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Coach: Steve LINNANE



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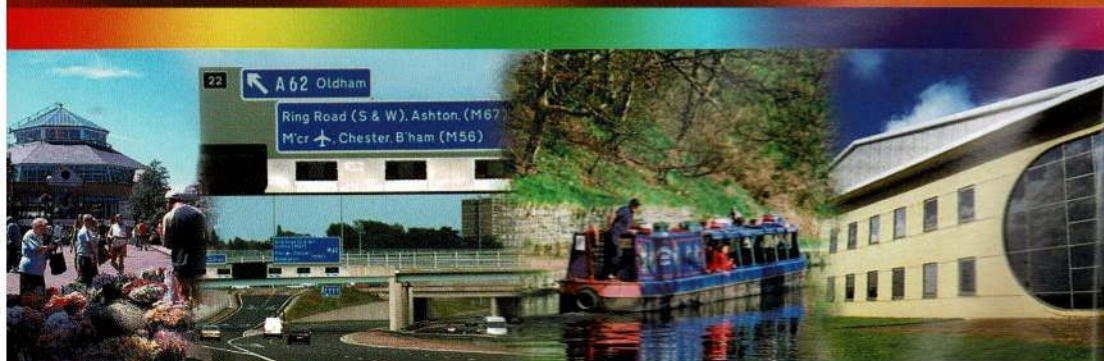
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IN THE HOT SEAT

Christopher Hamilton

ONCE again we find ourselves playing a 'four pointer' with today's opposition Hull KR.

Having played the top two teams in the Division over the last two weeks our progress up the table has been stopped although at the same time other results have probably been as good as they could have been for us.

The top three are on their own in points terms, but the pack below them, which includes ourselves, are neck and neck in the race for play off places and even Batley have given themselves a fighting chance over the last fortnight.

The amazing tightness of the Division was highlighted last week when Hull KR went from eighth to fourth courtesy of a home win over Featherstone.

We will certainly need to be switched on this week to win and Hull KR have already shown their intentions for next season with the signings they have announced.

Since our last home game the spectre of injuries has reared its head with several key players missing the Leigh game and then Ryan Staziker and Darren Shaw picking up serious injuries within the first ten minutes - injuries which may rule them both out for the season.

Hopefully by this week we will have brought in some fresh faces to strengthen us for the end of season challenge although we are in the same position as everybody else - ie players with injuries and looking to bring in new ones!

The turnout at the Senior Academy Grand Final was fantastic and the crowd was around 500. Compare that with most National League Two gates each week and most of the clubs in there would have been jealous.

Those who did attend were not disappointed as the performance the lads put on was nothing short of excellent.

Given that it was a final and played in 90° heat you could have forgiven mistakes but the lads played superbly and thoroughly deserved their emphatic win.

Well done to Shaun Gartland and all the team and let's make sure we finish the job and get promotion to the Academy Championship - you deserve it for all your hard work.

Enjoy the game,

Chris



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Molloy's Message



WELCOME to everyone who has made the journey from Hull today, in what may pan out to be a crucial encounter in both club's play-off ambitions.

The 4th, 5th and 6th places are still up for grabs and can be seriously contested by 6 teams. This again shows what a competitive division this has turned out to be, with National League 2 also set up for a dramatic conclusion. I congratulated the rugby league in one of my earlier programme pieces for this visionary concept and I think it has been a breath of fresh air for the game in general.

These last four games are all going to be hotly contested and I feel the first side to string three victories together could go a long way to clinching the fourth spot which would give the crucial home advantage in the first play off encounter.

It seems that Featherstone and us are stuck on the 12 point mark and everyone is closing the gap. However, given the opposition over the last fortnight we shouldn't be too downhearted. I feel in the Salford game we showed a lot of character and commitment but lapses in concentration cost us dearly. The Leigh encounter was a totally different story with two players pulling out on Saturday and one on Sunday morning. This meant there was a lot of disruption in our preparation and also meant that Joe McNicholas had to play two games in two days. One of them was the Academy Grand Final, on the hottest day of the year, and then back in for the first team as we only had 16 available players.

Congratulations to our young fellows in what has been a frustrating year for them, as the format of the division was up in the air until the last minute with sides pulling out, but the professionalism shown by Shaun Gartland and the lads is a credit to themselves and the club. Lets hope they can go all the way and pit themselves against the big boys next season.

As always, your vocal support today will be greatly appreciated.

Steve

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IN TOWN Today - Hull KR



Andy Smith

Four years at Hull FC before becoming a favourite at Craven Park. In his sixth season at Rovers. Always first choice on the team sheet. Position: Second Row Age: 26

Paul Mansson

Very experienced Kiwi, recently signed from Doncaster Dragons for the 2004 season. Prolific try-scorer who has already scored four tries in his first three games for the Robins. Position: Stand-off Age: 31

Mark Blanchard

Made a try scoring debut against Oldham in 2000, will be looking to cement his place this season. Position: Centre/Wing Age: 21

Jamie Bovill

GB under 16 International. Toured Australia in 1999 season. Suffered from injury in the last couple of seasons, looking to make an impression this year. Position: Second Row/Prop Age: 19

Jon Aston

Signed from Rochdale Hornets after a spell at Hull FC. An exciting player, coming back from injury year, a favourite at Craven Park. Position: Prop/Second row Age: 26

