



TODAY'S TEAMS



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Coach: Mike FORD

ROCHDALE H

Coach: Martin Hall

Mark SIBSON	1	Brendan O'MEARA
Gavin DODD	2	Sean COOPER
Dave GIBBONS	3	Matt CALLAND
Jon GODDARD	4	Danny WOOD
Joe McNICHOLAS	5	Casey MAYBERRY
John BRADDISH	6	Richard AGAR
Neil RODEN	7	Latham TAWHAI
Simon KNOX	8	Joe BERRY
John HOUGH	9	Richard PACHNIUK
Jason CLEGG	10	Wes ROGERS
Phil FARRELL	11	Paul SMITH
Bryan HENARE	12	David STEPHENSON
Lee DORAN	13	Damian BALL
Gareth BARBER	14	Casey MAYBERRY
Danny GUEST	15	James BUNYAN
Will COWELL	16	David LARDER
Leo CASEY	17	Matthew LONG

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S. M. ELLABY

REFEREE:

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PETER

R. G. WILLIS

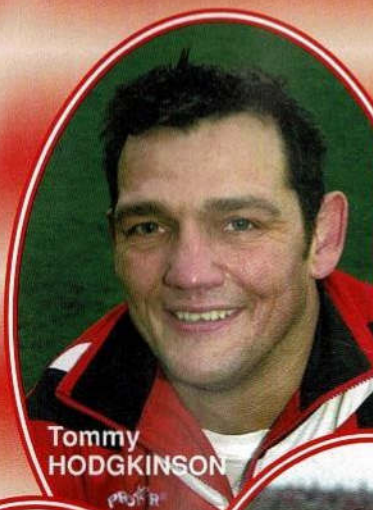
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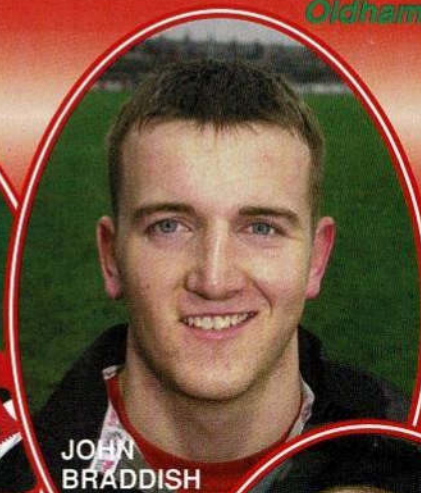
OLDHAM RLFC

The Roughyeds

The Seasons Greetings from the
Directors, Staff and Players at
Oldham R.L.F.C.



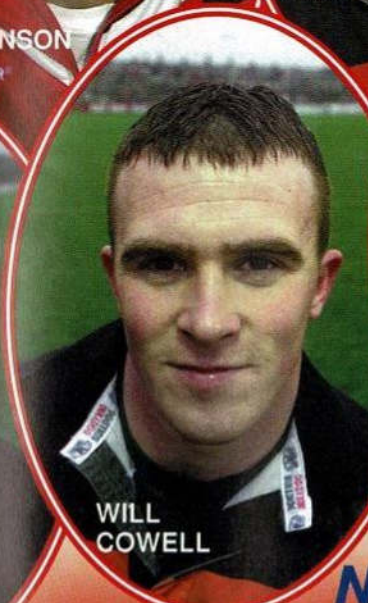
Tommy HODGKINSON



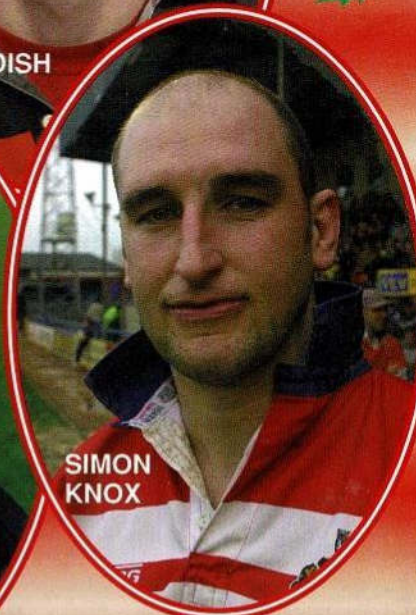
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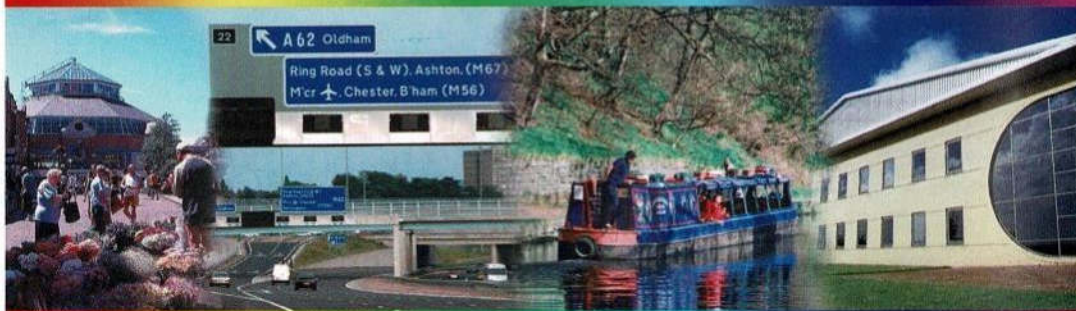
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OLDHAM
Metropolitan Borough

IN THE HOT SEAT

with
Christopher Hamilton



If you are reading this prior to having eaten your Xmas Turkey then things will have fallen into place. If not, I'm not sure what we do.

One thing is for sure, I have reached the point where I am asking myself if everything that my role with the Club entails is really worth all the stress and hassle that it brings.

What is especially hard to cope with is that we always seem to be a victim of circumstances beyond our control.

The past few weeks have been a nightmare when we thought we could build on the relative success of getting to the Grand Final.

We have worked hard with Ashton United and Tameside Council to ensure that games can take place at Hurst Cross and I sincerely hope that we have achieved that objective.

All we want to do is play rugby league.

Today's game will be another tough one against a Rochdale team which beat us in the Law Cup and has won three League games on the trot, but I'm sure Mike and the Lads will be keen to record their first win.

On a brighter note, may I take this opportunity on behalf of myself, the staff and all the players to wish you a Very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Thank you for your support.

Chris



The Roughyeds

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Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94.

Front Cover: New signings -

Tommy Hodgkinson, John Braddish,

Jon Goddard, Will Cowell & Simon Knox

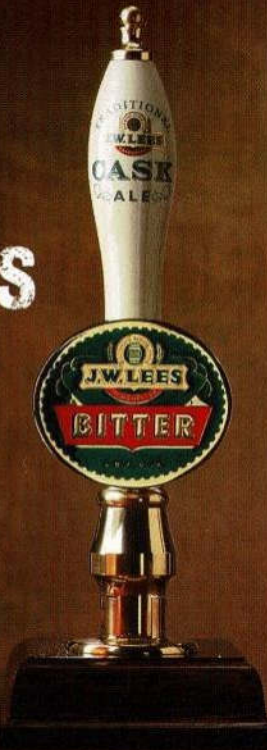
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLDHAM RLFC (1997) LTD.

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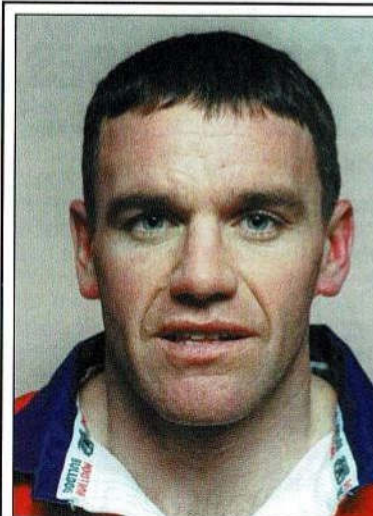


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A FIXTURE NOT TO BE MISSED



FORD FOCUS ... with Mike Ford



WE were disappointed to come away from Craven Park with a 26-10 defeat which did not reflect the course of the game. For 60 minutes I thought we were the better side but, unfortunately we ran out of steam a bit in the last quarter. A couple of decisions went against us and we were not mentally strong enough to deal with repeat sets of six tackles against us. It is always daunting to play at Craven Park and not many sides will win there. Hull KR have a big side which is well drilled and plays to a solid game plan.

