



TEAMS

OLDHAM

Coach: Steve MOLLOY



ROCHDALE H

Coach: Martin HALL

Gavin DODD	1	Paul OWEN
Chris CAMPBELL	2	Sean COOPER
Paul ANDERSON	3	Mick NANYN
Jon GODDARD	4	Gareth PRICE
Joe McNICHOLAS	5	Casey MAYBERRY
Gareth BARBER	6	Danny WOOD
Neil RODEN	7	Ian WATSON
Steve MOLLOY	8	Matt LONG
Anthony MURRAY	9	Warren AYRES
Martin McLOUGHLIN	10	David STEPHENSON
Chris MORLEY	11	James BUNYAN
Lee DORAN	12	Damian BALL
Phil FARRELL	13	Paul SMITH
Simon SVABIC	14	Andy WALLACE
Jason CLEGG	15	Andy GRUNDY
Ryan STAZIKER	16	Wes ROGERS
John HOUGH	17	Matt BATEMAN

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE: COLIN MORRIS
 ROBERT HICKS



STEVE WRIGHT
 ROB AINSWORTH



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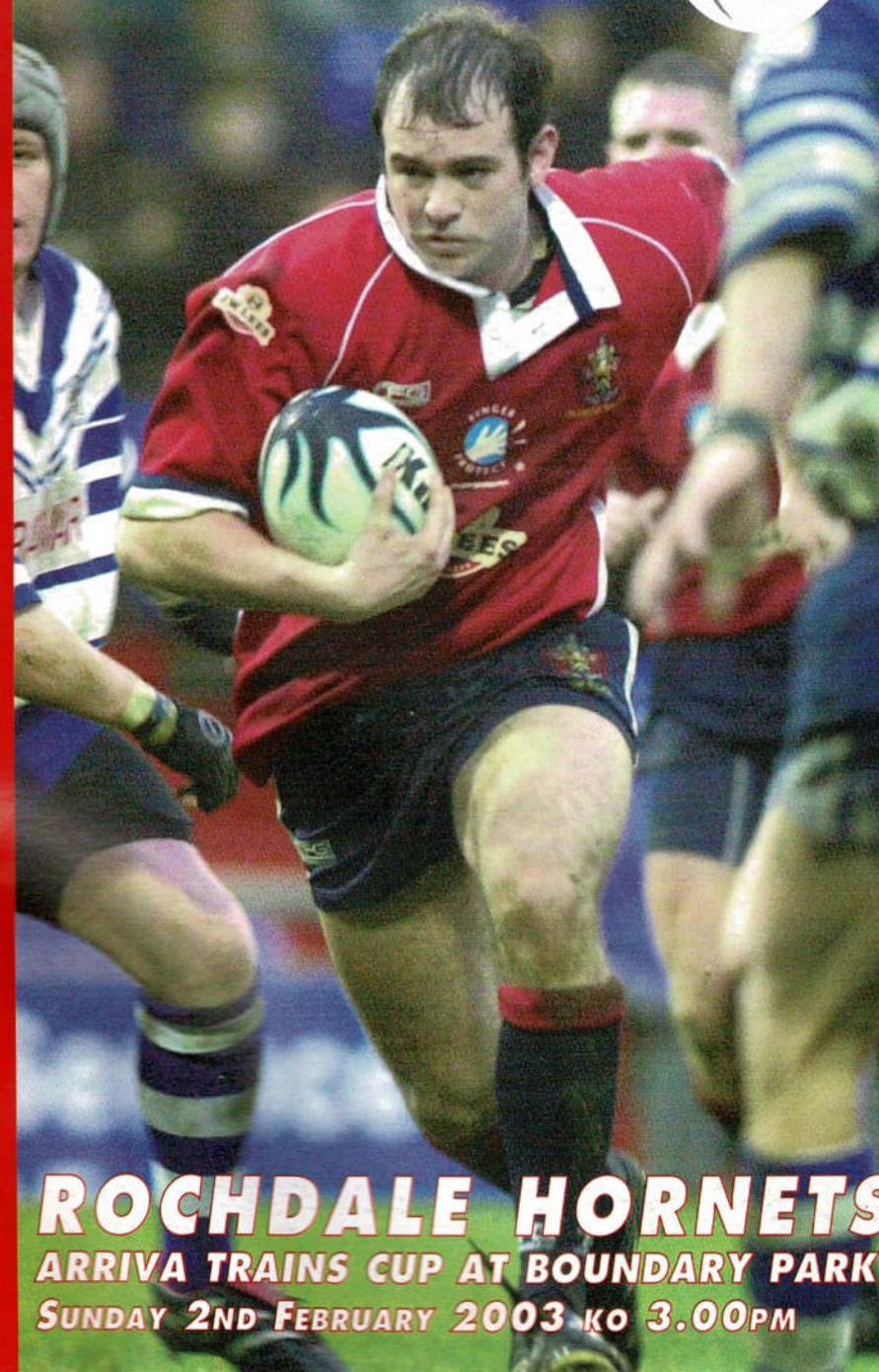
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The Roughyeds



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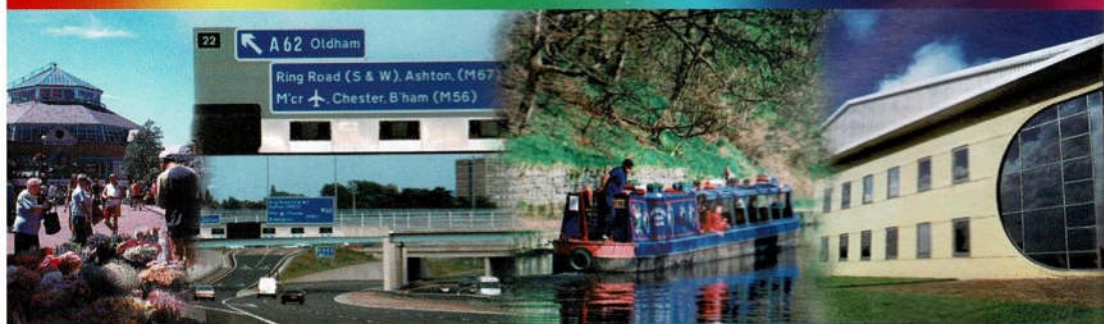
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The Roughyeds

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IN THE HOT SEAT

Christopher Hamilton

IT WOULD probably be fair to say that last weeks 'homecoming' was something of a disappointment. Playing amateur opposition is always hard - firstly it doesn't fire up the spectators enthusiasm and secondly it is hard for the players to stay focussed.

Nevertheless the main objective was achieved in that we won the game and although not as many people attended as I would have liked the crowd of 1270 was the sixth highest of the third round ties.

Our 'reward' was, as you will probably know, an away tie at London Broncos on Sunday 9th February. Every club that makes it to the fourth round dreams of a big game against one of the top Super League sides so we are disappointed but, although we will not make a lot of money out of the game, it will be an experience for the club as we have not played the Broncos before and hopefully plenty of you will travel down to get behind the lads.

