



TEAMS

OLDHAM LEIGH

Coach: Steve MOLLOY Coach: Paul TERZIS



Gavin DODD	1	Dave ALSTEAD
Chris IRWIN	2	Damian MUNRO
Paul ANDERSON	3	Dale CARDOZA
John GODDARD	4	Phil KENDRICK
Chris CAMPBELL	5	Alan HADCROFT
Gareth BARBER	6	Pat WEISNER
Neil RODEN	7	John DUFFY
Steve MOLLOY	8	Sonny NICKLE
John HOUGH	9	John HAMILTON
Paul NORTON	10	Paul NORMAN
Lee DORAN	11	Sean RICHARDSON
Chris MORLEY	12	Adam BRISTOW
Phil FARRELL	13	Willie SWANN
Gavin JOHNSON	14	Rob BALL
Simon SVABIC	15	Bryan HENARE
Danny GUEST	16	Leroy RIVETT
Dane MORGAN	17	Dave BRADBURY

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE: MICHAEL DAWBER
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RLFC

Official
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The Roughyeds



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SUNDAY 25TH MAY 2003 KO 3.00PM

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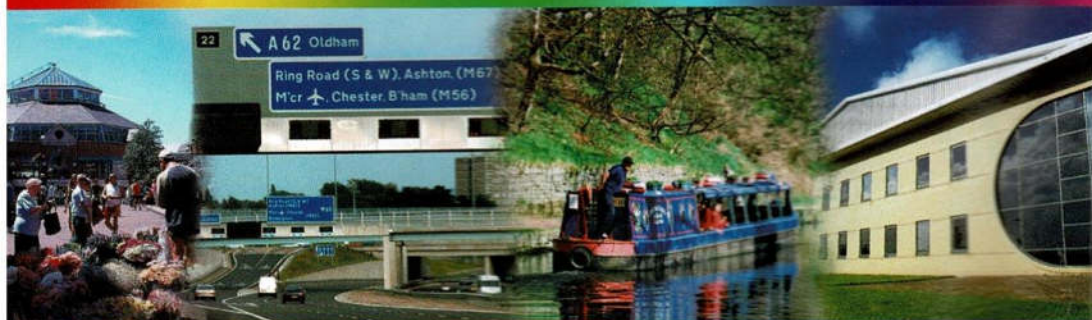
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Bob Irving 1964-74

Martin Murphy 1966-82

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

IN THE HOT SEAT

Christopher Hamilton

WITHOUT any shadow of a doubt our start to the season has been disappointing. Both in the Arriva Trains Cup and our National League games. So far we have fallen below the standards we have set in previous seasons and those which the players identified themselves for this year. The performance at Doncaster was poor and the fans made their feelings known, but let's put one or two things right:-



1. These players are not bad players and they do not go out on the pitch to play badly.
2. Steve Molloy is a young coach in his first job - I work with him on a daily basis and know that the quality of his coaching is good and in him we have someone who is committed to the Club, is enthusiastic and will put in whatever is needed to get things right.

For most of this week people have been shouting for changes - how fickle - remember Steve is the man who stepped into the breach last season and ensured we made it into Division One. Not only that but he also masterminded the play-off performances when everybody was singing his praises.

The Club is determined to get things right and we understand the frustration of the fans - nobody wants to win more than me. We will get things right and I am amazed that all of a sudden its as though we are in crisis - we most certainly are not.

The Club is making great strides off the pitch and the purchase of our own Social Club is evidence of that. We will also be shortly making major announcements which will further enhance the reputation of the Club. Every week I ask for the fans to get behind the team and I am doing the same this week. For too many games this season there has been no atmosphere and the players need you to lift them with your noise - even when we haven't got the ball.

Leigh arrive today as unbeaten League leaders - what better incentive for the lads to get back on track. Believe me we CAN do it - but we need your support.

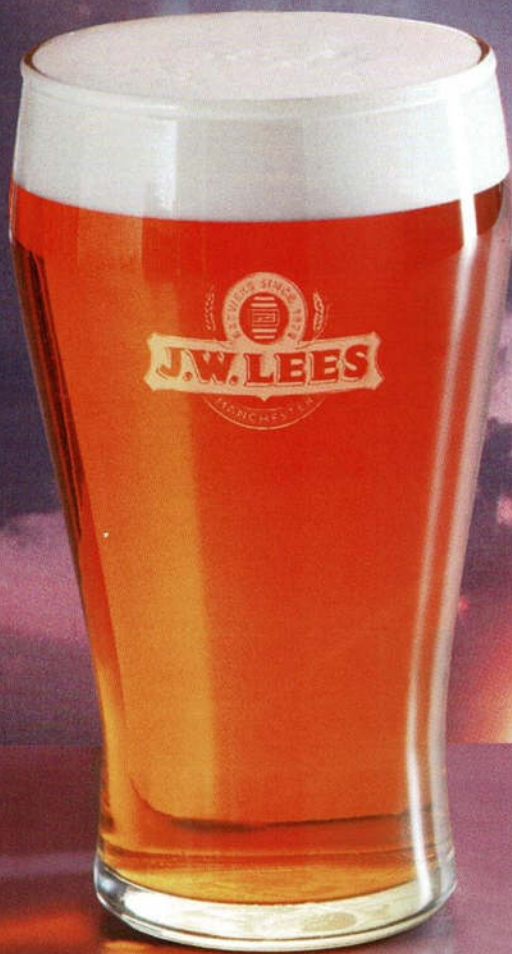
Enjoy the game.

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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Molloy's Message



WELCOME to Paul Terzis and the players of Leigh Centurions, who are certainly flying high in the competition, and are also in the last four of the Arriva Cup fulfilling a lot of their potential. Unlike us who are still on the starting blocks.

Today is a great opportunity to show our potential and get our season going with a committed, competitive performance.

The Doncaster performance just was not good enough. After a perfect start in Chris Campbell's seven second try (in a 16 year playing career I have never seen one faster) and after a ten minute period in which we competed and looked the better side, we then fell into the trap of trying to play Doncaster at their own game.

I understand how frustrating it must be as a spectator and our defensive frailties are a cause for concern, so much so we have picked up our training commitments and are now training a fourth night to remedy this problem.

On the injury front it is getting better and this will bring competition for places which can only be good, and will ultimately bring the best out of the players. Martin McLoughlin and Will Cowell might even have a trial run in the Academy, filling the three over age player rule. By the time you are reading this Darren Shaw and Ian Marsh are only a week or so from making their comebacks. Darren's professionalism and Ian Marsh's commitment will be a major boost for the squad and push us ultimately in the right direction.

Enjoy the game.

