

# OLDHAM RLFC

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

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V BATLEY BULLDOGS  
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# Chairman's CHATTER

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

WELCOME to Boundary Park for our second Home game of the Season against Batley Bulldogs. We extend a warm welcome to Kevin Nicholas, David Ward and all the Officials, Players and Supporters but hope that they return home disappointed with the result!

Our first Home game of the Season against Bramley last Monday turned into something of a nightmare and I certainly didn't get much sleep Monday night. I am sure the Players will be keen to get that performance out of their systems today and give you something to cheer. Looking back on the Bramley game there wasn't a great deal wrong with our attacking play but our defence, which has been pretty good up to then, fell apart and we paid the ultimate price.

Plenty of people were quick to tell us about our goal-kicking problem but I can assure you that both Paddy and Mick Coates and the Board have been aware of it for some time. It is not a case of just sitting back and hoping that we can win without having a regular goal-kicker but it is difficult to find someone capable of coming into the side and holding down a place on merit, rather than just on the basis that a Player can kick goals.



We have been talking to several clubs for a while now to resolve this problem and with a bit of luck we may have an addition to the squad in time for today's game. If we haven't, I hope that you will give Richard Darkes, or whoever else may be given the responsibility, your full support as without it a Player's confidence can soon drain away.

Although the performance last week was not what we hoped for, we were encouraged by the attendance and there is no doubt that the potential in Oldham is enormous. When I attend FASDA or Rugby League Council meetings people are genuinely surprised at the level of interest in the town and we can all feel proud of being Oldham Rugby League Supporters. I hope that today the Players can

get the right result in what will be a difficult game against a Batley side that seems to have a good mixture of youth and experience. I also hope that people will not forget too easily that six months ago there wasn't a professional Club in the town and everybody connected with the Club is giving 100% plus to the cause.

Best Wishes.

Chris Hamilton



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A J Law Cup Winners 1998

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF  
THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLDHAM RLFC (1997) LTD.



Roger

# Oldham Evening Chronicle's HALSTEAD



THE disappointing crowd of only 60,000 for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final at Wembley perhaps added weight to my article in the match programme for the postponed game against Lancashire Lynx in which I advanced the argument that we were becoming a TV sport.

I daresay millions watched the Eagles of Sheffield dare to perform the Rugby

League version of the Full Monty by whipping Wigan to some tune in the biggest Wembley upset of the post-war period.

And of those millions a good percentage would be based in the game's heartland of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria . . . genuine RL fans who chose to watch the BBC version rather than make the trip to the capital.

It has been widely suggested that the lowest cup final gate for years was due to the relatively small level of support generated by a Sheffield club based on the edge of League territory and in a city far better known for its soccer and its steel than for its rugby.

Certainly, it is true to say that there would have been far fewer empty seats had Wigan been playing Bradford Bulls, St Helens, Leeds Rhinos or even clubs with great RL traditions such as Castleford, Salford or several others.

But was there more to it than that? I fear that in the hearts and minds of many long-standing enthusiasts of the sport the Silk Cut Challenge Cup has been somewhat devalued by events of the past two or three years.

To start with, it is no longer the great finale to the season, the climax in the Spring to a full winter of tough, tense competition.

The early rounds, moreover, can be likened to a pre-season tournament in which they provide clubs with their first competitive action after a long autumn-winter close season.

And then we get the constant preaching that Super League is THE most important competition and that everything else pales into insignificance alongside it.

With eight Australian coaches at 12 Super League clubs and the upcoming Aussie-style end-of-season play-off, culminating in the Grand Final at Old Trafford in October, there is a great danger that the Grand Final will replace the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final as the sport's major showpiece event.

The Challenge Cup final's claim to be No 1 will also suffer from the temporary closure of Wembley after next year's final.

The finals in the year 2000 and the year 2001 will have to be held elsewhere – Twickenham is one of the possible venues – and by the time we return to the new National Stadium at Wembley in 2002, the Grand Final may have snatched the initiative.

I wish the Grand Final no harm. Long may it fill Old Trafford with 55,000 fans and many thousands more watching on TV, but I won't be alone in mourning the Challenge Cup final's loss of status as the jewel in the crown of the only competition that involves ALL pro clubs and many more from the amateur ranks.

The event was crying out for a top show at Wembley this year and hats off to Sheffield Eagles for ensuring that it was one of the best.

John Kear's men did a wonderful job, not only demolishing the hottest-ever Wembley favourites but winning the hearts of a nation that loves to see the day of the underdog.

The Lance Todd Trophy went to Eagles playmaker Mark Aston. He was a worthy winner, but my vote was given to prop and skipper Paul Broadbent who, with fellow front-row man Dale Laughton, did as much as anyone to ensure that Eagles got a stranglehold where it mattered most – in the pack.

The new Oldham club can draw great inspiration from Sheffield's achievement in reaching Wembley, and going on to win the cup, only 14 years after its formation.

Paddy Kirwan said as much at the public meeting which launched the Roughyeds last autumn. If he felt it then, he will certainly think it now.

So, let's see, 14 years on from 1997 is the year 2011. Let's target that for the Roughyeds first trip to Wembley and let's hope that, by that time, the Cup final is still the premier event on the RL schedule.

Sheffield Eagles went a long way at Wembley to making sure the cup final remains at No 1. Well done, Eagles.



# The Roughyeds

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# Don Yates On This Day

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

## DON YATES RECALLS THIS DAY IN HISTORY

UNTIL the switch to summer rugby, early May was traditionally the climax of the rugby league season when the leading clubs contested either the Cup or Championship final, sometimes both. Immediately after the First World War, the Lancashire Cup competition was also staged in spring instead of autumn and it was on this day in 1919, Saturday 10th May, that Oldham met Rochdale Hornets in a unique Lancashire Cup Final. It was expected to be a close fought affair and so a crowd of 18,617 were attracted to the Weaste, Salford. As events turned out, Hornets proved to be much the better side on the day and they ran out comfortable 22-0 winners, second-row forward Sammy Carter crossing for two of their six tries.



