with the team-mates around them. Oldham leaned heavily on them throughout last season and their continued good health will be more important than ever in 1997.

Goodway must be concerned about the lack of depth and competition for places has to be intensified to get the best out of the staff. They took Leeds and the Bulls close, in the opening fortnight, making their performance at the Willows all the more baffling to the frustrated Goodway.

After flirting with relegation for much of last season, Paris have recruited extensively from Australia as they seek to compete in Super League. And they felt the immediate benefits when they won away at Sheffield on the opening day of the season.

That 18-4 victory brought their first away win in Super League, following hard on the heels of their first-ever win on English soil in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup at Batley in February. But subsequent defeats at home to Leeds and against a Martin Offiah-inspired London Broncos, on Good Friday, have pushed them back towards the wrong end of the table. Their return to the Willows, on Easter Monday, takes on added significance and they will be hoping to repeat the brave defensive effort which took them so close to victory at the Willows in Cup football a month ago. The Reds' 8-4 success only came after a bruising contest and Paris must have taken much encouragement from the performance as Salford.

Since that defeat-with-honour, Paris have been hit hard by injuries, and the end of the French domestic season, thus releasing the likes of Pierre Chamorin, Fabien Devecchi and Pascal Jampy, cannot come soon enough for coach Peter Mulholland. But Test winger Pascal Bomati, who was last year's leading try-scorer in Super

League with 10, will not be back in PSG colours after being lured to the Rugby Union outfit, Brive.

It will be like being on a Kangaroo tour for the Paris-based Australians when they play away and the team harmony that generates should serve them well. Mulholland's men can do an important job for the game if they win matches and get the crowds to see them at Charlety Stadium. They started well with an encouraging five-figure gate for the visit of Leeds.

The potential in Paris was there for all to see, on that unforgettable opening night for Super League last March. They gave the new concept the perfect lift-off and match days in France proved to be real 'occasions'. Now, they are looking for a team to match the off-the-field razzmatazz. Just three wins and a draw (all on home soil), meant that Paris were looking over their shoulders for much of last summer. They had to act decisively if their second season was not to be a disaster and the appointment of Mulholland should ensure they compete on the field.

The deep-thinking

Australian knows all about starting from scratch. He was the architect of Perth's entry into the Australian competition, and there has been more than a hint of déjà vu for the former school-teacher as he prepared his Paris players for the campaign ahead.

He did his coaching apprenticeship the hard way, creating a successful schools team, getting his big chance in lower grade football in Australia, before breaching into the 'inner circle' when Perth's application for entry to the Winfield

Cup was accepted in 1993. He spent two years preparing the Reds for their 1995 entry and a further two as their head coach.

There was no such leisurely timescale available when the Paris job offer came and he recruited extensively in Australia, drawing on the myriad talents of a group of players he had worked with previously. There are some class players who should be only too happy to resurrect careers which ought to have gone further. Ex-North Sydney half-back Jason Martin, for instance, was one of the most promising talents in Australia, five years ago, but never managed to 'kick-on' after a sensational start to his career. Signed from the Cowboys, having played for Mulholland at Perth, Martin can become a household name in Europe if he gets his act together.

Similarly, centre Jamie Olejnik was one of the outstanding players in the Australian Schoolboys party to England in 1991, and was expected to go on to outstanding things with Penrith. It never happened, another move to Manly failed to bring the best out of him, and Paris picked him up after Perth released him. Mulholland is not alone in being convinced of his ability and Olejnik only needs to show the right attitude to become a sensation this summer.

Familiar names among the 23 Australians now in their official squad are former St George Grand Final prop Tony Priddle, ex-London Broncos hooker David O'Donnell, who spent his Australian career with Manly and the Roosters, 1993 Kiwi tour forward David Lomax, former Balmain half-back Phil Bergman and Canberra's Jeremy Robinson. The common factor among these recruits is that they all have something to prove.

Paris came to the starting line as the unknown quantities of the 12-team competition in 1997, and, to a large extent, they remain so. But a place outside the bottom-four would represent success for Mulholland. Anything else would be an unexpected bonus for Paris Mark II.



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OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

ROGER HALSTEAD

Martin Crompton led Oldham Bears to a rip-roaring performance in the first home super league game of the season against Bradford Bulls.

The Bulls won 30-18, but the score flattered the Yorkshiremen, who led only 24-18 with five minutes left when Crompton had a try disallowed in controversial circumstances.

Twice earlier denied a try by inches, Crompton broke for the Bradford line only to be hauled back by his headguard as full-back Stuart Spruce threw out an arm in desperation.