Steve

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IN TOWN Today-Leigh



Neil Turley Neil is already a club legend at Leigh where his scoring exploits in two seasons have been nothing sort of remarkable. After a dream debut season in the first team that saw Lancashire and Great Britain Under 21 honours follow the smashing of the club tries in a season record, Turley set a new points in a season mark last term with an impressive tally of 404. Despite being heavily marked Turley still finished the season with 29 tries.

Leroy Rivett Leroy joined the Centurions in mid January on a week-to-week contract and is another potentially exciting signing for the club. A player with speed to burn, given the opportunity. In the last Challenge Cup Final to be staged at Wembley Rivett scored an amazing four tries that earned him the Lance Todd Trophy as Man of the Match.

Damian Munro Outstanding footwork and pace are two ingredients that made Damian one to watch during his days at Widnes. After starting his career at Halifax, 26 year old Munro moved to the Halton Stadium where he found success and real try scoring form as a fullback or winger.

Dale Cardoza Dale is a explosive threequarter who joined the Centurions charge to the Grand Final last year. Cardoza has already got a list of clubs behind him. After graduating from the Academy scene at Sheffield the former East Leeds junior went on to represent Huddersfield after their merger with the Eagles, Warrington, Chorley, Doncaster and now Leigh.

Alan Hadcroft Alan Hadcroft is back for a third spell at the club following a year in Australia that saw him play in the local Illawarra competition against the likes of former international Paul McGregor, Jeff Hardy and Craig Simon.

Willie Swann A Samoan international halfback, Willie played in 2 World Cups (1995 & 2000) and brings a wealth of experience to the side after spells with Warrington, Rochdale and Hunslet. Swann is a very punishing player one on one in attack and gives his all in every game, a fact widely acknowledged by the Leigh fans. Despite being recognised more as a halfback Swann is also at home at stand off and loose forward.

John Duffy John proved last season that the old saying 'never go back' is totally unfounded. The halfback was released by the Centurions at the end of their 2001 romp to the Minor Premiership and promptly joined Chorley. By April 2002 however Duffy was unsettled at Victory Park and rejoined Leigh. He quickly proved an inspired signing with a string of good performances that cemented his place in the squad.

Sonny Nickle Former Great Britain International Sonny Nickle was the Centurions biggest signing of the close season after his high profile release by Super League champions St Helens. Described by

Paul Terzis as the complete player in his position, Sonny is expected to play mainly in the front row, but his mobility and pace could still be utilised in other areas.



Paul Rowley

Paul Rowley After returning from a seven year absence to play for the club, Paul Rowley was in great form last year, earning a spot in the team of the year. A regular in first team rugby since he was 17, Paul has also played for Halifax and Huddersfield. He has a wealth of top-level experience and represented England in the 2000 World Cup.

Dave Bradbury Dave Bradbury has perhaps been one of Paul Terzis biggest success stories. After playing most of his career in the back row - even representing Great Britain in that position, Leigh signed Dave from Huddersfield in November 2000 and he was switched to prop. Never afraid of being where the action is, former Oldham and Salford forward Bradbury is a crowd favourite at Leigh, and the Irish International is set to make the hard yards again this season and will take on further responsibility as club captain.

Sean Richardson After three times representing teams that have claimed Grand Final glory, Sean Richardson joined Paul Terzis Coliseum revolution during the close season. The 29 year old has previously played for Dewsbury, Wakefield, Widnes, Castleford and St. Helens, yet is best remembered for his fiery performances against the Centurions over the years.

Bryan Henare Former Auckland Warrior second row Bryan Henare is the Centurions quota player this season. After originally coming to this country to play for St. Helens where he played for a season and a half, Henare moved to Oldham where he featured in 45 games over two seasons. Always an impressive performer against the Centurions in the past, it is hoped he will show form for the club in 2003.

Adam Bristow One of the best ever overseas signings for the Centurions, experienced loose forward Bristow is perhaps the most consistent player on the club books. He joined the Leigh side from the now merged Western Suburbs club in November 1999 and has been virtually ever present in the Leigh pack since, notching up over one hundred games.

A Potted History of Leigh by Don Yates

THE DEFEAT suffered by Salford at Featherstone earlier this month will have given Leigh renewed hope in their quest to gain Super League status. Although Salford remain favourites to lift the First Division title, undefeated Leigh, at the top of the table, will fancy their chances of winning the title for the first time since 1989. In those days the championship immediately below the top flight was the Second Division Championship and Leigh have won it three times, during the 1977-78 season, the 1985-86 season and then in the 1988-89 season.

Giving Leigh even more reason to be optimistic has been the steady progress they have made up the league ladder since the introduction of Super League in 1996. The first season of summer rugby in 1996 saw Leigh down in Division Two where they finished in seventh spot. The following season they moved up to third but were promoted to Division One following the resignation of Prescot and Carlisle's amalgamation with Barrow. Leigh's first season in Division One proved disastrous, they finished bottom, but since then they have been most unfortunate when contesting the play-offs to Super League. In 1999 they were fourth but fell at home to Featherstone Rovers at the first hurdle. The following year they were again fourth and, after winning at Dewsbury and then eliminating Oldham, they lost 13-12 to Dewsbury in the Grand Final after conceding a dramatic, stoppage time dropped goal. In 2001 Leigh ended the regular season on top of the league but their form faltered at the worst possible time. They lost their opening play-off match to Oldham 15-14 but, after getting back on course with a win against Featherstone Rovers, they were knocked out by eventual Champions Widnes. Last season they finished second in the table and again reached the Grand Final, causing full-time Huddersfield all sorts of problems and leading 10-8 late in the first half before eventually losing 38-16.

The history of the professional Leigh club has also included several successes since they were founded in 1878. They were one of the twenty-two clubs who broke away from the Rugby Football Union in 1895 to set up what is now the Rugby Football League.

Since then Leigh have twice been crowned League Champions. The first time was during the 1905-06 season, a campaign that began with a couple of defeats in which Leigh failed to score. Thereafter it was the Leigh defence which dominated, their opponents failing to score on no fewer than 13 occasions. Their other championship success came in season 1981-82 when they were First Division Champions.

Leigh have also won the Challenge Cup on a couple of occasions, in 1921 and 1971. Other cup successes enjoyed by Leigh have been Lancashire Cup victories in 1952, 1955, 1970 and 1981 and Floodlit Trophy successes in 1969 and 1972.

The last trophy to be won by Leigh was the Trans-Pennine Trophy, which the club won in 2001 with an emphatic victory over Keighley at Lawkholme Lane. They scored



Simon Svabic

seven tries that evening as they trounced the home side 36-0. Current Oldham centre Paul Anderson crossed for a couple of tries in that final and another player now at Boundary Park, stand-off Simon Svabic landed four goals. Also included in the Leigh line-up at Lawkholme Lane were former

Oldham favourites Tim Street and David Bradbury. A couple of former Oldham juniors lined up for Keighley that night, Paul Ashton and David Best whilst a member of the Keighley coaching staff at that time was Steve Deakin, now in Super League with Huddersfield.