*Ike Southward*

Thirty-nine years and another World War later, on Saturday 10th May 1958, Wigan met Workington Town at Wembley in the Challenge Cup Final. The Riversiders were expected to win comfortably but Town took an early 5-0 lead and, but for a series of injuries at a time when substitutes were not permitted, they could have pulled off a shock victory. As it was Wigan won

13-9. Winger Ike Southward, later to join Oldham, scored all the Workington points with a try and three goals.

The 1967 Championship Final between Wakefield Trinity and St. Helens went to a replay which drew a crowd of 33,537 to Station Road, Swinton on Wednesday 10th May. Trinity won 21-9 to lift the title for the first time in their history.

Twelve months ago, on Saturday 10th May 1997, Saddleworth Rangers won the Oldham Amateur Championship when they defeated Waterhead 31-2 in the final which was staged at Greenfield.

It was on this day in 1978, Wednesday 10th May, that the BARLA open age team took on the Northern Zone at Lae, Papua New Guinea during BARLA's tour of the South Pacific. It was a tough match in which defences were well on top. Northern Zone led 4-2 with ten minutes remaining, full-back Rodney Som having landed two penalties to one from BARLA's Peter Glover. At that point BARLA winger Steve Critchenson was sent off for dissent two minutes later second-rower Ronnie Carter joined him after throwing a punch. This seemed to incense the excitable crowd of 5,500, several of whom invaded the pitch and attacked the BARLA players. Fortunately no injuries were sustained although the match was abandoned. At hooker for BARLA that evening was Geoff Catling from the Heavy Woollen District who turned professional with Dewsbury shortly after the tour.

A senior international between England and France took place on this day in 1956, Thursday 10th May. The setting was the lovely city of Lyons with France making good use of home advantage to win 23-9. England were in the match up to half-time when they trailed by only 4-3. There was one Roughyed in the English line-up, centre Alan Davies who scored one of the English tries, the other two being awarded to Mick Sullivan (Huddersfield) and Colin Clift (Wakefield Trinity).

Finally, it was on this day in 1992, Sunday 10th May, that Wigan winger Martin Offiah scored a remarkable ten tries at Central Park where Leeds were beaten 74-6 in the semi-final of the Premiership competition.



# Comments from THE COACH

THE support we have received at the opening three away games, and especially the first home game against Bramley has been terrific. It has shown how important Rugby League is to the people of Oldham, and how important an Oldham team is to Rugby League.

The crowd of 2,900 for the first home game against Bramley will have surprised many people in the game, and certainly a number of first division clubs who are struggling with less than a third of that number. As a game, the crowd were treated to some very entertaining open rugby with both sides contributing on attack, to produce 16 tries. Taking no credit away from Bramley we did not do ourselves justice defensively. In our first three league games we conceded only four tries, so it was a shock to the system to concede nine tries in one game.

Prior to the Bramley game our defence had been sound, but our control of the ball going forward had let us down during long periods of the first three games.

In the build up to the Bramley game the emphasis was on getting our

attack into shape, and improving the ball control. We obviously did something right because we scored seven tries and crossed the try line on four other occasions only for these efforts to be disallowed by the officials.

We have now shown at various stages of our opening matches that we have the ability to match any team in the division on both attack and defence. We now have to learn to put both aspects of the game together, consistently. We are still a young team, learning about each other, and it is important to take some positives from the defeat by Bramley and improve on the negatives.

One area that certainly needs to be addressed is that of goal kicking. The extra two points added to each try can give a massive psychological advantage, but can deflate a team when missed.

I expect today's game with Batley to be a tough encounter. Batley have a lot of experience in their ranks, and I am sure they will have a big say in who wins the 2nd Division Championship.

**Paddy Kirwan**



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# The Roughyeds

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# Best Wishes to Oldham Roughyeds

# Junior Roughyeds

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"THE ROUGHYEDS"

## Hi to all the Junior Roughyeds.

We wish to send out a warm Oldham Rugby League welcome to all the Players, Supporters and Junior members of Batley Bulldogs.

On Saturday the 2nd May the Junior Roughyeds were very fortunate to be able to watch the Oldham Players training at Boundary Park. I know the children (and parents) enjoyed this. We then held our monthly meeting at the Clayton Arms. Richard Dakes, Graeme Shaw, Adrian Mead and Paul Round attended the meeting to sign their Player Profiles.

The Roughyed was launched last Monday at the Bramley match. The winner of the prize for naming the Roughyed was won by Mrs Shaw for "Red Ed the Roughyed". Well done Mrs Shaw.

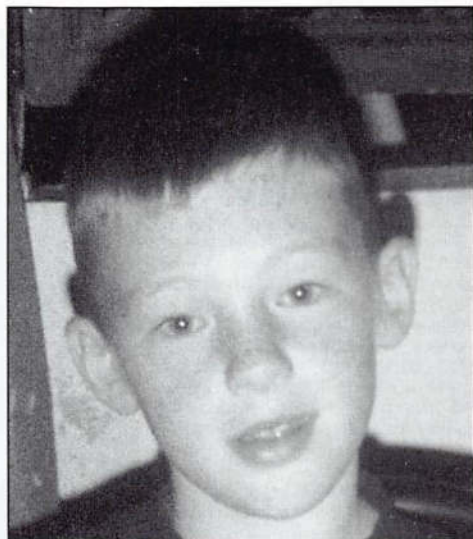
This season we have two teams of Ballboys/Ballgirls for our home matches.

I would like to thank the following children on behalf of ORLFC for volunteering to be Ballboys/Girls. I'm sure they will do us proud.

I would like to thank Graham Aitken from Royton Tigers who did a short training course on Saturday morning for the children. Ball Boy/Ball Girl Team A is made up of Freddie Fallas, David Buchan, Kieran Aitken, Ashley

Ogden, Steven Fitton, Steven Wall, Emma Buckley, Lisa Connor, Mark Brocklehurst, Sarah Robinson, Lee Reed and Dawn Reed.

Well, what a great day and a great win at Doncaster for Oldham. The away support was tremendous. It was a very special day for mascot Nigel Scott and his family too!



Nigel Scott

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# Today's VISITORS

## **SIMON JACKSON**

Simon signed for the Club in June 1995 having previously played Junior and Amateur Rugby league for St. John Fisher. He is a product of the Academy Team at Batley. He broke into the First Team last season and has now established himself as a regular member of the First Team squad at the age of 21.