On the positive side we showed a lot of enthusiasm and commitment and I think we surprised them in the first half. I thought we were very aggressive and knocked them out of their stride which was very pleasing. Our new signings all fitted in well and our kicking game was excellent, but we suffered from a lack of competitive football to give us that edge to our game when it mattered. Certainly we created chances and in future games we must take more of these to sustain pressure on our opponents.

Today's opponents, Rochdale, showed a massive improvement last season under Martin Hall and since then they have spent heavily to improve the side further. They are a tough side who always start strongly and we will have to get into our stride straight away.

I am pleased now to have secured the coaching team I wanted with John Henderson, Shaun Gartland, Mark Knight and Andy Proctor all on board and able to provide invaluable input. On a personal note I, and all the players, would like to thank our outgoing physio Lisa Sharratt for all her work. We wish her and her family all the very best. Fortunately Danni Turner is already with us and can step into Lisa's shoes. This is the kind of conveyor belt system we would like to operate throughout the club whenever anything untoward crops up, as this provides continuity and stability.

In hoping for a good, entertaining game today. We hope our fans will appreciate the difficulties we have faced and that you will stick with us throughout a long and arduous season. As things are we are going to be catching up on other sides in the league table because they have two or three games' start on us. But please remember it's not who is top of the league in the first few weeks but who is there at the end, as Hornets showed last season.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas.

Mike

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In Yer Face



IF YOU had been able to buy the programme produced for the postponed Swinton Lions game you would have noticed several changes (as indeed you will today). In welcoming new contributors Ian Wilson (a contributor to League Express) Dave McGealy (of Radio Cavell) and former international referee Sam Shepherd, all of whose columns we hope you enjoy, we would like to place on record our thanks to Simon Winnard, Dave Roberts and Marjorie Cooke for their efforts last year. And, of course, our special thanks go to Roger Halstead. This will be the first time in many, many years that an Oldham programme has appeared without a contribution from the town's premier rugby journalist, the demands on whose time and expertise never seem to lessen. Thanks for all your efforts, Roger. And you can continue to enjoy the Halstead view of all things R.L. in the Oldham Evening Chronicle of course.

❖ ❖ ❖

Swinton's Tony Barrow has had some outspoken comments to make regarding the fixture formula for this season's N.F.P. And it's hard to fault much of what he says. For example, the loss of Oldham and Rochdale derby games at Gigg Lane is a financial blow the Lions can do without. Derby games on Bank Holiday dates is Tony's cry and I, for one, think he's right.

And the complex play-off system to decide the composition of National Leagues One and Two in 2003 also begs the question when you could play every other club home and away, a system which is much simpler and fairer. However, I do appreciate that the method adopted is designed to keep interest in the competition going right to the end of the season so there is perhaps some merit in this formula.

And then there's the National Cup.....

❖ ❖ ❖

Are you as alarmed as me at the cross-code shenanigans going on with Super League clubs? If Dave Whelan can afford to put £10

million into Orrell and send Wigan players to play for them it does not bode well for the future of Rugby League. And with similar goings-on at Leeds - and mooted for the future at such as St. Helens and Bradford - one wonders just what agenda is being pursued. While the powers that be in these clubs might not want us to know - after all we're only the paying customers - I hope they are prepared to acquaint their fellow Super League clubs, traditional R.L. towns like Castleford, Halifax, Salford, Hull, Wakefield, Widnes and Warrington, with their plans.

❖ ❖ ❖

At the time of going to press so far this season I had seen Oldham's two pre-season games plus Rochdale v Batley, Swinton v Hull K.R. and Hull K.R. v Oldham. In all five games I had no quarrel whatsoever with the refereeing. However, what is remarkable nowadays is what a mess the play-the-ball call be. Interference and lying on are rife and it is done so cleverly that it is difficult to determine the deliberate from the unavoidable. Unfortunately, what this means for referees is that, if they start to penalise it, it becomes a judgement call and the spectators will be up in arms about 'inconsistency'. This means that a quick play the ball is difficult to execute (hence the laxity about playing the ball with the foot) and frustrates the fans. The whole issue is a minefield and I don't pretend to know the answer. However I am sure every Coach in the game is an expert in this area: so if they are so good at slowing things down let's ask them how to speed things up!

❖ ❖ ❖

And finally, since this is the season of Good Will To All Men, we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.



'THE DON'

ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to December 23rd yesteryear

SIXTY-TWO years ago the country was at war but rugby league was still played although not as frequently as during peacetime. There was even one international match played during that first year of hostilities. On Saturday 23rd December 1939 England met Wales before a crowd of 15,257 at Odsal Stadium, Bradford. Wales led 6-3 at half time before pressing on to beat the English 16-3. At loose-forward for Wales that afternoon was Oldham back-row forward Alex Givvons, a legend who still lives close to where the Watersheddings ground once stood and who has a street named after him on the Old Rugby Green housing estate which replaced the rugby stadium.



Alec Givvons

On Saturday 23rd December 1911, Rochdale Hornets staged international rugby when they entertained the Kangaroo tourists at the Athletic Grounds. Australia won what was described as 'a wonderful exhibition of the best of Northern Union football' by 18-6. Centre Viv Farnsworth, later to join Oldham, scored two of the four Kangaroo tries, his second, scored in the closing minutes of the match, being a particularly outstanding effort. Unfortunately dense fog spoiled the occasion causing one scribe to observe when describing Farnsworth's late try, 'it would have been all the better if one could only have seen rather more of it.' Forty-five years later, in 1956, Australia were back in Europe where, on Sunday 23rd December, they defeated France 10-6 in Bordeaux. During that match Kangaroo prop Roy Bull was sent off but on the intervention of French skipper Gabriel Berthomieu, he was allowed to

return to the field of play after five minutes. It was the first time that the sin bin had been used in a test match albeit strictly against the rules as they stood at the time.

It was on this day in 1950, Saturday 23rd December, that Rochdale Hornets defeated a star studded Barrow team 17-3. Included in the Barrow line-up at the Athletic grounds that day were five players who represented Great Britain, Jim Lewthwaite, Phil Jackson, Frank Castle, Willie Horne and Jack Grundy. Making his debut for Hornets against such illustrious opposition was hooker Bob Dagnall who went on to emulate those stars by representing his country. Dagnall had moved on to St.Helens before he gained test recognition but it was with Hornets that he learned the complexities of the hooking role.

Another player to make his professional debut on December 23rd was former St.Marys halfback Jack Sweeney. He was scrumhalf in the Keighley team which defeated York 8-5 in 1944. Jack did not enjoy such a lengthy professional career, just four matches for Keighley and one for Workington Town. He then returned to junior rugby in the Oldham area where he starred many times in the Standard Cup competition. His son Terry is a hard working committeeman for the local St.Anne's club. Twelve months ago, on Saturday 23rd December 2000, Terry was down in the dumps after St.Annes had lost 20-18 at home to Waterhead in the Standard Cup. Saints led 10-0 after only five minutes of that tie and they were still 18-14 ahead with ten minutes remaining. At that point former Oldham academy player Warren Druggitt scored an equalising try and two other former Roughyed academy boys, Craig Barker and Paul Lord, dropped goals to snatch victory for Waterhead. Earlier a couple of lads who have turned out for Hornets in recent seasons, Steve Crowther and Ian Schifilliti, had scored tries for Saints and Rochdale's record point scorer, Steve Gartland, had landed three goals.