Although Leigh are confident that it will be they who join Mr. Deakin in Super League, Oldham too, hope to have a say in the matter which makes this afternoon's match crucial to both clubs in what is developing into an intriguing First Division Championship chase.

From The Pen Of

.....Michael Turner



Of Roughyeds And ... Leigh

Once again this season it is our pleasure to welcome our friends from Leigh and thus renew the keen rivalry between our two famous Lancashire teams. To follow on from the notes in the programme for the Arriva trains match in March here are a few more extracts from the annals of Roughyeds v Leigh encounters.

On October 31st 1896 Oldham defeated Leigh by thirty points to three at Watersheddings on what was a field day for the home wingers with Tom Martin scoring four tries on the right with Jack Hurst chipping in with a hat trick on the left.

A crowd of 6,000 gathered at Leigh on February 27th 1904 to witness a scoreless draw between the two clubs. On only one other occasion did the teams contrive to produce such a result. The match was again at Leigh on November 18th 1948.

Oldham's record scorer for tries in a season, Reg Farrar, played his last match

for the club against Leigh on September 6th 1930, when he scored Oldham's only try in a five points each draw at Watersheddings.

December 17th, 1966, saw the debut of Oldham "Hall of Fame" member Martin Murphy. The young full back played the first of his 462 games for the Roughyeds against his home town of Leigh and received a "baptism of fire" having to leave the field and receive several stitches before returning to the fray. Oldham won the match 14 - 5 to take revenge for an 8 - 12 defeat at Hilton Park earlier the same week. Six years later in December 1972, Martin scored the BBC "Try of the season" with a magical long range effort in the floodlit cup semi-final at Hilton Park. However, for the Oldham supporters this was little consolation as Leigh took the match by ten points to eight before going on to beat Widnes in the final.

On January 8th, 1984, referee Mr J

Mean of Leyland abandoned the Oldham v Leigh match midway through the second half for fighting. The early finish came following a scrum that broke up into a mass brawl, after the official had already warned both teams. Leigh were most hard done to, for at the time they were leading 24 - 16, but in the subsequent replay, ordered by the Rugby League authorities, Oldham "pinched" the match 13 - 10, thanks to a last minute try by Ian Birkby.



Oldham winger Brian Lord is tackled by Lewis of Leigh as Peter Smethurst and Malcolm Price look on. Action from the match at Watersheddings on February 17th 1962. Result - Oldham 22 Leigh 10.

Barrett got the Doncaster video man to rewind his film at half time and check it out. Seven seconds from the moment it left Gareth Barber's boot!

I can remember back in the 50's Oldham wingman Dick Cracknell fielding the ball straight from the kick-off and scoring under the posts without a finger laid on him, but it was a David Liddiard try that is the claimant to the fastest remembered Oldham score. It was back in 1986 when Carlisle kicked off a Challenge Cup match here at Boundary Park. He fielded the ball behind his own line and scored at the other end. It was recorded at 18 seconds.

BW

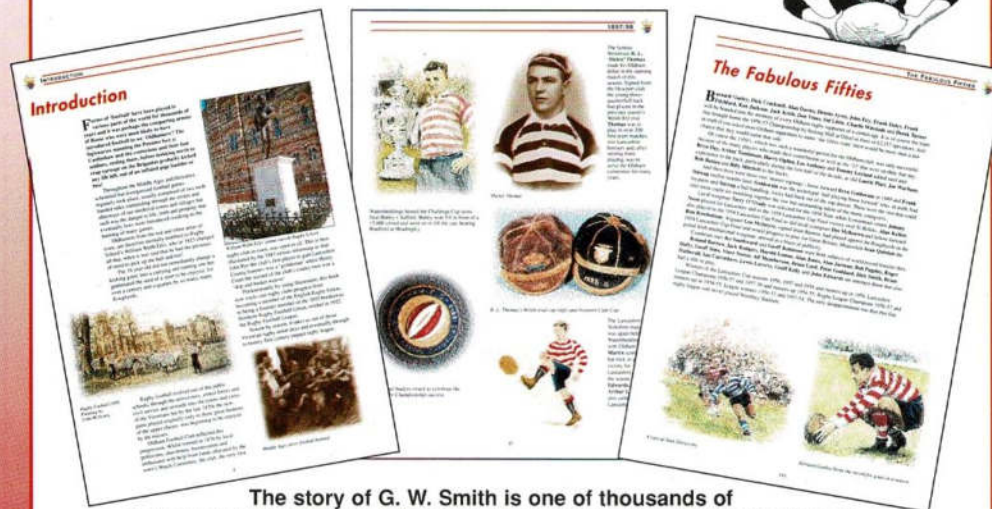
Here we go!! I am only half way through writing this article and it's started already (10-45 Sunday night!). the phone's just rung and the claim now is that the fastest try was scored in a match before it kicked off! Evidently some celeb is once supposed to have kicked off a match and instead of the ref bringing the ball back to the centre spot for a 'proper' start, he let play continue and a try was scored. Who can argue with that!

The news surrounding the possible introduction of a salary cap into the National League is welcomed with open arms but only if it rids us of the hated 'parachute' payment due to the relegated Super League club. I have watched this game for almost 50 years and whilst I am the first to support promotion and relegation, the parachute payment which allows the relegated club to have an overwhelming advantage over it's competitors must rank as one of the most stupid arrangements ever sanctioned. Discussion should be about how unpredictable the fixtures are since the introduction of a two division National League (or is it three?) but substitute discussion with question, "Can anyone stop Salford?" Whitehaven and Featherstone will argue yes, but ask your nearest bookie; possible but highly improbable.

AUSTRALIA'S test side will wear historic replica jumpers when they play New Zealand in the Trans Tasman Test at Stadium Australia in July. The ARL have made the decision on two counts, first it will be the 95th anniversary of the first Test played by the Australians which was against the trail blazing New Zealand All Golds who stopped off in Australia on their way back from the historic first ever Tour to Britain and secondly it will be the 75th anniversary of the first time Australia wore their trade mark green and gold

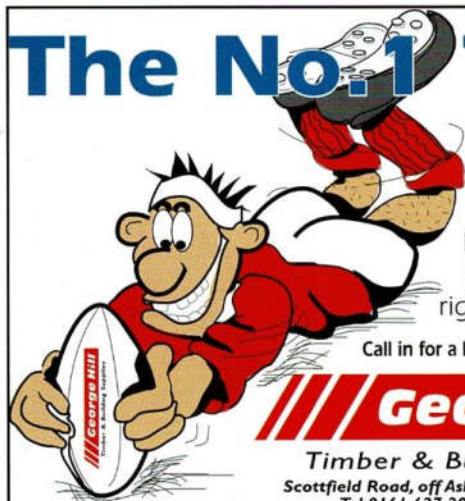


My thanks go out to Roger Halstead's Australian contact and Oldham supporter Bob McKenzie who sent over the information on pioneer George Smith who, of course, was instrumental in forming that first New Zealand touring side caustically dubbed 'All Golds' by the then New Zealand RU authority. Without the likes of George who stayed to play for Oldham and then spent the rest of his life here there would have been no Australian/New Zealand Tests to celebrate!