## **LEE BARGATE - Wing/Centre**

Lee is in his second spell at the Club, having initially signed from Middleton Amateurs in 1990. He then went to Featherstone Rovers before being persuaded back to Batley by David Ward.

## **ROGER SIMPSON - Centre/Winger/Stand Off/Full Back**

Rover signed for Batley in January 1996 as part of a deal which saw Glen Tomlinson transferred in the opposite direction to Bradford Bulls. He has recently had a testimonial to recognise his long service at Bradford Bulls during which time he received one cap for England against France in 1995. He has now played some 40 games for Batley scoring 21 tries and is still capable of going the length of the field.

## **PAUL GLEADHILL - Winger**

Paul came to Batley with David Ward at the beginning of this season having previously played at Featherstone Rovers. As a speedy and elusive Winger he is already making his mark at the Club by getting on the score sheet. Last season he played 22 times for Featherstone scoring 13 tries.

## **RICHARD PRICE -**

## **Stand Off/Goal Kicker**

Richard signed from Sheffield Eagles in 1996. Last Season he broke the Club's points scoring record in 31 appearances scoring 22 tries and 110 goals making a total of 308 points. He has also previously played for Hull during which time he played twice for Great Britain Under 21's.

## **STEVE WALKER -**

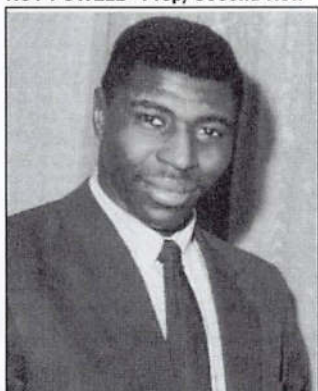
## **Centre/Winger/Full Back**

Steve signed from Dudley Hill Amateurs in 1992 and since then prior to this Season has played 103 times for Batley scoring 48 tries and 16 goals. Last Season he played on 22 occasions and scored 11 tries and 10 goals.

## **DERYCK FOX - Scrum Half**

Deryck joined Batley at the beginning of this Season from Featherstone Rovers. He has previously enjoyed an illustrious career with both Featherstone Rovers and Bradford. He has two Caps for England whilst playing for Bradford Northern as well as 14 Caps for Great Britain whilst in his first spell at Featherstone and at Bradford. He also played once for Great Britain Under 21's and Batley are hoping that his experience will prove invaluable to all at the club this Season. He is another player born locally and has returned to his home town Club.

## **ROY POWELL - Prop/Second Row**



Roy has joined the Club this Season from Featherstone Rovers and was immediately made Club Captain which he appears to be relishing. He played on 29 occasions for Featherstone last Season and also had a long and distinguished career with Leeds. Whilst at Leeds he won a total of 19 Caps for Great Britain as well as 5 Caps for Great Britain Under 21's. He is well known for his defensive qualities and is a Batley lad.

## **MARK CASS - Scrum Half/Hooker**

Mark signed from Hull in 1992 having previously played amateur Rugby League in Middleton, Leeds. A past Batley Player of the Year, up until the beginning of this Season he had played 139 games for Batley and scored 35 tries and a drop goal. Last season he played on 27 occasions scoring 10 tries

and a drop goal.

## **ANDY WRAY - Prop/Second Row**

Andy is on loan from Featherstone until the end of July 1998. He is another player persuaded to join Batley by David Ward and having impressed in the early Alliance games has now broken into the first team squad.

## **GRAHAM MIDDLETON - Prop/Second Row**

Graham joined Batley from Leeds in 1993 and prior to the start of this Season had made 60 appearances scoring 7 tries. He is another player who due to a dispute with the previous Board did not play last Season but under a new Coach and Board he has now re-joined the Club and has immediately made his presence felt in the First Team squad.

## **TONY WALTON - Second Row**

Tony joined the Club from Doncaster in 1993 and up until the start of this season had made 104 First Team appearances scoring 19 tries. Due to injuries he played on only 16 occasions last Season scoring 3 tries but should play a major part in the first team squad this Season.

## **PHIL MIRFIN - Second row/Loose Forward**

Phil joined the Club from Castleford in 1995 and is another player who did not play for the Club last Season due to a dispute but has now returned after impressive games in the Alliance and is again part of the First Team Squad.

## **PAUL HARRISON - Centre/Second Row/Loose Forward**

Paul joined the Club from Hull in 1994 and up until the start of this season had played on 71 occasions scoring 21 tries. Due to a dispute with the Club he did not play last season and eventually went to York, but has now re-signed for Batley and is relishing his new role as a Loose Forward having previously played mainly as a Centre and on occasions in the Second Row.

## **JONNY MORGAN - Second row**

Johnny has joined the Club this Season as yet another recruit from Featherstone Rovers having previously played for Doncaster. He has quickly established himself in the First Team Squad.



# Don Yates . . . Statistically SPEAKING

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

THE first opponents that the Roughyeds entertained at senior level at Boundary Park were Batley. Oldham beat them here in January 1982 when the match was switched from frozen Watersheddings to the electrically heated pitch at Sheepfoot Lane. That was one of 73 competitive matches between these clubs, 40 of which have been won by Oldham, 26 by Batley and seven ending all square. The Gallant Youths have only won at Oldham twice, both league matches and both by a three point margin. In April 1949 they won 5-2 and in January 1971 by 10-7. Batley's biggest victory over Oldham came at Mount Pleasant in April 1924 when they won a Championship semi-final tie by

Youths were beaten 44-0 in a second round Player Trophy tie at Mount Pleasant. Second-rower Paul Round was the try scoring hattrick hero of that win.