Before looking to today's game I sincerely hope that BARLA's decision to 'unify' with the RFL will be the start of the whole game moving forward following the strides made by the new management at Red Hall. Certainly from speaking to Maurice Oldroyd he feels it is the way forward and lets hope things work out.

Rochdale come to town today in what, as ever, is sure to be a fiercely fought contest. We need to register our first win in the Arriva Trains Cup competition but with local derbies form counts for nothing and we know we will need to improve on our two previous performances to get a win today.

We will also be keeping a close eye on today's game as we have implemented two new initiatives for this game. The first was via Revolution Radio whereby buying an adult ticket in advance enabled a child to go free and the second was via a new link up with the Oldham Chronicle who printed vouchers for presentation at the turnstile today with the same offer.

We are making a concerted effort to increase the number of young spectators to our games and will have various offers in place throughout the season. As ever your help is vital and if possible take up these offers yourself or encourage others to do so.

Enjoy the game,

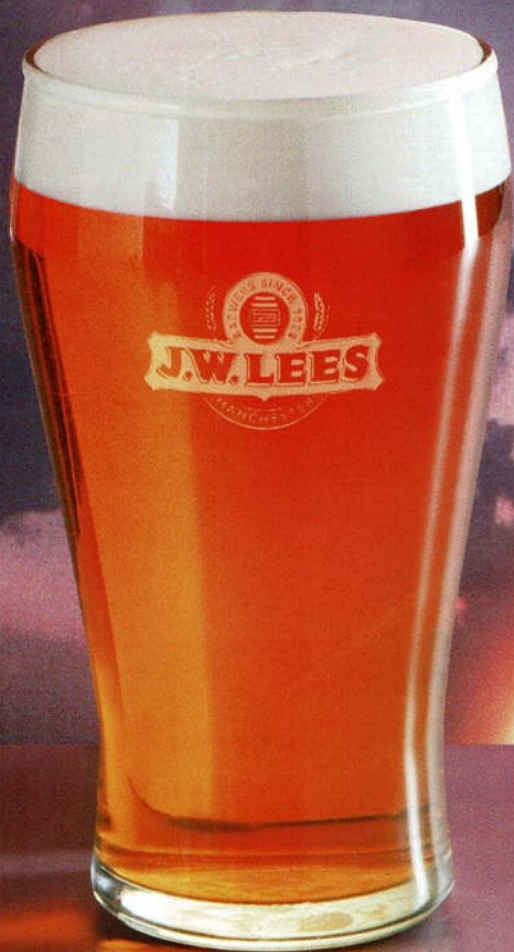


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Molloy's Message



ALTHOUGH we were here last week I feel that today is the official home coming of the Roughyeds and I hope that the added bonus of a local derby will whet the appetite of the supporters.

Rochdale and Oldham games are always hard fought encounters and today will be no exception.

Like ourselves Rochdale have new personnel in their ranks and have a lot of Super League experience in Ian Watson, Paul Southern and more recently Jon Roper.

After our first Arriva Cup and Challenge Cup games it's important that we compete and play to our potential and don't turn over cheap possession which we were probably guilty of in our first two games.

I am pleased with the way Paul Anderson has settled in and as well as creating a couple last week he managed to cross for one himself. Anthony Murray and Chris Campbell also took their opportunities well and have given me a selection headache for today. But I feel a successful Oldham side must have competition for places. I feel for Danny Guest who broke his thumb last week and will be sidelined for probably six weeks, Danny worked very hard in the close season to lose weight and improve his game and early signs looked like this was paying dividends, but unfortunately that's the nature of sport.

Enjoy the game,

Steve

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IN TOWN Today-Rochdale



Warren Ayres - Half back/Hooker: Left Salford to gain regular first team experience with Hornets. Took a while to settle, but established himself last term and produced several match winning performances. A ball playing half back with a great turn of speed, his father Warren was a big Hornets favourite in the 70's.

Damian Ball - Loose Forward: A player who tasted Grand Final success with Dewsbury. Joined Hornets before the start of last season adding his classy ball handling skills to an already impressive pack. Renowned as a creative player he is also a regular points scorer.

Matt Bateman - Winger: Product of St Helens youth development he joined Hornets from Swinton in the close season. A regular points scorer throughout his career he is hoping for a big season with Hornets this term.

James Bunyan - Second Row: Left Doncaster midway through 2001 season due to their financial problems. Has strengthened Hornets squad with his power and speed and can be called on to play in a number of different positions if needed. A relentless tackler and regular try scorer.

Sean Cooper - Centre: Signed from Oldham in November 1998, Sean combines pace and power on attack and defence whether playing Centre or on the Wing. Has experience of playing at the top level and is consistently near the top of Hornets try scoring list.

Andy Grundy: Another product of Wigan's youth development arrived at Hornets in the close season after a spell at Chorley Lynx. At 24 years of age he still has the best years of his career in front of him and will be looking for a big season at Hornets.

Matt Long - Prop: Signed on the eve of the 2002 season from Widnes, Matt is the son of a former Dewsbury and Bradford star. He is a tremendous physical presence on the field and scores more than his fair share of tries for a Prop.

Casey Mayberry - Centre, Winger: Another addition to the squad last season, joining from Halifax Blue Sox. A pacy player who can play anywhere across the backs. Is capable of scoring tries from anywhere on the field and has become a great favourite with the fans.

Mick Nannyn - Centre: Another close season coup when he signed for Hornets. He was Swinton's leading try and points scorer for the last two seasons. Reliable goal kicker.

Paul Owen - Full Back/Stand Off: An elusive runner and reliable under the high ball Paul

reinforced his reputation last year with a series of solid, eye-catching displays. A great favourite with the fans, pulls of tremendous one-on-one tackles and is a regular try scorer.

Gareth Price - Prop: Another young player who signed in the close season and is looking to further his development and achieve success at Hornets.

Wes Rogers - Second Row: Signed from Oldham after the start of 2001 season.

Regularly makes an impact in a very strong pack with his sound defensive qualities. On attack he also scores his fair share of tries.

Paul Smith - Loose Forward, Second Row: Joined Hornets before the 2002 season from Swinton where he marked himself out as one of the best young stars in the NFP.

Continued to impress last season with his powerful running style, great hands and try scoring record. Has caught the eye of a number of clubs and Paul could have a great future in the game.

David Stephenson - Loose Forward: Another player with Super League experience, most recently with Hull Sharks. It was a major coup when he signed for Hornets. A wily campaigner, with a robust running and tackling style he has a good pair of hands and leads by example.

Ian Watson - Scrum Half: At 26 years old Watson has a wealth of experience and is a current Welsh international. Good ball handling skills and astute tactical kicking game. Signed from Salford in the close season.