Paul Fletcher

Sixteenth season at Hull KR, red and white through and through. A strong powerful running forward, proven try-scorer, with a good turn of pace. Position: Second row/prop/centre Age: 32

Dean Andrews

Been at Craven Park for the last six years coming through the Academy ranks, had a short stint with Doncaster. Hoping to make an impression in the pack. Position: Wing/Second row Age: 23

Jimmy Walker

Signed for Hull KR season 2001 from Doncaster. A regular in last years starting line-up. The speedy stand-off looking for a big year. Position: Stand-off/scrum half Age: 29

Steve Cochran

Another player who's come through the academy ranks and is working his way into the first team. Lively around the ruck. Position: Hooker Age: 20

Alasdair McClarron

Signed from Driffield rugby union in 2001. Became a regular try scorer in the first team. With his exciting turn of pace, he's a real favourite at Craven Park. Position: Wing Age: 29

Craig Murdock

Signed from across the city after his time at Wigan Warriors, bringing experience and knowledge to the first team. A real influential player both on and off the pitch. Position: Scrum half/hooker Age: 30

Craig Farrell

Finished his amateur career at Scarborough Pirates before signing for Hull FC. Unfortunately suffered from injury last year but is back and is looking for a more positive season this year. Position: Wing/Centre Age: 21

Richard Wilson

Signed from Hull FC, a regular first teamer always leads from the front. In for a big year. Position: Prop Age: 27

Lynton Stott

Signed from Sheffield in season 2000, after winning the

Challenge Cup with the Eagles. One the opposition always pick out as a danger man. Position: Centre Age: 30

Chris Stephenson

Recently signed from Hull Dockers., Renowned for his goal-kicking. Position: Stand-off Age: 21

Adam Sullivan

Signed from Bradford Bulls a year ago, played only a few academy games before getting called up into the first team. Hoping for a big year. Position: Second row/prop Age: 20

Paul Pickering

Played for Rovers Academy over the last two seasons. Looking to make an impression for the red and whites as a first team player Position: Hooker Age: 20

Mike Hall

Played 2 years Academy before making a promising debut against Sheffield in 2000. Unfortunately broke his leg, is hoping to break back into first team rugby this coming season. Position: Full Back Age: 21

Nick Caldwell

Recently signed from York Acorn, the big powerhouse is looking to make a big impact within the pack this season. Position: Prop Age: 20

Nick Pinkney

Signed from Salford City Reds this year. The new Captain is a highly rated centre. A pacey player with a prolific try scoring record and a strong defence. Position: Centre Age: 29

Craig Poucher

Signed for the 2003 season from Hull FC, the strong running centre is an exciting prospect for the future. A powerful effective player. Position: Centre Age: 21

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A Potted History of Hull Kingston Rovers . . . by Don Yates

HULL Kingston Rovers have been members of the Rugby Football League since 1899 and have enjoyed three golden eras, the early 1920s, the late 1960s and those glorious years between 1977 and 1986.

The first honour won by the club came in 1920 when the Yorkshire Cup was won, a particularly satisfying triumph because they defeated arch rivals Hull FC in the final. Two seasons later the Robins became League Champions for the first time and they won that title again in 1925. Rovers came close to winning the double in 1925 but Oldham beat them in the Challenge Cup Final. The Robins lifted the Yorkshire Cup in both 1966 and 1967 as well as going close in other competitions. However their best ever period came ten years later when Rovers won nine major trophies in as many seasons. They won the Yorkshire Cup, the Floodlit Trophy, the Regal Trophy, the Premiership twice and the League Championship on three occasions. The trophy which brought most satisfaction to followers of Hull Kingston Rovers was that 10-5 Challenge Cup Final victory over Hull FC at Wembley in 1980. In addition to these successes the Robins also appeared in eight other major finals during this memorable spell.

The most recent piece of silverware won by the Robins was the Silk Cut Plate in 1997 when Hunslet were defeated by sixty points to 14 on another glorious Wembley afternoon.

Apart from their trophy winning exploits, the Robins have been involved in several record-breaking achievements. Way back in 1905 Rovers were drawn against Cumbrian amateurs Brookland Rovers in the Challenge Cup. The tie ended in a 73-5 victory for the Robins with winger George Tich West establishing two records that still stand all these years later. He scored eleven tries and ended with a personal haul of 53 points, record totals in the British domestic game.

Another long standing record created by a Hull Kingston Rovers player was the

190 consecutive appearances which utility back Gilbert Austin made between January 1919 and December 1923. It was a record that stood for almost 60 years before it was eventually extended by Keith Elwell of Widnes.

One of the most famous players in the history of the Robins is diminutive stand-off Roger Millward. He was a member of the last Great Britain team to win a test series against Australia.



Roger Millward

That was in 1970 when the second test at Sydney Cricket Ground was won 28-7. Millward scored two tries and seven goals in that victory, his twenty points haul equalling the record score by a British player in a test against the Kangaroos.

Wing three-quarter Ged Dunn was a prolific try scorer for the club. In February 1975 he raced in for six touchdowns in a 56-5 victory over New Hunslet at the old Craven Park ground. Dunn's feat equalled the try scoring record for any individual player in a Second Division match.