## RESULTS OLDHAM - BATLEY MATCHES DURING THE PAST TEN SEASONS

|                    |                  |    |
|--------------------|------------------|----|
| 89-90 League       | Oldham 22 Batley | 4  |
| League             | Batley 14 Oldham | 30 |
| 90-91 Regal Trophy | Batley 20 Oldham | 16 |

## DETAILS OF BRAMLEY'S LAST VISIT TO WATERSHEDDINGS

Sunday 10th January 1982  
Division Two  
OLDHAM 17 BATLEY 9  
half time 12-2  
attendance 2,743

Oldham Tries: Phil Ward,  
Adrian Alexander  
Terry Flanagan  
Goals: Mick Parrish (4)  
Batley Tries: Martin Savage  
Goals: Henry Oulton

**Oldham:** Alan Taylor; Geoff Munro, Brian Caffery, Mick Parrish, Phil Ward; Ashley McEwan, Paddy Kirwan; Brian Hogan, Alan McCurrie, Adrian Alexander, Bob Mordell, Mick Worrall & Terry Flanagan  
Substitutes; Ray Ashton & Alan Platt  
**Batley:** Paul Storey; John Jones, Malcolm Shaw, Steve Presley, Henry Oulton; Trevor Briggs, Neil Pickerill; Mick Frain, Brendan Cummins, Jimmy Waltham, Alan Watts, Martin Whelan & Martin Savage.  
Substitutes; John Pitts & John Vodden



Mick Worrell

38-0. Oldham's biggest home win over Batley came in August 1963 when winger Trevor Simms scored a hattrick of tries as the Roughyeds won a league match 44-7. But Oldham's biggest ever victory over Batley was achieved in November 1987 when the Gallant



# Iva Slateloose

## GUEST WRITER

SINCE the Junior supporters mascots have been writing about their experiences watching Oldham I thought I'd ask some of the players for their views on the games they'd featured in. This is what they wrote:-

### My Trip to Workington by A. Mead

I'VE NEVER travelled as far before. I thought I'd gone to a foreign country. Neil said that in the past everyone over 25 never went to Workington because you couldn't get back in time for last orders and Cumbrian forwards always gave you a right belting. Besides, the coach and the kitman always won all your wages off you at cards. I didn't believe him at first, but when I got back to Oldham I was black and blue and I didn't have enough money to go for a curry with the lads. I was starving. For some reason we only got jam butties after the match. I don't think I want to go to Workington again. I didn't understand what they were saying. Can anyone tell me what a 'marra' is?

### A Visit to Bramley by C. Eckersley

I ALWAYS thought Bramley was where apples came from, but I didn't see any orchards. Not that I could see much anyway because it was persisting down, we had to get changed in a swimming pool under the South Stand. I kept expecting Sharon Davies to come past but all I saw were a few 'floaters'. It wasn't any better outside. I kept asking for an umbrella because my dad told me Stanley Matthews once played on the wing with

one. But the referee said if the wind got behind me I'd fly down the wing like a bird. Funny, I've always dreamed of doing that! Anyway they had these players with peculiar names. I asked this chap called Freeman about his boots and he told me to see Hardy and Willis. A bloke called Tiffany invited me for breakfast. They had two Gibbons but I didn't find out if they were a breeding pair. The ref said Eugene Currie was hotter than a vindaloo. And somebody told me this guy Golden had some special parts of his anatomy but I didn't know what he meant.

### We Slew the Dragons by C. Barker

WE GOT lost going to Doncaster. Somebody said they play at Belle Vue and we ended up in Wakefield. Anyway they told us to think of it as a day at the Races and if we found the race-course we'd be alright. It was then that I thought we'd be facing the Marx Brothers. I didn't fancy having to mark that Groucho. Anyway, eventually we got to the ground. This guy was selling a mag called 'Who the Hell was St. George Anyway?'. I always thought they had St. Ledger in Doncaster. When the teams came out they announced 'Here come the dragons' but all their players had Woolf on their jerseys. I thought 'Aye, aye they're trying to confuse us here'. It worked for about 40 minutes till Neil scored. At half time Mr Kirwan told us they were Woolfs in sheeps clothing. He must have been right because in the second half we fleeced them!

Sorry Lads. Only Joking!

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# Don Yates . . . . .Down Memory Lane

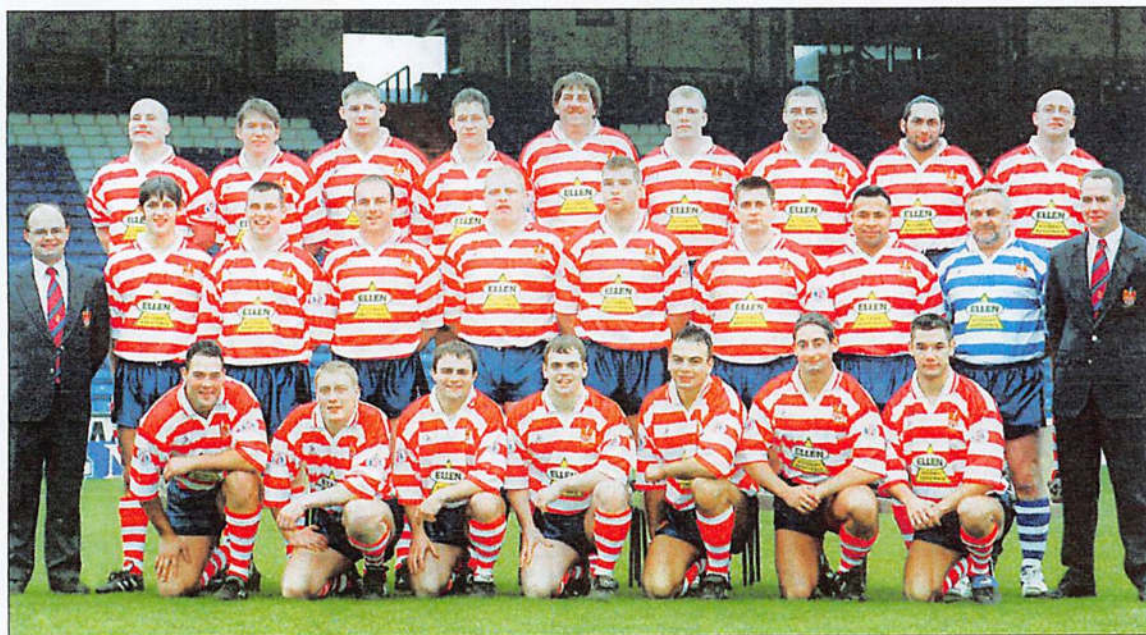
When the Challenge Cup was introduced way back in 1897 it was very much an end-of-season tournament. In fact the entire league programme had been completed by mid-March with Oldham placed second in the Lancashire section and Batley sixth

Batley's semi-final opponents were Warrington with the match staged at Huddersfield in pouring rain. Late in the match, with Batley leading 6-0, Warrington asked the referee to stop the match because of the deteriorating conditions. The referee agreed with their request and the match concluded six minutes early. Warrington later objected to the League and asked for

**St.Helens:** Tommy Foulkes; Bob Doherty, David Traynor, Jim Barnes, Billy Jacques; R.O'Hara, F.Little; T.Winstanley, Kitty Briars, W. Winstanley, T. Reynolds. Joe Thompson, T.Dale, S.Rimmer & Pug Whiteley.