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Back On The Terraces

..... With Simon Winnard

THE NEWS that National League clubs have voted unanimously for the 're-introduction' of a Salary Cap at their recent meeting in Barrow has been widely welcomed by all involved in the game.

The newest attempt at a salary cap, effective from 2004 onwards, will limit expenditure on players' wages to £150k for NL1 and £100k for NL2 clubs. In addition, it is intended that clubs will also be limited to spending only 50% of their income on wages, although interestingly 'special provisions' will exist for clubs to make applications to the RFL for exemptions on their respective threshold as long as a 'proper business case' can be provided.

Commenting on the decision, RFL Financial Director, Nigel Wood, said: "While it is clear that excess spending amongst National League clubs is not quite the problem that it was some years ago, there was still a unanimous view that clubs must be regulated and disciplined to live within their means. The proposed Salary Cap regulations are quite complex but, hopefully, they will regulate excess spending and reward those clubs who succeed in developing their businesses on a holistic basis."

The penalties for breaching these capping regulations, agreed by all the National League clubs, include potential punishments such as point deductions, automatic relegation or the denial of promotion and fines. In respect to dishing out relevant punishment, Wood added, "The clubs were also clear that they regarded the Salary Cap as a significant League rule and demanded that the RFL Board of Directors viewed breaches of the Salary Cap as a serious offence."

On the face of it, in addition to automatic relegation for clubs that go into administration, this can only be a good thing in terms of securing the longevity of our game. Too often have clubs 'over stretched' themselves for one big promotion push, only to end up in deeper financial trouble as a result.

Also, at a time where our game has finally put together a viable and competitive structure, we are in desperate need of a level playing field. However, whilst in principle this seems yet another decision that smacks of common

sense, there are many questions that remain unanswered.

Problems with Super League and NRL caps have been well documented, with our antipodean counterparts certainly taking a harder line on breaches. Indeed, I'm sure that we would all be interested in the definition of 'special provisions for exemptions'. Perhaps we should contact the JJB Stadium for clarification over that one! What also needs clarification is just where does the parachute payment come into play here?

News that the RFL negotiations appear to have stalled must be a serious cause for concern for Super League clubs who are heavily subsidised by Sky funding. Indeed, today's sporting climate will undoubtedly see the TV companies in a much stronger bargaining position than before – something that is being mirrored with Football at present.

So has a real one off opportunity passed us by here? The enormous amount of television money was meant to be invested to revolutionise Rugby League – but what do we have to show for the millions that have been invested into our game? Grass roots development has been ignored, players pockets lined and the game outside the top flight has been ostracised by the greedy few and their 'I'm all right Jack' mentality. Perhaps a drastically reduced package will affect a wake up call for those clubs and a natural order may be restored where success is earned, not bought, and a level playing field is restored – we can but hope.

It would be remiss of me not to mention our disappointing start to the season. In the defeats against Salford and Doncaster we offered little resistance in defence whilst on attack to say we looked short of ideas and a cutting edge would be somewhat of an understatement. The Roughyeds faithful are getting edgy and defeat against the high flying Centurions today would mean just two league points from five games. With over a quarter of the season already gone, it's not over the top to say we might even have a fight on our hands to retain our NL1 status. It is therefore critical that we stick together, unite in adversity and overcome our current difficulties. Nobody ever said it was easy being a Roughyed.

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CONTRARY to rumours circulating the town it was NOT Chris Hamilton who said, "I mean it, some of the players don't deserve to live" and "there's too many bloody passengers in this team! They're not going to laugh at this shirt any longer. They are not going to make fun of me ... They can die." Even the Oldham Chairman doesn't get that passionate. So who said it? Apparently Athletico Madrid Chairman Jesus Gil, recently fitted with a heart pacemaker at 70 years of age, got a bit heated under the pressures of La Liga and living cheek by jowl with wealthy neighbours Real Madrid. Advised to calm down Señor Gil replied, "I'm sick of people telling me to relax! They can stick my heart up their ar...s!"

From the book of enigmatic excuses Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier: "You call our season a step back. I call it a phase of plateau." Eh? I think he means "we're standing still". Kopites won't like that!

I see Doncaster player Martin Ostler is described in the Club programme as a 'caravan technician'. Does that mean he feeds the camels or shovels up after them?

Although I was at Knowsley Road in 1991 when Saddleworth Rangers won the BARLA National League Cup and the National Youth Cup, it had escaped my attention that one Paul Norton had appeared for Wigan St. Jude's in the Youth game ... on the wing! Now there's one for our current flankers to contemplate. And I sure as hell wouldn't want to face him if I were an opposition winger. Another Boston? Make 'em have it, Knocker!

So, Chris Campbell thought he'd scored a try in a record breaking seven seconds? Not according to one Oldham fan! His story goes that on one occasion at Widnes a

visiting dignitary kicked off, the referee waved play on and a Widnes player picked up the ball and scored under the sticks. Apparently the visiting team were waiting for the referee to bring back play and order a scrum, the usual procedure in cases of kick-offs by celebrities etc. Eventually the referee did just that. But Widnes claim that their player scored a try before the game had kicked off! That'll take some equalling, eh Chris?

I love it when coaches or officials get in a tangle. How about ...?

- Right, lads, I want 80 per cent commitment for 100 minutes.
- Right, lads, spread out in a bunch.
- Get your first tackle in early, even if it's late.

Even journalists can be victims of a mix-up. One such reported that, Wigan were denied a try when the referee missed a palpable trip on Dean Bell as the centre burst through."

It appeared in the paper as, "Wigan were denied a try when the referee, Mr Palpable Tripp, missed a trip on Dean Bell as the centre burst through."

A well known prop forward was recruited by Oxford University to coach their pack before the annual Varsity match against Cambridge. Because the Oxford forwards were a bit raw, to say the least, it was decided to field the coach in a warm-up game against Loughborough.

However, as this was strictly illegal in university rugby, Oxford's team captain told his coach to be very careful what he said at the post-match reception. "In fact, if you can, answer everything either 'yes' or 'no' ". This was going alright until someone asked, "and what are you studying, then?" "SUMS" came the reply.