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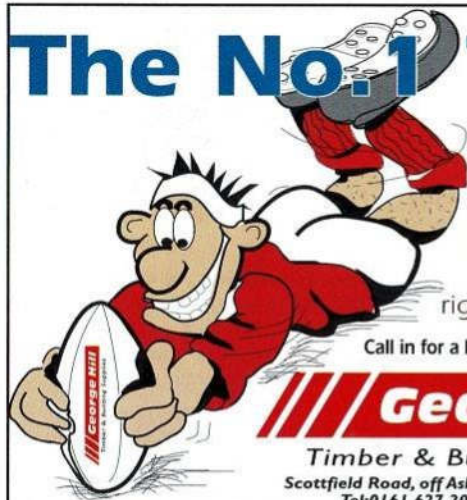
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Review of the Academy Season 2001

FIRST DIVISION FINAL LEAGUE TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Leigh Centurions	18	16	0	2	704	230	474	32
Workington Town	18	15	0	3	494	312	182	30
Featherstone Rovers	18	12	1	5	660	266	394	25
Barrow Raiders	18	11	0	7	555	407	148	22
Dewsbury Rams	18	11	0	7	470	371	99	22
Oldham	18	7	3	8	488	534	-46	17
Doncaster Dragons	18	6	1	11	354	570	-216	13
York	18	5	0	13	403	515	-112	10
Gateshead Thunder	18	4	1	13	425	553	-128	9
Chorley Lynx	18	0	0	18	161	956	-795	0

ACADEMY CHAMPIONS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Wigan Warriors	22	18	1	3	725	437	288	37
Hull F.C.	22	18	0	4	711	366	345	36
Bradford Bulls	22	15	2	5	709	374	335	32
Leeds Rhinos	22	13	3	6	764	434	330	29
St. Helens	22	14	0	8	677	534	243	28
Halifax Blue Sox	22	12	2	8	522	440	82	26
Huddersfield Giants	22	11	0	11	594	531	63	22
Wakefield Trinity	22	10	0	12	434	533	99	20
Castleford Tigers	22	8	0	14	455	587	-132	16
Salford City Reds	22	7	1	14	509	736	-227	15
Hull Kingston Rovers	22	6	1	15	388	591	-203	13
Warrington Wolves	22	5	0	17	346	712	-366	10
London Broncos	22	1	0	21	327	886	-559	2

PLAY OFFS

Elimination Play-Off:			
Barrow	58	Dewsbury	14
Qualification Play-Off:			
Workington	13	Featherstone	38
Elimination Semi-Final:			
Workington	18	Barrow	21
Qualification Semi-Final:			
Leigh	28	Featherstone	14
Final Eliminator:			
Featherstone	35	Barrow	20
GRAND FINAL:			
Leigh	17	Featherstone	20

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NFP Round Up

AFTER their comfortable victory against Oldham in the Law Cup Rochdale Hornets were less than convincing in their victories against Batley, Hunslet and Swinton. Nevertheless they arrive at Hurst Cross today with six points. The 'nets will undoubtedly miss the power and penetration of Danny Sculthorpe who has completed a well earned transfer to Wigan and will, hopefully, go on to be a force in Super League for the Warriors and, perhaps, one day for Great Britain. Despite the loss of Sculthorpe Hornets have one of the best squads in the N.F.P. and will surely be one of the leading sides in this season's competition. The Marlon Billy - Matt Calland partnership looks likely to be particularly productive.

Hull K.R. also got off to a flying start with victories over Hunslet, Swinton and Oldham. They possess a big, bruising pack and quality half-backs in Craig Murdock and Jimmy Walker. Having run into form at the back end of last season expect the Robins to continue in the same vein this year.



Robert Purdham

Whitehaven began with two easy wins against York and Dewsbury but came a cropper at Chorley. Hampered by injuries last term 'Haven will be a real threat this season, especially with quality playmakers like Aaron Lester, Leroy Joe and the highly rated young stand-off Robert Purdham, although he looks likely soon to depart for Super League with London Broncos.

Workington set off with victories over Sheffield, Featherstone (their first win at Post Office Road/Lionheart Stadium since 1954!) and Keighley. The winter months will favour Town's big forwards and halfbacks Tane Manihera and Martin Wood so don't be surprised to see them among the front runners early on.

As expected Leigh Centurions are away to a flying start with wins against Barrow and Hunslet at home and away to Batley. The club carries an incredibly large squad of players

and without an Alliance side this season (after being Alliance Championship runners-up last year) it's difficult to see how they'll keep everyone happy. Although formidable on paper, they are not necessarily unbeatable, as Oldham and Widnes showed last July.

Both Chorley and Gateshead have looked less like easy pickings so far which can only be to the overall good of the game. The former recorded an excellent 20-16 win over Whitehaven on Tim Street's debut (including the inevitable spell in the sin bin) while the latter succumbed to a draw with Featherstone only when the Rovers equalised in the 77th minute.

Notoriously bad travellers Barrow recorded a fine 31-12 victory at Dewsbury. While the Raiders look likely to fare better this time around I suspect the Rams will have a tough time after completely re-building their side.

The holiday programme throws up some terrific contests. Today sees Chorley go to Barrow (home win, though not by much) and Doncaster at Sheffield which, like Oldham and Rochdale, is so close to call that either game could end in a draw. On Boxing Day expect Batley - complete with Steve Molloy at prop - to beat Dewsbury, Leigh to win at Swinton and Workington to win at Whitehaven. But two intriguing games feature York at Hunslet in a battle of the basement (home win) and Gateshead at Keighley, a Thunder win would be a great fillip for the Tynesiders but I expect the Cougars will be just too strong.

The New Year fixtures are equally hard to call. Can Chorley overcome Batley or Gateshead defeat Whitehaven? Logic says not, but then what has logic got to do with it?

Leigh v Oldham and Rochdale v Hull K.R. are two terrific contests which could go either way. When in doubt go for a home win is my philosophy but I expect at least one of these will produce an away result.

On New Year's Eve Barrow make the trip to Workington but will return empty handed and on New Year's Day there will be similar disappointment for the travelling fans of Hunslet (at Dewsbury), Featherstone (at Doncaster) and Keighley (at Huddersfield). The exception will be Swinton who, after a nightmare start to the season against tough opposition, will return with the spoils from York.

IN Town TODAY



ROCHDALE HORNETS

LOSING four of their first five fixtures last season Rochdale got away to the worst possible start, but with a few judicious mid-season signings, the Hornets recovered sufficiently to finish third and reach the semi-final play-offs. This term they have recruited further and now have a squad which many believe can take them all the way to the Grand Final.

Coach to Rochdale Hornets is Martin Hall who took up the position of Coach at Rochdale Hornets in November 2000, leaving Halifax Blue Sox where he was assistant to Gary Mercer. He stepped into the Hornets hot seat after the shock resignation of Steve Deakin, who returned to Keighley after just a few months in charge.

Martin had a tremendously distinguished playing career. He started at Oldham but soon made the switch to Rochdale Hornets. His style and technique made him a popular player with the Hornet fans but he also began to attract the attention of a number of bigger clubs. After 3 years at Hornets, Wigan stepped in to sign him. He went on to win just about every domestic club honour in the game, as a Hooker, during Wigan's tremendously successful period in the mid 1990's. Hall scored in both Premiership and Challenge Cup Finals in the 1994-5 season. In 1998 he joined Castleford Tigers for a brief spell before switching to the Halifax Blue Sox.

Among Hornets new recruits are:-
RICHARD AGAR. Arguably the best stand-off in the N.F.P. Agar follows in his father's footsteps by playing for Hornets. A Grand Final winner with both Dewsbury and Widnes Agar is one of the best tactical kickers in the game, but also has the skills with bull in hand to split any defences. One to keep and eye on.

RICHARD PACHNIUK returns to Scotland as another two time Grand Final winner - in his case with Hunslet and Dewsbury. Once on Oldham's books, Pachniuk is one of the outstanding dummy half players in the modern game. He allies uncompromising defence to a penchant for darting try-scoring runs which gave him a try scoring record for hookers till eclipsed by Phil Cantillon of Widnes.

MATTHEW LONG. Another Grand Final double winner at Dewsbury and Widnes, clearly demonstrating Rochdale's desire to recruit experience and proven winners. Big, powerful and long striding, Long is generally used to great effect as an impact player against tiring defences. Briefly appeared with Hull Sharks. Meanwhile, from last season Rochdale feature:-

DANNY WOOD. Likely to appear today at fullback in place of Paul Owen who was injured in the Law Cup game. Wood is a versatile utility player and a prolific goalkicker. Possessed of a great pair of hands Wood's ball playing ability can open up the best of defences. A Hunslet junior, Wood signed first for Dewsbury and appeared briefly with Oldham under Mick Coates. The Roughyeds loss was definitely Hornet's gain.