An early dropped goal by Joe Oakland, worth four points in those days, settled the nerves of the Gallant Youths in a match which, by all accounts was full of open, entertaining play. Jack Goodall then crossed for a try after a Wattie Davies kick and Batley led 7-0 at the interval. St.Helens hit back after the break when their leading try scorer David Traynor scored the only try which Batley conceded during their entire cup campaign. Munns then restored Batley's seven point advantage by scrambling over for a try in the corner which brought the scoring to a conclusion. Batley had won the Cup 10-3 and they returned home to a tumultuous reception. The Gallant Youths had achieved immortality.

**All photographs by kind permission of the Oldham Evening Chronicle  
whose co-operation we gratefully acknowledge.**



## OLDHAM 1998 The Roughyeds

**Back Row:** Michael Edwards, Chris Eckersley, Brian Quinlan, Nathan Varley, Paul Round, Graeme Shaw, Keith Atkinson, Craig Diggle, Sean Cooper.

**Middle Row:** Paddy Kirwan (Coach), Darren Robinson, Graig Barker, Richard Darkes, Jason Clegg, Martin Maders, Andy Fleming, Afi Leuila, Steve Wanless (Physio), Mick Coates (Asst. Coach),

**Front Row:** Michael Prescott, Steven Wilde, Neil Flanagan, John Hough, Ian Sinfield, Aidrian Mead, Joe McNicholas.

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# From the Supporters Club

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

## MAIN BRANCH CASINO EVENING

We can't take you to Monte Carlo or Las Vegas, but we can bring you the excitement of the Roulette Wheel, as we are looking at organising a Casino Night in June, at a venue yet to be arranged. Watch this space, and local paper or ask any Supporters Club Official for further details.

If you want to mix with the "high rollers" come along to the Casino Night.

## AWAY TRAVEL

We will be organising coach travel to all away matches this season, with coaches departing from the Black Horse public house on Ripponden Road, Watersheddings. Seats on the coaches can be reserved by contacting Joyce (665 1832) prior to match day.

Members of the main branch of the Supporters Club receive a discount on the above prices.

Please contact Joyce (665 1832) for details of the departure time and prices for the coaches to future away matches.

These coaches are scheduled to arrive at the match within a reasonable time prior to kick-off and depart for home immediately after the match.

We will also be organising coaches for travel to our home matches to be played at Spotland, Rochdale when Boundary Park is unavailable.

## ROUGHYHEAD REWARD

This year the half time draw will be known as the Roughyhead Reward and will again be sold by the main branch of the Supporters Club. As in previous years the winner will receive 50% of the total sales at each match. The winning number will be drawn at half time and the holder of the winning ticket will be presented with their prize on the pitch.

Please look out for the Roughyhead Reward team at today's match and future fixtures (including those taking place at Rochdale) and please buy a ticket or two. Remember the more you purchase, the bigger the prize, the more it helps Oldham RLFC.

## FUTURE EVENTS

We are always looking at different ideas for fund raising so watch this space in the programmes for details of future events that we hope you will attend and enjoy. If you have any fund raising ideas please contact either Alice (633 6780), Sue (681 3397), Trevor (628

8006) or any other Supporters Club official.

## DUTY FREE SHOPPING

Looking to the future, we are considering the possibilities of organising a special Christmas Shopping Weekend to either Bruges or Paris, including a trip to a Hypermarket on the outskirts of Calais on the return journey. The trip will include a one night stay on the continent and a Channel crossing by Le Shuttle.

If you are interested please contact either Alice (633 6780) or Trevor (628 8006) for further details.

## MEMBERS DRAW

Please remember that a free draw will be held for members of the main branch of the Supporters Club attending at any function we organise, so come along and enjoy yourself, you may be the lucky member.

## FASHION & CLOTHES SHOW

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## ORLFC SUPPORTERS CLUB- WATERSHEDDINGS 107

The latest news from the 107 branch is we are holding a **General Quiz Night** on the **19th May at Mr Wrigleys at 8.00pm**

Anyone interested in a stop over in York or transport to any match, please contact Debbie on 633 0849 or Cathy on 624 2942.

We would like to thank all members and non-members for turning up at our start of season bash and thank you to all who made it such a good night.

**Good Luck in today's game Lads.**

Cathy Houghton  
Treasurer



# From The EDITOR

I WAS INTERESTED in Paddy Kirwan's comment in the last programme about having the same referee in successive away matches. Paddy would have his own reasons for disliking this situation, but I thought it was noticeable that Oldham got 'caned' at Bramley for their marker defence at play-the-ball. At both Workington and Doncaster Oldham's markers worked really hard to close down the opposition early with Mick Martindale outstanding in this role. No doubt the coach and players had worked on this aspect of play in training. However at Bramley Oldham were penalised unmercifully and Mickey Edwards was sin-binned for an offence at play-the-ball, the same 'offence' incidentally which led to Sheffield's second try at Wembley. At one stage Oldham conceded yet another penalty, I remarked that if this was Wigan and the game was on Sky TV Eddie and Stevo would be singing the praises of the defence. Funny isn't it, how referees have different interpretations of the same law? Or even how the same referee can vary in his application of a law from game to game! Could this be because a referee's assessor has mentioned an aspect of his game he

could improve? Whatever, there is no doubt that real or perceived inconsistency is the feature of refereeing which most frustrates spectators. With so much riding on results these days it makes you wonder whether it might not be better to decide that once a referee is considered good enough he should be left to get on with it without further interference. Now there's a reactionary opinion if ever there was one.