Danny Wood - Centre, Stand Off: Earmarked as a player of exceptional talent from his junior days. Signed for Hornets three seasons ago, regularly puts in man of the match performances. A creative player who can be relied on to score more than his fair share of tries. Extremely reliable goal kicker.



Paul Smith

A Potted History of Rochdale Hornets ..by Don Yates

ROCHDALE HORNETS were formed in 1871 and, like Oldham were founder members of the Northern Rugby Football Union in 1895. There have been many exciting tussles between Oldham and Hornets down the years with matches between the two figuring strongly in the history of the Rochdale club.

The first major trophy won by Hornets was the Lancashire Cup in 1911 when Hornets beat Oldham 12-5 in the final at Broughton. The Roughyeds, fielding eleven internationals, were favourites to win that final but the result was never in doubt as Hornets dominated the game. The period either side of World War One was a good era for Hornets who appeared in four other Lancashire Cup finals and also won the Lancashire Championship in season 1918-19. They lost to Wigan in the 1912 Lancashire Cup final but gained revenge two years later when they beat Wigan 3-2 in the 1914 final. When the war ended in 1919 the Lancashire Cup competition was staged in spring when Hornets won the trophy by beating Oldham 22-0 in the final. The following autumn Oldham gained revenge by beating Hornets 7-0 in the 1919 final.

Two seasons later, 1921-22, Hornets won the Challenge Cup for the only time in their history. En route to the final Hornets met Oldham at the quarter-final stage, a match which attracted a crowd of 26,664 to the Athletic grounds. It was the biggest crowd to attend a Rochdale Hornets match at that venue. After beating Oldham 5-2, Hornets went on to beat Hull 10-9 in the final before a Headingley crowd of 35,000, at that time the biggest crowd to watch a rugby league match in Britain.

That crowd record stood for only two years, until April 1924, when 41,831 crammed into the Athletic Grounds for the Challenge Cup Final in which Wigan beat Oldham 21-4. The biggest crowd for a league match at the Athletic Grounds also involves Oldham who drew 19,654 in October 1954 when the Roughyeds beat Hornets 18-4. The record gate for a Hornets match at Spotland was also set when Oldham were the visitors. On Boxing Day 1989, 8,061 saw Hornets beat Oldham 24-12. The record crowd for any rugby league match at Spotland was the 8,974 attendance at the Northern Ford Premiership Grand Final when Widnes beat Oldham 24-14 in 2001.

The first Sunday match staged by Hornets was against Oldham in March 1968 when, once again, the Roughyeds won at the Athletic Grounds 13-10.

Two years previously, during February 1966, a Hornets home fixture was staged at Watersheddings. The Athletic Grounds were not equipped with floodlights in those days so Hornets, with a lengthy list of postponed fixtures to arrange, switched their match with Wigan to Water-sheddings. The experiment was not a success. Hornets lost 35-5 before a disappointing crowd of 2,005.



David Larder son of former Oldham centre Phil

Earlier during that 1965-66 season Hornets reached the Lancashire Cup Final when former Oldham centre Johnny Noon was their player-coach. Warrington beat Hornets 16-5 in that final and they also beat Hornets in the final of the 1974 Regal Trophy competition, a gallant Hornets team going down 27-16. Hornets put up an even braver show in the 1971 Floodlit Trophy final when they visited St.Helens and kept the home side try less, losing out on goal kicks 8-2.

That Regal Trophy final 29 years ago was the last occasion Hornets appeared in a major final. To progress in this National League Cup competition Hornets will have to overcome some stiff opposition but they have made a good start to the campaign and are capable of producing a shock, especially against their fierce rivals, the Roughyeds.

From The Pen Of

.....Michael Turner



Of Roughyeds And Hornets

THE RIVALRY between the Roughyeds and our Rochdale neighbours goes right back to the pre Northern Union days in the Victorian era. The first "Rugby League" meeting between the two clubs took place at Watersheddings on 30th November 1895. Oldham won that match, a hard fought encounter, by thirteen points to eight and, as could be witnessed in last months Law Cup game at Spotland, the old adversaries still show and expect no quarter from their opponents.

On three occasions the teams met in the final of the old Lancashire Cup. Hornets were successful in 1911-12 and then the clubs contested the first two finals after the first world war. Rochdale again took the trophy in 1918-19 with Oldham bringing home the cup the

following season. The other "big" game to feature the clubs came in the Challenge cup semi final of 1925 when Oldham triumphed nine nil over the Hornets at Central Park, Wigan before going on to win the cup against Hull KR at Headingley.

The best points haul for an Oldham player against Rochdale stands to winger Abe Johnson who scored eight goals and three tries on March 3rd 1928 as Oldham triumphed 58 - 6. A month later the same player racked up 30 points against Widnes - still a club record and ironically a few weeks after that Hornets won the return match 7-6 at the Athletic grounds.

The Roughyeds try record for the fixture is jointly held by Sam Williams (November 24th 1900) and Sid Rix (April 24th 1926) with four and surprisingly, the goals record goes to Geoff Sims with ten scored on September 16th 1961.

In more recent times Oldham had the distinction of playing in the last fixture at the Athletic grounds on April 1st 1988 and on February 9th 1997 Hornets provided the opposition in a 4th round Challenge cup tie which was billed as being the first match with Boundary Park as the official home venue for Oldham R L F C !



Action from the Oldham v Hornets match on April 3rd 1961 - Brian Lord reaches out to score despite the attentions of future Roughyeds favourite Trevor Simms.

PROBABLY the most important news this week for the long term good of the game, was BARLA's vote to accept unification with the Rugby Football League after going it alone for over 30 years. Until the amateurs were on line with the professionals it has been impossible for the game to speak with a united voice.

Hopefully now the outright hostility and broad divisions that have been apparent in the past will be healed and the planning for the future, so vital for our game, will now be easier to achieve. The irony is that the prime mover in the re-unification, Maurice Oldroyd was the instigator of the breakaway over 30 years ago.

However, controversy is never far away and the attempt to get closer links with French Rugby League appears to have taken a backward step after the fierce criticism of British refereeing by the Chairman of Villeneuve Leopards after their Challenge Cup game with Featherstone. Obviously it is impossible to pass judgement if you weren't at the game. But if the experience of the two recent Oldham players, Darryl Lacey and Gavin Dodd, who tried their luck over the Channel, is anything to go by, the French won't be blameless.

The draw for the 4th Round of the Cup has not been kind to us – away to London Broncos. With no disrespect to the London club, if you are being drawn away to a Super League side then London, financially, must be the ones not to come up against. Not only will there be less of our own fans making the journey, higher transport costs for the team, but The Broncos have the worst home following of any Super League Club. Never mind, we shall just have to beat them and get a more lucrative tie in the next round.