Right wing **SEAN COOPER** is also an ex-Roughyed, formerly with Bradford Bulls. Difficult to stop close to the line, Cooper also has a mean sidestep. Hits 33 in six days time.

Club captain **BRENDAN O'MERA** is an Australian who played with South Sydney and appeared in Dewsbury's grand Final winning team. Solid defender with a good try-scoring record.

MATT CALLAND began with St. Anne's and has played for Featherstone, Hull, Bradford and Halifax. This is his second spell at Rochdale where his rugged style goes down well with the fans.

MARLON BILLY on the left flank was formerly with Swinton, but his career has blossomed since moving to Spotland and last season he established a new record for tries in a season for Hornets with 31. He also equalled the record for tries in a game with 5 in Rochdale's record 98-0 defeat of York. Like many Hornets players he has benefited from a weights programme and is extremely difficult to stop in full flight.

Scrum Half **LATHAM TAWHAI** has also appeared in an N.F.P. Grand Final having captained Hunslet in 1998. He subsequently moved to Doncaster and was picked up by Rochdale in mid-season 2001. One of the best play-makers in the division.

Big prop **ANDY IRELAND** usually starts a match before giving way to an impact player. Experienced and reliable the former Widnes, Hull and Bradford prop was once a target for Oldham Bears.

Ex-Swinton, Widnes and Oldham forward **WES ROGERS** could appear at No.10. Now recovered from a broken arm, Rogers will be looking for an extended run in the team, though he could have to share the blind side role with former Keighley, Huddersfield and Doncaster man **JOE BERRY**, a Scotland international.

Candidates for places in the back-row include a 2001 mid-season recruit from Doncaster in **JAMES BUNYAN**, who can be a punishing wide runner. Versatile enough to play centre in the Law Cup.

DAVID STEPHENSON is the ex-Oldham and Hull Sharks hooker now graduated to second-row. Good hands, as you would expect of a former No.9, and strong in the tackle.

PAUL SMITH is a 23 year old former Swinton back-row forward who joined the Lions from Eccles. A one time young player of the year at Gigg Lane, Smith is now beginning to make his mark as a leading light in the N.F.P.



Damian Ball

DAVID LARDER is the ex-Keighley son of former Oldham player and G.B. Coach Phil. A good, solid performer with a telling burst and strong defence.

Finally, new recruit from Dewsbury **DAMIAN BALL** is another Grand Final winner. Once on the books at York Ball will add experience and a cool head to a Hornets side which sometimes lacks discipline.

Walkerbouts

... with Brian Walker

ASHTON UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

I hope that supporters will find this brief background to our hosts of interest.

MOST OF the better known Tameside soccer clubs started life around the 1880's but were originally formed as RUGBY clubs, Mossley, Stockport, Hyde, Dukinfield and Stalybridge were all weaned on the oval ball before turning to 'association' and all would have had fixtures at one level or another with Oldham.

Ashton United is an exception. Formed in 1878 (more than 20 years before Oldham Athletic) as Hurst FC they are one of the oldest soccer clubs in the country and in 1885 beat Newton Heath (embryo to Manchester United) in the final of the Manchester Senior Cup.

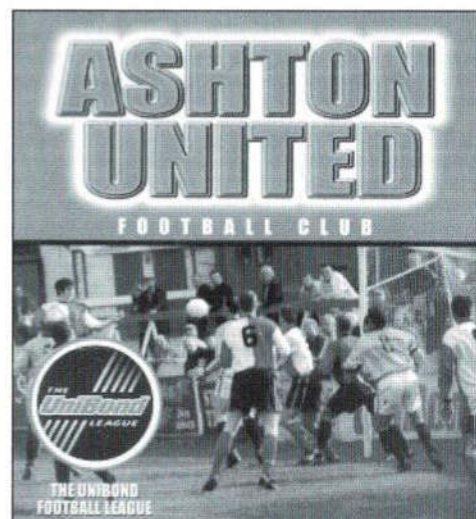
The club's formative years were spent at a ground at Rose Hill (Hurst), moving to Hurst Cross in the early 1900's. In 1947 the club's name was changed from Hurst FC to Ashton United and it's colours from black and white to red and white.

Since the war the club has played in the Lancashire Combination, the Midland League, the Cheshire County League (where it had regular fixtures with Latics reserves), the North West Counties and, since season 1992/3, Division One of the Unibond Northern Premier.

Of the eight seasons played since the formation of the Unibond, Ashton has finished third on five occasions failing by the narrowest of margins to gain promotion from Division One to Premier (pathway to the Nationwide Conference). Last season the club ended the campaign 14th.

Famous players include a 15 year old Alan Ball (his father was club coach), John Mahoney (Wales) and Eric Gemmell (who, until his record was

broken by Roger Palmer, was the Latics highest aggregate goalscorer). Well known coaches are Sammy McIlroy (1994 from Northwich Victoria) and Eddie Hopkinson (early 1980's). Other players who have served both Ashton and Latics include Ronnie Fawley (early 50's), Alan Lawson and Johnny Colquhoun (early 70's) and Darren Royle (son of Joe) one of United's current stars.



Ashton United have reached the FA Cup first round proper on just two occasions, in 1957 losing a replay at Hurst Cross to Halifax (this was the club's record attendance and, depending on who you believe, was somewhere between 7,000 and 11,000!) and again two years later losing 8-0 to Southport. In this season's campaign the club, via Midfielder Gareth Morris, scored the fastest ever goal in the history of the FA Cup (after just 4 seconds) v Skelmersdale at Hurst Cross.

Current Chairman Terry Styring supported by eight fellow Directors joined the club in 1995 and has held the position since. Club coach is Gerry Quinn who arrived from Ossett Albion at the end of 1999.

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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we welcome the players, officials and supporters of the old enemy, Rochdale Hornets. No doubt the keen rivalry that exists between the clubs will again manifest itself today. Who can forget that thrilling encounter in the Northern Ford play-off semi final last summer. A terrific day for the Roughyeds. However it has to be said that this great victory is now sandwiched between two wins for the Hornets in last season's league match at Boundary Park and the recent Law Cup match at Spotland.

For today's featured match we look back to another semi final between the clubs. This was in the Challenge Cup of 1929. A match that was watched by the biggest crowd ever to assemble for an

Oldham v Rochdale encounter. The game was played at Central Park, Wigan on April 4th 1925.

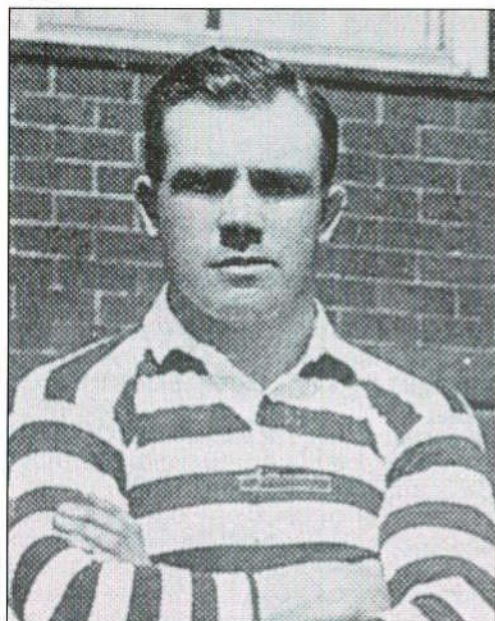
Over 27,000 spectators gathered for the event which proved to be a fiercely competed affair with the Hornets having the best of the early exchanges but it was Oldham who scored first when full back Ernie Knapman dropped a goal from long range. Back came Rochdale and they were unlucky when a try by Hennessey was disallowed for offside. Likewise, Oldham narrowly failed to score when Reg Farrar was forced into touch, right at the corner flag. Hornets finished the half like they had started by threatening the Oldham line but the Roughyeds held firm to turn round with a two points to nil advantage.

Just two minutes into the second period, Oldham skipper Herman Hilton was obstructed which resulted in a penalty goal scored by Albert Brough. Now it was Oldham who were in the ascendancy and an infringement by Hornets full back Gowers resulted in another penalty this time converted by George Hesketh. Now with a six point lead the Roughyeds never looked like losing the tie and the victory was made complete in the final minute when stand off Ben Beynon followed up his own kick to score an unconverted try. This last score made the final result a 9 - 0 victory to Oldham.