## TALKING POINT

IS THERE any point in a Rugby League scrum? Nothing could be more damaging to the reputation of the game than the current situation whereby six players from each side come together in a loose alliance, meet briefly and break up at the earliest opportunity. The hooker is effectively redundant and it is getting to the point where the ball barely leaves the scrum half's hands. Spectators are so immune to the blatant disregard shown for the laws of the game that the oft heard cry of 'feeding' has not been heard these many years past. Alright so it speeds the game up, but the idea that putting twelve players on one spot will give more room for the backs to move and execute rehearsed

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# From The EDITOR

## Continued

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

moves is not actually exploited. And why? Because teams have taken to putting props or second rows in the stand-off position while the half back makes a token gesture of putting his head in the scrum. Power replacing skill. And all the time the blurring of roles continues so that the attributes particular to one position are eroded in favour of the all purpose footballer, good at everything and outstanding at nothing.

Anyway to return to the point: What is to be done about the scrum? Well in my

view it's time we enforced the rules as they are written. I do not see why any referee should blatantly ignore one part of the rulebook while enforcing the rest. What's more let's make forwards pack down while the backs stay out of the scrum and, hopefully, try to play some football. And if the two packs can't form up properly at the first attempt penalise the offending side. Players will soon get the message, if not from the referee then from their own coach who won't be happy about his side giving away easy ground.

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# From the Pen of . . . Michael Turner

## The Men from the Mount - Gallant "Bulldog" Youths

TODAY it falls upon the "Roughyeds" to welcome to town the Batley club who were fellow founder members of the Rugby League.

Way back in those early "Northern Union" days the team known as the "Gallant Youths" were a major power in the game and became the first winners of the Challenge Cup in 1897 and retained the trophy the

Perhaps the best known player to assist both clubs is JOHN ETTY.

"Big John" holds our post war record for tries in a season with the total of 43. This achievement was a telling factor which helped the club to the Championship title in the Oldham RLFC 'Hall of Fame'.

Prior to joining Oldham, he had given just short of ten years service to Batley (his home town club), during which time he won Yorkshire county recognition. After his brief but successful spell with the "Roughyeds", John went on to gain more honours in the twilight of his career, including winners medals in the challenge Cup and the Yorkshire Cup, with the famous Wakefield Trinity team of the early 1960's.

following year. Oldham broke the sequence in 1899 with our famous final victory over Hunslet, but Batley again claimed the trophy in 1901, defeating Oldham on the way with a 9-2 victory in the semi final at Huddersfield.

On the one occasion that Batley won the Championship, Oldham were again defeated in the semi final or play off stage of the competition. This was in 1924 when, after thrashing the "Roughyeds" 34-0, the men from Mount Pleasant went on to defeat Wigan in the final. This prevented the Central Park outfit from completing the double, as they had already beaten Oldham in the Challenge Cup final.

The last time the clubs met in league competition was in the second division campaign of 1989-90, when Oldham completed a comfortable double over our visitors. However the last senior match between the teams came in the second round of the Regal Trophy on December 9th, 1990 when Batley indeed showed the "Bulldog" spirit to come from well behind to steal a 20 points to 16 victory with a try in the last minute of the match.



John Etty (far right) pictured at a recent social function, at the Clayton Arms, when Martin Murphy was added to the Oldham RLFC "Hall of Fame".

(Left to right: Bernard Ganley, Martin Murphy, Alan Davies, Bob Irving and John Etty.)



Oldham RLFC

# The Roughyeds

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# The Roughyeds

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# Joe Warham GUEST WRITER

"THE ROUGHYEDS"



**JOE WARHAM, Vice President of Leeds Rhinos, is a powerful and much respected voice in the game. A former Oldham player in the 1950s, he moved into management and led Leeds to their championship successes in 1961 and 1969. He was responsible for signing some of the best players ever to wear amber and blue at Headingley. Here, he gives his views of the current state of Rugby League and offers a number of**

**ideas on how to improve the game he loves...**

IN conversation recently with one of the Club's youngsters I mentioned casually how I envied him and that I was playing trials with my home club, Warrington, when I was his age (16 years) in 1936.

He was obviously a bright kid because he immediately asked me did I realise that had I then had this same conversation my interlocutor I would have been playing in 1875, twenty years before the Northern Union was formed!

This set me thinking and made me realise that I had at least a second hand knowledge of the game since its foundation. I recalled the stories I was told of Billy Batten, Jack Fish, Harold Wagstaffe etc. I remember in my day, too, after each match, receiving a critique of my wing play at Oldham from George Smith. George who? Well, he was a New Zealand champion hurdler and jockey who toured with the 1905 All Blacks and the original 1907 All Golds.

Today all of this seems to disqualify me, and others of my ilk, from holding any valid opinion on the game. Odd voices that express themselves occasionally in the RL press relabelled as dinosaurs, or at least reactionaries of negative thinking. Nevertheless their view must be put, not least, because there is now a generation of players, spectators, legislators and yes, media personalities, who have no concept of what the game was.

Talk is always of a deadening series of play the balls in a sea of mud or snow. It was not this parody that shone like a beacon light through the dark gloom of the depressed thirties and gave consolation to tens of thousands of unemployed in Northern England.

The game we now have is different. It appeals, it seems, to a young generation, but seems to me to be flawed. It is fast, open and entirely predictable.

Every game will begin in the same manner. The starting side will kick deep. The ball will be caught by, or given to, a forward who will dive into the tackle. Five further dives will follow and the inevitable kick. The ball will be fielded and the same routine adopted by the opposite side. There is no obvious reason why sides should ever score. They do so because of weakness by the defence.

The much vaunted strength of today's tackling is often purile and when it fails, tries accrue - often in spectacular length of the field fashion. But little is created.

As the game develops, if a defensive lapse doesn't occur the side in possession (if in an attacking position) will keep the ball alive, tossing it around in basketball fashion in the hope of a gap appearing. Such gaps are not created by the attack.

Thus there is a sameness which is only alleviated by defensive error. Contrast this with (say) the base of the scrum moves which once so captivated us. At Salford in the thirties it was said that you had to tackle three men in order to kill the ball. Even from the terraces one never knew which of Watkins, Jenkins or Feetham had possession. And every club had its base of scrum: McCue, Shannon and Millington; Todd, Thornton and Beverley. You can add your own.