On the subject of the Challenge Cup,

everybody was disappointed with our display against the amateurs of East Hull. Although we comprehensively beat them our completion rate was terrible and I have no doubt that this was made very clear to the players at training on Monday. According to Coach Molloy the worst thing to happen was for us to score two tries in the first few minutes. "The players got giddy and wanted to score every time we had the ball," said Molloy. "There is no doubt we would have lost to any professional club if we had played like that." Congratulations are certainly due to amateurs West Brom and Halton Simms Cross who beat professional opposition and Halton have certainly been rewarded financially with a visit to Wigan in the fourth round.

Now to this week's clash with the old enemy, Rochdale Hornets. Not only will it be the first all-professional game back at Boundary Park, but in relation to the new Cup competition, it appears to be a must-win game to put even more pressure on the players. I am sure, however, that the players will be up for it and let's just hope the whole town gets behind the club and we have a terrific turn out. There is no doubt that the club, in association with The Oldham Evening Chronicle and The Revolution, have done everything in their power to push the game.

Once again it is nice to have had so many favourable comments about this year's programme. We try to vary it every year and to make it an interesting read, not only for the Rugby League enthusiast, but also for the casual reader. Can I take this opportunity to thank all the contributors who freely give so generously of their time? Suggestions as to ways to improve the programme or ideas for new approaches are always welcome. Just drop a line to Nigel Marland or Brian Walker at the club.

NM

Walkerbout

with
Brian Walker

WHAT'S IN A RUGBY SHIRT?

IT'S NOT too many years ago that when a rugby shirt had been repaired again, again and again and eventually deemed well and truly knackered, it would be thrown into the training skip and still used on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Only then would an order be sent off to Bukta for it's replacement. In Oldham's case one red and white hooped rugby jumper please exactly the same as you've supplied for the last hundred years. Oh, and extra large with a number 8 on the back.



Time was that a team's playing kit was it's trade mark. Oldham's, as we all know, was red and white hooped shirts and navy blue shorts. I remember back in the 60's, Oldham's coach of the time standing in front of the faithful up at Watersheddings announcing that the side would play the new season in white shorts similar to Wigan and Leigh's. "Much cleaner looking! much smarter!" he said. He might just as well have announced Saddam personality of the year. He was eventually dispatched back down the East Lancs Road, severance pay 13 pairs of white shorts.

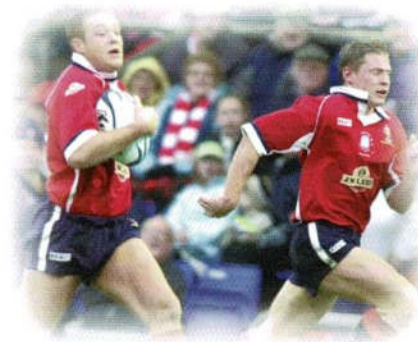
Of course all that changed dramatically in the early 80's when fans could better emulate our heroes by wearing replica shirts. And why not? It was different, it was fun, available to everybody and it added colour to the terraces and I was one of the first to don the red and white.

For a few years tradition dictated that style and colour didn't alter but now of course regular change of playing kit is a necessity determined by cash and fashion.

Sponsors emblazon their company name or product across the front and back of our club shirts driven not just by potential media coverage but by the number of fans who walk around our streets and shopping centres willingly acting as advertisers.

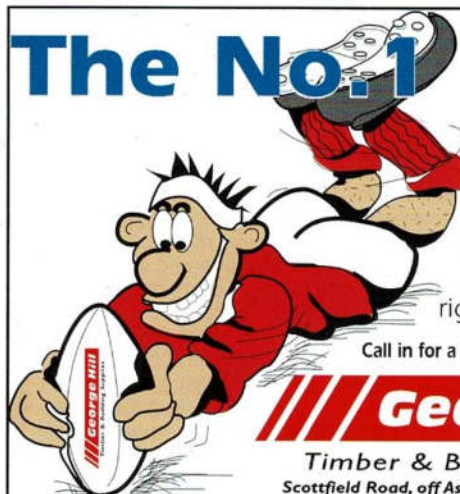
Cash is in short supply and cash from shirt sponsors and from the sale of replica shirts is an important, no, a vital source of income to all clubs. Similarly it is important to fans that their side turns out in the very latest style ensuring that the £40 or so that they pay for their replica shirt is money well spent keeping them ahead of the rest of the rugby league's fashion pack.

Oldham's new number unveiled in the flesh last Sunday for the match against East Hull made the visitors' kit look dated and is a sure fire certainty to get the tills ringing.



The black and orange change kit is attractive and fashionable too but for "change strip" substitute "away strip", an irritation picked up from the round ball lot. Most people prefer to watch Oldham play in red, white and blue wherever and whenever possible.

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Back On The Terraces

..... With Simon Winnard

TODAY we welcome our local rivals Rochdale Hornets back to Boundary Park for the first home fixture of our Arriva Trains National Cup campaign. We fought out a tough pre-season encounter (are there any other kind against Rochdale?) that saw the Roughyeds secure a 28-22 victory and return the Law Cup to the town. No less than 12 new signings were paraded that day, but it was perhaps the contribution of two key members from last season's squads that caught the eye.

Phil Farrell, the Roughyeds skipper, and his loose forward counterpart Paul Smith have both made significant contributions to their club's causes over recent campaigns and both have undoubtedly got a Super League pedigree. Indeed, Smith's on-off move to Saints over the closed season looked to have ended his association with the Hornets. However, differences have been put aside and playmaker Smith will once again be Rochdale's biggest single threat today.

Expansion is a fashionable topic around RL circles at the moment. On the back of the launch of NL3 and the massive expansion of the Summer Conference we have seen the re-emergence of York as the City Knights and they made an immediate impact with a magnificent crowd for their first round game against Hull KR. Also, the introduction of the Skolars to NL2 has really given the game a boost in the capital.

All this of course as the green light has been given to French club UTC to make an application for the 2005 Super League season - a decision that, whilst raising a few eyebrows, has largely been welcomed.

What is interesting is just how quickly the decision was taken following the recent presentations to the RFL delegation. The jury is still out on whether that proves to be in haste or a decisive piece of action by Richard Lewis and co. However, this seems a timely decision in light of the ensuing re-negotiation of the News Corporation TV contract. A recent interview with Mr Lewis clearly showed that there is a clear intention for Super League to expand to at least 14 clubs over the next two years and bringing 'new blood' into the competition looks to be a high priority. You can of course only watch Saints, Bradford, Wigan, Leeds and London so many times a year on Sky I suppose!

There is no doubting that the concept of expansion to include French teams is appealing but is the time or choice the right one? One of the big benefits of UTC's application is that there are certainly strong RL links in the Catalan region. Indeed, Oldham schoolboys have toured there on many occasions, so the grass roots have been firmly laid down.

However, in recent years there has been a decline in the status of League in the area which has seen a corresponding upturn in Rugby Union's fortunes. The other code regularly attracts crowds

above 8,500 in Perpignan, whereas another applicant Toulouse, has League as the only major spectator sport in what is a large city. Whilst either club would undoubtedly offer the cosmopolitan appeal that League is after, the logical route for expansion before we go down that road again is to spread the word to South Wales.