Scoring legend Neil Fox holds the career point scoring record with 6,220 points, which he amassed between 1956 and 1979. Fox scored most of those points with his first club, Wakefield Trinity, but he also served Hull Kingston Rovers as well as Bradford Northern, York, Bramley and Huddersfield.

Another record involving Hull Kingston Rovers was established in 1985 when they met Hull in the final of the Regal Trophy. That final was staged at Boothferry Park, then home of the Hull City soccer club and it attracted a crowd of 25,326, a record attendance for that particular competition.

From The Pen Of

. Michael Turner



Of Roughyeds And ... Robins

TODAY WE extend a warm welcome to the players, officials and supporters of Hull Kingston Rovers. The "Robins" joined the league for the 1899-1900 season and towards the end of that first campaign for the Rovers, Oldham travelled to Humberside on April 7th 1900 for a friendly match that was the first meeting between the clubs. Oldham triumphed that day by a scoreline of fourteen points to six.

The first league match took place on September 27th 1902. Again the fixture was in Hull with the Roughyeds victorious (7-2). The return game at Watersheddings the following January, saw Oldham complete the double (19-2) with the help of a hat-trick of tries from right winger Tommy Cash. The first time Rovers lowered the Oldham colours was on February 2nd 1906 with a five points to two win at Hull. There have been many meetings between the clubs from that day to this with three encounters in particular worthy of special mention.

These, of course are the three BIG

games between the two sides. First there was the 1925 Challenge Cup final at Headingley. Oldham brought home the trophy after a Reg Farrar inspired, sixteen points to three victory. Next there was the saga of the twice replayed Challenge Cup semi final in 1964. After two nerve wracking, bone crushing encounters at Headingley and Station Road, it was Rovers who proved the stronger in the second replay at Fartown. Their success (12-2) taking them to Wembley and a final tie against Widnes.

Last but not least there was the 1990 Old Trafford showdown in the second division premiership final. After building up a commanding lead by early in the second half, it looked as if Rovers were bound for the honours. However, a remarkable come back by the Roughyeds saw them sneak through by thirty points to twenty nine. Another nerve tingling experience served up by these two great trans-Pennine rivals. Long may such fixtures as these continue.



Mike Blackmore evades the tackle of Vince Nestor and the covering John Donovan to score in the semi final replay at Swinton on April 15th 1964. Result: Oldham 14 Hull K.R. 14. (The match was abandoned after 12 minutes of extra time with Oldham leading 17 - 14.)

FIRST OF ALL, what a great win for the Academy lads in the Grand Final at Manor Park on Saturday. They did the club and themselves proud in blistering heat and both sides deserve credit for serving up such good rugby in extreme conditions. It says much for both sides and the officials that there were only seven penalties in the whole match.

Wasn't it a good idea to allow a pause in the game halfway through each half to allow the players and officials to take on water? It seems that special permission from the RFL had to be gained in order for this to happen. It might well be a good idea for this to take place in every game when the temperature is so high and both teams agree.

Whilst on the subject of the youngsters' success, can I on behalf of the club thank the fans for the great turn out at the game? We don't have an accurate count of the numbers but generally people's estimate was between 500 and 600. Seen in context this was more than at two National league 2 games, equal to one in National League 1 and not far behind Horner's crowd against Dewsbury. It really is a thrill for the lads to have had such a following especially as it was so vocal. Let's hope that the experience encourages more of these fans to become regular supporters of the Academy lads in the future.

On to NL1 and the next four games - it really is very close. We were very unfortunate to have all our preparations hit by the injuries to John Hough (we must have a word with Svab as to where to put his 'plates of meat' next time) and Iain Marsh on Saturday and Jon Goddard having to cry off with sunstroke on Sunday morning exacerbated this. On top of that Ryan Staziker badly ruptured a

hamstring early in the game and Darren Shaw, as well as playing out of position at hooker, picked up a suspected broken thumb in the first ten minutes of the game - but still completed the whole 80 minutes of the game.

Just as we were hoping our early season injury jinx had gone away, things appear to be worsening again. Let's hope that their injuries are not as bad as they first look - but it is certain that young Ryan is out for the season and I have just heard that Shawy's thumb is confirmed as being broken. I know that Steve and Chris are working hard, trying to get some new faces in before the August 22 deadline and if everything has gone to plan there could be a new face on the pitch today.

Today's game is vital as Hull KR have a much better points difference than us so it is very important that we get off that 12 points mark. It really is essential that we try and get the fourth place which will guarantee us a home draw in the first play off round - something we have never had in the past. Not only would it give us an advantage but would also bring in much needed revenue.

On to the broader front in respect of Ian Wilson's article in today's programme (written a fortnight ago because of holidays) there still doesn't seem to have been any more progress as far as TV rights for next season are concerned. It is hoped that now the powers that be in TV have finally sorted out the FA Premiership deals they will put more time into finalising a deal with the RFL. The Leeds v Bradford game last Friday showed just how good Rugby League looks on television and must have improved the RFL's bargaining powers greatly.