Rugby Union has improved enormously from what was deadly boring, to a serious contender for spectator appeal. It has done so by adopting Northern Union laws.

When, like many others during the war, I played my services RU "faute de mieux" I found the game totally inhibiting and frustrating, and adjustment of the ball was a "knock-on"; the ball could be kicked directly into touch from anywhere on the field; a loose ball had to be played with the foot before it could be picked up. All this has now been brought more nearly into line with RL.

It depresses me, therefore that we continue denigration of another code which while still massively inferior to RL now has its attractions.

The crux of the difference in codes (and much of



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# Joe Warham GUEST WRITER

the monotony of current RL) is the bringing back of the ball into play after a tackle. When a tackle is made the defence has negated the attack and in justice should have an equal chance of gaining possession.

This is recognised in RU and was so acknowledged when the Northern Union first introduced the 'play the ball'. In a two man scrum the ball was to be dropped centrally between two players either of whom could play the ball in any direction. Simple – but it has caused problems ever since and has been the cause of a multitude of rule changes.

Effectively, we know that in Union and in League the side in possession always had the greater chance of keeping it. In despair we have currently accepted that the side in possession keep it for six tackles; and voila, we have a type of American rugby. We'll stand back ten yards and give you five attempts to advance the ball or score, then it's our turn.

Coupled with the obscenity of so called scrums when the feeding side is guaranteed possession, the changed character of the game is completed. We might just as well dispense with the play the ball and scrums by allowing the side in possession simply to restart by passing the ball.

Incidentally this also applies to tap penalties where the ball never leaves the kicker's hand but is simply given a token touch with the foot. Witnessing this farce at a game in company with Greg McCallum I asked him didn't the laws forbid it. The controller of Referees agreed that they did but referees don't enforce the law!

So how can we get back to Rugby League football from the present cross between basketball and American rugby (if, like me, you want Rugby League football)?

1. Bring back meaningful scrums.
2. Change the play the ball so each side has a chance of possession.
3. Reduce the ten yard rule. If the side in possession wants more room, let them lie deeper. At present the team in possession is offside at EVERY play the ball.
4. Go back to games of thirteen a side with substitutions allowed only for bona fide injured players. The players will tire. So what? Isn't stamina one of those rugby virtues in which you are trying to prove yourself superior to the opposition?
5. Give authority (and responsibility) back to the

referee. Players over the years didn't question the referee – not because they were more virtuous than those of today; but simply because they knew they were wasting their time since the laws of the game forbade a referee to change a decision once given. Nowadays if players can prevail upon a referee to consult his lineman or the video, a decision can be reversed. And the authorities are surprised at the increased harassment of officials! Let me hurriedly add that I am wholly in favour of video replays and the philosophy that a little time spent in ensuring that the decision is a correct one is time well spent. But at a recent match the decision making involved the ref, both linesmen, the in goal judge, both captains, the aggrieved players and the alleged offender – eight people! This is decision by committee!

6. Allow 'stealing' of the ball. The onus is on the side in possession to keep it. Again the current situation is a lottery. Was it one on one? Was the ball dropped or knocked out of hand by the tackler? One could still penalise the holding up of a player (ie not completing the tackle) in order to allow for ball stealing.
7. No one to enter or leave the field of play without the referee's permission except in the case of injury when ONE person (initially) may render assistance.
8. Forbid the spectacle of a kicker making a sand castle in order to get high on the kick. This is a rugby skill and if the kicker cannot achieve it naturally he should not be allowed to use artificial means. If assistance is needed (because of hard grounds) then agree on a standard size tee to be provided by an official.
9. Revert to traditional numbering 1 - 13 with 14, 15 for substitutes.
10. Change the modus operandi of the referee so that he looks along the line of flight of the ball instead of being 10 yards away at right angles to the path of the ball. Last season more passes were given 'forward' when they weren't or ruled legal when in fact they were forward, than ever before in history.
11. Controversially! Go back to winter! Games are seasonal by nature. Cricket is a summer game. Rugby is a winter game.

After all that, what a wonderful game we have. Bad laws (or laws only observed in the breach) may reduce its attraction but, it is still the greatest game in the world.

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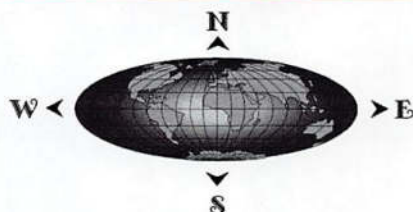
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# Don Yates' Here & There

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

AFTER the Roughyeds' comparatively successful start to the campaign, they will be confident of accompanying Bramley and one other Second Division club into Division One at the end of the season, writes Don Yates.

And on current form Batley look like gaining promotion alongside Oldham and Bramley so the big question is - Who will join Lancashire Lynx, York Wasps, Barrow Border Raiders, Workington Town and Doncaster Dragons in the Second Division next season? Like most contentious issues at Red Hall, the identity of applicants for professional status are shrouded in mystery. However, recent enquiries reveal that the contenders are Hemel Hempstead, Blackpool Gladiators, Woolston Rovers, Dudley Hill, Beverley, Walney Central, Egremont Rangers, Askam, London Skolars and Dewsbury Moor.

Of course, tenancy of a stadium at least equal to semi-professional soccer standards is a necessity, so how do we stand with regard to those requirements? Blackpool Gladiators have no problems because they play out of the Blackpool Mechanics soccer ground but there could be a problem with Hemel Hempstead. They have plans for a new stadium, but with the experience of Sportspark 2000, it would be prudent for them to look for alternative accommodation. As for the Conference League contingent, Woolston Rovers and Dudley Hill have excellent clubhouse facilities, covered standing accommodation and floodlights. similar

facilities exist at Egremont although their clubhouse is some distance from the ground. Askam have floodlights to go with top class clubhouse facilities and Walney Central's clubhouse, although not palatial, is adjacent to their ground. Dewsbury Moor change and entertain visitors at a nearby public house and Beverley play on a cricket ground, which should make things interesting in the summer months. I am not familiar with the London Skolars set-up, but acquiring players of the required standard in the London area could prove difficult. Bramley could give advice with regard to that.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle for the Conference League clubs concerns finance. After speaking with one club who have been involved in 'unofficial' talks on Division Two, it seems that no Murdoch funding will be available for clubs recruited from the amateur leagues. Apparently these clubs are expected to cope on self-generated sponsorship together with gate receipts which are certainly less than £200 per match at this time. Conference League clubs thinking of a move into Division Two would be well advised to consider all the circumstances. They must then decide whether or not to stay with a progressive and, perhaps more important, a democratic organisation or throw in their lot with the cut throat business of professional sport.

