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The Roughyeds



Featherstone Rovers

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Up Front

.....With Christopher Hamilton



TODAY we entertain Featherstone Rovers in our last 'normal' league game of the season. This will be another big test as they are currently third in the table and, depending on today's results, could finish second. I am sure that both clubs are looking at this season as being a success regardless of what happens in the play-offs.

But what of the play-offs? Anybody who saw the game last week against Dewsbury will know that the result could have gone either way and I would suggest that the league leaders were the more worried side.

We know that if we play to our potential then we are capable of beating any team. The trouble with the top eight play-offs is that there are seven other teams all saying the same thing!

The top eight idea has made the Northern Ford Premiership more exciting than ever this year and the play-off games will, no doubt, be a fitting finale to a great competition.

In view of the above why do we have to continually make sweeping statements such as 'NFP to start in October' when

these matters haven't even been discussed by clubs. That was a headline I read this week and yet at a rugby league council meeting over two weeks ago Sir Rodney Walker strongly advised clubs to avoid this scenario as the RFL would be unlikely to allow the season to start and compete against the World Cup which is being held in October/November of this year.

The most worrying thing about this is that clubs are looking to change things yet again. I can understand this if changes are made on balanced judgements but I have no doubts whatsoever that people will not have thought out all the implications of bringing the season forward.

A classic example of this is the fact that all NFP clubs want automatic promotion/relegation with Super League but are we really going to be taken seriously by the powers that be if we expect any relegated Super League side to play in Super League's season until September and then start an NFP season the month after? GET REAL!

Enjoy the game.

Chris Hamilton

The Roughyeds The Roughyeds

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FORD FOCUS . . . With Mike Ford

End of Season Player of the Year Awards & Alliance Stats



AFTER last week's defeat at Dewsbury we studied the video carefully and concluded that we really should have won the game. In the second-half we felt we exerted all the pressure and made all the breaks without putting points on the board. In fact we felt that Dewsbury never looked like scoring in

this period and we are bitterly disappointed not to have come away with a win.

To pinpoint our failings I felt we lacked composure at key moments, we took too many wrong options and we didn't control the football as well as we could have. We will be training all the harder to put right these failings because we feel we are good enough to take on and beat anyone. I have a group of players

who take great pride in their performance and they want to prove their professionalism both for themselves and for you, the fans, whose support is terrific and is really appreciated by all of us.

In welcoming the players, officials and supporters of Featherstone Rovers today we recognise that we will have another real test on our hands, as their outstanding Coach, Peter Roe, has built a formidable side. Our defeat at the Lionheart Stadium was a real shock to the system but we used that setback as a springboard to achieve better results in the second half of the season. Today's game will be really good preparation for the play-off series: much better to meet tough opposition at this stage because it represents a real contest for the games to come. We will be taking it one game at a time, but this group of players are ambitious and we intend to go all the way if we can.

As always, give us your superb backing,

Mike

END OF SEASON PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS!

We will holding our annual Player of the Year awards at the **Pennine Lounge, Mumps on Friday 7th July 2000.**

All the players including the Alliance and Academy players will be in attendance.

The Junior Roughyeds will be involved in the evening and they will also present their Player of the Year Trophy.

The finale of the evening will be the announcement of the **OMC Ford** Player of the Year and the **'Elite'** Club Player of the Year.

There will be a disco and buffet on what promises to be a highly enjoyable evening as we celebrate what has already been a tremendous season.

Tickets are priced at £5.00 for Adults, £3.75 for Elite members and £2.50 for Children.

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ALLIANCE SCOREBOARD

TOP TRIES

20 Chris Spurr (Featherstone); 19 Mike Briggs (Widnes), Simon Lewis (Wigan) & Alan Reddcliffe (Widnes); 16 Phil Jones (Wigan); 15 David Hodgson (Wigan) & Shane Irabor (Barrow); 13 Martin Aspinwall (Wigan), **Gavin Dodd (Oldham)**, Jim Forshaw (Salford) Paul George (Widnes) & Andrew Nelson (Whitehaven)

TOP GOALS

80 Steve Stoddart (Whitehaven); 66 P. Jones; **58 Kevin Fitzpatrick (Oldham)**; 51 Simon Verbickas (Widnes); 43 Paul Sykes (Bradford); 40 Liam Jones (Widnes) 39 Steve Kirkbride (Warrington); 35 Craig Fisher (Workington); 34 Craig Wingfield (Leigh).

Alliance First Division Final Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	PTS
Widnes Vikings	2015	0	5	766	332	434	30	26
Whitehaven W	2013	0	7	554	438	116	26	30
Leigh Centurions	2011	1	8	524	472	52	23	23
Featherstone R	2011	0	9	485	495	-10	22	22
Hunslet Hawks	2011	0	9	422	485	-63	22	22
Batley Bulldogs	2010	1	9	364	371	-7	21	21
Oldham	2010	0	10	418	394	24	20	20
Rochdale Hornets	2010	0	10	461	559	-98	20	20
Workington Town	207	0	13	451	484	-33	14	14
Keighley Cougars	207	0	13	440	559	-119	14	14
Barrow B Raiders	204	0	16	389	685	-296	8	8

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In Yer Face



IN THE days when Rugby League used to sign players from Rugby Unions it always used to annoy me when the words 'defect' and 'defector' were applied to such signings, as though a David Watkins or a Keith Fielding could somehow be linked to Burgess and MacLean when all they were doing was looking after their own interests and attempting to earn a living.



Fereti Tuilagi

So now that the boot is on the other foot with Apollo Perelini and Fereti Tuilagi (and possibly Jason Robinson) it would be altogether better if Rugby League writers refrained from using the same language. We in League can hardly claim to have been the victims of prejudice and persecution for a century and more if

at the first opportunity we are going to go in for the same immoderate words and behaviour. Not many years ago 'a free gangway' was the byword of the day and so it should be. Let's just remember that gangways allow travel in two directions.

Sean McRae's one word description of France (s**thouse) at the recent Oldham Roughyeds dinner may have been vaguely amusing, and Don Yates' description of his recent adventures in that country in our last programme may point up the failings of Rugby League in that country, but so long as we denigrate our cousins across the Channel we undermine the viability of international competition. It is not in our interest to go along with Mr McRae's opinion because the truth is that the general view in Australia is that England is not that far off

French standards and the only meaningful top-class competition is not international football but State of Origin. In reality it is time that we in this country started to take Anglo-French competition seriously. The only real advantage that Rugby Union has over Rugby league is the quality of its international events. For evidence of what happens when you remove those events you only have to read Mike Rylance's excellent book 'The Forbidden Game' which chronicles the early years of Rugby league in France and the rapid demise of Rugby Union in that country before the wartime collaborationist Vichy Government banned our game.