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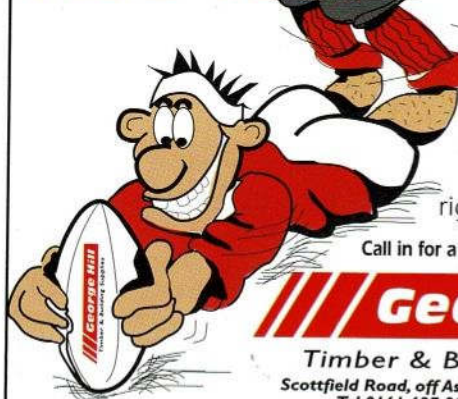
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Back On The Terraces

..... With Simon Winna

WELL, here we are at our penultimate home game of the regular season and it's still all to play for. With the top three places all but secured by Salford, Leigh and Rochdale, the battle for the remaining play off positions is now really hotting up. However, after staring a relegation battle firmly in the face just a few weeks ago, much improved form has meant that the Roughyeds could now even be in a position to even push for fourth spot.

However, so tight is the division, with a structure that has been a real success in my opinion, that the teams involved in the fight for the play offs could easily find themselves in 8th or 9th position and actually be playing off for survival. Now that's testament to just how competitive our division really is.

In terms of preparation for the play offs, there has been some frantic transfer activity, with clubs looking to bolster their squads for one last push for the play offs. The Roughyeds know only too well how successful that can be. Indeed, our own player coach was the subject of such a move not too long ago. It will therefore be interesting to see whether we make any similar acquisitions in a push for end of season glory. With the squad depleted in terms of numbers, a couple of timely additions could just make all the difference.

Our last home game against Salford provided tangible evidence of the progress made over the last month or so. We finally fronted up to our full time opponents and came out of the game with a huge amount of respect. Whilst it was a great team effort, a couple of players that should be singled out for particular praise are Chris Morley and Iain Marsh. As ever, Morley was uncompromising in defensive but also explosive on attack and, in my opinion, was clearly our man of the match. Marsh too is looking back to his best, delivering some powerful big hitting tackles as well as looking strong with the ball in his hands.

Interestingly, following the game many pundits singled out Gavin Clinch for special praise in directing Salford to the two league points. Whilst there is no doubting Clinch's quality at this level, I personally have grave reservations about his ability to operate

back in Super League. His kicking game apart, Clinch didn't take on our defensive line in 80 minutes of rugby, opting purely to offload, sometimes spilling the ball when under pressure. Give me a fully fit Neil Roden every time, particularly when partnered by Svabic at outside half.

On the Svabic issue, it was praise indeed from fellow contributor, Ian Wilson in his last programme article. As match reporters for 'opposition' publications for many years, Ian and I, together with the irrepressible Roger Halstead, have often pontificated over various issues over the years. It's fair to say that we have slightly different views and unlike my approach that is doused with a certain amount of cynicism (or was that realism?), Mr Wilson is the eternal optimist - his unflinching faith in our sliding defence being a prime example of this. Healthy debate apart, it's nice to see that Ian not only actually reads this column but also agreed with one of my opinions for a change.

I note that New Zealand Rugby League chiefs have expressed their fear over the proposed Tri-Nations series planned for the next three seasons. Whilst they are quite rightly concerned that this could sound the death knell for any future Lions tours Down Under, more specifically, they are angry that all the Tri-Nations matches will be played in Britain.

That said, New Zealand RL Chairman Selwyn Pearson does not appear to have a solution of just how a Lions tour could now be arranged whilst Australian League chiefs are unwilling to back any visit. Whilst this statement gives an insight as to just who the real power brokers are on the International RL committee, it also addresses a real concern over a meaningful International league calendar.

Perhaps of more immediate concern to Pearson was a way to move forward in the wake of the recent 48-6 defeat at the hands of the Kangaroos. A Test series against Great Britain would probably be viewed as an opportunity for the Kiwi's to re-group against 'easier' opposition. Now there's an incentive for the Lions if they ever needed one!!

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FOLLOWING on the Tony Smith/Darryl Powell manoeuvre at Headingley Iva has arranged a similar two year job swap. At the start of 2004 Iva will become Head of State for a two year period and the Queen will move upstairs to be Director of Royal Events. What this means is that Iva will take control of national affairs for a two year period during which time he will coach the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in an effort to instil some teamwork, confidence, discipline and sense of purpose (a pretty tall order, I know). Clearly this daunting task will be a full time occupation but Iva regards it as a challenge and as a stepping stone to a job in Australia (the Holy Grail of all aspiring leaders). Meanwhile Her Majesty will be in charge of all functions such as entertaining Gary Hetherington at diplomatic banquets (lets face it you need to be diplomatic where Mr Hetherington is concerned). Under this new regime I am sure we can look forward to the return of 'It's a Royal Knockout' with Eddie & Stevo as guest presenters. Team advisers will no doubt include Maurice Lindsay, Chris Caisley, Gary Hetherington and Kath Hetherington as they appear to know all there is to know about everything. Of course, at the end of two years H.M. will revert to her normal duties and Iva will return to the ranks of the commoners, albeit with the chance to succeed Chris Anderson as Coach of Cronulla Sharks (well, everybody else's name is being linked with this job, so why not Iva's?).



This job swapping lark could catch on you know. I hear on the grapevine that James Lowes has a two year deal with Trappist monks. Meanwhile the referees' society is negotiating with the street mime artists union (by gesture only of course) for a similar exchange of rôles.

And what of Oldham's players I hear you ask in this scenario? Well, Iva has it on good authority that the following two year job swaps could well be on the cards:-

GARETH BARBER

Style adviser and hair consultant to David and Victoria Beckham.