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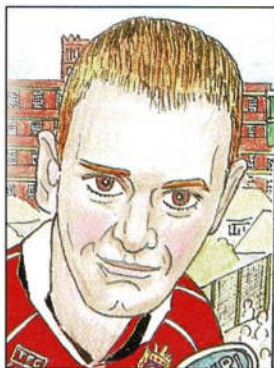
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We'd been sat in the bus station for three weeks, waiting for the 427, so I started sorting out my handbag to pass the

time, and I found an old programme. "Hey, look," I said, "Iain's got two I's" Shaz looked at me sideways. "Everybody has! Except Cyclops. And referees." "No, you plonker!" I laughed, "in his name, not his head!" "Oh, Trace!" she giggled, I thought you'd lost it then!" "I lost it a long time ago behind the bikes sheds!"

"Doesn't he come from up Barrow way?" she wondered. "perhaps there's some Scottish

connection, 'cos they spell it like that." "But Marsh isn't Scottish is it?" I asked. "I don't know," she replied, "but I wouldn't mind getting bogged down with him! D'ye get it - Marsh - bogged down!" "On, no," I groaned, "you're not off again are you?" "Haaaa," she shrieked, "don't be such a stick in the mud!" "I'm not getting sucked into this conversation," I countered, "Let's be serious!" I laughed.

"He's normally a centre, but he can play in the second row of the pack." "Yeh," she said, "and I bet he can play in the back row of the Roxy, too" We were so busy laughing, we didn't see the bus coming, and missed the flippin' thing!

*Love & Kisses,
Tracey*

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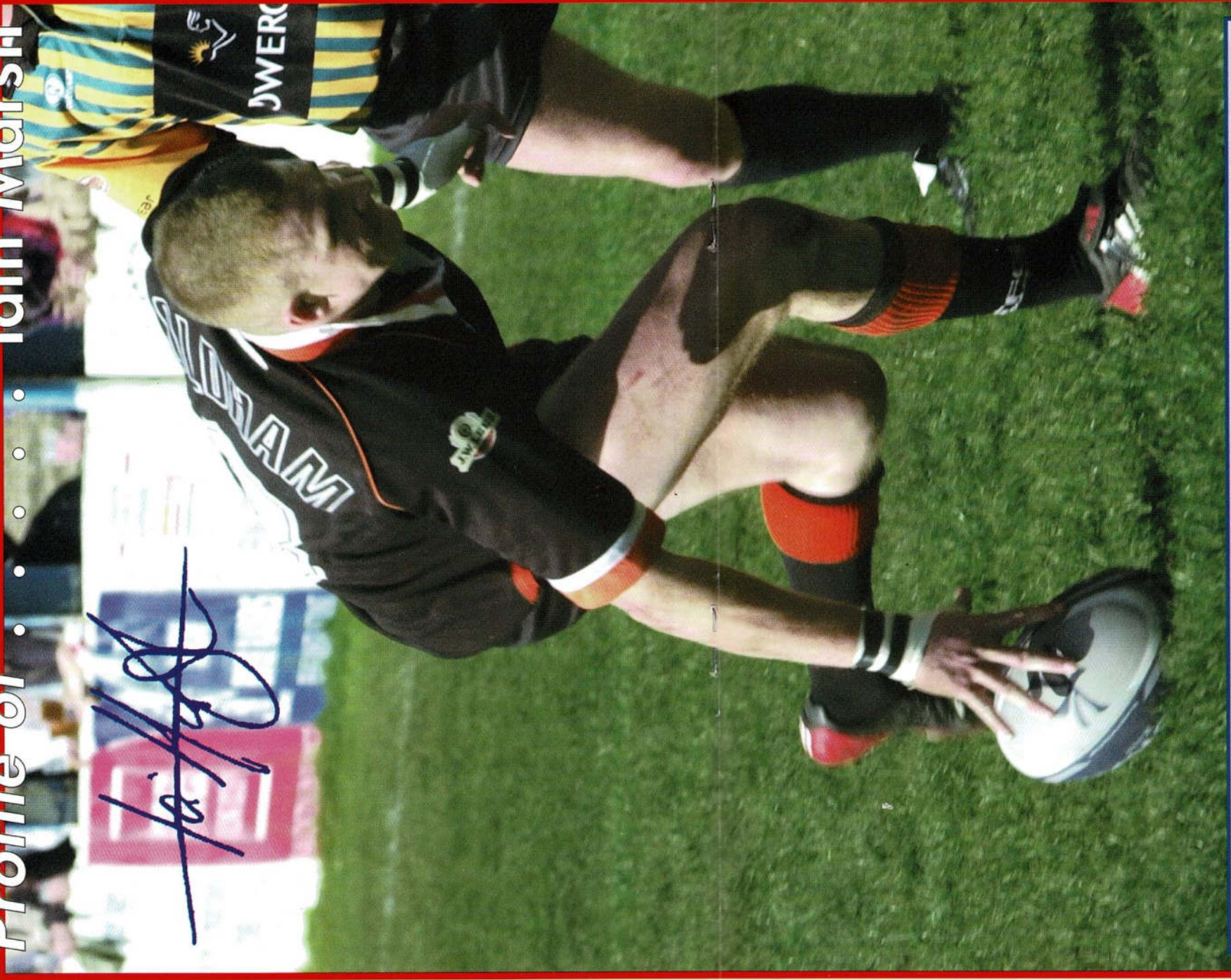
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Profile of Iain Marsh

Iain Marsh



Native of St Helens where he played for the Blackbrook Amateur Club from the age of six and also represented St Helens schoolboys at various age groups whilst a pupil at Cowley High.

Joined Widnes Tigers at the age of 14 before signing professional forms with Salford City Reds at 16.

Andy Gregory and John Harvey were amongst his coaches at Salford who all helped develop his skills as he progressed through their Academy system.

Played four matches in Super League plus a number of first team friendly fixtures.

Played for Lancashire Academy against both Yorkshire & Cumbria.

Spent six months in St Helens 'A' team when Ian Millward agreed to take over his contract from Salford.

At the age of 21 signed for Barrow Raiders and played in all but a handful of last seasons matches scoring in the home game against the Roughyeds.

Made 12 appearances in the threequarters scoring three tries for the Roughyeds so far this season. Currently out injured as he recovers from an operation to trim a damaged knee cartilage.

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Steve Molloy - Oldham

Paul Sculthorpe - St. Helens

Gareth Barber - Oldham

Does the kit fit?



Iain Marsh

I NORMALLY get out of my pit at about
10.00am but only if my mum has got my
breakie ready, beans or scrambled egg on
toast.

To away games my travel partners are
Morley and Irwen (Laurel and Hardy)
Anderson & Svabic (Morecambe & Wise)
the best set of comedians I know.

Another player who claims not to be
superstitious, so why do you wear the same
socks and t shirt under your kit? "No
comment!"

Just before leaving the changing room
I like to take in some smelling salts to clear
the noggin and to help focus on the game.