Surely it is possible to do more to foster Rugby League in France, if only at APC level? We made a serious error in not cultivating Paris St. Germain as a Super League side (though it should have been packed with French not Australian players). We made a further error in not persisting with the Treize Tournoi and we made yet another mistake when we took French sides into the Challenge Cup but ONLY if they played in England. Such short sightedness is bewildering.

At the end of last season I went to Widnes to see a Northern Ford Premiership XIII take on Villeneuve, a match the French Champions won. This alone suggests that French club rugby is not a million miles away from NFP standards. With a good few players having played in this country (there are even one or two playing in Australia now) it would be nice to think that France can have a good World Cup come the Autumn. Certainly players of the calibre of Freddie Banquet, Fabien Devecchi, Yacine Dekkiche, Gael Tallec, Jean-Marc Garcia, Laurent Lucchese, Jerome Guisset, Sylvain Houles and others now have the experience to pose a formidable threat. The trouble is that without the financial resources and the durability that full time professionalism can bring France cannot hope to match the standards of the Australians. But, then, can Great Britain either?

ROGER ROGER

OLDHAM can look back with pride on their Northern Ford Premiership season that comes to an end with today's game against Featherstone Rovers and look ahead with optimism to the top-eight play-off that starts next weekend.

To finish sixth out of 18 clubs in the NFP is nothing short of a phenomenal achievement by a club which isn't three years old until October.

While I accept that 34 league games would probably have been too many, given that RFL bosses these days want to condense the season to little more than six months - whatever happened to those long, lovely seasons that stretched from mid-August to mid-April or even longer? - it would have been interesting to know how things would have worked out over the 34.

For instance, the Roughyeds six 'missing' games were against Sheffield, Batley and Hull K.R. at home and Hunslet, York and Keighley away.

Now I don't pretend to know what formula was used by the fixture planners, but it is interesting to see that from the six teams Oldham played only once they took ten points from a maximum 12.

Only Keighley, who won 24-14 at Boundary Park on May 10, prevented a 12 out of 12 mark, thus encouraging the realistic assumption that Mike Ford's men would have done very nicely, thank-you, from a full programme in which they would have played Sheffield, Batley, Hull K.R., Hunslet, York and Keighley both at home AND away.

I don't know how the 'easy six' system affected the five clubs which will finish above Oldham in the final table, but it is fascinating to see that four of the Roughyeds six are currently placed in the bottom five.

Excluding themselves, obviously, Oldham have played ten of the top 12 home and away and it looks as though they might be coming face to face with Hull K.R. at 'home' in the play-off's elimination semi-finals next weekend.

Funny old game, isn't it? When Widnes were beaten by the Roughyeds a fortnight ago

the Vikings party was convinced they would be back here in the play-off. They had not counted on a Hull K.R. victory last Sunday at the Autoquest Stadium, which allowed the Humbersiders to leapfrog Widnes into seventh place and with an extra point.

If the red, red robins beat Barrow on Humberside today, Widnes cannot catch them and the Rovers will be here next Sunday.

For the many scores of people who continue to ask me how the play-off system works, I will endeavour to explain. Are you sitting comfortably? It goes like this:

Week One: preliminary semi-finals, 1 v 4, 2 v 3; elimination semi-finals, 5 v 8, 6 v 7.

Week Two: minor semi-finals, winners of 1 v 4 and 2 v 3 get a bye; loser of 1 v 4 v winner of 5 v 8; loser of 2 v 3 v winner of 6 v 7.

Week Three: major semi-finals, winners of 1 v 4 v winner of loser of 2 v 3 v winner of 6 v 7, winners of 2 v 3 v winners of loser of 1 v 4 v winner of 5 v 8.

Week Four: Grand Final at neutral venue, in this case Gigg Lane, Bury on Saturday July 29.

The beauty of this Aussie-type play-off system is that it keeps interest alive for a lot of clubs until the very last day of the league programme.

Oldham will finish sixth no matter what happens against Rovers today, but Peter Roe's boys will be all out to win so they can lock themselves into third place with the prospect of a trip to Keighley in the preliminary semi-finals.

The Roughyeds, on the other hand, have several reasons for wanting to avenge the heavy defeat they suffered at the Lionheart Stadium at the end of March.

If they pull it off, Featherstone could drop to fourth or even fifth.

What a truly competitive season we have enjoyed in the much under-valued Northern Ford Premiership.



Roger Halstead

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LIVING HISTORY

From the Pen of Michael Turner

RUGBY LEAGUE MILESTONES - A SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

1980 - 1990

THE EIGHTIES began where the seventies had left off with the Hull clubs dominating the domestic game. Indeed the 1980 Challenge cup final was an all Humberside affair with Hull K.R. recording a famous victory in the most famous Rugby League "derby" match of all time. In the same year the Fulham club was established in London and still survives today as the London Broncos albeit with a flexible approach to certain rules from League HQ.

In 1982 the Australian tourists led by Max Krilich, were the first team to go through an entire programme unbeaten giving them the nick name "Invincibles". This included three drubbings for Great Britain in the test matches, the first of which was played at Hull City's Boothferry park ground, reflecting the level of interest in that city. In 1983 the value of a try was increased to four points and the "sin bin" scheme and "hand-over rule" were also implemented. In the same year Featherstone stunned the Rugby League world with a dramatic victory over Hull in the Challenge Cup Final. The 1984 tour realised the worst fears of the British game as the young Lions under the surprise captaincy of Bradford Northern's Brian Noble, were once again mercilessly savaged by the rampant

Kangaroos. Worse was to follow with another three test "whitewash" at the hands of the Kiwis. Five Oldham players, a record for the club, made the trip; Des Foy, Mick Worrall, Ray Ashton, Andy Goodway and Terry Flanagan.

The mid-eighties saw two classic Wembley finals. In 1984 Widnes defeated Wigan thanks to two wonder tries from Joe Lydon. However, the following year it was the men from Central Park who took the trophy when they beat Hull in a match of fast flowing, open Rugby League football.

The 1986 Kangaroos captained by Wally Lewis emulated their historic predecessors of 1982 with another undefeated tour. They simply pulverised the opposition at club and test level with a game plan built on power and pace. The English clubs looked on in awe and admiration. Widnes with their big, aggressive, yet still skilful, pack of forwards and lightening fast backs, were the first club that warranted a justifiable comparison. This combination brought them the first division Championship in 1988 and 1989, but they and everyone else would be eclipsed by Wigan who would totally dominate the game for a decade from the mid eighties.