GAVIN DODD

Teacher of French language, literature and culture at Hathershaw Technology College.

DANE MORGAN

Stunt man and stand-in double for Arnold Schwarzenegger.

JON GODDARD

Contestant in the Fame Academy.

DARREN SHAW

Manicurist and beauty therapist at Tymbuktu Health and Beauty Clinic.

SIMON SVABIC

General factotum and petrol pump attendant at Lees Village Service Station (he has to repay all that publicity every time he kicks a goal somehow).

LEE DORAN

Mr Universe contestant.

STEVE MOLLOY

Elvis Presley lookalike performer.

PHIL FARRELL

Adviser on haute couture to Kylie Minogue and Britney Spears.

PAUL ANDERSON

PR adviser to Max Clifford with special duties as presenter.

DANNY GUEST

Café owner and wine taster at Café René in a new version of 'Allo 'Allo.

JOHN HOUGH

Lofty (a la Don Estelle) in a new series of It Ain't Half Hot, Mum.

CHRIS MORLEY

Head brewer and taster for Warsteiner (the World's biggest selling German lager).

MARTIN McLOUGHLIN

Jock strap of the month and centrefold model for Health and Beauty magazine.

WILL COWELL

Court correspondent and field sports adviser for Cheshire Life magazine.

IAIN MARSH

Irish Wolfhound breeder and Crufts show organiser.

NEIL RODEN

Media spokesperson and Newsnight presenter (a poor man's Jeremy Paxman).

RYAN STAZICKER

Stud farmer.

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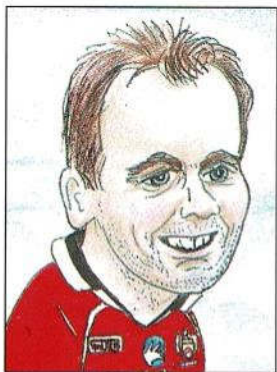
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Tracey's Tittle Tattle



WE'D just watched a dead old rugby video, and Shaz observed that scrums aren't what they used to be. As if she knew what she was talking about!

"Well hookers don't get done for 'feet up' or 'loose arm' anymore," I agreed. "Loose arm?" she queried, totally puzzled. "How can you play rugby with a loose arm? What happens if it comes off altogether?" I ignored her and carried on, saying that Scruff is a hard working hooker who doesn't have time to put his feet up anyway, 'cos he's too busy either hooking or acting half back. "Oh no," she groaned, "not another actor from the Coliseum!" "You mean a Thespian?" I asked - just to confuse her. "Don't be stupid," she replied, scornfully, "he can't be a thespian - he's a bloke!" "What's more," I went

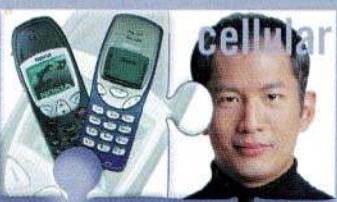
on, winding her up even more, "he's Vice Captain!" "Well you've shattered my illusions now," she complained. "He was the first to sign for his home town club and here's me thinking he's the very epitome(!) of a genuine club man, and a good family man, then you go and tell me he's a Thespian and Vice Captain! What's going on? Is Chris Hamilton running some sort of disorderly house? We should be told! Then I can join!"

Then a thought struck her, (something did) "What IS a Thespian, anyway?" "Get this, I answered, "it's from Thespis - he was an ancient Greek dramatic poet." "Oh, he did stuff like this?"

"Ring a ring o' roses, hookers have bent noses!
But our 'nine' is a handsome swine.

Who's Russell Croweses?!"
Welcome to Shaz's Skule of Kulcher!
See you soon,

Love,
Shaz & Trace



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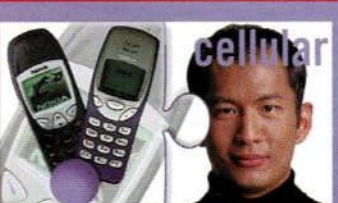


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Profile of . . . John Hough



John Hough on his day is the best hooker outside Super League and as good as some in it! A danger to any defence from acting half back.

Oldham born 'Scruff' signed for the 'Wire' as a youngster but was the first player to join the Roughyeds when the club was reformed in 1997 and has since played in 171 first team matches scoring 50 tries.

Was on the team sheet for 82 consecutive matches between February 1st 1999 and April 16th 2001.

Recently signed a new contract to take him to the end of the 2004 season.

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Steve Molloy - Oldham

Paul Sculthorpe - St. Helens

Gareth Barber - Oldham

Does the kit fit?



John Hough

ON MATCH DAYS I get up at 8.30 and have a quick breakfast of whatever is available, then I go off to Mass if there's time, if not I go later, a good Catholic boy am I.

I'm another loner on the coach - I just like to get my match prep finely tuned.

My nickname 'Scruff' is purely because it rhymes with Hough and is nothing to do with my sartorial elegance (or lack of it). I went through a period whereby I was known as 'No Legs' because of the length of my shorts (very long) compared with the length of my legs (very short), when I pulled my socks up you could see nothing of my legs but my knees.

Before a match I have to read the match programme - this is an important part of my prep. and as I'm the big gob who does the countdown just before we leave the changing room, part of my pre-match prep is to loosen the vocal cords.

