

SILK CUT

CHALLENGE CUP



3RD ROUND TIE
WIDNES VIKINGS v OLDHAM
SUNDAY 1 FEBRUARY 1998
KICK OFF 3.00pm
PROGRAMME PRICE £1.50





**“Wishing
the Vikings every
Success for the
1998 Season”**

starting points

**We welcome the players, officials,
and spectators of Oldham RLFC for
this Silk Cut Challenge Cup tie.**

NEW START...

For our first competitive match at the Halton Community Stadium we couldn't have more appropriate visitors than Oldham, for whom this is a first game against professional opposition (excluding friendlies) since their rebirth this winter.

Although ourselves and Leigh benefited indirectly as a result of the Bears financial problems last year by way of 'promotion', nobody here took any pleasure at all in watching the predicament of a fellow club, and a famous club at that.

We are delighted that professional Rugby League lives on in the town and we extend our very best wishes to all concerned with the Roughyeds as they seek to re-establish themselves in the game.

BRAVE NEW WORLD...

We hesitate to draw too many conclusions from our game with Leigh a fortnight ago - after all, last season opened on a wave of optimism and we all know how that ended - but we can at least say that there were signs of hope in that game. No doubt it will take a little while for our new look team to gell together (and elsewhere in this programme you'll find an article detailing who has come and gone during the off season) but when it does the early indications are that we might surprise one or two opponents who remember the Vikings of 1997.

SAD LOSS...

Many of you will have read in the local press of the untimely death of Stephen Wood Jnr. As well as being a devoted Widnes fan, Ste was our scoreboard operator for several years and he always performed his duties efficiently and with good humour, even through his long battle with illness. We would like to extend our sympathies to Stephen's family and friends, including his brother Paul who is on the Vikings playing staff. May Stephen rest in peace.

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1979, 1991

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1976, 1979, 1992

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1980, 1982, 1983,

1988, 1989, 1990

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1988, 1989, 1990

European & World Club Champions 1989

WIDNES VIKINGS



ALL POINTS WEST

AN INTERVIEW WITH VIKINGS' HEAD COACH GRAEME WEST...

Q. How would you sum up the pre-season just gone?

A. It was excellent. We asked a lot of questions of the players, their commitment and their ability and the majority of them have come through with flying colours - I'm proud of them. We've been training five days a week since the end of October and that is a lot of time that we've asked the squad to put in, especially given the fact that the contracts certainly aren't on the Super League scale.

At the end of the process I've had to select my first team squad and it wasn't easy. One or two who were on the fringes but who missed out are understandably upset but they know that the door isn't closed to anyone. If they do the job in the reserve grades and give of their best they'll put pressure on the players above them and, hopefully, give me a few more tough decisions to make before the season's over.

Q. We seemed to play quite a bit of football in the game against Leigh - is that how you want the team to operate this season?

A. Well I'm all in favour of playing an open game, but I'm emphasising patience to the team. They have to set up the positions through the forwards first before they look to put on a backline shot. And if they do come up with an error I want them to settle things down for a while and give themselves a break from tackling - there's nothing worse than trying to rectifying a mistake by playing basketball stuff only to turn the ball over to the opposition straight away again. No team can afford to do nothing but tackle. So yes, football is great, it entertains the fans, but if we are going to win games we have to walk before we can run.



WIDESTES VIKINGS

Q. What do you make of the new set up, with the extra games and the end of season play-offs?

A. It's a great thing. Maybe there are one or two too many league matches, but nothing we can't cope with. And everyone should have something to play for in the last few weeks of the season, whether it's aiming for the play-offs or trying to avoid the drop. From our point of view I'm hopeful that we can move up the table compared to last season's showing. The last couple of months in 1997 we beat quite a few of the fancied teams for this season and should have beaten a few more. So we could do well.

Q. Oldham are a bit of an unknown quantity today, aren't they?

A. I watched them at Hunslet a few weeks back and although they struggled, they showed plenty of spirit and I expect more of the same today. They'll also have a few faces who weren't on show when I saw them. The thing about Oldham, no matter who's in the side, is that they have a great cup fighting tradition and they won't lie down and die today. I remember playing

for Wigan at Watersheddings at a time when we were winning everything, and that little git Paddy Kirwan popped up and scored a try in the last minute to knock us out!