Not that it would need much effort of course. The present disarray of the Welsh Rugby Union, the region being within easy travelling distance for both sets of fans, the fact that there is a proven production line of rugby playing talent, not to mention more than a keen interest in RL all adds to its appeal. Indeed, a list of established top RU clubs with youth structures already in place are just raring to go.

Whilst, establishing the Welsh Conference this year is a definite move in the right direction, I believe that allowing UTC to simply leapfrog the queue ahead of Welsh sides gives out the wrong message. Fair enough, UTC have been asked to prove that they could satisfy the same ground and financial criteria as any NL1 Grand Final winners - described amusingly by the RFL as the 'traditional route' for promotion to SL. However, presumably the travel costs will be subsidised by the RFL for all involved. An interesting scenario would be if UTC finished bottom of SL in their first season. Would they then be relegated to NL1? If so would the RFL continue to subsidise the travel costs? Unlike others, I don't subscribe to the theory that relegation should be 'tailor made' to accommodate this scenario? If you live by the sword then.

Indeed, I believe that any new club joining our professional ranks should be asked to do so in the lowest league. Was that not the case for Oldham in 1997 or York and London Scholars this year? Interestingly, the Toulouse Chairman has publicly stated that the club will lodge an application to join NL1 in 2004? why NL1? However, if accepted, it would pose an interesting possibility of them earning promotion to SL for the 2005 and then playing UTC. Last weeks Challenge Cup performances from the French sides points firmly to the fact that would be extremely competitive in the National League. This would be without the need to heavily subsidise the SL franchise or top heavy overseas quotas. The way forward looks fairly obvious to me.

I fully support the concept of expansion but not to the detriment of our existing family of clubs. Given the financial climate that the RFL finds itself in at present, if expansion is to be pursued then surely it should be done with financial prudence and not the risks associated with the ill fated past experiments. Controlled expansion such as formation of NL3 and a structured promotion and relegation between all divisions has got to be the way forward. Let's hope that the community based bid from Bramley is successful at the third time of asking and brings the club back to the family - an ever expanding one at that.

Iva Slateloose



Iva's Fantasy League

GENERAL RULES

1. Entries for Iva's fantasy league must be written on the back of a bus ticket. Bonus points are awarded if the ticket is an Arriva ticket (official sponsors) and if the ticket is numbered sequentially (ie 1-2-3-4-5) or the numbers add up to 21. *[Didn't you play that game when you were young?]*
2. Entries must consist of a team of seventeen players, one Coach and one Referee. The combined value of all 19 shall not exceed £2.50p (€4).
3. Any player may be selected in any position as this is now normal practice throughout rugby league up to and including international level. Except the referee cannot be nominated at scrum-half because he will be too busy polishing his white stick.
4. Every player can be selected from the same club (just in case you hate Hairnets more than anyone else).

POINT SCORING

1. Coaches will receive points as follows:-
 - a) 3 points for every time they blame the referee for losing.
 - b) 4 points for every time they blame injuries for losing.
 - c) 5 points for every hysterical outburst in the Press (e.g. Andy Kelly would have scored 5 points this week after his rant about Villeneuve).
 - d) 8 points for every time the team lose because a fox (or possibly a dog) runs on the field and distracts the players [well it did happen at Watersheddings].
 - e) 10 points for every time the Coach accepts the opposition were a better side, played better than his team and were worthy winners.

WARNING: You'll never score a maximum 10 if you choose Ian Millward.

2. Players will receive points as follows:-
 - a) 1 point for every time they are substituted
 - b) 2 points for every time they required the attention of the physio
 - c) 3 points for every time they go to the blood bin
 - d) 5 points for every sin-bin
 - e) 10 points for every sending-off

WARNING: It is not a good idea to choose any player called Farrell. However, Sonny Nickle could be very productive, as could Tim Street or, if he hasn't retired Vila Matautia

3. Referees will receive points as follows:-
 - a) 1 point for every disallowed try
 - b) 2 points for every 'try referred to a video ref., touch judge or St. John's Ambulance man.
 - c) 3 points for every missed knock on or

forward pass (these misses will be confirmed at the end of each game by the respective Club Chairman but may not exceed 120 per side)

- d) 5 points for every penalty awarded
 - e) 10 points if no penalties awarded
- GOOD TIP:** Russell Smith could prove fruitful here
- GOOD TIP:** Colin Morris is handy in this category. I don't think he has enough wind left to blow his whistle anymore.

PLAYER VALUATIONS

You may pick who you like as no player has a valuation because nobody can afford a transfer fee any longer. However, there are bonus points if you pick a player who Halifax subsequently pay you to take off their hands or who reaches an out of court settlement of more than £5.

PRIZES

First Prize: at the end of the season the winner, who will be judged solely by a committee consisting of Iva Slateloose, Saddam Hussain, George Bush and Elle Macpherson (please note how I'm trying to do my bit for world peace), will receive a signed photograph of Gary Hetherington (unless the competition is won by a Leeds fan in which case substitute Robert Mugabe for Gary Hetherington).

Second Prize: your favourite player's jock strap in club colours (except for Whitehaven who include chocolate in their team strip).

Third Prizes: several pairs of touch judges flags for you to wave at random as is the current practice at all rugby league fixtures.

SAMPLE TEAM/COACH/REFEREE

1. **GARY CHARLTON** (WORKINGTON TOWN) Always a likely offender.
2. **RICHARD CHAPMAN** (FEATHERSTONE ROVERS) The cheeky chappy with a nice line in backchat.
3. **STUART DICKENS** (FEATHERSTONE ROVERS) Has his own cushion for time likely to be sat on the bench.
4. **CRAIG MURDOCH** (HULL K.R.) On speaking terms with every referee.
5. **GRAEME HALLAS** (YORK CITY KNIGHTS) A smile, a joke, a song.
6. **ROB ROBERTS** (UNEMPLOYED) Everybody's favourite party guest.
7. **SIMON BALDWIN** (SALFORD CITY REDS) Bring me sunshine.
8. **DANNY EVANS** (DEWSBURY RAMS) Any friend of yours...
9. **JAMES LOWES** (BRADFORD BULLS) However, you might like to include him as your nominated referee.
10. **DEAN SAMPSON** (UNEMPLOYED) If he gets a club he's a top bet as a point scorer.
11. **PAUL DAVIDSON** (HALIFAX) Adds punch to any side.
12. **JAMIE BLOEM** (HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS) Adds bite to any side.
12. **MATT CALLAND** (HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS) Adds something.....

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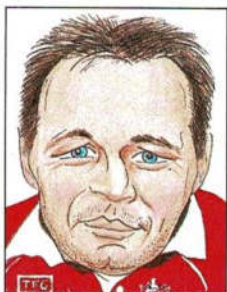
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Tracey's Tittle Tattle



'YOU KNOW, "Shaz said to me - off on a fantasy trip again, "I dreamt weird things about Rugby when it started again.