OLDHAM TEAM:

E Knapman; S Rix, A Woodward, E Davies, R Farrar; B Beynon, G Hesketh; R Marlors, A Tomkins, Jk Collins, R Sloman, A Brough, H Hilton.

Attendance: 27,308



Albert Brough. Scorer of a penalty goal in the 1925 semi final against Rochdale. Albert played in all four of the Roughyeds successive Challenge Cup finals in the 1920s. The Oldham RL Heritage Trust have just acquired Albert's winners medal from the 1927 final (See p.32).



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A Chance to Meet TOMMY HODGKINSON

with David McGealy, Radio Cavell 1350AM



Born 15th April 1970 in St. Helens, Lancashire.

How many are there in your family?

One brother and one sister, mum, dad and wife and a little boy.

What's your first memory of Rugby League?

I come from a rugby league background and my cousin played for Great Britain so that's how I got into rugby. I remember as a youngster watching him play for Warrington in the mid to late seventies.

Who did you play for in your first real game of Rugby League?

My first game was when I was about seven or eight playing for the school team and then, because I enjoyed it so much, I played for a local amateur side, Blackbrook. My games teacher at the primary school was a rugby league fanatic and it gave me a good start in my career.

Was he a good coach?

Well he thought he was.

Are you going to tell us who he was?

No, no.

Who did you first sign professional for, and how old were you?

I turned professional for St. Helens when I was eighteen. I'd moved on from Blackbrook and had been playing for Saints development side for some time and was captain of the team. St. Helens and Wigan approached me at the same time both wanting me to sign. With St. Helens being my hometown, I chose them.

You turned down Wigan, that must have been a big decision?

Well, not that big. At the time Wigan were full of internationals and Saints were there or thereabouts pushing Wigan for honours. I thought it'd be better for me as I'd have more chance of breaking into the first team at St. Helens than I would have at Wigan.

Why did you come to Oldham?

It was a hard decision to make. But with Widnes going full time into Super League I work as well, and obviously I'm not getting any younger at 31, so I wasn't willing to give my job up for one year to go full time into Super League. When Oldham approached me as last year's finalists I thought Oldham were going places. I thought it the right move at the right time for me.

Who's been the greatest influence on you in Rugby League?

Obviously my dad's had a lot of influence on me, but from my rugby background my uncles and cousins all had a lot of influence as well. When I was at secondary school I was

fortunate enough to have two games teachers who were both rugby league internationals, Bob Prosser and Geoff Hitchin. They both played for Saints and at Wembley so I was fortunate I had some good coaching at school.

What was your most memorable moment in rugby league?

One was signing for my home town team St. Helens followed by when they made me captain. Another was with Widnes last year, getting them into the Grand Final, winning that and getting them into Super League. They've been out of the limelight for a few years and I think they're back where they deserve amongst the 'big boys'.

You may have enjoyed that Saturday night but I was pretty sick.

Well hopefully we can put it right this year.

What about the low point of your career?

There's been a few. I had a couple of bad injuries when I was younger. I had a 'reconstruction' on my shoulder and didn't play for a year.

Are you any good at watching the game?

No terrible, I don't like watching. Love playing but not watching.

What's the most amusing thing you've ever seen on a rugby field?

When I was younger, I was playing in a 'A' Team match at Saints in front of about 2,000 people. I was full back and I remember 'back peddling' as fast as I could and I've only gone and tripped over myself, done about six cart-wheels and been left lying on the ground with nobody near me for about forty yards.

Who's the biggest character you've come across in the game?

There's quite a few but Neil Holden is a laugh a minute. I played with him at St. Helens and Bradford when he was 'A' Team coach. He's a

practical joker who's had me a few times with a couple of Australian accents. Once he rang me up and told me he was Peter Tunks, the Oldham coach, and he wanted to sign me. I fell for it 'hook, line and sinker'. Then he rang me back about five minutes later asking me if Peter Tunks had rung me. I said "how do you know? Then he started putting on the accent again. I thought, you little....."

How long do you want to play Rugby league for?

Well the games so hard that if you play into your thirties you've done well. But as long as you keep yourself fit and healthy there are some players playing at thirty five or thirty six even in Super League. But you never know what's around the corner. You just take one season as it comes.

Would you look towards the coaching side?

Yes: I've done a bit of coaching with the youth sides at St. Helens and I used to coach a local amateur side as well. But I'm not the best watcher of rugby. But you never know, if the opportunity arose. You never know what's around the corner when you've finished playing.

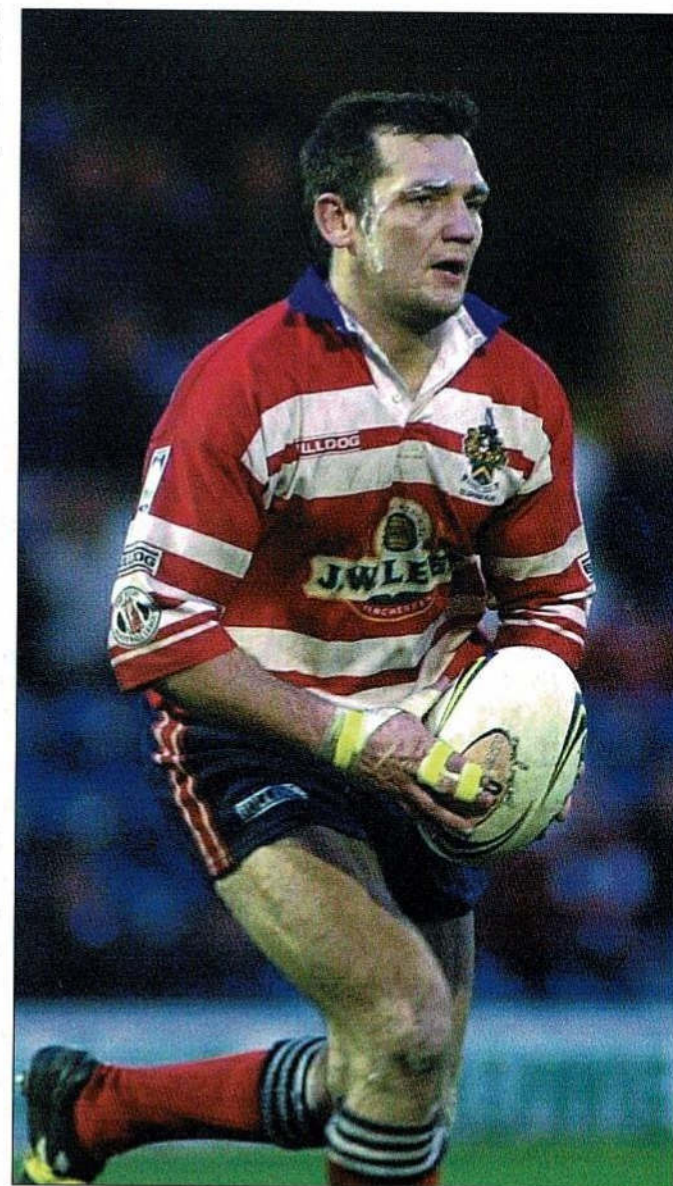
Earlier on you mentioned your rugby league family, but what about the women?

My sister's a St. Helens girl but she's a Wigan supporter and we have a bit of conflict when we're watching the local derby; my dad shouting for Saints and my sister for Wigan. Gets a bit hostile at times to say the least.

Tell us a secret about one of your team mates at Oldham?

No I can't say nothing really. No, no I'm not saying. They might say something about me when they get interviewed. So I'll leave that one.

This interview will be broadcast in full on Radio Cavell - 1350AM next Friday during 'Sports Preview' between 5.00 and 6.00pm.



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Iva Slateloose



CUNNING ruse by the N.F.P. this season. To put an end to the endless debate about when to play we have a Summer season AND a Winter season. And if you aren't sure which is which it's been split by the new National Cup competition. Clever, eh?

Wigan owner Dave Whelan is so desperate to win something he is snapping up shares in all sorts of enterprises, worldwide. His investments so far include New York Mets baseball (damn!), Manchester United (blast!), Tim Henman promotions (sod it!) and, best of all, the Taliban table tennis team.