Worst advice from a coach came via
Andy Gregory at Salford. If you don't pull
your finger out you could be digging holes
in a scrap yard. Eh?! The only holes he
ever knew about are the ones he fell
down on the way home from the pub.

Worst team talk was from John
Foran, Salford Academy. You're
all too quiet cause I can hear
you (don't ask?)

Most influential coach
I have worked under
discounting his naff advice
has to be Andy Gregory.
He gave me my start in
first team rugby and his
one to one advice was first
rate.

As for Molly as coach he
works dammed hard and has
some good ideas, yes for a
prop.

Best/Worst Changing Room
Best - JJB

Worst - Whitehaven, no doors
on toilets I like my privacy
I'm shy.

Best/Worst Playing Surface
Best - Headingley

Worst - the famous Batley slope.

Best/Worst Food

Best - Barrow Pizza Hut pizzas

Worst - The Swinton Slop, a mixture of curry
and chilli, awful.

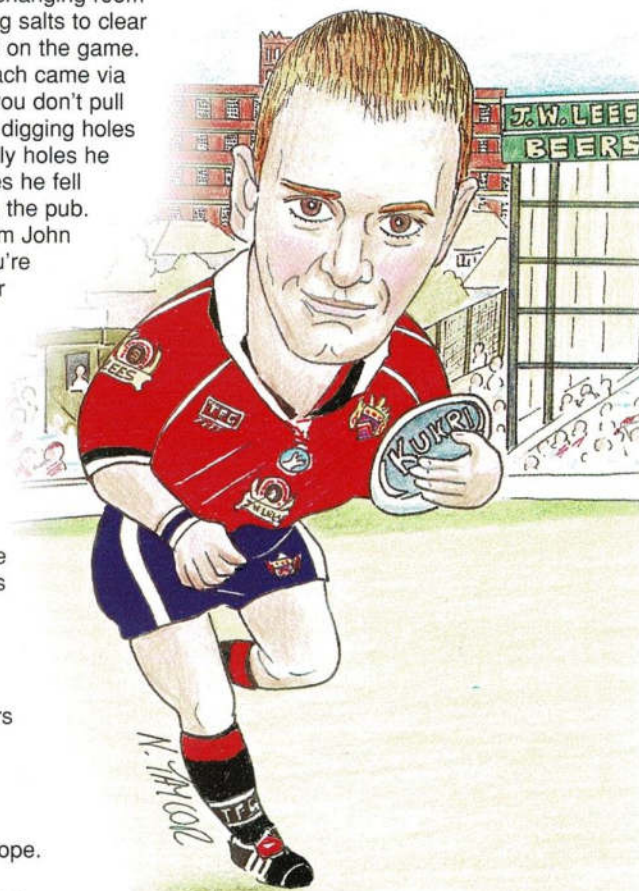
I don't think I look like anyone famous
but when I was at Salford I had my head
shaved and Simon Svabic said with that
head and your pointed nose you look like
Jap Stam (ex United player).

Sorry about the poor joke.

Q. What do you call a three legged donkey?

A. A Wonkey

Mitch



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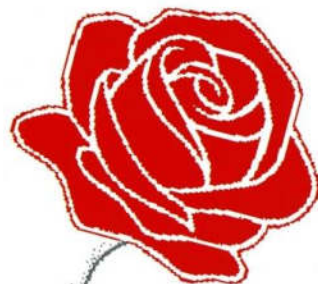
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Senior Academy

with Sean Gartland



Senior Academy Under 21 First Division

APRIL 2003 F - A
21 SHEFFIELD EAGLES 69 - 6

MAY 2003
3 DONCASTER DRAGONS H 16-28
10 BARROW RAIDERS A 48-23
17 Barrow Raiders H 48-12
24 DONCASTER DRAGONS A 2.30
31 SHEFFIELD EAGLES H 2.30

JUNE 2003
14 BARROW RAIDERS H 2.30
28 BARROW RAIDERS A 2.30

JULY 2003
12 SHEFFIELD EAGLES H 2.30
19 DONCASTER DRAGONS A 2.30
(THORNENSIAANS)

26 PLAY OFF RND ONE
AUGUST 2003
2 PLAY OFF RND TWO
9 SNR ACADEMY FIRST DIV GRAND FINAL
23 PROMOTION/RELEGATION PLAY OFF 1
30 PROMOTION/RELEGATION PLAY OFF 2

**THE PLAY OFF WILL TAKE THE
FOLLOWING FORMAT:**

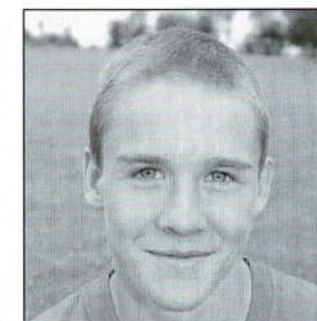
1st v 2nd
with the winner through to the
Grand Final
3rd v 4th
with the loser eliminated
**Loser game one v
winners game two**
with the winner through to the
Grand Final

The relegation/promotion issue will feature a similar play off format between the bottom three sides in the Senior Academy U21 Championship and the winner of the Grand Final of the Senior Academy U21 First Division with the Grand Final winner taking the top ranking in the placings. The intention is also to reduce the Senior Academy U21 Championship to 12 teams for season 2004.

*All of Oldham's home matches will be
played at Oldham Rugby Union's Manor
Park Ground at Bardsley.*

	P	W	D	F	A	P
OLDHAM ROUGHYEDS	4	3	0	181	69	6
DONCASTER DRAGONS	3	3	0	105	52	6
SHEFFIELD EAGLES	4	1	0	76	176	2
BARROW RAIDERS	3	0	0	65	130	0

(AS AT 19TH MAY 2003)



*Paul
Bennett
scored a
hat trick of
tries during
the 48-23
win against
Barrow
Raiders at
Manor
Park.*

Words of Wilson

... by Ian Wilson

WHAT ON earth can be done about the terribly disappointing attendances in National League One and Two? At the time of writing, fourteen league one games have been watched by a reported total of 21,087 supporters, giving an average crowd of 1,506, and corresponding League Two figures are 10,246, aggregate, with 683 average.

What do people want? And what has happened to ex-committed supporters in such traditional strongholds of the game at Barrow, Featherstone, Hull K.R. and Workington (not to mention Oldham)? We now have two genuinely competitive leagues, the majority of games having uncertainty of outcome, genuine promotion and relegation, and quality and committed rugby league on the field, yet still most games are played in front of areas of empty terraces and seats.

In the long term, surely there is a research exercise to be done, but there must be short term marketing activities which can increase the number of people, of all ages, watching games and enjoying the entertainment on offer. I am not a marketing man, but how about the following three suggestions as a starter:

- (1) Carefully organised advertising in local newspapers in the couple of days before each game.
- (2) Discounted tickets for away supporters at standard prices (£5.00 say), for all games.
- (3) The production centrally of a short video, after say six and twelve rounds focussing on quality tries, big hits & close finishes, to be distributed free by the clubs in their area.