Q. Not counting any chickens, but if we do win today, would you fancy Wigan down here in the next round?

A. Well, as you say, we've got this one to get through first, but I've never been one to spend time wondering who we might draw in a later round. You get who you get and you make the best of it, and that's all there is to it.

Q. Finally, what do you make of the new twinning arrangements between Super League and lower division sides?

A. I'm very wary of it. So long as the loan periods don't go beyond the current one month, then I don't suppose it makes much difference. But I suspect that the big clubs might have their hidden motives, and what they give with one hand they might take away with the other. I don't suppose the lower clubs will be too happy if their best players are whisked away.



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From the Top...

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN...



It is likely this afternoon that we will be playing in a new set of home jerseys - black with white hoops.

Although we were not due to change our home strip until next year, our suppliers Le Coq Sportif have been taken over by another company who have decided to concentrate on manufacturing football shirts.

We only have two strips from last season and with three teams to wear them we were faced with a problem. Ellgren were already designing a new away shirt for this year and they have agreed to

supply us with a new home strip for this Division 1 campaign as the two striped sets would not have lasted the season which could be a total of 100 games for all three teams.

We will be able to supply a limited number of replica home shirts and enquiries should be made to the club shop. The away shirt is due in the shop by the end of the month and replicas will be available for what promises to be an eye-catching alternative shirt.

TONY CHAMBERS

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1998 SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP

1998 SILK CUT PRIZES

This is the second season of Silk Cut's new £2.1 million three year sponsorship of Rugby League's most famous knockout competition, played under the Silk Cut banner since 1985. The 1998 Wembley victors will receive a record prize cheque for £100,000.

Of the 1998 sponsorship investment of £700,000 a total prize fund of £486,000 is projected for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup. The remaining prize funds will be deposited in the League's Capital Development Fund. The complete 1998 Silk Cut Challenge Cup prize structure is:

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP

Third Round losers (1st and 2nd Div. Clubs)	£4,000	Quarter Final losers	£15,000
Third Round losers (Amateur clubs)	£1,000	Semi-Final losers	£20,000
Fourth Round losers	£5,000	Runners-up	£50,000
Fifth Round losers	£8,000	Winners	£100,000

PROJECTED PRIZE FUND	£486,000
PROJECTED CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND	£214,000
GRAND TOTAL	£700,000

1998 SILK CUT AWARDS

Silk Cut Awards will again be presented to the adjudged Man of the Match in each tie from the first round onwards. In each case the winner will receive a commemorative medallion, plus a cheque for £200 (from the third round through to the quarter finals). The Man of the Match at both semi-finals received a cheque for £400 plus an engraved silver plated replica rugby ball.

1998 SILK CUT TIMETABLE

Silk Cut Challenge Cup

First round:	6th and 7th December	Fifth round:	28th February and 1st March
Second round:	20th and 21st December	Quarter Finals:	14 and 15th March
Third round:	31st January and 1st February	Semi-Finals:	28th and 29th March
Fourth round:	14th and 15th February	Final:	2nd May

1998 SILK CUT TICKETS

Tickets for the all-seater 1998 Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final at Wembley Stadium on Saturday 2nd May can be booked now priced £39, £35, £30, £27, £22, £17 and £12 in the stadium, and £50 in the Olympic Gallery.

Please forward order and remittance, made payable to the Rugby Football League, to THE TICKET OFFICE, THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE, RED HALL LANE, LEEDS, LS17 8NB

Switch, Visa and Access bookings can be made by telephoning the Ticket Hotline 0113 232 9444 between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

1998 SILK CUT DRAWS

The draw for the first round will be made live on GMR at 7.10pm on Tuesday, 18 November.

The draws for the second and third rounds will be made live on BBC Radio Leeds on Monday 8th December and Monday 5th January respectively.

The fourth round draw for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup will be made live on BBC Radio Five Live at approximately 5.15pm on Monday 2nd February 1998.