As it's towards the end of the season most of the team talks (good and bad) have already been mentioned. But briefly, yes, Fordy's before the Grand Final is up with the best and John Harbin's 'Tap dance' talk is down there with the worst. But I'm sure there's more to come.

WORST AND BEST Changing Rooms

Best: Boundary Park
Worst: Swinton

Playing Surface

Best: Headingley
Worst: Batley

Food

Best: Leigh & Salford
Worst: Hurst Cross (first match)
How about the rest of the season?

The team seems to be inconsistent, that's our problem and I'm sure we'll rectify it and make the play offs and once there who knows what will happen? We seem to play well in the play offs - fingers and everything else crossed.

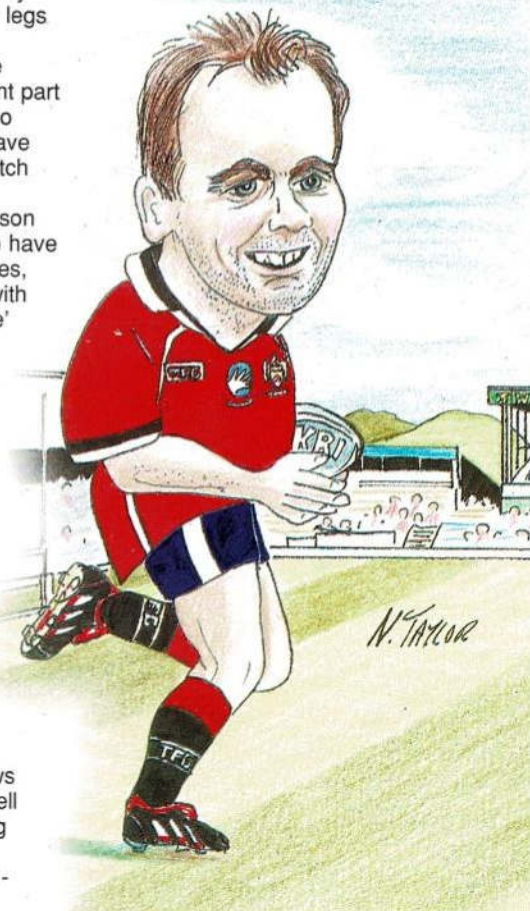
No I don't look like anybody else - I'm unique, a one off, they broke the

mould when they made me [Yes, only because they realised they could make people taller! - ask Dane Morgan, who just happens to be a taller version of you Johnny Boy - (Mitch)]

JOKE

The Vatican has taken over the Railway and called it Transportus Coitus Interruptus everybody gets off one stop before their destination.

Mitch.



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Senior Academy

with Shaun Gartland



Senior Academy Under 21 First Division Grand Final

**Oldham Roughyeds 45
Doncaster Dragons 4**

On a day when temperatures approached 100°F, thirty four players turned up the heat even further when they gave everything to entertain a packed Manor Park itself baking in the hot August sunshine. Yes, the Roughyeds beat the Dragons by eight tries to one but don't underestimate the efforts of the Doncaster boys who played football throughout.

Replacing the blood and thunder dished up in previous encounters was end to end crowd pleasing football resulting in some glorious tries.

Jason Clegg was almost unstoppable and I can picture in my minds eye now one barnstorming run culminating in SIX of the Dragons hanging on as though on a fairground ride.



Kiel Lancashire

Young scrum half Kiel Lancashire was awarded the game star title and I wouldn't argue with that but equally it could have gone to either of the half backs, any of the front row forwards

and I also thought that Andy Gorey at full back and Chris Carter at centre had excellent games.

Referee Chris Nicholls, who had a good match himself, sensibly allowed drink breaks mid way through each half coupled to an extended half time break to help both players and officials through conditions that would have given concern to any health and safety inspector.

For the record the tries were scored by Carter (2), Gorey, Bennett, Lancashire, Gillham, McDermott and Rowe with six goals coming from the boot of second row John Mitchell.

RELEGATION/PROMOTION ISSUE SENIOR ACADEMY U21 CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE.

The Roughyeds will now play the 12th placed club (third from bottom) from the Senior Academy U21 Championship League away from home during the weekend of the 23rd/24th of August and in turn the winners of that match will be at home to the winners of the match between the 13th and 14th placed Championship sides the following weekend. The winners of that match will play in the Championship League next season. It is intended to reduce the number of clubs in the Championship League from 14 to 12 for next season.



Words of Wilson

... by Ian Wilson

AS I WRITE this piece, there is no TV agreement in place for next season's league programme, or for future Challenge Cup and RL international fixtures. Just how important is TV for Rugby League? And how should the answer to that question influence those in the hierarchy of our game who are currently engaged in negotiations with the TV companies?

As far as I can see, RL benefits from TV in three ways - direct money income, indirect cash benefits and general public relations via TV exposure. The first is obvious, and has had a revolutionary effect on the whole game. Before Sky, we were basically a semi-professional game, operating largely in parts of northern England, during a winter season, September to April. Now, we are, at least for the elite Super league clubs, a fully professional game, with around two hundred and fifty players, plus associated administrative staff, earning their living full time from it. This is the main direct consequence of Sky TV payments.

Of course, this Sky - initiated revolution has had lots of secondary effects. The game is largely now a 'summer' one, at professional and semi professional levels, as well as at the new amateur National League Three and Summer Conference Levels - though leaving the bulk of the amateur game still playing in the winter. Lots of supporters of the semi-pro clubs have been left - on balance, just about matching the new ones attracted to Super League. And we have also lost a few traditional clubs - Bramley, Mansfield and Kent Invicta.