The BBC's Sports Review of the Year missed the mark: it isn't Rugby League that's a joke - it's the BBC's own coverage of sport!

I see Barrow are the latest club to launch a Hall of Fame. This set me thinking and I came up with a brilliant idea: a Referee's Hall of Infamy. On the way in you get a set of darts to throw at pictures of your chosen object of derision. In the video show of the 100 greatest refereeing howlers (or should that be 1000?) you get to boo and throw seat cushions. And in the Madame Tussaud's life size model section you can beat them with their own white stick!

What's the League Express coming to? Two weeks running without a letter from Kevin Maguire (Batley). Has he emigrated?

Talking of League Express they've just concluded their Reader's Poll 2001. It's a bit like a Labour Party candidate's list without as much choice. Talk about politically correct! Iva couldn't find anybody to vote for, so here's the great one's selections without an imposed list:-

PLAYER OF THE YEAR - SHAYNE McMENEMY (Halifax Blue Sox). I defy any Roughyed fan to tell me I'm wrong. If you do you should be ashamed not to be as biased as me!

YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR - to qualify for this award you have to be in nappies and always spitting out your dummy. [Plenty of choice there, then (Ed.)] PAUL WELLENS is shaping up nicely!

MATURE PLAYER OF THE YEAR - What exactly is a 'mature' player? Is it a rugby equivalent to Danish Blue or Gorgonzola: something indigestible that stinks? Anyway the winner is - GARY SCHOFIELD. How did he get on the pitch for the Legends of League games? Sedan chair?

OVERSEAS PLAYER OF THE YEAR - A tie between BRETT MULLINS and ROBBIE MEARS of Leeds. And if they're not overseas they should be!

COACH OF THE YEAR - George Barlow & Son. [We've had that one before - Ed.]. Alright then, LEE CROOKS. Let's face it if you can lose just about every game you're involved in you deserve some sort of award.

N.F.P. PLAYER OF THE YEAR - No contest, TIM STREET. Not because he deserves it, but would you tell him you hadn't voted for him?

N.F.P. YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR - Anybody from Hunslet Hawks. They're all so young they celebrate a win with a round of milk (Cow and Gate, naturally).

N.F.P. OVERSEAS PLAYER OF THE YEAR - BRENDON TUUTA. What do you mean he didn't play in the N.F.P. this year? He'll have battered somebody, somewhere overseas for certain.

N.F.P. COACH OF THE YEAR - That loudmouthed bloke by the tunnel at Dewsbury. If you listen to him he's won more games than all the professionals put together.

CLUB OF THE YEAR - Has to be HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS. After four years at the bottom it's time they won something, and this is the only way they will!

REFEREE OF THE YEAR - Hollywood Bill Harrigan. I'm glad I had my binoculars at Bolton: he kept the teams so far apart they were at opposite ends of the stadium.

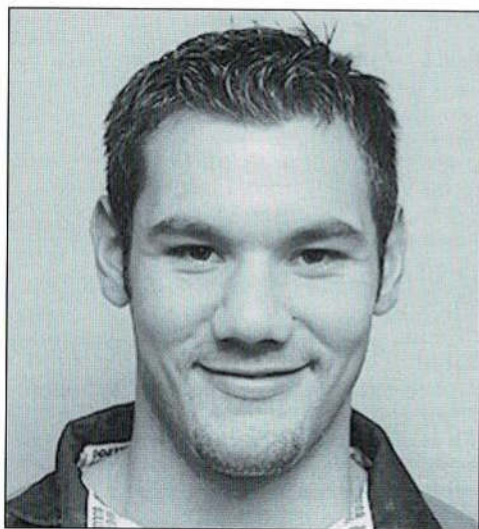
Wilson's Wisdom

... with Ian Wilson

EVER since that black day in Paris when our relegation from Super League was confirmed, we have been battling against the odds. Talk about walking under ladders! And events in recent week would just be unimaginable if it weren't for the fact that it is poor old Oldham they have happened to.

I wonder if Chris Hamilton and his colleagues would have done what they did to re-found the club if they had had any inkling of the problems which lay ahead. I am sure that there is no need for me to repeat them here. However, they make what has actually been achieved quite astounding. Assuming that the financial position is healthy - and I have no knowledge of this - it is simply remarkable, given the circumstances, that we were within 80 minutes of winning the N.F.P. competition last season. When sporting honours are being handed round, I cannot believe that any unbiased analyst would not acknowledge that some are due to these associated with Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd.,

Only an insider can know the different degrees of credit for the achievement due to the various people involved - Chairman, fellow directors, coaches, back room staff,



Joe McNicholas

senior players. I trust the latter will take their fair share when the history of the new club is written, though. As I write, I have in front of me the Match teamsheet for 1st January 1998 - Rochdale H 16 Oldham 36 - with numbers 5,8,9 on the Oldham side being McNicholas J., Guest, D., Hough J. To me, and I suspect to a fair few others too, they are heroes all; in a different way from the names that still trip off the tongue from the 1950's, but heroes nevertheless.

What of the future? The off-field prospects, from past experience, are simply not worth trying to predict, except that I have no doubt that there will be twists and turns, and hopes dashed and setbacks overcome, before some form of Nirvana is reached. On the field though, having seen the Leigh friendly and the Hull K.R. game, but not the Law Cup match, I can see no reason at all to be anything but optimistic about the season ahead. Crucially, from first impressions, team spirit looks to be as high as it was last season. And, in particular, the first view of John Braddish was encouraging, I thought, and this was very much confirmed at Craven Park; when was the last time we saw a stand-off making a clean break, other than in a broken field situation, against decent opposition? And his range of kicks from hand was imaginative too.

For those who didn't make the trek to East Hull, don't be misled by the final score. Not many N.F.P. sides will win over there, I suspect, and at 10-10 on 65 minutes, we had probably been the dominant team for most of the match up to that point. 10-26 was no reflection at all on the overall balance of the contest, and Gary Wilkinson observed afterwards that i) he was delighted to have played us before we had gained match fitness, and ii) he was glad not to be due to play us again. Apart from a few one-on-one missed tackles, which I have no doubt Mike Ford will have addressed this week, the main weakness, I felt, was an inability to get players in telling support after breaks had been made; I suspect Sean Edwards in the black and orange would have had 4 tries, at least!

Junior Roughyeds

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MERRY CHRISTMAS to all the Junior Roughyeds also to the Directors, Players, Supporters and Junior members of our nearest rivals Rochdale Hornets.



Gavin Woodward

The Oldham mascot for today is 9 year old **Gavin Woodward**. Gavin's favourite player is John Hough and besides watching Oldham Rugby Gavin loves playing on his playstation but only when his dad has finished on it.

The mascot for Leigh Centurions is 11 years old **Abigail Webb**. Abigail goes to Hulme Grammar School and her favourite player is Neil Roden. Abigail hopes Neil is playing against



Abigail Webb

Leigh and she hopes his knee is now in full working order.

On the 6th December the Junior Roughyeds held their Christmas Party at Cheeky Chimps and everyone had a great time. Thanks to everyone who attended.

All the Junior Roughyeds wanted to know what Jason Clegg is having for Christmas. Jason says that he hopes Father Christmas is bringing him plenty of socks and underwear, especially thermal ones!

Once again have a very Happy Christmas and see you in 2002!