We were at Boundary Park last night, but it was the Hurst Cross ground and I was playing in an anti clockwise direction of course - against Steve Molloy, and after, when I was in Steve's - sorry - The Clayton Arms, I started singing this song - it just came to me - and it goes to The Yellow Rose of Texas!

Oh that prop forward, Steve, is a great big cuddly bear, His arms and legs like tree trunks, 'though he hasn't got much hair.

And when he came to tackle me, I didn't act so dumb, I dropped the ball on purpose, 'cos I fancied having a scrum!

"D'ya think I'd make Poet Laureate?" she said. "No", I said "and stay off the cheese before you go to bed".

"Hey, he's sorted though int he? she said. "But that nickname! You've never met anybody less like a Molly, have you? It's a girls name innit? The only other Molly I know's in that song." "Yeh" I said, "Our Molly's got cockles and muscles alright, but they're 'nowt like Molly Malones!"

Love & Kisses,
Tracey

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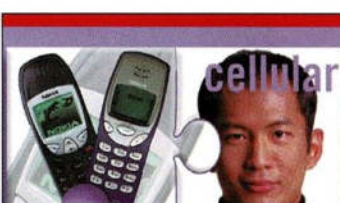
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Profile of Steve Molloy



Born 1969 • Interest in RL developed at Fitton Hall Secondary School under the influence of Iain MacCorquodale
Captained GB under 19s when aged 17 • Turned pro for Warrington on 18th Birthday & played for GB under 21s
Leeds next when at Headingley captained England in '93, played for GB (Full test caps) in '94
On to Featherstone - and inclusion in '96 GB Tour Party for trip to New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji
Sheffield Eagles next port of call, but cup-tied and could not play at Wembley in final against Wigan
Played for merged Huddersfield/Sheffield club, then stayed at McAlpine when Huddersfield 'went solo'
Loan spell at Oldham in 2000 • Joined Roughyeds from Batley, March 2002 • Named player-coach, July 2002

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Steve Molloy - Oldham

Paul Sculthorpe - St. Helens

Gareth Barber - Oldham

Does the kit fit?

Steve Molloy



UNTIL recently Steve's breakfast consisted of potato cakes, beans and poached eggs until a GB nutritionist (killjoy) advised him against it. He now has Cheerios. He sits on his own on the coach (no it's not B.O.) but is always close to assistant "Proccy" in case they need to discuss anything.

Steve's not superstitious but if he or the team are going through a particularly good patch he'll try and keep things the same - eg same strapping, same boots etc. Just before going on the pitch Steve makes a visit to the loo - as he is encouraged to take on vast quantities of liquids he suffers more than others with nervous 'wee wees'.

The worst advice he was ever given was from Gary Schofield his captain at Leeds prior to a game against the Aussie tourists. He told him to run straight at Paul Sironen as his defence was dodgy. He complied in the first minute and that is the last thing Steve remembers about that match. As far as prep talks go, the most memorable was from Doug Laughton who came into the changing rooms, fag in mouth, and told them "You'll beat these they're crap", and then walked out.

Best/Worst Changing Room
Best Huddersfield
Worst Salford
Best/Worst Playing Surface
Best Leeds (Headingley)
Worst Hull K.R.
Best/Worst after match food
Best Leigh (full Sunday dinner)
Worst Huddersfield (How many more things can they do with mince)

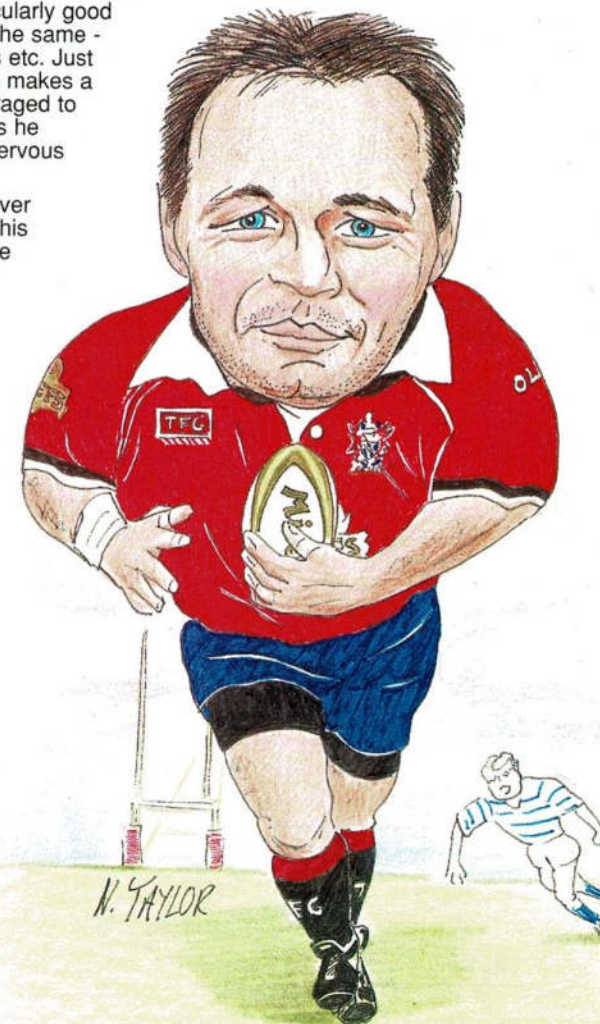
His favourite coach is Tony Smith from Huddersfield, very knowledgeable and first person to offer advice when it is needed.

Steve was once mistaken for

the famous cruiser weight boxer Glen McCrory in Las Vegas when he went to watch the Lewis/Holyfield fight. He almost ended up at the weigh in.

The only clean joke he remembers is one of Joe Mc's. *What do you call a chicken in a shell suit?* - An egg.

Mitch



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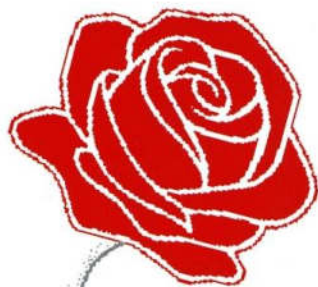


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Senior Academy

with Sean Gartland



THIS season the **SENIOR ACADEMY** will be structured into two divisions **CHAMPIONSHIP** and **FIRST DIVISION** with Oldham entering a side into the nine team First Division.

The contest will be an U21 affair with each of the First Division sides able to play three players overage (with no restrictions).

The Championship division will allow only two players to be overage.

Whilst the fixture list has not yet been formalised it is planned to commence league matches the first week of March with Oldham's home games again scheduled for Manor Park.

There will be no Alliance action.

Words of Wilson

... by Ian Wilson

TIME to look forward to our prospects for 2003 - and to say goodbye to some familiar faces

I would first suggest that, for the first time for a good while, there is a lot to be said for this season's structure, with four competitions - cup, league cup, league and play off series - scheduled at sensible times.