The draw ceremonies for the fifth round, quarter-finals and semi-finals will be made live on BBC Look North, North West Tonight and BBC Radio Five Live at 6.55pm on the following dates:

Fifth Round	Monday 16th February
Quarter Finals	Monday 2nd March
Semi Finals	Monday 16th March



John Hough

Picture courtesy of League Express

Oldham Roughyeds



William Boot

Back by popular demand for a tenth season!

■ Yes, it's true! This is my tenth season in harness at Widnes, so to speak and I have to admit that it's been more or less downhill all the way!

Within a month or two of my first article for the match programme, which was called 'Champions' in those days (sniff), we had won the World Club Challenge on that memorable occasion at Old Trafford. But although we've been to Wembley since, won Premiership and the Regal Trophy, we haven't really recaptured that early magic. Am I an unlucky charm? I don't think so, but the Board of Directors do - they've offered me a golden handshake of a seven figure sum (£7) in order to try and pension me off. I'm holding out for a higher offer, so if you too want to join the fund raising effort with a view to getting rid of me, why not go out and purchase some of Harrods' finest brown paper envelopes and drop a little something by my Executive Box*. All contributions gratefully received.

■ What a fantastic night a week last Friday at the inaugural dinner of the Past Players Association. I'm not a past player myself, you understand (unless St. Maries u11 second team qualifies me) but there were around 100 ex stars

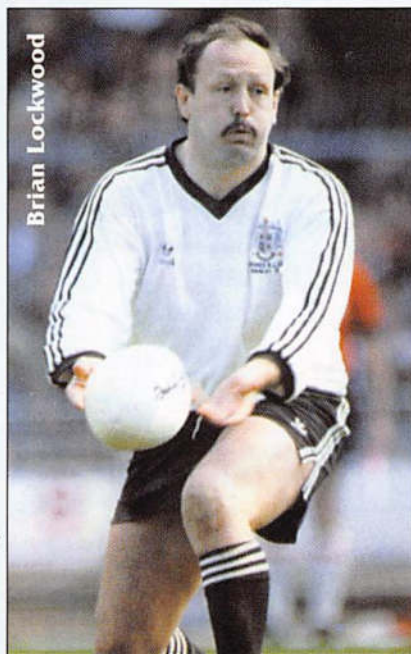
there, amongst the impressive turnout of 350 people. All your old favourites were there, and Harvey Howard, but there were one or two surprise guests. Personally I was thrilled to see Brian Lockwood and Bill Ramsey in the throng not only because they're two of my all time favourites but because it also shows just what sort of affection

they have for our club that they were prepared to cross the Pennines on a winter night to see their former colleagues.

■ I still haven't got my head round this new stadium. Mrs Boot sends me out with a ball of wool whenever I'm off to the ground, because unless I leave myself a trail, I can never find my way out of the warren of corridors and conference rooms. Funnily enough, I never used to get

lost in the old main stand. As I ate my three course meal at that dinner, I couldn't help but remember the lukewarm Bovril, damp crisps and stale Waggon Wheels that I used to buy decades ago at the snack bar under the stand where the Supporters Club had their souvenir shop.

■ Still on the subject of Friday last's shindig, ex ref Billy Thompson had us all



Brian Lockwood

WIDNES VIKINGS

in stitches with his quips. I won't repeat any of them here a) because it is bad manners to give away an after dinner speakers jokes and b) because I can't remember any of them (boy, that Ribena was strong). However one thing he did say was that he was extremely sceptical of the new Super League Europe in general and Chris Caisley in particular, saying that a couple of good seasons by the Bulls seem to have qualified him to run the game. Salman Rushdie, he alleged, was a more popular figure in Bradford than Caisley.