I am just glad that neither St. Anne's nor Saddleworth Rangers have been linked with this latest move to reorganise our structure.

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*Good Fortunes to the Roughyeds  
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*Best wishes to the Oldham RLFC team for  
the Season - Gain promotion!*



# Roughyeds Notice Board

## PLAYER KIT SPONSORSHIP

Why not sponsor your favourite player?

Full Kit for the season £200,

Boots £50

Shirts £50,

Socks £20

Tracksuits £45,

Shorts £25,

Training Kit £40

All sponsorship will be acknowledged in the programme.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have any comments on any aspect of OLDHAM RLFC (1997) please contact the Editor at:-

93, Chew Valley Road, Greenfield,  
Oldham OL3 7JJ

Phone/Fax: 01457 872515

## OTHER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE:

Match Sponsorship, Associate Match Sponsorship, Matchball Sponsorship, Man of the Match Sponsorship, Roughyeds Match Day Club + Programme and Electronic Scoreboard Advertising.

Details from the Club Offices:

0161 628 3677

## PROGRAMMES BY MAIL ORDER

Collect Programmes?

Relative/friends/living out of the area?

Why not book a full season's League match programmes for despatch to your nominated address? Cost £18 for the season inclusive of P&P.

For details call: 01457 872515

## Mr Wrigleys 'Penny Rush' Bar

*Every Tuesday Night - 'Roughyeds Night'*

**View on the 'Big Screen': The previous weekend's Roughyeds Game!**

*Commences 8.00pm Prompt*

**HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR THE CLUB!**

*167 Union Street (opposite the Evening Chronicle Offices)*

*Tel. 0161 627 3999*

A designated Roughyeds Players & Supporters Area! - (John Smiths Smooth £1.20 Pint!)

On Thursday, 9th July, the Club will be holding a

## Fund-Raising Golf Tournament

at Oldham Golf Club.

It will be a 4-Ball Betterball - Stableford competition with a 2.30pm Shotgun Start.

Entry will be £200 for a team of 4 or £110 for a team of 2.

***Included will be Lunch on arrival, a 5-course Evening Dinner  
and obviously prizes galore!***

*For tickets or enquiries please ring  
any Club Official on 0161 628 3677*

*Brian Walker on 0145787 5084 or*

*Chris Roberts (Oldham Golf Club Captain) on 0161 633 5399*

## Away Travel . . Away Travel . . Away Travel

**DIRECTIONS TO PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS GROUND:** (The venue of our away fixture against Lancashire Lynx on the 31st May.) M61 to M6 take junction 32 off M6, signed M55/A6 take A6 slip road (Not M55). At the Roundabout turn towards Preston and immediately turn back on yourself, ie under the A6 - This is Lightfoot Lane - the ground is approx 1 mile on right - lookout for the golf range.

**IMPORTANT - Do not be tempted to take the new junction 31A off the M6**



# Taking Oldham *forward*



Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council is the driving force behind the continued regeneration and revitalisation of the Borough.

Council endeavour has enabled Oldham to become a centre of real opportunity within the North West region.

It has made possible a new and still expanding Town Centre, 14 new schools in as many years, Oldham Sixth Form College, a multi-million pound programme of building and environmental regeneration, thriving and growing development sites and much, much more.

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Metropolitan Borough 

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Neil Flannagan Sponsored by  
New Earth Water Services Ltd.

Steve Wild Sponsored by  
Holmes & Gilmore plc

## OLDHAM

Coach: Paddy Kirwan

|    |                 |    |               |  |
|----|-----------------|----|---------------|--|
| 1  | Aidrian MEAD    |    |               |  |
| 2  | Chris ECKERSLEY |    |               |  |
| 3  | Afi LEUILA      |    |               |  |
| 4  | Steven WILDE    |    |               |  |
| 5  | Richard DARKES  |    |               |  |
| 6  | Craig BARKER    |    |               |  |
| 7  | Neil FLANAGAN   |    |               |  |
| 8  | Paul ROUND      |    |               |  |
| 9  | John HOUGH      |    |               |  |
| 10 | Michael EDWARDS |    |               |  |
| 11 | Joe NADIOLE     |    |               |  |
| 12 | Graeme SHAW     |    |               |  |
| 13 | Mick MARTINDALE |    |               |  |
| 14 | Darren ROBINSON | 16 | Ian SINFIELD  |  |
| 15 | Nathan VARLEY   | 17 | Mike PRESCOTT |  |

## TODAY'S OFFICIALS

TODAY'S REFEREE  
**Mr D. Atkin**



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&

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TOUCH JUDGES

**Mr S. Evans  
Mr B. P. King**

## BATLEY

Coach: David Ward

|    |                      |    |             |  |
|----|----------------------|----|-------------|--|
| 1  | Simon JACKSON        |    |             |  |
| 2  | Lee BARGATE          |    |             |  |
| 3  | Steve WALKER         |    |             |  |
| 4  | Roger SIMPSON        |    |             |  |
| 5  | Paul GLEDHILL        |    |             |  |
| 6  | Richard PRICE        |    |             |  |
| 7  | Deryck FOX           |    |             |  |
| 8  | Chris McWILLIAM      |    |             |  |
| 9  | Mark CASS            |    |             |  |
| 10 | Andy WRAY/Roy POWELL |    |             |  |
| 11 | Graham MIDDLETON     |    |             |  |
| 12 | Tony WALTON          |    |             |  |
| 13 | Paul HARRISON        |    |             |  |
| 14 | Nigel CRAVEN         | 16 | Grant MYERS |  |
| 15 | Phil MIRFIN          | 17 | John MORGAN |  |

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