In 1988 Great Britain, although losing the series, won a test match in Australia for the first time in eighteen years. Two Oldham players; Mike Ford and Hugh Waddell were selected for the tour. In the same year Wigan won the first of a staggering eight consecutive Challenge Cup Finals. The "Riversiders had assembled a superb squad with the likes of Edwards, Hanley, Offiah, Lydon, Bell, Betts and Gregory ensuring there was a steady stream of silverware going to the Central Park trophy room.



Current Oldham Coach Mike Ford was selected for the 1988 Great Britain tour along with Hugh Waddell

PROBING THE NFP

ALL the round 26 matches went according to form with the only two potential surprises not materialising. Although Widnes had the opportunity to overturn Oldham, the Roughyeds pack was too strong for the Vikings with Shayne McMenemy, Steve Molloy, Andy Proctor and Phil Farrell all in fine form. David and Anthony Gibbons took advantage to spearhead a 34-26 victory. Meanwhile, despite leading at half time, Hull K.R. collapsed in the second period at Whitehaven to go down 44-12. This was the Robins third defeat in Cumbria. Gary Purdham, David Seeds and David Fatialofa were outstanding for the Warriors.

Today's visitors Featherstone accounted for Batley even while playing up the slope in the second half. Jamie Stokes stood out at no. 6 and full back Michael Rhodes raced in for two classy touchdowns.

Leaders Dewsbury were surprisingly behind at the break but rallied to demolish York 56-17. Barry Eaton led the way from scrum-half and finished with a try and eight goals. Keighley, meanwhile, did not have things all their own way but, inspired as usual by Martin Wood, were good enough to defeat Sheffield 28-16.

Doncaster also got a tough work out at Hunslet where David Plange and St. John Ellis exchanged accusations over their teams' respective merits. Another regular stand out Craig Weston, rose above the tittle-tattle to inspire the Dragons 24-10 victory.

Leigh got a big shock when Maurice Bamford's Lancashire Lynx roared into a 14-0 lead. Dean Blankley and Jason Pekepo were well to the fore until hooker Mick Higham and centre Paul Anderson decided enough was enough, rallying the Centurions to an eventual 50-14 win.

Finally Dave Watson led Workington to a 22-8 win against Rochdale.



Jamie Rooney

Last week Featherstone demolished Workington 58-6, man of the match Jamie Rooney leading the way with two tries and five goals. Oldham, meanwhile, never recovered from a slow start which saw Dewsbury Rams take an early 10-0 lead. Nevertheless the Roughyeds, well led by Hough, David Gibbons and Roden, gave the home side a

fright before the Rams ensured victory 16-12 and with it secured the league leader's trophy (apparently called the Minor Premiership) for the second successive year.

Leigh dropped out of the top 4 when losing 29-18 at Doncaster. Five drop goals by the Dragons suggested the home side were determined to put points on the board every time they hit the visitors end, especially after trailing 6-14 at half time. Wayne Parker and Peter Edwards were the architects of the Dragon's success.

Keighley completed an expected win against Whitehaven, 50-12. Nathan Antonik and Martin Wood led the rout and only a monumental slip-up will now stop the Cougars finishing second.

In the battle for top 8 places Barrow's dismal away form cost them dear, a 30-2 defeat at Sheffield being their eleventh setback on their travels. Player-coach Mark Aston came off the bench to inspire the Eagles to a fabulous win.

At it happened a Barrow victory would not have mattered as Hull K.R. pulled off the shock of the day when they beat Widnes at the Autoquest 16-14. The result moved the Robins up to seventh, one place above the Vikings. Goalkicking proved vital as Widnes scored three tries to two, but former Viking Mark Hewitt landed four goals to one for the Robins.

In the other games a Darren Robinson hat-trick helped Rochdale to a 33-20 scoreline against Batley. Meanwhile Swinton had ten different scorers in their win against York 50-12. And, finally, Willie Swann established a new Hunslet club try-scoring record when he crossed six tries in the Hawks 66-6 victory over Lancashire Lynx.

As for today's fixtures, Barrow will be ultra-keen to overcome Hull K.R., but are unlikely to stop the Robins booking a trip to Oldham in the play-offs.

Dewsbury will be desperate to defeat Leigh after losing at home earlier in the year. But the Centurions will want to capitalise on any slip-ups by Featherstone or Doncaster as a top four spot would be the prize.

Keighley should dispose of Swinton at Cougar Park and Doncaster should overcome Whitehaven at Belle Vue. This means that Oldham v Featherstone is intriguing. A 61-26 defeat still rankles with the Roughyeds but the young Rovers will be full of confidence and will want to hang on to third place. Oldham, however, will want to exact revenge and set themselves up for a serious play-off challenge.

With Widnes expected to win at Batley the final league placing will pan out today in preparation for what is sure to be a magnificent play-off series. Be sure not to miss it!

In Town Today



....FEATHERSTONE ROVERS

LOSING several experienced players before the season started suggested that Featherstone might struggle in 1999-2000. Not a bit of it. Despite bleeding many young players the coaching team of PETER ROE and IAN FAIRHURST have produced a winning combination which has had an outstanding season. Results have been built on a solid platform of home success with only Dewsbury winning at the Lionheart Stadium. Away from home, however, Rovers are less convincing, a draw at Hull K.R. followed by defeats at Barrow, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Leigh and Rochdale.

Hub of the team all season has been scrum-half JAMIE ROONEY, a prolific points scorer and top quality play-maker who stepped up from last season's Alliance team and has proved the find of the season. He has usually been partnered by ANDY BASTOW a product of Stanningley A.R.L.F.C. who came to Rovers via Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and who, at 22, is maturing into a fine all-round footballer.

Recently wingman JAMIE STOKES has also worn the number 6 shirt as Peter Roe has made tactical changes. Stokes possesses exceptional pace and is a Great Britain Academy international.

Centre or wing MATT BRAMALD was ever-present in 1999 after signing from Dewsbury. He has already proved a regular scorer and can often create chances out of nothing.



Ian Thompson

Wingman IAN THOMPSON originates from Hunslet but was signed up by Wigan, only to be cut under salary cap regulations. Rovers, knowing when they are on to a good thing, were quick to get his signature. Thompson is often partnered by MARTIN LAW, another former Wakefield player and once the Wildcats 'Man of Steel' because of his tough tackling.

Also in contention is JAMIE COVENTRY, quick and elusive and with experience of Super League at Castleford and Huddersfield. CHRIS SPURR is a local lad coming through the ranks of Academy and Alliance but, unlike father Bob, Chris is a back rather than a hooker. RICHARD GIBSON, meanwhile, is also a local junior able to fill either halfback role.

Behind this young and talented back line regular full back is MICHAEL RHODES. Originally an Aussie Rules player Rhodes turned to League with Brisbane Norths before being brought to Featherstone by the Independent Supporters Association. He is proving an excellent acquisition, sound in both defence and attack.