■ What's my view of the Super League situation I hear you ask (or were you just yawning?) Well for what it's worth I'd be extremely wary if I were the likes of Warrington, Halifax or Castleford. At the moment they're lining up with the big boys to outvote the rest of the league, but do they think that Leeds, Bradford, Wigan and Saints would give a

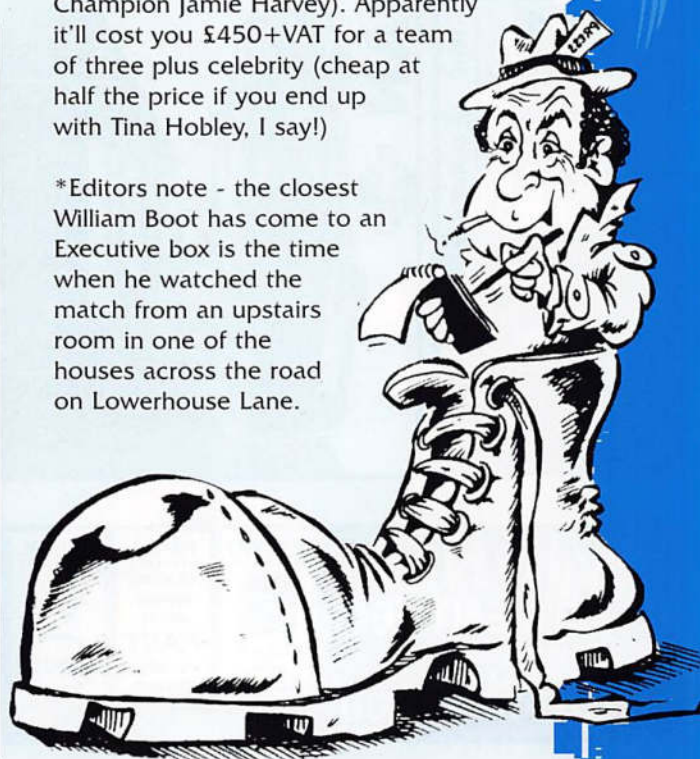
toss if the chance came to get rid of them in favour of Edinburgh, Dublin or Barcelona in a few years time? I'm all for progress, marketing and development, but I think it's time for every true RL

person, whether Super League, FASDA or BARLA, to stand up to the pie-in-the-sky soundbite merchants who have proved time and time again that, for all their fine words, they couldn't organise a social event in a

brewery (or an Oceania Cup in, well, Oceania).

■ Attention all golfers! I've been rubbing down my old hickory shafts in anticipation of the club's All Star Celebrity Golf Classic later in the year. Frank Myler tells me that big names from the likes of Emmerdale and Coronation Street are expected to be in attendance, not to mention Stan Boardman (pictured above with darts Champion Jamie Harvey). Apparently it'll cost you £450+VAT for a team of three plus celebrity (cheap at half the price if you end up with Tina Hobley, I say!)

*Editors note - the closest William Boot has come to an Executive box is the time when he watched the match from an upstairs room in one of the houses across the road on Lowerhouse Lane.



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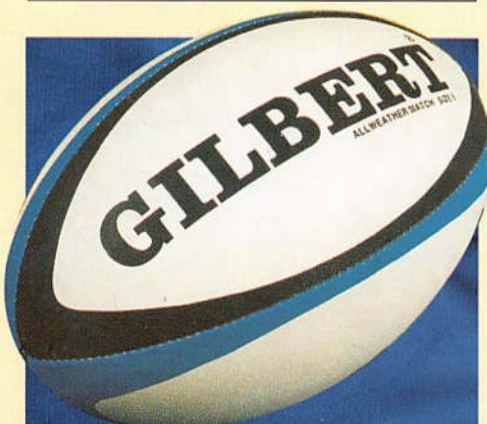
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Widnes Vikings

Colours: Black and White

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Jim SALISBURY | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 2. Dean CROSS | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 3. Jamie BLOEM | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 4. Shane WILSON | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 5. Peter SMITH | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 6. Paul HOWELL | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 7. Paul EMERY | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 8. Craig MAKIN | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 9. Lee ASHTON | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 10. Neil MEASURES | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 11. Paul HARRIS | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 12. Kyle WHITE | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 13. Tane MANIHERA | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 14. TBA | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 15. TBA | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 16. TBA | ☐ ☐ ☐ |
| 17. TBA | ☐ ☐ ☐ |



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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