The second source of income, which depends on TV exposure, is individual club sponsorship revenues, and these should not

be ignored. Just ask any of those semi-professional clubs who featured on ITV's Rugby League Raw programme, how much they would like National League games to be shown on TV - or, indeed, the RFL, who have no sponsor at all for the National League, just as cricket hadn't for their national one day league competition, because of its lack of attractive TV exposure.

Which brings me to the third TV benefit - general PR - and, again, this must not be underestimated. The non-regular, non-committed sports enthusiast, in my experience, knows virtually nothing these days about the game, because it has, for most of the year, disappeared from terrestrial TV - and I am certain this is why Richard Lewis and his team are so keen to get an improved BBC Cup and international package in place first. And isn't Sky's superb coverage - apart from the benefits it brings in terms of quantity and quality of RL coverage, compared with to anything there has ever been before, for us committed supporters - also the reason behind the fantastic growth in the game nationally at amateur level?

Let us hope, then, that the strategy works, and the BBC and Sky packages can both be agreed - maybe even also with boosted ITV (or some other terrestrial channel) snippets of the National Leagues: Because there is also another side to the equation. How important is RL for TV? The whole negotiating process is fraught with dangers, I suspect with us having rather more to lose than the TV companies. Which is why if Mr Lewis pulls off a satisfactory outcome, he should earn the long lasting respect and gratitude of the whole game.

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Top players lead the way

Express

By GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS

AS the season nears its climax, the time is approaching when the annual Player of the Year and Team of the Year will be unveiled. Who would you pick?

In National League One, a high percentage of the top performers inevitably come from the top three teams, who will finish so far ahead of their nearest rivals.

At Salford, stand off Cliff Beverley is the game's overall top try scorer, while other notable efforts have come from the consistent Andy Coley, match winner Gavin Clinch and try scoring centre Andy Kirk.

Leigh Centurions have again been able to call on the mighty efforts of loose forward Adam Bristow on a week-to-week basis, while Damian Munro has been among the tries, Paul Rowley has worked tirelessly and Neil Turley shown flashes of brilliance.

Rochdale have had a settled team all year - with their entire pack worthy of consideration, plus superb loan stand off Rodney Bowker and top points scorer Mick Nanyin.

Outside those three, there have been several other top performers. Kiwi prop David Fatialofa has been a tower of strength for Whitehaven, as has Stuart Dickens at Featherstone - who have two contenders for the Young Player of the Year in Andy Bailey and Richard Whiting. Hull KR hooker Paul Pickering could also be included in that group.

Meanwhile, Barry Eaton (Batley) and Frank Watene (Dewsbury) have toiled for their sides at the wrong end of the table.

In National League Two, Sheffield fullback Andy Poynter and winger Tony Weller are among the competition's leading points scorers, while Gavin Brown has kicked plenty of points from stand off.

Chorley have unearthed a real gem in winger Eric Andrews, while forward Dave McConnell and fullback Mark McCully have also excelled.

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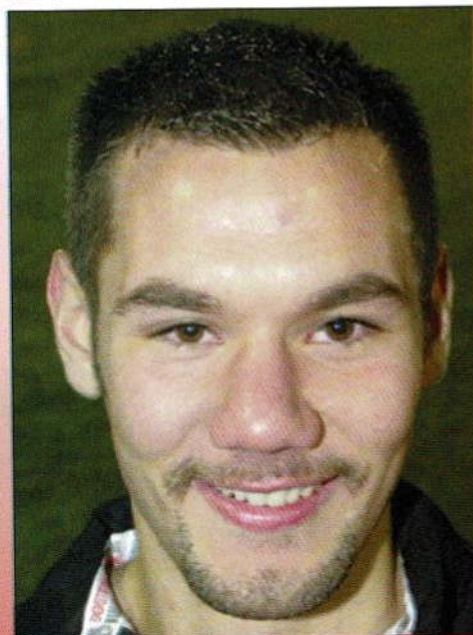
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From your newsagent*

At Keighley, Matt Firth and Simeon Hoyle have led the side in the centre of the park, while few players have been more influential than York scrum half Danny Brough. His halfback partner Scott Rhodes has also been outstanding, though a recent injury has disrupted his season.

Hunslet's young scrum half Phil Hasty has won more Rugby Leaguer & League Express Gamestar awards than most, while Jamie Marshall has scored a hat full of tries for Barrow.

Swinton have had two terrific performers in fullback Wayne English and prop Simon Knox, while at Gateshead, teenage halfback Neil Thorman is emerging as a real star for the future.

These are just a few names to throw into the melting pot for end of season consideration, and there are undoubtedly several more in both competitions worthy of mention. Who would you choose in your NL1 or NL2 Team of the Season?



**Joe McNicholas League Express
Man of the Match v Leigh**

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In Yer Face

O.K. so Rugby League doesn't get everything right and from time to time the game takes terrible stick from the media when positive drugs tests are revealed. However, last week the government agency UK Sport said that: "We've found that the Rugby Football League is one of the exemplary governing bodies, who always keep us informed. They are also one of the very few - cricket and football are others - that provide funding for their own testing." The result of R.L.'s policy is obvious: the more tests carried out and the more frequently this is done the more chance there is of catching offenders. No testing or infrequent testing will catch fewer (or no) offenders. Journalists (especially working for national dailies and weeklies) please note: just because no miscreants are brought to light does not mean a sport is clean. Do you seriously think that Olympic sports have fewer drug cheats than R.L.? Get serious.