In the forwards 19 year old prop STUART DICKENS is making a name for himself and is a former Academy international able to kick goals if required. Fellow prop CRAIG BOOTH was bought half-way through the season to provide experience. He returned to Featherstone from York, but has also seen service with Oldham and London Broncos. MAEA DAVID, a big Samoan, also operates in the engine room of the pack. He has played for Illawarra in Australia and for Hull and Bramley in England. Recently RHYS JONES-ORRIS has also added his power to the front-row.



Richard Chapman

RICHARD CHAPMAN is a top quality hooker or loose-forward. Possessed of great ball-handling skills Chapman was lured to Sheffield in Super League before returning to Fev. One to watch out for today.

An alternative at hooker is ANDY HEPTINSTALL, yet another local lad busting onto the scene and able to open the defence unless kept on a tight rein.

In the back-row try-scoring skipper DANNY EVANS has been in fine form. He has followed his father and grandfather into Rovers colours and is sure to present a threat today. So, too, his partner NEIL LOWE, a powerful young talent capable of running amok if given half a chance. Has represented Scotland.

At loose-forward MATT LAMBERT is in his second spell at the Lionheart having also played at Hunslet and York.

And others likely to appear include STEVE DOOLER, a young loose-forward bearing a famous Featherstone name; Wakefield born prop MICKY CLARKSON; jinking half-back PADDY HANDLEY; and ex Huddersfield wingman TIM SLATTER, another local lad following in his father's footsteps.

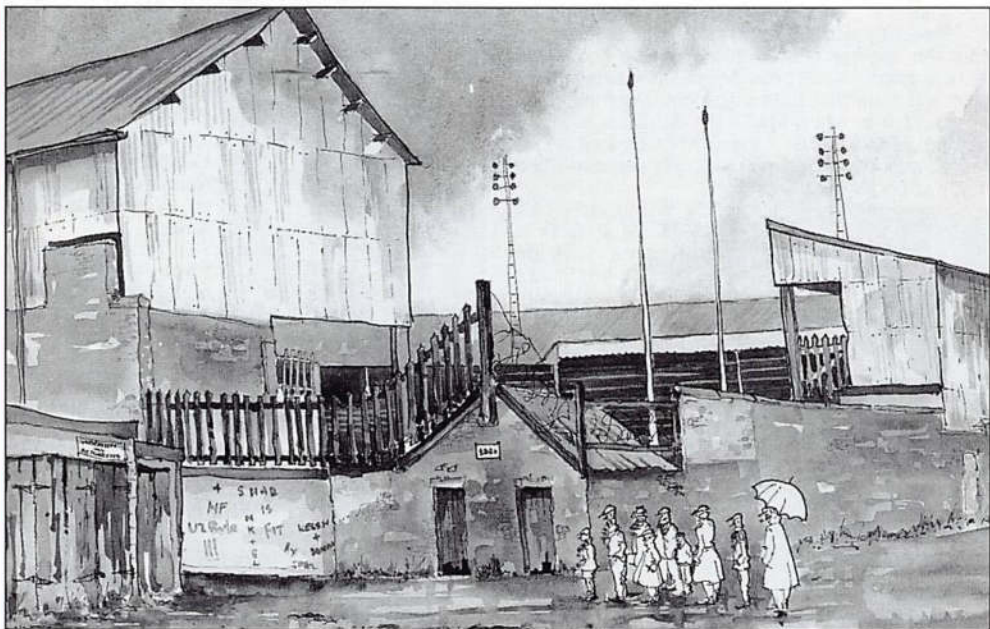
Walkerbouts

With Brian Walker

GOING TO THE MATCH



WHEN Mr Lowry painted his now famous matchstick supporters in his work 'Going To The Match' he had in mind the fans of Bolton Wanderers and their then back street stadium but it was as if, almost before the paint was dry, demands were beginning to be made of all organised supporter sports, football and rugby league in particular. Never in his wildest dreams could Laurence Stephen Lowry have envisaged those ultimate changes; back street location to motorway venue, clogs to trainers, Burnden to Reebok...



When H.Seale painted this Watersheddings scene more than just a moment was captured. The storm clouds had already gathered and the 'old lady' looked more than a little tired, as though 'with a huff and a puff the wind could blow the old ground down—' Once or twice it did and when the elements failed the council finished the job off.

The difference of course is that in Bolton's case the expectancy of their supporters has been realised and in the case of Oldham rugby fans, and with the track record of Oldham Council, for them it could still be years off. If only we could realise our dreams with a paint brush!

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An interview by Dave Roberts with Phil Farrell

What a game against Dewsbury.

We should have won it; we knew we would go close, in fact we felt as if we could win it. I hope we get them in the play-offs and we show them how good we are.

And the support was great.

It was absolutely brilliant, I said to Kevin Mannion when we were walking out that there were more Oldham fans than there were Dewsbury, and to think they were there to see them lift the trophy. The fans have been great all season, and the Dewsbury game was an example of the support we have had all season.

Another tough game today.

We owe Featherstone one. Since they beat us we have got stronger and better. Today we hope to give them what for and

finish off the League programme with 2 points.

Featherstone's danger men are?

Jamie Rooney and Richard Chapman caused most of the damage at Post Office Road, but we are confident of getting a result.

Fordy has done a great job.