TODAY'S OFFICIALS



Referee: **Mr S NICHOLSON**



Touch Judges: **Mr B Sharrock**
Mr G Wallace

LINE-UP

Oldham

Colours: Red & White

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Steve WILDE | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Craig DIGGLE | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. Adrian MEADE | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. Sean COOPER | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Joe McNICHOLAS | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. Craig BARKER | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Neil FLANAGAN | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. Paul ROUND | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. John HOUGH | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. Martin MADERS | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11. Brian QUINLAN | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. Graeme SHAW | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. Mike PRESCOTT | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. TBA | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15. TBA | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 16. TBA | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17. TBA | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
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19	20	21	22	23	24

PENALTIES

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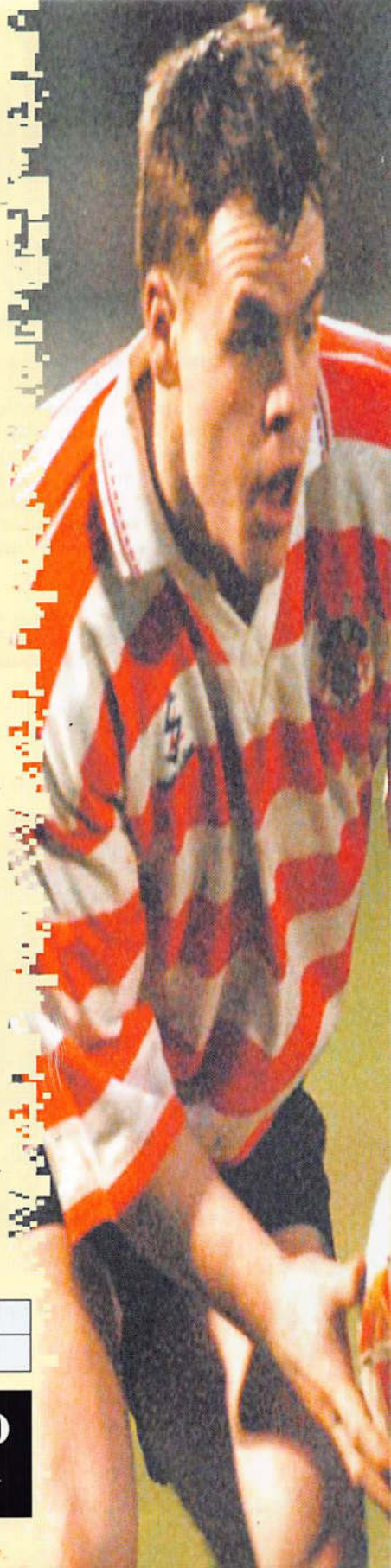
VIKINGS

OLDHAM



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Up Close... & Personnel

It has been a bewildering off season in Rugby League with every club seemingly having wholesale changes of personnel. To help you keep track of events here at Widnes, we've summed up our transfer activity, and have included the comments of Graeme West on some of the players who have come and gone.

IN...

Jim Salisbury, 24 year old full back from Liverpool St Helens RUFC. "We had a tip off about him, had him watched and were pleased with what we saw. He joined the line more often than is usual for an RU full back and didn't kick so often."

Tane Manihera, 23, half back/loose forward. "Can play any one of the key positions and has experience of playing alongside Paul Howells from his NZ Maori days." Neil Measures, 26, prop. "I played against him in a reserve fixture when I was at Wigan and he was at Barrow. I remember him as being a handful." Roy Litherland, 26, utility back, previously played with Halifax and York. Paul George, 20, scrum half, Widnes



Shane Wilson...experienced

born, signed from Wigan. "Great pace, but needs to work on his organisational skills - we've seen evidence of progress in that department already."

Shane Wilson, 24, centre, former South Sydney. "Struggled a bit for match fitness against Leigh, but that will come. All last season we were crying out for an experienced centre who could marshal the defence and now we've got one in Shane."

OUT...

Shane Cooper - retired. Rob Myler - signed for Worcester RU: "He trained here for two months but then got a fantastic offer to go to RU, and we don't begrudge him that. But we are holding out for compensation for the disruption it has caused to our team building plans." Anthony Samuels - released to comply with quota limit; "A tough decision because he'd had a great off season but when Tane Manihera arrived, someone had to go. We're trying to help him find another club."