Although a lot of pundits disagree, I think that the RL Challenge Cup is correctly placed where it is: and given the importance of keeping it on the BBC, and their tight scheduling, it has to be there anyway, at least for the time being. A late April final also provides a good mid-season highlight, and then allows proper emphasis afterwards on the gradual build up of league fixtures to the finals and play off series.

For the non-Super League clubs, the Arriva Trains League Cup competition should mature into an important opportunity to chase silverware, as well as to play relatively local, competitive fixtures pre-Easter. It is surely far better timed at this time of year than interrupting the league fixtures proper, as it did it 2002.

Even after the disappointing result at Leigh, we still have every chance to compete effectively for a quarter final slot. Today, of course, is a must win game, if this is to materialise - and after the recent history of games with Hornets, it seems certain to be a close contest. It would be good to see us beginning a run to make a real fortress out of Boundary Park, whatever reservations one may have about playing here.

The really important competition though is the National League One. The fundamental objective of the season, surely, is success in this. But what would constitute 'success'?

The minimum target must be survival. Given that we finished 9th last season, the neutral will expect us to struggle this year. Furthermore, when you actually analyse last seasons results in detail, we should

really be favourite to finish 10th. In total, against the other 8 relevant teams in the league (ignoring Salford) we amassed a total of 7 points in 13 fixtures - home wins versus Featherstone and Whitehaven and draws with Dewsbury and Doncaster and at Batley. This is the lowest of all the teams; the next lowest being Dewsbury with 9. Against the same 8 sides, incidentally, we got 10 points from 11 fixtures in 2001, and 16 from 14 in 2000 - so we clearly have a trend to reverse if 2003 is to bring success.

Inevitably, the personnel of all sides changes from season to season, and no doubt our new signings have been made with the realisation in mind that we need to move to a higher level if we are merely to survive in NL1. Mark Sibson, David and Anthony Gibbons, Bryan Henare, Keith Brennan and Joey Hayes, in particular, just as Leo Casey (especially), Pat Rich, Ian Sinfield, Chris Farrell, Shayne McMenemy, Kevin Mannion and Mark Campbell who have also left us for a variety of reasons, over the previous two seasons, have all made valuable contributions to the club's recent achievements and I for one would like to put on record my appreciation for their efforts.

However, it is crucial that Steve Molloy's judgement with respect to this season is proved correct. Alongside the ongoing development of the players retained from last season, in short, the newcomers have to do better than those who have gone.

In this 'better' does not just refer to individual playing ability, of course. One of our great strengths since the club was reborn has been team spirit and defensive commitment. A newcomer with greater individual ability, but without a genuine team-man attitude, would not be 'better' in my opinion. We shall see!

So what would be 'success'? My view would be top six. We shall all know on September 7th.

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Going like a Train

Express

By GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS

SUCH is the nature of the modern-day fixture programme, that the Arriva Trains National Cup will be interrupted once again next week for the newly re-titled Powergen Challenge Cup.

Not that any National League teams should mind too much, with the exception of Workington, London Skolars and Gateshead Thunder, who all made their Challenge Cup exits last weekend.

Round Four of the Challenge Cup is the round when the national media sits up and starts to take notice of Rugby League for another year, and this year's draw has given a window of opportunity for the National League sides to make the fifth round.

At least six NL teams will be in the bag for that draw - because six ties will be between NL teams.

Sheffield Eagles entertain Keighley Cougars in a clash that is too close to call, as is the other all-National Two match-up involving Chorley Lynx and Swinton Lions.

Chorley were tipped to struggle against amateurs Leigh Miners last week, but they came through with ease to confirm they are no easybeats under young coach Darren Abram. And with the wily Peter Roe now in charge at Swinton, that should be a humdinger.

There are two all-National One ties with Featherstone Rovers taking on Leigh Centurions and Rochdale Hornets entertaining Hull Kingston Rovers.

Both are going to be huge battles between some of the great names of Rugby League, with the prize, potential money-spinning ties against Super League big boys.

NL2 Barrow Raiders have drawn a tricky one against NL1 favourites Salford City Reds, but York City Knights will have high hopes of turning over Doncaster Dragons, who themselves saved their best result for the Challenge Cup last year, defeating Huddersfield Giants 30-10 at this stage.

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It should be another great day for the new York club at the Huntington Stadium.

Batley Bulldogs may have got the trickiest draw of all - the long trip up to West Cumbria to face Wath Brow Hornets, who performed the giant-killing act of the third round as a last-minute drop goal beat NL2 Workington Town. Can they do it again?

There are four chances of NL teams pulling off giant killings - there weren't any last year, with Barrow going closest, holding Warrington Wolves to 10-0 at Craven Park.

Dewsbury have to travel to meet former coach Neil Kelly's Widnes Vikings; Whitehaven have a challenging trip to Headingley to face Leeds Rhinos; Hunslet Hawks host Huddersfield Giants on a bumper day for the Hawks; while Oldham may fancy their chances at London Broncos.

Whatever the outcome, you can keep up with all the Powergen Challenge Cup, Arriva Cup and National League news in Rugby Leaguer & League Express, every Monday.



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CLUB CALL

CLUB CASH

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"	G. Slater, Limeside	B8675
"	David Crosland, Lees News	A3114
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In Yer Face

THE recriminations between Villeneuve Leopards and Featherstone Rovers and criticisms of referee Peter Taberner over last week's TXU Energi cup tie does the games no good. A penalty count of 15 against 7 certainly did the Leopards no favours and no account seems to have been taken of different interpretations between Britain and France. Three penalties conceded in the first two minutes without having handled the ball undoubtedly put the Frenchmen on the back foot. But then Oldham had suffered a caning at the hands of the same referee during the first half of the game at Leigh the previous week. However, what I am not keen to hear are the accusations of persistent foul play levelled by Featherstone against their opponents as thought the Rovers were paragons of virtue when we all know that their own approach and record betray a particularly physical manner. Best really to keep your mouth shut and celebrate the victory.

Oldham, meanwhile, had the benefit of a French referee against East Hull. And, all in all, I have to say that Monseur Albert did an excellent job. The one serious flare up involving Phil Farrell and Easts' Paul Roberts should have been nipped in the bud by the touch judge but, once again, the man with the flag was found wanting and the abrasive Roberts continued, on and off, to provide the crowd with a focal point for their anger throughout the game. M. Albert nevertheless managed to keep a lid on things which was much to his credit.

Elsewhere the best attendance of

the round saw Wath Brow Hornets pull off the shock of the round when defeating Workington Town 13-12 at the Recreation Ground, Whitehaven before the best attendance of the round - 3,017. As ever nothing draws a crowd in Cumbria like a local derby and one with the romance of the Cup and the element of a supposed underdog is as good as it gets. It is all too easy for we 'southerners' to forget just how important and vibrant the game is in Cumbria, so for Wath Brow Hornets to steal the limelight can only add to local passion for the game.