Adele Knowles



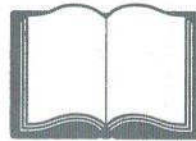
NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP TABLE 2001-2002

	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Diff	PTS
Leigh Centurions	3	3	0	0	120	35	85	6
Hull Kingston Rovers	3	3	0	0	104	22	82	6
Workington Town	3	3	0	0	88	45	43	6
Rochdale Hornets	3	3	0	0	76	44	32	6
Whitehaven	3	2	0	1	85	26	59	4
Barrow Border Raiders	3	2	0	1	109	51	58	4
Huddersfield Giants	2	2	0	0	50	14	36	4
Featherstone Rovers	3	1	1	1	57	46	11	3
Sheffield Eagles	3	1	0	2	54	44	10	2

Doncaster Dragons	2	1	0	1	30	38	-8	2
Chorley Lynx	3	1	0	2	52	66	-14	2
Batley Bulldogs	3	1	0	2	47	66	-19	2
Dewsbury Rams	3	1	0	2	48	80	-32	2
Keighley Cougars	3	1	0	2	62	99	-37	2
Gateshead Thunder	3	0	1	2	32	72	-40	1
Oldham	1	0	0	1	10	26	-16	0
Swinton Lions	2	0	0	2	16	50	-34	0
Hunslet Hawks	3	0	0	3	38	146	-108	0
York Wasps	3	0	0	3	22	130	-108	0

Amateur Album

.....WITH DON YATES



JAMES ROGERS

YOUNG players throughout the town rely heavily on their parents, and friends of parents, to provide transport, financial assistance and encouragement as they embark on their rugby league careers. Saddleworth Rangers' young second-row forward James Rogers is no exception. He was 11 years old when his father, Wilf, arranged for him to try his hand at rugby league with the Saddleworth Rangers youth squad. James took to the game like a duck to water. He scored a couple of tries in his very first match and came home with the man-of-the-match award. That early success resulted in Wilf running his talented son from the family home in Stalybridge to training at least twice a week and to matches each Sunday for several years afterwards. 'It cost a fortune in petrol but it was the same for all the other parents and I enjoyed it,' said Wilf. He admits to even enjoying watching the training and from being an armchair fan he became a dedicated follower of Saddleworth Rangers. Nowadays James owns his own car and Wilf actually misses running him about.

He still follows his playing career, however, travelling with his wife Melanie to most of James's matches. The pair have travelled all over Cumbria, Yorkshire and Lancashire watching their son and since his involvement with the Great Britain under-21 squad it has led to trips as far afield as Hemel Hempstead down south and even a trip to the United States last June.

That ten-day holiday to Philadelphia brought many happy memories for the Rogers family. They saw all three matches of the mini-tour undertaken by the Great Britain under-21 squad and were treated royally by officials of the United States Rugby League, especially supremo Bill Hansbury. After travelling by taxi from their holiday hotel to the stadium for the first match, arrangements were then made to travel with match officials to the other

games. 'I felt very proud watching James run out in a Great Britain jersey. It got to me a bit', he said. Obviously all the tedious driving had paid its dividend especially when James scored the final try in the 62-14 defeat of the Junior Tomahawks.



James Rogers

Wilf is not the sort of father who constantly pushes his son. 'He's a sensible lad. He knows what he's doing,' says Wilf. What James is doing right now is a business studies course at Huddersfield University. That takes up most of his time although he has been turning out for the University side as well as Saddleworth and the British Students management team have also been showing interest.

Although James has spent time with both the Oldham and Rochdale academy squads, he is putting his studies first at the moment. We will have to see what happens after that but, be it Saddleworth in the Conference League or some Great Britain squad in a foreign land, James, and many more like him, will always enjoy the support of his family.

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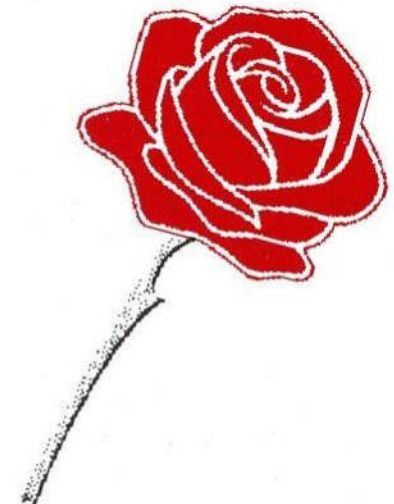
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The Whistle Blower

..... With Sam Shepherd

Sam Shepherd, perhaps Oldham's most famous International Rugby League referee and assessor, is a new columnist for the matchday magazine.

AUSSIE touring teams were usually treated to some rough stuff by the home teams, with the first match at Hull KR being a benchmark; usually this match was "given" to Eric Clay or Fred Lindop to "sort out". Not many referees wanted the particular match that I got at St. Helens.

The scene was set as the first scrum broke up, both No. 8's toe to toe, exchanging telling blows. As I whistled to stop play and to remonstrate with the combatants, I wondered if I dismissed these two, how many players would we finish up with. In the event, I settled for a penalty to the home team.

Then, after 15 mins in a St. Helens' attack, Tom Van Vollenhoven ran infield from the main stand side, and, approaching the full back, kicked ahead but was violently obstructed by the full back. I ran to give a penalty where the ball bounced in the field of play; however, Vollenhoven was in a bad way with serious facial injuries and taken to hospital.

The fact that I did not dismiss the offender caused anger among the St Helens players, and was the beginning of a nightmare; the

home players were incensed, as time went on, to quote one of Fred Lindop's phrases, "they were fighting in lumps" with me valiantly trying, and failing, to keep control.

My two colleagues, patrolling the touch lines were not very helpful, and neither came on to report foul play.

Even in the second half, fighting continued and penalties were the order of the day, and though some "football broke out" now and again, I finally had to dismiss three players, one being Billy Benyon, (who unluckily was sent off again three days later by my late colleague, Terry Keane).

The final score, St Helens 8, Australia 4 (all penalties) seemed irrelevant. I was glad to escape to the dressing room where I was consoled by D.T.H. (Denis) Davies, and he insisted that I go into the tea-room for the presentation. Each player received a selection of glasses and was applauded, but there was a deathly hush as I went forward, but I survived, and I still have one inscribed glass which I never use!

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6 GARTLAND
7 BISHOP

Referee:
Mr. S. Shepherd
Oldham



- Forwards
8 HALSALL
9 KARALIUS
10 WATSON
11 WARLOW
12 MANTLE
13 COSLETT

- 14 BARROW, A.
15 HOGAN

AUSTRALIA

- Full Back
2 JOHNS
Threequarters
6 GREAVES
9 SADDLER
8 McDONALD
3 IRVINE
Half Backs
12 BRANSON
13 SMITH, B.

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H. Jackson
Orange Flag
W. Silcock

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TOPIC OF THE DAY ...BOUNDARY PARK

AS THE controversy over the use of
Boundary Park broke Roughyeds fans were
urged to voice their opinions in the local
press. I am aware that the Oldham

Evening Chronicle received in the region of 160 letters, only a small proportion of which were published. While the Chronicle has been extremely supportive of Oldham R.L.F.C. in its time of trouble, it is frustrating for all those of you who took the time and trouble to write not to see your efforts in print. No doubt many of you would have said similar things and the correspondence could have become repetitious. However, a large mailbag does represent an outpouring of feeling and reaction which, if it is not publicly acknowledged, is not brought home to those who make the decisions. Therefore, as programme editor, let me say thank you to all those who wrote to the papers and campaigned in various ways to show the Chairman of Oldham Athletic and the Leaders of Oldham Council just how strongly the followers of Oldham Roughyeds felt. Let me urge you to write again if there are further developments you wish to comment on. And if there are points you want to raise the club programme is here for your use. Just send your letters to the club offices at Union Street marked for the Editor's attention.

In my own case I covered myself by copying my letter to the Advertiser, which duly appeared in the edition dated Thursday 6th December (better late than never). However, as the debate raged my wife and I wrote a second time - without publication - in an effort to keep the pot boiling. Below and on page 30 we reproduce this letter and also Brian Walker's contribution to the discussion which was also passed over. Forgive our use of editorial privilege, but we think the points raised are worthy of public airing.

From G & M Cooke to the Sports Editor, Oldham Evening Chronicle.

Dear Sir,

Before Oldham Athletic supporters in general, and officials of SAFE in particular, become too paranoid it would be as well to point out that no-one blames Oldham Athletic as a club for the current predicament regarding Boundary Park. That dubious honour lies with the Chairman, Board of Directors and Chief Executive. It should be remembered that when Oldham Council rescued the former Oldham Bears the subsequent sale of Watersheddings for development put money into the pot of Hiretarget/OPP, whereas the rescue of Oldham Athletic has taken money out of the pot. It is clear that an offer by the Council to top up Oldham R.L.F.C.'s rent payments by £60,000 is merely to use part of the proceeds from the sale of Watersheddings. And it could further be argued that £520,000 to lay a new surface at Boundary Park is similarly funded, albeit that further land sales added to the pot of money intended to facilitate the creation of a new dual-use Oldham Stadium. If we are to delve into history, it might also be added that the Boundary Park pitch has been unsatisfactory since the artificial surface was ripped up, and the blame for that can only be laid at the door of previous Oldham Athletic administrations. It is ironic that at a time when the new pitch would be better able to sustain additional fixtures than at any time in the last decade the new surface will in fact host fewer games than any pitch in the history of Oldham Athletic.