ROUND & ABOUT...

"Jim Cassidy and Paul Gartland are in the same boat. They both struggled to stick with our training schedule during the winter due to other commitments but are now back on board. They played in the 'A' team last week and know that if they play consistently well they'll be in with a shout of a first team call up. Steve Boscoe hasn't been seen all winter and Phil Kendrick has a contract dispute - both will be allowed to move on if the terms are right. John Harrison is still on the books but didn't train pre-season. Shaun Richardson is back in training after his bad break and may be available in the summer but he still has a lot to do both physically and mentally to get himself right again for match action."

WIDNES VIKINGS

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Simon Says...

Hello, again.

After the traumas of last season, I guess the long close-season has been a good thing. It has helped us to forget the sinking titanic that was Widnes Vikings last year and left us without rugby for just long enough to miss it and want it back again (we're fools to ourselves!).

In between Widnes signing and losing a player, there was of course Christmas. I hope you all had a pleasant Christmas. In my family, somebody was bought the Star Wars trilogy and I have spent much time watching it since. I wonder what Luke Skywalker thought the first time he saw his father, Darth Vader, at the throne of the evil empire and ruthlessly chopping down Obe Wan Kenobe. His first impression of Vader must have been so different to what Skywalker eventually thought and knew of his father.

That's the great thing about science fiction - it's an escape - a fantasy world. In real life, of course, we judge people by first impressions all of the time, especially sportsmen. I remember writing a column two or three years ago in which I was writing of my first impressions of then new Widnes payer - Tim Russell. I said that he was too light-weight and would never become a favourite. How wrong I was.

For this reason I went to our pre-season friendly with Leigh with an open mind and determined not to be too critical or praising of our new signings on the strength of the one game. That soon went out of the window.

Widnes coach of last year, Doug Laughton, is renowned for his eye for talent and shrewd bargaining. On the

basis of two weeks ago, Graeme West also has the unique God-given ability.

Most people have said that new centre Shane

Wilson did not look fit enough.

Personally I cannot understand how anybody expects to be able to judge a man's fitness level from the stands. The thing that did shine through in Shane's performance for me, however, was that he has definite talent. The two clean breaks he made were due to his size, speed and skill, a formula that we have been missing in the three-quarters since Andy Currier left us last term.

The signing of Jim Salisbury could prove to be a master-stroke. The ability that separates outstanding full-backs from good ones is that of being able to join the attacking line with precision timing and running at a gap. It was evident on Sunday that Salisbury has this ability in abundance and this could make him a potent force in rugby league.

I knew a little about Neil Measures before Widnes signed him in that I had seen him play and was aware that he was a tough customer; and so it proved two weeks ago as he tore into the Leigh pack like a raging bull. His sheer presence seemed to give Craig Makin the confidence to do the same, and Makin had an outstanding game.

Paul George clearly has a great rugby brain. He was creating gaps left, right and centre and it is just a shame that the players around him were not always taking full advantage.

So a hugely promising display against Leigh.

Roy Litherland and Tane Manihera are yet to get their chance to impress (Litherland did not play for very long and Manihera not at all against Leigh) but let's hope they give us a good first impression.



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WIDNES
VIKINGS

WIDNES VIKINGS FactFile

Date	Opponent	V	Kick-Off	Att	Result	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
1	OLDHAM (SCCC3)	H	3 00																				
8	Wakefield	A	3 30																				
15	SCCC4																						
22	ROCHDALE	H	3 00																				
MARCH																							
1	Hull KR	A	3 00																				
8	HUNSLET	H	3 00																				
15	Featherstone	A	3 30																				
29	Leigh	A	3 00																				
APRIL																							
5	DEWSBURY	H	3 00																				
10	Whitehaven	A	7 30																				
13	SWINTON	H	3 00																				
19	Keighley	A	3 00																				
26	WAKEFIELD	H	3 00																				
MAY																							
6	Rochdale	A	7 30																				
10	HULL KR	H	3 00																				
15	Hunslet	A	7 30																				
24	FEATHERSTONE	H	3 00																				
JUNE																							
3	LEIGH	H	7 30																				
7	Dewsbury	A	3 00																				
14	WHITEHAVEN	H	3 00																				
21	Swinton	A	3 00																				
24	KEIGHLEY	H	7 30																				
28	Whitehaven	A	3 30																				
JULY																							
5	DEWSBURY	H	3 00																				
12	Wakefield	A	3 30																				
15	SWINTON	H	7 30																				
26	Featherstone	A	6 00																				
AUGUST																							
2	HULL KR	H	3 00																				
7	Hunslet	A	7 30																				
16	KEIGHLEY	H	3 00																				
23	Leigh	A	3 00																				
30	ROCHDALE	H	3 00																				