The other notable results of the weekend were Halton Simms Cross overcoming London Skolars 15-8 and U.T.C.'s victory at Gateshead (38-4). It is early days yet as the Skolars set out on their adventure as professionals, so this defeat is not the be all and end all. And the signing of during the preceding week of ex-Oldham favourite Pat Rich should give them valuable experience. Even so all credit to Simmies for their performance.

On the other hand U.T.C.'s comfortable win reinforces the view that French rugby league is striving to improve standards and must be given as much help as we can afford. Which is why the reaction at Featherstone to their French visitors is so disappointing. As they say variety is the spice of life and French dressing always adds a different dimension. Now an away fixture in Perpignan.....count me in!

[Written before the TXU Energi 4th Round Cup Draw was known]

G.C.

ON THIS DAY

... with Don Yates

FEB
2



EXACTLY seventy-four years ago, on Saturday 2nd February 1929, Oldham and Rochdale Hornets met in a league match at the Athletic Grounds. The Roughyeds were a much better team than Hornets at that time and were expected to win comfortably. They had already beaten Hornets 18-0 in the Infirmary Cup and, later in the campaign, won 37-0 at Watersheddings. However, on this occasion Hornets raised their game and ended a six match losing sequence to defeat their arch rivals 7-3. International winger Sid Rix scored the Oldham try but scrum-half Martin touched down for Hornets and full-back Walter Gowers, like his son Ken a prolific marksman, landed two vital goals to give Hornets a euphoric victory.

The 1962-63 season was badly effected by the weather with a hard frost lasting from mid-December to the beginning of March. During that period most matches, both professional and amateur, were postponed. The only ground which was able to stage matches was Naughton Park, Widnes. The local chemical industry came to the rescue of Widnes by producing some miracle solution which, when spread on the pitch, melted the ice and made the pitch playable. As a result Widnes played all their home matches on schedule. There was a side effect to this miracle solution, however. It was a good few seasons before the turf at Naughton Park was back to normal and several players suffered painful reactions to minor cuts and abrasions after playing at that venue. On Saturday 2nd February 1963 Oldham visited Widnes in a First Division match. Defences were well on top throughout the game, which was decided by a single score, a try touched down by the diminutive Widnes scrum-half Ged Smith who later enjoyed a successful spell here at Oldham. Making his debut for the Roughyeds in that 3-0 defeat was centre three-quarter John Donovan who had been signed from St.Helens. He stayed at Watersheddings for six years during which time he made 167 appearances and scored 33 tries and a couple of goals.

Frost was the last thing on the minds of

the players involved in the World Nines, which were staged at Townsville, Queensland five years ago. Twelve nations were involved and the competition began well for Great Britain. They won all five pool matches with Oldhams Martin Crompton and the former local junior Iestyn Harris starring for the Lions. However, on Sunday 2nd February 1997, Great Britain faltered at the semi-final stage, losing 10-0 to Western Samoa. Willie Swann, then of Warrington but later to enjoy a spell with the Hornets scored the second Samoan try. New



Martin Crompton

Zealand lifted the trophy, beating Western Samoa 16-0 in the final with tries from Tony Iro, Quentin Pongia and Ruben Wiki plus a couple of goals from Marc Ellis. The attendance on that third day of competition was 13,423.

A much smaller crowd, 2,539, were in attendance at Whitehaven on Sunday 2nd February 1986 when Great Britain took on France at under-21 level. There were no Oldham players involved in that international but the match marked the international debut of Rochdale Hornets full-back Kevin Harcombe. It was a most satisfactory debut for Harcombe who won the man-of-the-match award after Britains hard fought 6-2 success. Remarkably he was never selected for any other representative fixture.

It was on this day in 1977, Wednesday 2nd February, that Lancashire entertained Cumbria at Hilton Park, Leigh. The biggest thorn in the Lancashire side that evening was Oldham bred Iain MacCorquodale who qualified for Cumbria because he was playing for Workington at that time. He scored a try and four goals but Lancashire were able to win 18-14.

STATS AND FACTS

APPEARANCES & SCORERS SEASON 2003

PLAYER	APP	SUB	TRIES	GOALS	D/G	PTS
Gavin Dodd	2	0	2	0	0	8
Iain Marsh	1	1	0	0	0	0
Jon Goddard	2	0	0	0	0	0
Paul Anderson	2	0	1	0	0	4
Joe McNicholas	2	0	1	0	0	4
Simon Svabic	1	1	0	3	0	6
Neil Roden	2	0	1	0	0	4
Steve Molloy	2	0	0	0	0	0
John Hough	1	1	0	0	0	0
Martin McLoughlin	1	1	0	0	0	0
Lee Doran	2	0	0	0	0	0
Chris Morley	2	0	0	0	0	0
Phil Farrell	2	0	2	0	0	8
Gareth Barber	1	1	0	2	0	4
Gavin Johnson	0	1	0	0	0	0
Ryan Staziker	0	1	0	0	0	0
Danny Guest	1	1	0	0	0	0
Chris Campbell	1	0	2	0	0	8
Anthony Murray	1	0	0	0	0	0



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DATE	OPPONENT			RSLT	ATT
DECEMBER 2002				F - A	
28	ROCHDALE HORNETS	LAW C	W	28-22	2,141
JANUARY 2003					
19	LEIGH CENTURIONS	NL C	L	14-22	3,070
26	EAST HULL	CC R3	W	32- 6	1,270
FEBRUARY					
02	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL C	H		
09	LONDON BRONCOS	CC R4	A		
16	BARROW RAIDERS	NL C	H		
23	SWINTON LIONS	NL C	A		
MARCH					
02		CC R5			
09	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL C	H		
16	LEIGH CENTURIONS	NL C	H		
		CC QF			
23	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL C	A		
30	BARROW RAIDERS	NL C	A		
APRIL					
06	SWINTON LIONS	NL C	H		
13	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL C	A		
		CC SF			
18	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL 1	H		
21	DONCASTER DRAGONS	NL 1	A		
26		CC FINAL			
MAY					
04	DEWSBURY RAMS	NL 1	H		
11	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL 1	A		
18		NL C QF			
25	LEIGH CENTURIONS	NL 1	H		
JUNE					
01	HULL KINGSTON ROVERS	NL 1	A		
08		NL C SF			
15	WHITEHAVEN	NL 1	H		
22	BATLEY BULLDOGS	NL 1	A		
29	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL 1	A		
JULY					
06		NL C FINAL			
13	FEATHERSTONE R.	NL 1	H		
20	DONCASTER DRAGONS	NL 1	H		
27	DEWSBURY RAMS	NL 1	A		
AUGUST					
03	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL 1	H		
10	LEIGH CENTURIONS	NL 1	A		
17	HULL KR	NL 1	H		
24	WHITEHAVEN	NL 1	A		
31	BATLEY BULLDOGS	NL 1	H		
07	FEATHERSTONE R.	NL 1	A		

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