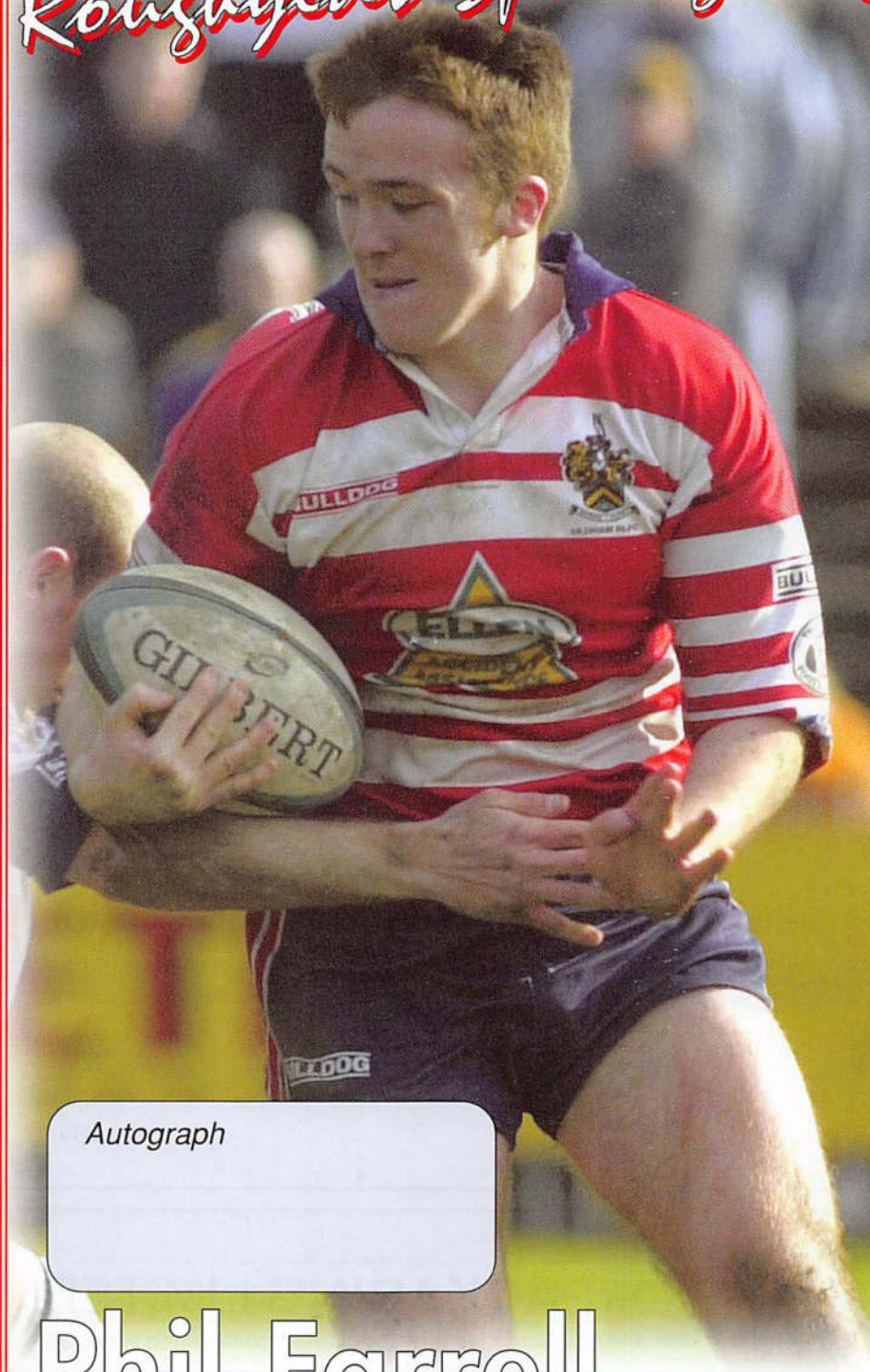
Neil Kelly at Dewsbury has been given a team but Mike has worked hard to build this side. We all have a laugh and sometimes at his expense but every member of the squad has a great deal of respect for him.

Embarrass a team mate.

I travel to training with Neil Roden and Chris Holland who can confirm that Kevin Mannion's feet would make a fly sick.

DAVE ROBERTS

Roughyeds Spotlight



Autograph

Phil Farrell

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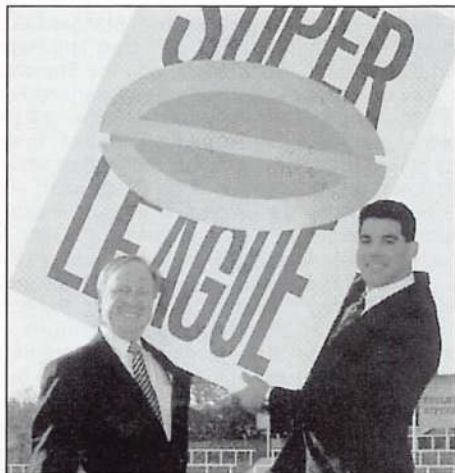
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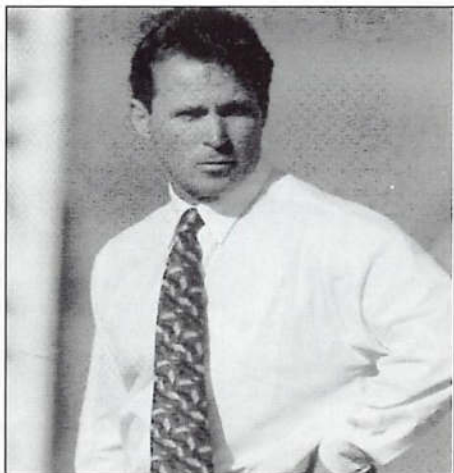
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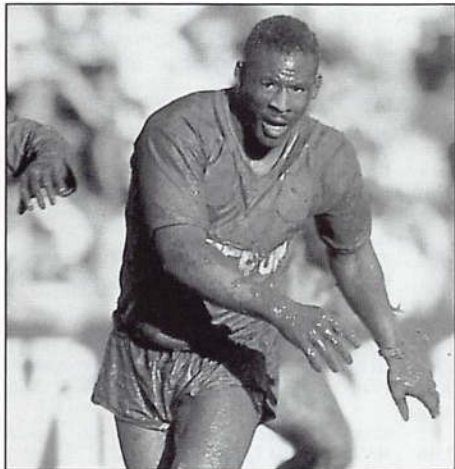
iva Slateloose



Would you buy insurance from this man? Maurice launches Super League (cockeyed as usual)



So Matty said to me "Smithy are you turning funny?" and when I looked down I realised I'd lost three rolls of wallpaper.



Summer Rugby changes the entire concept of how the game is played as Ellery basks in sunny conditions and a dry pitch



As Lancashire Lynx struggle Geoff Fletcher contemplates riding to the rescue yet again!

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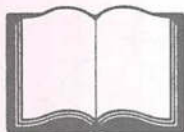
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Amateur Album

THE DEFUNCT CLUBS



AT SOME time or other during the 105 years that rugby league has been played, amateur clubs have represented every district of this town. Roundthorn and Derker were in existence for many years without dominating local competition, whilst the high point for Greenacres was their Standard Cup victory in 1936 when they beat Higginshaw 9-5. Fitton Hill, who introduced Johnny Blair and Geoff Munro to the sport, won the Standard Cup in 1985 with a 9-8 victory over Shaw whilst over thirty years earlier, in 1954, Lowermoor lifted the trophy when they beat Milnrow 23-15. Utility back Johnny Noon was Lowermoor's most famous product. Great Britain tourist Terry Fogerty played his early rugby with Strinesdale whilst dashing centre Joe Collins, now a regular follower of the Roughyeds, won many a match for St. Pats before taking the professional ticket. Factory teams also played their part in the history of local amateur rugby. Textile machinery giants Platts won the Standard Cup in 1946 with a 16-7 victory over Waterhead whilst Ferranti won that prestigious competition twice, the last time in 1938 when they defeated Saddleworth Rangers 11-9. British Aerospace, who played at their fine sporting complex at Broadway, Failsworth were one of the first local clubs, alongside Saddleworth, to play Conference League rugby although their stay at that level was short lived and less than successful.