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Club Talk

■ **This weekend is your last opportunity to buy Season Tickets at the discounted rate. Speak to Harold Lyskey at the Club Shop.**

■ If you are one of those early birds who purchased an eleven game season ticket before Christmas, did you know that four game supplements are now available to cover the rest of the season? There are considerable savings to be made compared to the admission price for four separate games, even more so if you purchase your supplement before the end of February. Ask at the shop for details.

■ Millennium Tickets have proved extremely popular with supporters, no doubt because they're good value, quite apart from the tremendous boost that they give to the Club's finances. A reminder of the prices - a Silver Ticket allowing access to ALL Vikings games here at the Stadium (League, Cup, play-off,

Academy, Alliance etc.) for three years costs £600 plus VAT. A Gold (five year) ticket costs £1060 plus VAT. Amongst the benefits is the Millennium Suite where members can meet before and after the game, as well as at half time.

■ The Junior Vikings will have their first meeting next Saturday, 7th February, 10.00am to 11.30am in the Social Club. Come along and meet Graeme West and the players, have fun and win prizes. All current junior season ticket holders are automatically members of the Junior Vikings and any new members who pay the £25 fee for the year will receive a season ticket! That works out at less than £1.70 per match admission! Watch out in the local press this week for details of all the other benefits you get from being a Junior Viking. Anyone who wants to help with the club in future is welcome to come along, and any mums and dads who might be thinking of buying a season ticket for themselves can do so at the shop that Saturday morning.

■ Fans wishing to travel to next week's league game at Wakefield can book on the Supporters Club coach by seeing Alan Rae in the bar under the South Stand today or via his shop, 9 Sunningdale Ave, Hough Green, 424 2524. Cost is £5.50, departing 12.45.

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ALLIANCE

■ **The Alliance fixtures don't get underway until the middle of this month but last week Widnes visited St Helens in a friendly match which was played under lights at Blackbrook ARLFC.**

The early part of the game was all Saints as they pressed on the Widnes line which managed to repel all attacks before taking a 6 point lead though an Alan Reddecliff try, goaled by Paul Wood. The try came as a result of a set play involving loose forward Jimmy Cassidy and full back Adam Hughes, Reddecliff's strength seeing him beat two defenders to go over in the corner.

Saints rallied and went in 12 - 6 ahead at the break, both tries coming as the result of poor handling by Widnes which gave the homeside possession.

The second half saw Colin Whitfield make some changes with Paul Gartland moving from stand - off to hooker and Roy Litherland coming into the stand-off berth. Jason Hunter also came off the bench and these substitutions served to turn the game Widnes' way.

From a simialr move to the one which gave the visitors their opening try, centre Carl Turner went in, Wood levelling the scores with his conversion and then Roy Litherland took on the Saints defence single handedly to score to the right of the posts, Wood again goaling.

The best try of the game came with fifteen minutes remaining as Eddie Kilgannon finished off a five man move, started in his own half by Paul Gartland and continued by Dave Smith, to score. Wood was on target once again to increase Widnes' lead to twelve points.

With the game drawing to a close Widnes posted a final score as Karl Fitzpatrick, on for Paul Wood, darted over for a try to complete a morale boosting victory for the visitors.

The most pleasing thing to come from this victory was the way the players seemed to be fitter and stronger than the St Helens side and once again there was a good

spirit amongst the side which helped when things weren't going their way. Captain Terry Reid led from the front whilst Dave Smith put in some bone - crunching tackles.