It keeps being said that once people attend, they come back. The time has surely come to test how true this surely is.



How valuable a player to Oldham is Neil Roden? When I am reporting on a match for League Express, it is obviously impossible to record every contribution by every player, I merely make a note of what seems at the time to be significant contributions. My notes for the last home game v Dewsbury, included the following comments on our number seven.

- 2 First Oldham attack, Roden grubber leading to Hough touch down, ruled out for offside.
- 6 Huge Roden bomb into corner, leading to Oldham scrum. In next set of six, Roden pass for Anderson try.
- 11 Another big Roden bomb to corner, this time well taken by Mack.
- 19 Roden to Farrell, to Anderson for try.
- 29 Roden grubber forward another set of six.
- 30 Dewsbury 7 clean break, beats Dodd, superb last ditch tackle by Roden.
- 35 Clever Roden chip close to line, try to McNicholas, ruled out for obstruction.
- 39 Clean Roden break down centre field, not well supported.
- 40 Roden drop goal on hooter.
- 43 Superb tap, Roden kick for McNicholas, very nearly a try.
- 58 Clever Roden chip for Barber try.

If there is a better number 7 outside Super League, and one that is more valuable to his team, given the number of tackles he always makes as well, I have yet to see him, and I include Gavin Clinch in this, who is acknowledged in having the skill, of a Super League player.

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If the Cap fits . . .

Express

By GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS

NATIONAL League clubs have voted unanimously for the re-introduction of a salary cap - and on the face of it, that has to be a good thing for those outside the top flight.

Perhaps most importantly, it means that relegated Super League clubs will have to meet several criteria if they are to have any chance of running a full-time squad in National League One from now on.

The new cap, which will be effective from 2004 onwards, will limit expenditure on players' wages to £150,000 for National League One clubs, and £100,000 for National League Two clubs. But clubs are also limited to spending only 50 per cent of their income on wages.

There will be special provisions allowing clubs to apply to the RFL for exemptions on either threshold, providing a proper business case can be made.

But even if they can make out a case for exemption, the maximum figure that clubs will be allowed to spend will be a maximum of £300,000 in NL1 and £200,000 in NL2. To do that, clubs will have to prove that they are debt-free, run junior teams, and have a sound business plan.

The penalties for breaching the regulations include such potential punishments as point deductions, automatic relegation or the denial of promotion and fines.

The minimum estimated cost of running a full-time squad in recent years has been put at around £500,000, meaning the new figures will severely restrict teams dropping down from the top flight.

"I don't think it will mean the end of full-time squads, but it will

certainly limit what clubs will be able to pay players on full-time contracts," Oldham Chairman Chris Hamilton said.

"In the past clubs have been able to keep their stars and bring a few more players in.

"But that won't happen unless they have a massive degree of player loyalty.

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"And that will help the clubs to have a more level playing field."

RFL Financial Director Nigel Wood believes that the new agreement reflects that National League clubs have come to terms with financial reality.

"While it is clear that excess spending amongst National League clubs is not quite the problem that it was some years ago, there was still a unanimous view that clubs must be regulated and disciplined to live within their means," said Wood.

"The proposed salary cap regulations are quite complex, but hopefully they will regulate excess spending and reward those clubs who succeed in developing their businesses."

The plans appear sound enough, and as well as curbing clubs' spending should significantly even out the playing field, in NL1 in particular.

And the fact that all National League clubs agreed to the new measures should indicate that clubs at this level are serious about sorting the finances out.



Jon Goddard- League Express
Man of the Match v Doncaster

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In Yer Face

LAST November Rugby League World devoted a page and a half to a letter from a Wigan fan living in Northumberland, the only time in all its years of publication I can remember that amount of space dedicated to a single letter. The subject of the writer's anger was the failure of St. Helens to make their match with Wigan an all-ticket affair with the consequence that many hundreds, if not thousands, of supporters were locked out. And all that despite numerous enquiries before the game regarding advance ticket sales and the operation of the turnstiles. You can imagine the anger of the writer, having driven 150 miles, got soaking wet and having to listen to Radio 5 Live's commentary on the tedious journey home.

In League Express last Monday another Wigan fan had cause to complain about the entrance arrangements at the Halton Stadium, Widnes. This is not the first time that the Halton Stadium has come under fire and, again, it highlights the ability of rugby league clubs to shoot themselves in the foot when it comes to the care of their most prized asset, the paying customers. I only hope that Bradford Bulls got their arrangements right for last Friday's derby match against Leeds Rhinos, though I suspect the Bulls will have made a better job of it than anyone.

At National League level problems regarding admission are not likely to arise all that often. Indeed we could do with someone to drag people in rather than lock them out! However, it now seems that we must endure, for very poor reasons, what Super League fans have to put up with on a regular basis to meet the demands of television, namely the switching of fixtures at the drop of a hat. In my view a fixture list published at the start of the season and designed in part to encourage season ticket sales should

constitute a form of contract. The long standing argument against summer rugby – and proven beyond doubt in my opinion by the lack of Super League fixtures on Sunday afternoons – that there are numerous alternative leisure activities available means that supporters may well plan their summer around the published fixtures. The alteration of those fixtures at a late stage treats fans with contempt and loses the clubs revenue. The switching of Oldham's Good Friday fixture with Rochdale Hornets to Thursday night almost certainly reduced the 'gate' and thereby the club's income. The switch of the match at Salford from Sunday afternoon to Saturday night was not only inconvenient but almost certainly costly to the City Reds. Now we have Hull KR deciding they will kick off at 6pm on Sunday. Why? And was any thought given to visiting supporters? I for one will not be at Craven Park next week (never the most salubrious place to visit anyway) and it annoys me no end that I will not see my team in action when I absolutely HATE missing a game.

Will rugby League ever learn to treat its supporters properly?

Referee Steve Ganson is getting some terrible stick from the Sky TV commentary team. It is quite unnecessary and it should stop. His last minute decision to penalise Leeds against Hull, which gave the visitors a hard-earned draw, was quite correct. League Express Editor Martyn Sadler took the trouble to study the video evidence and explained why Mr. Ganson was right. I wish Messrs. Hemmings and Stevenson, with all the technology available to them, would show the same care and attention before rushing to judgement. Please, please, please, Sky bring Phil Clarke into the commentary box and get rid of the idiot!

G.C.