Geoff Munro

Earlier this year two of our local clubs qualified for a tilt at professional opposition in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup. However, in the late 19th century it was not unusual to see as many as five local clubs contesting the first round of the Northern Union Challenge Cup. In 1897, for instance, Lees visited St. Helens where they were beaten 58-0. Waterhead Hornets lost 63-3 at Rochdale and Oldham Juniors suffered a disappointing defeat 26-8 away at Eastmoor. Werneth drew a bye and then gave up ground advantage before losing 30-0 at Salford but Crompton managed to reach round three. A bye followed by a 26-0 home win over Bradford Church Hill saw them travelling over to Halifax where their cup dreams evaporated 50-0. The following year three of our local teams reached round two. In round one Abbeyhills drew a bye and there were two local derbies. Werneth beat Oldham Juniors 14-0 and Lees won 9-0 at Mossley. All three bit the dust in round two, Lees 65-2 at Salford, Werneth 16-4 at Barton and Abbeyhills 59-0 at Leigh after giving up ground advantage.

The biggest contribution which local clubs have given to our game, however, is in producing star players for the professional game. St. Marys gave us centre Billy Mitchell, a tremendous professional, and Terry O'Grady who went on to gain Great Britain recognition. Herman Hilton, a test forward of the 1920s, was signed from Healey Street Adults whilst another international of that era, Rod Marlor, was signed from Salem Rangers. Hooker Edgar Brooks, who went on to play 293 times for Oldham, was signed from Watersheddings whilst half back Joe Lawton, who skippered Lancashire was signed from Highmoor. Two other outstanding utility backs, Arthur Lees and Sam Lees, were not related but both were signed from Leesfield Trinity.

There have been many more and with the current strength of the amateur game, it looks as if the conveyor belt of local talent will continue well into the 21st century.

Don Yates

ALLIANCE FIRST DIVISION FIXTURES 2000

JANUARY			
8th	Whitehaven Warriors	A	W 18-16
15th	BARROW B.R.	H	W 42-2
22nd	Workington Town	A	L 26-4
27th	Rochdale Hornets	A	L 16-4
FEBRUARY			
3rd	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	H	W 34-6
26th	Batley Bulldogs	A	W 18-11
MARCH			
8th	Widnes Vikings	A	L 40-6
14th	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H	W 34-12
23rd	ROCHDALE HORNETS	H	W 43-18
30th	Featherstone Rovers	A	L 32-6
APRIL			
5th	Hunslet Hawks	A	L 10-24
13th	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H	P
20th	LEIGH CENTURIONS	H	L 14-36
27th	HUNSLET HAWKS	H	W 26-8
MAY			
3rd	Keighley Cougars	A	W 38-14
20th	Barrow B. R.	A	W 23-18
27th	WORKINGTON TOWN	H	W 36-4
31st	Leigh Centurions	A	L 10-32
JUNE			
10th	WHITEHAVEN W.	H	L 14-22
15th	WIDNES VIKINGS	H	L 24-37
JULY			
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This superb painting has been commissioned by way of a TRIPLE celebration. To mark both the Millennium and the 125th Anniversary of the formation of the old Oldham club, and perhaps most important, to celebrate the achievements of Oldham Rugby Club, who, over those 125 years has not just produced many, many representative players, but has attracted famous players from each corner of the rugby playing world. But this painting is more, much more! A spectacular image of the gathering of 43 Oldham players from many eras, from many countries, captains of Australia, New Zealand, Wales, England and Great Britain captured together in one frozen moment in time.

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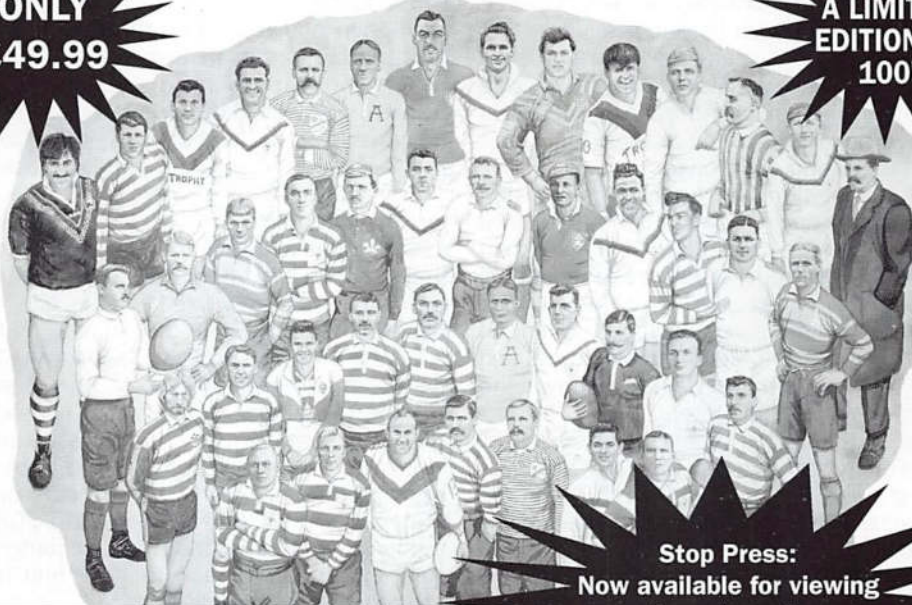
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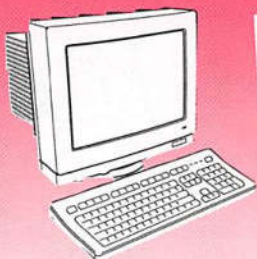
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With Simon Winnard

WELL, as we witness today's final league encounter, it is only right to pay tribute to the achievements of the Roughyeds this season. Under the guidance of Mike Ford, Oldham have finished an excellent sixth place in an extremely competitive Northern Ford Premiership.

Building on his coaching baptism at Bramley, Fordy has achieved his pre-season goal of a play-off spot in his first season as coach of his hometown club. The sceptic in me thought that a play-off spot was just a little too ambitious at the start of the season, particularly after last season's disaster. However, I couldn't have been more wrong. If there's one thing that the Roughyeds have in abundance its ambition. Add the talent that's there and a little more self belief and who knows what could happen?

The rebuilding of the squad this season has been carefully and sensibly planned, despite a rushed pre-season. When called upon, the board have backed the judgement of their coach and made key signings..even out of their own pocket ! The result has seen the playing standard of the squad improve beyond recognition and full credit must be given to all involved.