Widnes: A Hughes; A Reddecliff; T Fenlon, C Turner, E. Kilgannon; P Gartland, P Wood; T Reid, C Murphy, J Brown, D Smith, JP Doherty, J Cassidy. SUBS: J Hunter, R Litherland, K Long K Fitzpatrick, L Connolly, AN Other.

ACADEMY

■ **Give us a game - that's the message from the Widnes youngsters as they prepare for a season in Super League which doesn't kick off until 5th April, following an agreement with BARLA with regards to ensuring that the Youth and Academy seasons do not overlap.**

Following a 26-16 draw against the London Broncos in November they have concentrated on pre season training but are now looking to get in some match practice. Plans for a friendly prior to the first team fixture with Leigh didn't materialise as nobody wished to paly them - in fact some Super League clubs didn't have enough players to field an Academy side !

There were plans to travel to London once again and take on the Bronocs as the Widnes under 16s side were playing there but there was only one pitch available and with travelling time it was unlikely that both game could have been played.

At the time of going to press we were looking for opponents to play before today's game but not holding our breath. However we do have a friendly arranged for 8th March when we will entertain St Helens here prior to the Hunslet match with a 1.00pm kick-off.

With the team playing in the Super League this year there will be occasions when we won't be able to have curtain - raisers due to the fixture format but you can be assured that when they do take place you will see the best of the young rugby talent this country has to offer.



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Widnes Vikings



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film 98

WILLIAM BOOT REVIEWS UP 'N' UNDER... AND WHY NOT?

I'm not a big fan of films that include action footage - they're normally badly shot with choreographed moves which don't really convince the audience that it's the real thing. For all its bad press 'Up 'n' Under does look the part - the actors can all catch and pass, tackle and there were several impressive 'drop - offs' as The Wheatsheaf, coached by 2.4 children star Gary Oldman - an ex Castleford hooker who had been banned sine die for hitting a referee -overcame all the odds to beat The Cobblers Arms coached by Tony Slattery, ex Castleford vice chairman and ex lover of Oldman's wife.

Now I've not really given the plot away, I mean everyone knows that's the point of the film, and it trundles along without ever getting carried away but with enough one - liners to keep the audience chuckling.

I don't know if Stones put any money into the film but in nearly every scene there is a poster or a can, maybe if the film had been released last year they'd still be sponsoring Super League.

Once again Adam Fogerty took to the screen, flattening Neil Morrissey in a bar and running in several long range tries during the competition , Warrington coach Darryl Van de Velde must have been given a sneak preview of the film !

Griff Rhys Jones was superb as the architypal (check spelling !) local radio rugby league commentator complete with trilby

"As for comparisons with the 'Full Monty' there was only one - instead of a rear view of six naked steelworkers, there was a rear view of one naked Samantha Janus, much to Mrs Boot's disappointment."

and hip flask whilst the rest of the star - studded cast should be commended for treating the sport with the respect it deserved.

As for comparisons with the 'Full Monty' there was only one - instead of a rear view of six naked steelworkers, there was a rear view of one naked Samantha Janus, much to Mrs Boot's disappointment.

At the end, the rugby action looked good, the audience cringed as some of the tackles went in and cheered as the tries were scored. As for me the only unrealistic bit was Adam Fogerty scoring all those tries !

The film wasn't a laugh a minute, but then neither was the stage play, it was a tale about life, and a good one at that.

WILLIAM BOOT

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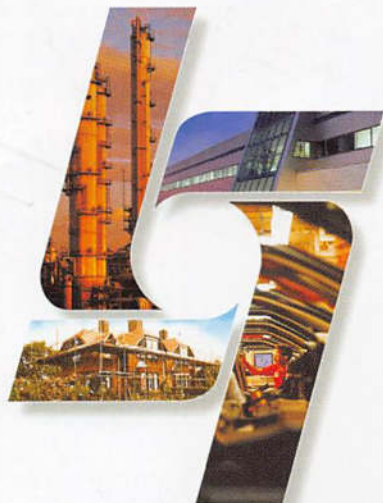


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