Despite having his head pulled backwards, captain courageous pulled his way over the line, but was rolled over on his back in a magnificent Spruce tackle.

Martin was honest enough to admit he didn't touch down properly.....but was it an offence when

Spruce clutched Crompton's headguard?

"Not in my book," explained referee Russell Smith. "There was no malice in the tackle and no deliberate attempt to tear off the scrum cap."

Point taken.....but was it a head tackle? Or was it a headguard tackle?

Suffice to say, the referee

was left with a tricky decision to make on the spur of the moment, but it goes to show that rugby can always throw up a talking point or an incident which isn't fully governed by the rules of the game or advice to referees from on high.

Having said that, I wouldn't have been at all surprised to see another referee on another day rewarding a penalty try.

The headguard incident was the final moment of high drama in a game which had supporters of both sides roaring from start to finish.

It was the Bear's best performance of the season, full of passion, fire, and crowd-pleasing individual performances which sent the fans home happy, even in defeat.

A fired-up pack of forwards, in which Brett Goldspink was a tower of strength in the front-row, laid the foundation for

half-backs

Crompton and Francis Maloney to throw up one of their best-ever performances as a midfield pair.

Crompton and Maloney on this form can lay claim to be one of the best pairings in Super League and the clash this evening with London's Tulsen Tallett and Josh White should be worth the admission money alone.



OLDHAM BEARS v I

TUESDAY 1st APRIL I



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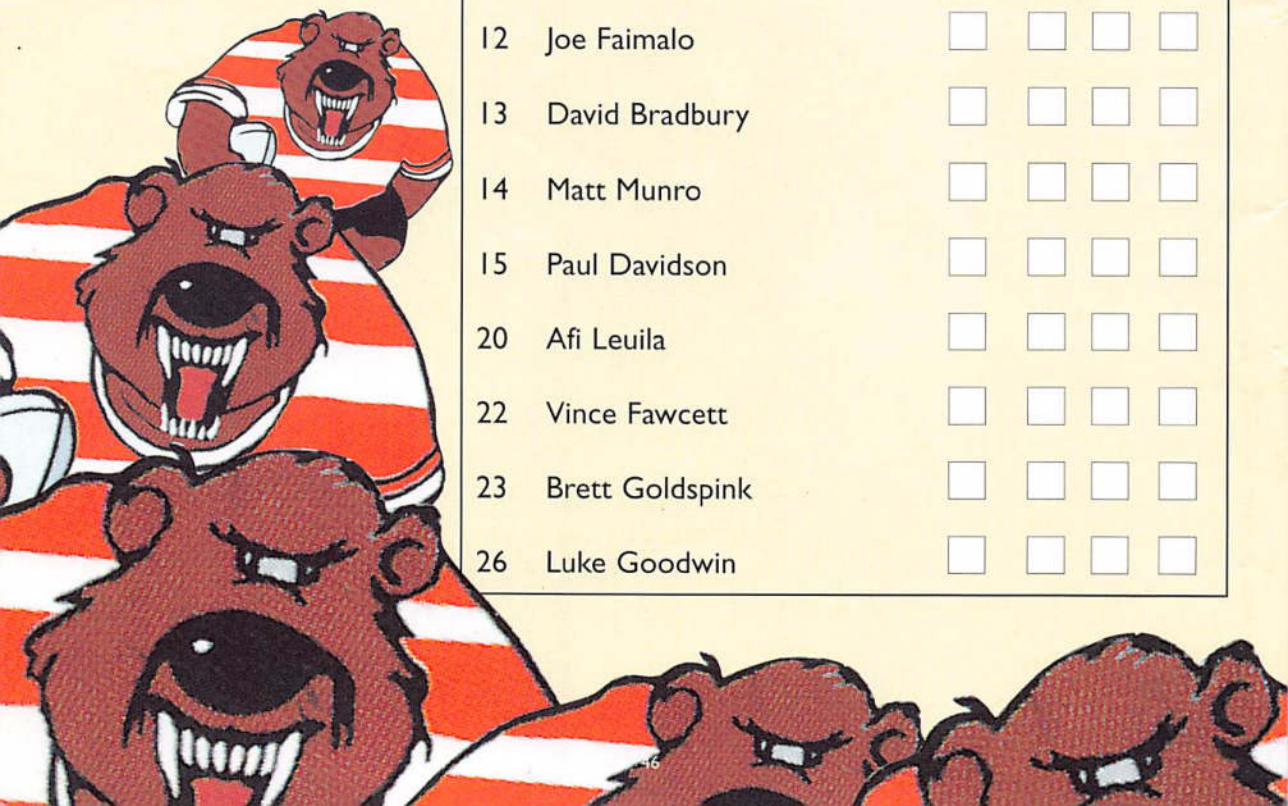
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