That ambition has been demonstrated by the recent end of season transfer activity. I was disappointed to hear that Fordy had narrowly failed to persuade the inspirational Kiwi Aaron Lester to come to the club. However, the successful loan signing of England Prop Steve Molloy, to all intents and purposes an Oldhamer, clearly shows the Roughyeds immediate intent.

Indeed, during a recent radio interview, Mike Ford clearly stated that the club was gearing itself up for a final push for Super League, confirming that the club would apply to Super League as soon as was possible. I admire Mike's ambition. However, whilst it is surely every sportsman's goal to compete

at the very top level of his game, I feel the overwhelming urge to err on the side of caution. It's all too easy to get caught up in the euphoria of a successful run, particularly in a season which has replenished my appetite for the game of Rugby League and this is where I have real reservations about promotion to Super League.

There is a lot to be said in favour of playing competitive games week in, week out. The play-offs beckon for both today's teams and in truth both Oldham and Featherstone are capable of going all the way. It all points to a magnificent climax to a real value for money competition. However, what would any of the promoted teams face should they actually secure that elusive Super League spot? Karl Harrison has already publicly stated that his Keighley Cougars side would not apply for SL status. As regular readers of this column will testify, I am a firm believer in free flowing promotion and relegation through all levels of RL, and of course I also want Oldham to reach the very pinnacle of the game. However, what I don't want to see is the Roughyeds on the end of a 96 - 16 drubbing at the hands of Bradford Bulls next season.

On paper, Oldham have nothing to play for this afternoon. With sixth place already assured, one could be forgiven for assuming that the lads will take it a little easier today with one eye firmly fixed on the play-offs. However, there is more than a little pride at stake here for the Roughyeds following their 61 - 26 mauling at Post Office Road back in March. Rovers didn't realise it of course but this defeat proved the season's motivational turning point for Oldham and signalled the real start of their push for the play-offs. With neither side displaying ruthless defence in the first encounter, be sure to expect a much tougher and more explosive encounter today.



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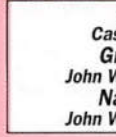
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Club Call

CLUB CALL

A warm welcome to all supporters to this afternoon's game between two teams who will be challenging for honours in the NFP play-offs. Although we lost at Dewsbury last weekend what a tremendous game! The support you showed the team last week was fantastic and it was difficult to know who had won and who had lost with the ovation our lads got at the final whistle.

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP PLAY-OFFS!!

We will be playing either Hull K.R. or Widnes Vikings in the play-offs next weekend. Full details will be announced on Monday regarding the match. If the game is made **ALL TICKET** arrangements will be as follows:

The game will be all pay (for season ticket holders also). Tickets will be available from the

Club Offices/Shop Tues-Fri 9am to 8pm, and on Saturday from the Club Shop between 9am and 5pm. If you require further details please phone 0161 628 3677

ROUGHYEDS REVIEW OF THE 1999/2000 NFP SEASON

Once our season has finished (*hopefully at Bury on 29th July 2000!*) We will be selling a special video with all the tries from our games this season (including the play-offs) and featuring an interview with Mike Ford. The price will be **£14.99** and I am sure that it will be a must for all Roughyeds fans. To place an order phone Paul on **0161 623 3677**

CHECKMATE MINI COACHES

A personal thank you to Mr Sam Tandy of Checkmate Mini Coaches of Mossley for the help and assistance he has shown the club. Sam has kindly offered to provide transport for our sponsors to get to Spotland and back. It provides everybody at the club with great encouragement when companies are willing to help us in our hour of need. Thanks Sam!
Enjoy the game.

Scot

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JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

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Hi to all the Junior Roughyeds.

May we send out a warm Oldham welcome to the Juniors, supporters and officials of Featherstone Rovers for the final game of the season.

The mascot for today's match is 8 year old **THOMAS BOLTON**. Thomas plays for Saddleworth Rangers Under 8s. He attends Knowsley Junior School, Springhead and his favourite player is Ziggy. Thomas has just been nominated Most Improved Player of the Season for Saddleworth Under 8s.



Today's Mascot
Thomas Bolton

Mascot for the first play-off game is **CHRISTOPHER BOLTON** who is 5 years old and his favourite player is Mike Ford. Enjoy your day.

WHAT A NIGHT

On Friday 16th June at Castleton Gabriels the Junior Roughyeds enjoyed a great meeting. The sun shone and we enjoyed a great B.B.Q. with the players. Daryl Rogers played some games with the children while the players trained. Many thanks must go to Helen Casey for standing in as Chef for the evening. She did a great job.

It was great to see the Academy team, the Alliance team and the first team all training together.

The Junior Roughyeds player of the season will be announced at the presentation evening on Friday 7th July at the Pennine Lounge, Mumps Bridge, Oldham.



Mascot
Christopher Bolton

Debra Rafferty

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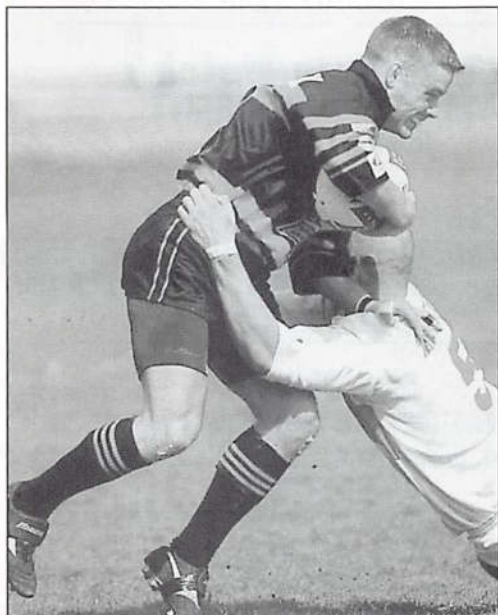
On this Day

DON YATES LOOKS BACK TO JULY 2ND YESTERYEAR

THIS afternoon Oldham wind up their Millennium 'regular' season with a match against Featherstone Rovers but both clubs will be hoping that their campaign will still have another month to run.

It is a big match for both sets of players and especially for Roughyeds' prop Steve Molloy who will be turning out against one of his former clubs. Twelve months ago, on Friday 2nd July 1999, Molloy was in outstanding form for Sheffield Eagles despite the fact that the Eagles suffered a 40-16 defeat against another of his former clubs, the Leeds Rhinos.

Three years ago, on Wednesday 2nd July 1997, two of the Oldham stars of this season experienced a disappointing evening with their



Joey Hayes

former clubs. Winger Joey Hayes was substitute for St. Helens who were beaten 14-12 at Sheffield despite leading 8-2 at the interval. Coach Mike Ford's evening was even worse. He was scrum half in the Castleford side which began so well against Bradford at Odsal. Ford touched down for what looked an excellent try

after six minutes of that match but, in so doing, he tore a hamstring which ended his participation in that particular game. To make matters worse, the try was disallowed and, although Castleford held Bradford for 70 minutes when the scores were level at 20-all, the Bulls went on to win 34-20.