ON THIS DAY

... with Don Yates

MAY
25



EXACTLY THIRTY-FIVE years ago, on Saturday 25th May 1968, the fourth World Championship competition kicked off in Australasia. France beat New Zealand 15-10 in Auckland whilst, before a Sydney Cricket Ground attendance of 62,256, Australia met Great Britain. There were no Oldham representatives in the British World Cup squad but the Leigh club was represented by hooker Kevin Ashcroft who figured in that opening encounter. The match was not a classic, far from it, but Britain were in contention up to half time when they trailed by only 10-7. After the interval Australia pulled away to win 25-10 but the margin of victory owed much to the boot of Australian full-back Eric Simms (South Sydney) as anything else. Australia scored only one try more than the Lions but Simms converted all three as well as landing five penalties. Wingers Ian Brooke (Wakefield Trinity) and Clive Sullivan (Hull, and later Oldham) scored the British tries with full-back and skipper Bev Risman (Leeds) adding two goals. The Kangaroos went on to win the trophy, beating France in the final.

Eleven years later, on Friday 25th May 1979, Great Britain were back in Australia starting a tour with a match against North Queensland in Mackay. Once again there were no Oldham representatives in the tour party and only one from Leigh, talented utility back John Woods. He played at centre in that tour opener when he was in superb form, scoring two tries, five goals and a dropped goal in Britains 29-5 victory. Woods went on to make 17 appearances during that tour, scoring 12 tries, 68 goals and a dropped goal.

When Great Britain toured Australasia in 1984 there were five players from Oldham in the tour party and two from Leigh.

Coach Frank Myler gave every member of the playing staff a run out during the opening week when the tourists faced three games.

The third match took place on Friday 25th May 1984 when the Lions met North Coast at Wauchope. Both Leigh players and one of the Oldham lads, second-row forward Mick Worrall, were included in the starting line-up whilst Oldham scrum-half Ray Ashton was named on the substitutes bench.



Des Drummond

Britain won comfortably enough, 56-6, with Stuart Donlan directing operations from stand-off and Des Drummond in sparkling form on the wing from where he scored three of the ten British tries. The three Oldham players not involved in that match were utility back Des Foy, back-row forward Andy Goodway and loose-forward Terry Flanagan.

The borough of Leigh can, quite rightly, be proud of its amateur traditions. Amongst the numerous amateur clubs in the town are Conference League outfits Leigh East and Leigh Miners Rangers, both of

whom have been prominent during this seasons Premier Division championship. Those two clubs were even more prominent during the 1990-91 campaign when, late in the season, Leigh Miners led the table by seven points from their closest rivals. Leigh East, however, had a huge backlog of fixtures caused by their winning of the Lancashire Cup and their lengthy run in the League Cup which only came to an end in a replayed quarter-final. Leigh East enjoyed a tremendous finish to the season, winning their closing seven matches. The final and decisive match in that sequence came on Saturday 25th May 1991 when they entertained Egremont Rangers who Leigh East beat 42-4. That win gave them the Conference League title, one point above runners-up Leigh Miners. Winger Dave Kay scored two tries and five goals in that win whilst another try scorer was Mark Dainty who ended the campaign with 32 touchdowns.

STATS AND FACTS

APPEARANCES & SCORERS SEASON 2003

PLAYER	APP	SUB	TRIES	GOALS	D/G	PTS
Gavin Dodd	15	0	9	0	0	36
Iain Marsh	11	1	3	0	0	12
Jon Goddard	10	1	3	0	0	12
Paul Anderson	12	3	6	0	0	24
Joe McNicholas	7	1	2	0	0	8
Simon Svabic	8	8	2	38	0	84
Neil Roden	14	0	2	0	3	11
Steve Molloy	14	1	1	0	0	4
John Hough	12	2	4	0	0	16
Martin McLoughlin	4	4	0	0	0	0
Lee Doran	16	0	5	0	0	20
Chris Morley	12	3	2	0	0	8
Phil Farrell	10	0	4	0	0	16
Gareth Barber	8	5	7	25	0	78
Gavin Johnson	0	1	0	0	0	0
Ryan Stazicker	12	2	4	0	0	16
Danny Guest	1	8	0	0	0	0
Chris Campbell	8	0	5	0	0	20
Anthony Murray	4	1	1	0	0	4
Chris Irwin	12	0	4	0	0	16
Will Cowell	3	0	0	0	0	0
Darren Shaw	2	3	0	0	0	0
Keith Brennan	2	8	2	0	0	8
Dane Morgan	3	7	4	0	0	16
Adam Sharples	0	1	0	0	0	0
Jason Clegg	0	2	0	0	0	0
Paul Norton	8	1	1	0	0	4



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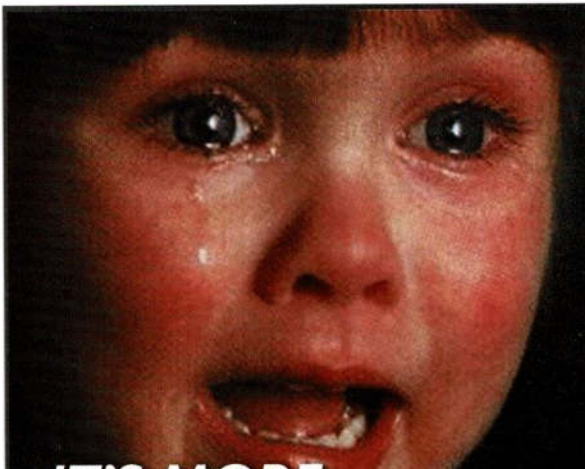
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Fixtures

DATE	OPPONENT	RSLT	ATT
DECEMBER 2002			
28	ROCHDALE HORNETS	LAW C W	28-22 2,141
JANUARY 2003			
19	LEIGH CENTURIANS	NL C L	14-22 3,070
26	EAST HULL	CC R3 W	32-6 1,270
FEBRUARY			
02	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL C D	22-22 2,050
09	LONDON BRONCOS	CC R4 L	12-42 1,014
23	SWINTON LIONS	NL C W	24-16 923
MARCH			
02	BARROW RAIDERS	NL C W	50-11 1,280
09	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL C L	4-62 2,839
16	LEIGH CENTURIANS	NL C L	26-31 1,945
CC QF			
23	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL C L	25-34 1,314
30	BARROW RAIDERS	NL C W	23-16 781
APRIL			
06	SWINTON LIONS	NL C W	68-14 1,032
13	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL C L	12-54 2,162
17	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL 1 L	28-33 1,754
MAY			
04	DEWSBURY RAMS	NL 1 W	41-21 1,198
10	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL 1 L	12-44 1,657
18	DONCASTER DRAGONS	NL 1 L	24-52 880
25	LEIGH CENTURIANS	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 CENTURIANS	NL 1 A	
17	HULL KR	NL 1 H	
24	WHITEHAVEN	NL 1 A	
31	BATLEY BULLDOGS	NL 1 H	
SEPTEMBER			
07	FEATHERSTONE R.	NL 1 A	

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