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

		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	☐	☐	☐	☐



LONDON BRONCOS

1997 KICK-OFF 7.30pm

LONDON BRONCOS

Team T G DG

31	Tony Martin	☐	☐	☐	☐
22	Scott Roskell	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	David Krause	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Paul Smith	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	Martin Offiah	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	Adrian Spencer	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	Josh White	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Tony Mestrov	☐	☐	☐	☐
26	Robbie Beazley	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	Matt Dunford	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Steve Rosolen	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	Peter Gill	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Terry Matterson	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	Shaun Edwards	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	Matt Nable	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	Roger Best	☐	☐	☐	☐
24	Russell Bawxen	☐	☐	☐	☐

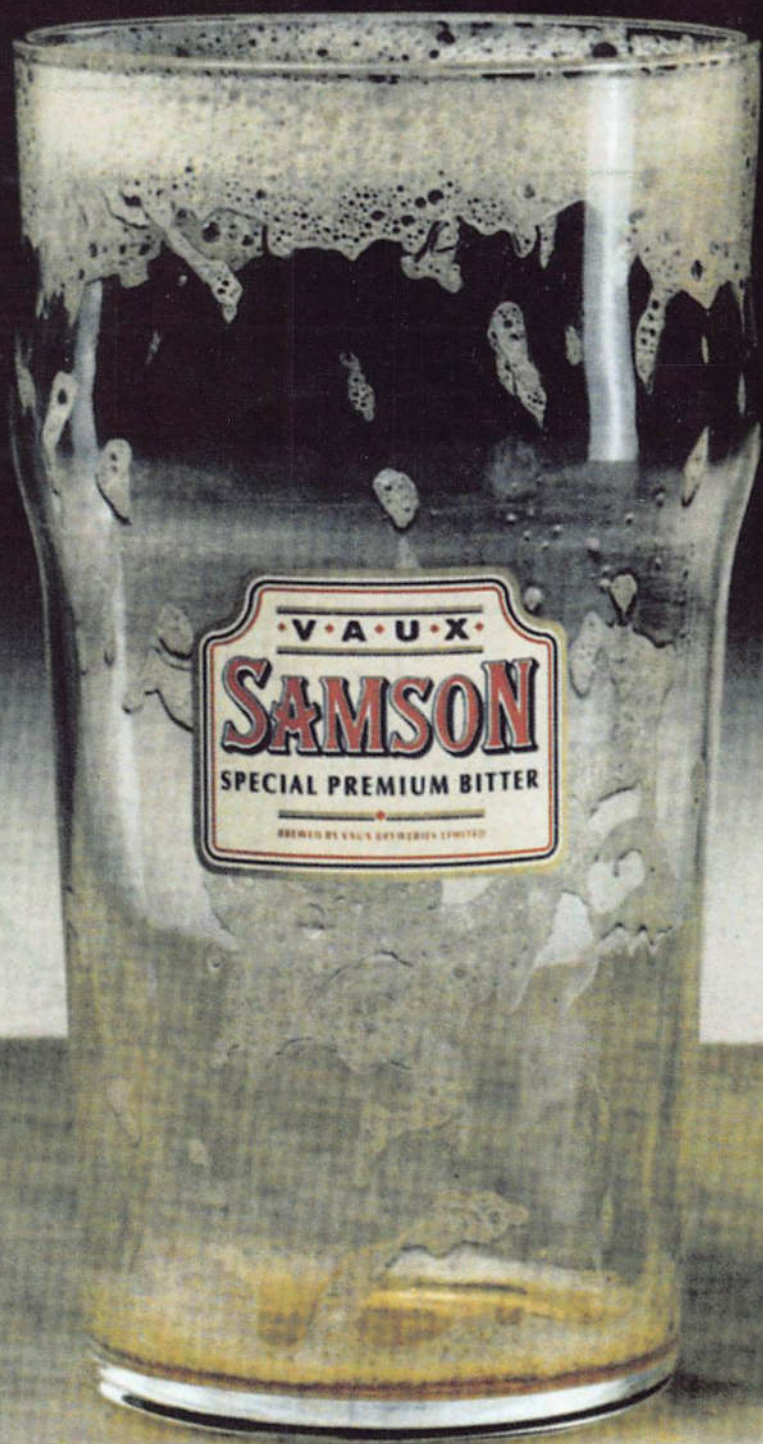


SCRUMS

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



TRY AGAIN!

VAUX SAMSON - ITS STRENGTH IS ITS TASTE