It was on this day in 1946, Thursday 2nd July, that Great Britain registered a runaway victory over Mackay who conceded 20 tries as the Lions ran riot to win 94-0. Included in the British pack that evening was Oldham second-row forward Doug Phillips but the star of the show was Barrow winger Jim Lewthwaite who touched down for seven tries. Another outstanding British winger, Wigan's Johnny Ring, enjoyed a successful evening 22 years earlier, on Wednesday 2nd July 1924. That night the British Lions defeated North Coast 28-19 at Lismore. In so doing they crossed for six tries, five being registered to Ring who touched down for 23 tries on that tour from only 15 appearances. Oldham prop Albert Brough was a member of the British pack for that match at Lismore. In 1983 Maori full-back Nick Wright had a less than successful spell with Oldham, much of which was spent sat on the sidelines suspended. However, 1978 was much more successful for Wright who was included in the New Zealand team which toured Australia. On Saturday 2nd July the Kiwis played Toowoomba on a rain sodden afternoon which reduced the gate to a mere 2,000. The Kiwis won 18-13 with Wright, playing out of position on the wing, touching down for a try and also landing a couple of conversions.

On Saturday 2nd July 1955, a remarkable test match took place at the Gabba Cricket Ground, Brisbane where Australia met France. The Kangaroos looked set for victory when they led 28-16 deep into the second-half. Then, in an amazing spell, France scored 13 points as they went on to win 29-28.

Five years later, on Saturday 2nd July 1960, the Kangaroos made no mistake at the Brisbane Exhibition Ground when they scored 12 tries in defeating France 56-6. Despite that overwhelming victory, and the fact that Australia scored 69 points against their opponents 21 in the three tests, the series, remarkably, ended all square with one test victory to each nation and the other test drawn.

Fixtures

Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
	F - A		
12	ROCHDALE H (LAW CUP)	W 30-18	1,204
27	ROCHDALE HORNETS	W 23-20	3,562
JANUARY			
2	Swinton Lions	W 23-18	2,567
9	WHITEHAVEN W	W 26-22	2,446
16	Barrow B.R.	L 19-16	1,618
23	WORKINGTON T	W 30-17	2,222
FEBRUARY			
6	Doncaster Dragons	L 16-26	2,130
8	Wigan St. J (SCCC R3)	W 44-0	1,376
13	Rochdale H (SCCC R4)	L 14-30	2,168
20	Leigh Centurions	L 10-28	2,410
MARCH			
5	LANCASHIRE LYNX	W 50-8	1,522
12	Widnes Vikings	W 20-31	3,300
19	DEWSBURY RAMS	L 12-14	2,115
26	Featherstone Rovers	L 26-61	2,071
APRIL			
2	Sheffield Eagles	W 28-6	1,220
9	HUNSLET HAWKS	W44-18	1544
16	Batley Bulldogs	W28-16	805
21	Rochdale Hornets	W13-12	2288
24	SWINTON LIONS	W34-28	1908
MAY			
1	YORK WASPS	W40-18	1852
7	Hull Kingston Rovers	W32-12	2005
10	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	L14-24	2528
14	Whitehaven Warriors	L18-26	808
21	BARROW B.R.	W30-16	1604
26	Workington Town	D12-12	595
29	DONCASTER DRAGONS	W25-6	2043
JUNE			
4	LEIGH CENTURIANS	W27-10	2823
11	Lancashire Lynx	W48-14	616
18	WIDNES VIKINGS	W34-26	2073
25	Dewsbury Rams	L12-16	1456
JULY			
2	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS H	3.00	

Oldham RLFC fully support the let's tackle racism in rugby league campaign and welcomes all players and spectators irrespective of their ethnic or racial origins. Racism has no place in our game and racist chants are totally unacceptable. Allow everyone to enjoy the game.

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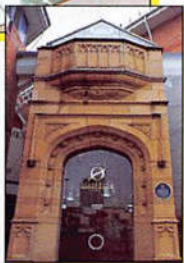
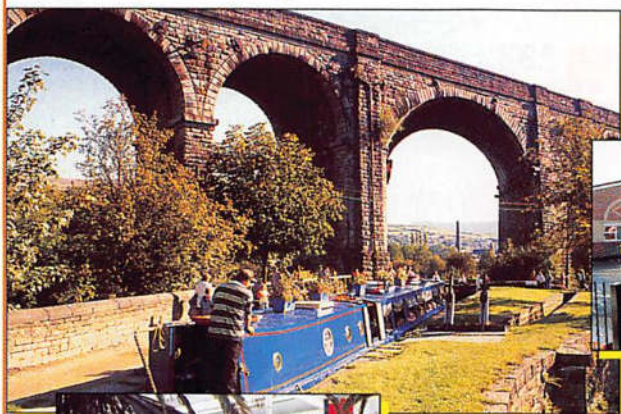
Programme

DOUGHTY'S GYM
Pricness Road, Shaw, Oldham. 01706 846 762

Programme

THE MIRROR
Hollinwood Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 8EP
0161 683 6073

Oldham – *Well placed for the challenges of the New Millennium*



Oldham Metropolitan Borough is ready to meet the many and varied challenges of 2000 and beyond.

The Council's forward thinking approach, commitment and activities have resulted in a massive regeneration and revitalisation programme of the Borough throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

This endeavour has led to an expanding, improving town centre which has benefited from £100 million investment, 20 new schools in as many years, a national award-winning multi million pound regeneration scheme, development of a new cultural quarter, a new business management school, a town centre based leisure scheme including multiplex cinema, Britain's newest Sixth Form College, a diversity of industry, the planned extension of the Metrolink tram system and much more.

All this, together with Oldham's reputation for innovation, hard work and friendliness means that the Borough finds itself well placed to meet the challenges of the New Millennium.

The Council is committed to continuing to serve the local community and in helping Oldham maintain its significant status in the North West Region.

OLDHAM 
Metropolitan Borough 

Enquiries about the Council's policies and activities, including its regeneration programmes and policies to the Chief Executive's Department, PO Box 160, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UG.



TODAY'S TEAMS



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Joey HAYES

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Pat RICH

Warren BARROW

David GIBBONS

Neil RODEN

Steve MOLLOY

John HOUGH

Andy PROCTOR

Phil FARRELL

Shayne McMENEMY

Kevin MANNION

Mike FORD

Leo CASEY

Danny GUEST

Mark CAMPBELL

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS

Coach Peter ROE

Michael RHODES

Jamie STOKES

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Andy BASTOW

Jamie ROONEY

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