And, while the current debate is raging, I am sure a number of other organisations would welcome clarification of Oldham Athletic's position regarding the use of Boundary Park by the community. For instance can Oldham Amateur Rugby League look forward to staging its prestigious Standard Cup Final on the ground and can Oldham Schools F.A. and the Oldham Amateur F.A. expect use of the facilities or will they too be priced out of a venue which we - all of us - as citizens and ratepayers of Oldham actually part own?

Continued on Page 30.....

Stat Attack

N.F.P. LEADING SCORERS (as at 22.12.01)

TRIES

TURLEY (LEIGH)
ROB PURDHAM (WHITEHAVEN)
BALDWIN (LEIGH)
BEAUMONT (WORKINGTON)
JOE (WHITEHAVEN)
ROPER (LEIGH)
IRABOR (BARROW)
LEWTHWAITE (WORKINGTON)
AUSTERFIELD (YORK)

GOALS

ATKINSON (BARROW)	16
TURLEY (LEIGH)	14
CHARLES (HULL K.R.)	13
O'NEILL (WHITEHAVEN)	12
WOOD (ROCHDALE)	11



NIEL TURLEY
4 TRIES 14 GOALS

From Brian Walker to the Sports Editor, Oldham Evening Chronicle

...Continued from Page 29

Dear Sir,

When Sir Alex Ferguson fired an impulsive and over publicised broadside blasting rugby league for supposedly causing damage to the playing surface of the Old Trafford pitch his cannon would have been better pointed in the direction of those prima donna players who sometimes had trouble moving the ball accurately from A to B. The United hierarchy were not deceived by this Ferguson smokescreen and have continued to provide league supporters with the opportunity of watching their sport at the Theatre Of Dreams and at the same time, of course, producing a few quid for the Mancunians pot!

Boundary Park, of course, would never normally expect to be compared to the Theatre Of Dreams, but right now we Oldham rugby league supporters can only dream of playing there next season. Pity, therefore, that Latics' Moore and Co don't seem to have the wisdom or foresight of their United counterparts and can afford to turn their noses up at an extra £100,000 income. Even in millionaire or, indeed, second division soccer terms that is still a sizeable chunk of cash.

Then again why should Oldham rugby supporters be surprised at anything meted out by Oldham Athletic? I sat in at those meetings back in 1997 when Latics, then led by Chairman Ian Stott, indicated their interest in forming a new, debt free rugby club but as the chances of Murdoch sponsorship money dissipated so did Latics' interest. Since then, to say that the relationship between the two clubs has been anything but estranged would be questionable.

In those days the Latics held the high ground because they owned the stadium. But when OPP handed over the £3.1 million purchase price that ended. Subsequently a further £500,000 of public money has been spent on the pitch thus ensuring its suitability, not just for soccer, but rugby and other sports too. In other words the first steps to provide an up to date community stadium.

It would seem that you can drive the team bus through the stadium purchase contract, but if Chris Moore is wringing his hands he would be better considering not just the damage he is creating locally to his own, fellow director's and football clubs' reputations, but the unnecessary pain he is causing to rugby league supporters.

Mr Moore may think he still holds the high ground but, morally, he needs to rethink and quickly.

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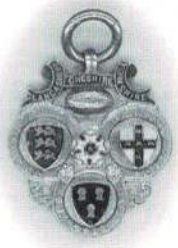
Albert Brough's
1927 Challenge Cup
Winners Medal



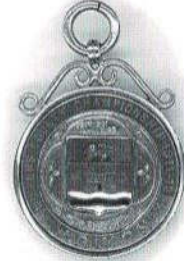
Billy Dixon's
1904/5
Championship Medal



Billy Dixon's
1907/8 Lancs League
Winners Medal



Billy Dixon's
1907 Challenge Cup
Runners Up Medal



Billy Dixon's
Cumberland County
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HELP PLUG THE DRAIN !!!

Oldham Rugby Heritage Trust, formed to preserve the heritage of Oldham RLFC not just for the benefit of the club's fans but on behalf of all sports enthusiasts in the town, boasts the most comprehensive rugby league club collection of trophies, medals, international caps and jerseys in the world.

The Trust relies on the vast percentage of its collection being donated but from time to time finds it necessary to enter the hurly burly world of the auction house in its quest to secure Oldham RLFC related memorabilia which otherwise would probably end up being displayed in Australian, South African and American sports bars!

Just last week a Shropshire auctioneer offered Albert Brough's 1927 Challenge Cup Winners medal to the highest bidder and a couple of weeks before that a collection of four Billy Dixon medals went under the hammer up in Cumbria. Brough, 1924 Tourist and Ashes winner, was one of only four Oldham players who played in the four consecutive Challenge Cup finals in the late twenties, a feat not surpassed until Wigan dominated the tournament in the 1990's. And Dixon, a club star from the early twentieth century, when the Roughyeds had arguably its best ever side, was Oldham's second most prolific trophy winner.

Most sports minded people would want to see those trophies returned to town and

that's just what the Trust ensured but not before parting with a four figure sum.

Last season I wrote in the programme about the frustration in not being able to afford to secure the future of vintage Oldham star Sam Lees' representative caps which ended up in the hands of a Cape Town dealer and proclaimed that this should never be allowed to happen again. At least the Brough and Dixon medals are now back, but not without the help of significant club backed fund raising and a generous contribution from the Independent Supporters Club. The cost of obtaining rugby memorabilia has spiralled and insurance, restoration and security costs don't come cheap.

So may be if you are interested in helping the future efforts of the Trust please contact one of the Trustees named below.

Also, if you have any item related to Oldham RLFC's history we would be pleased to discuss that too.

Merry Christmas



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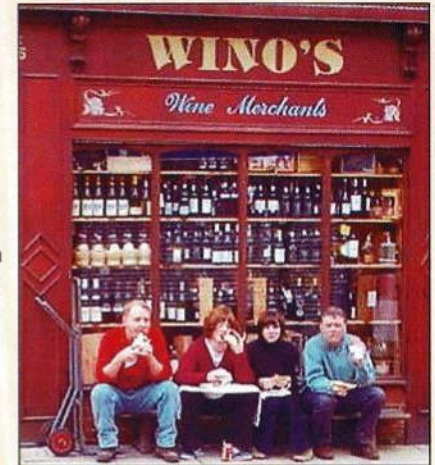
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Fixtures

Date Opponent Result Att

DECEMBER
2 SWINTON LIONS F - A
16 Hull K.R. 10-26 2032

23 ROCHDALE HORNETS H
30 Leigh A

JANUARY
6 YORK H

13 Dewsbury Rams A

20 CHORLEY LYNX H

27 Kellogg's Challenge Cup (3rd Round)

FEBRUARY
3 Workington A

10 Kellogg's Challenge Cup (4th Round)

17 GATESHEAD H

24 Kellogg's Challenge Cup (5th Round)

MARCH
3 Huddersfield A

10 DONCASTER DRAGONS H

15 Sheffield Eagles A

24 FEATHERSTONE H

29 Rochdale Hornets A (Nat Cup)

APRIL
1 DEWSBURY RAMS H (Nat Cup)

7 Huddersfield A (Nat Cup)

14 KEIGHLEY H (Nat Cup)

21 Hunslet Hawks A (Nat Cup)

MAY
5 BATLEY BULLDOGS H (Nat Cup)

12 National Cup Quarter Finals

19 National Cup Semi Finals

26 National Cup Final

JUNE
2 Keighley Cougars A

9 WHITEHAVEN H

16 Barrow A

23 BATLEY BULLDOGS H

30 Hunslet Hawks A

JULY
7 LEIGH H

14 Chorley Lynx A

21 Whitehaven A

28 HUDDERSFIELD H

AUGUST
4 HUNSLET HAWKS H

11 Batley Bulldogs A

18 Rochdale Hornets A

25 WORKINGTON H

SEPTEMBER
1 York A

8 KEIGHLEY COUGARS H

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