TAWERA NIKAU is one of the sport's recent greats. He was invariably a committed and robust footballer who gave his all whether donning the colours of Castleford, Warrington, Cronulla, Melbourne or New Zealand (among others). He suffered one tragedy with the suicide of his wife and has now endured another after losing a leg in a motor cycle accident. I always enjoyed watching Nikau play and like everyone else in the R.L. community wish him well for the future.



"I don't know whether you saw last weekend's Tri-Nation's match between South Africa and the Aussies but the aggression displayed by the Springboks was shocking.....attacking players when they are not in a position to defend themselves has no place in this already brutal game. The South Africans have to discipline themselves or be forced out of the game until they can. The initiative has to come from their coach Rudi Straeuli it's no good him bleating he won't select thuggish players. He has to actually mean it or somebody will be killed on the field of play" (James Whitaker in the Daily Mirror 9.8.03)

A pretty fair verdict on today's top class R.U. from an avid supporter of the game. If it's

like that now what will happen come the World Cup? Bet your boots the worst incidents will be swept under the carpet. And that from a game which has spent several lifetimes being holier than thou. Nuff said.



Strange goings on between two clubs and the media. Hull F.C. apparently don't like the press reporting on their injury situation, claiming it deflects attention from the performance of the players on the park. But surely any publicity is good publicity? If I was a media manager I'd want a story about my club in the paper every day making sure supporters and potential supporters have a constant flow of information to keep them interested.

Even odder, however, was Ian Millward's abandoned press conference during which the language he used to the journalists was somewhat ripe to say the least. Now we all know Head Coaches are under severe pressure and Millward's Saints haven't had as good a season this time round as in recent years. But alienating press men isn't a good way of presenting your club in a favourable light. We all know Millward's a bit over-protective of his club and players (not to say paranoid) but for a man whose work as a T.V. summariser marks him out as intelligent and informative his outburst at the press conference is inexplicable. Is he losing it or what?



Golden point: rubbish! Another crackpot idea from America via Australia. O.K. to settle a three match Test or State of Origin series there may be some merit but can the powers that be who tell us too much is expected of the players please justify how those same players are expected to play extra time after performing flat out for 80 minutes sometimes, as in recent weeks, in searing heat? In fact the recent heatwave not only brings into doubt the concept of the golden point but also the whole question of height of summer matches played in the afternoons. Surely we already have a method of separating teams over a season's programme? It's called points difference. Anything additional is false and meaningless.

ON THIS DAY

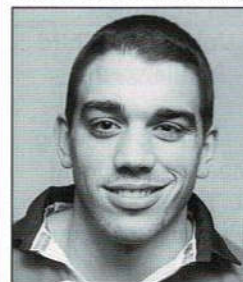
... with Don Yates

AUGUST
17



FORTY-SIX years ago Oldham won the League Championship. As reigning champions they began the following season with a match against Halifax at Watersheddings on Saturday 17th August 1957. The Roughyeds won that match 21-11 with two of their three tries being scored by loose-forward Derek Turner who had been signed from Hull Kingston Rovers. The other try scorer was winger John Etty and full-back Bernard Ganley added six goals. Making his debut for Oldham in that match was stand-off Rowley Moat who had been signed from Hull during the summer for £200. Moat's stay at Watersheddings was not a happy one. He played only six matches in 18 months, scoring two tries, before moving back to Humberside in December 1958 when he joined Hull Kingston Rovers. Oldham made a small profit on the deals, however, because he was sold for £500.

Twelve months later, on Sunday 17th August 1958, a couple of Oldham players were in Australia with the British Lions and they were included in the team which took on the New South Wales Coalfields in Maitland. The Lions won that match 30-23 with scrum-half Frank Pitchford scoring two tries. The other Oldham player involved in that match was centre Alan Davies. A third Oldham player made that trip down under, prop-forward Ken Jackson, but he returned home early after suffering a knee injury which was to eventually end his career.



Pat Rich

Sunday 17th August 1997 was a significant day in the career of the former Oldham goal-kicking centre Pat Rich. That day he made his senior debut as a member of the Keighley team that lost 30-17 at Widnes in a

Divisional play-off match. Rich had been signed from Durham Tigers, the north east amateur club, and he went on to make 25 appearances for the Cougars, scoring five tries and 20 goals, before moving over here to Oldham during the autumn of 1999.

It was on this day in 1990, Friday 17th August, that the St. Annes' utility back Steve Gartland, brother of our current academy coach Shaun, turned professional by joining Rochdale Hornets. He was an instant success at Rochdale where, during the 1992-93 season, he broke the Hornets point scoring record with a haul of 276. Twelve months later he joined Oldham but returned to Rochdale in 1997 when the original Oldham club folded. He also had a spell with Swinton. His best years, however, were with Hornets for whom, during his two spells at Spotland, he made 105 appearances and scored 63 tries, 227 goals and twelve dropped goals.

Eight years ago, on Thursday 17th August 1995, Hull Kingston Rovers entered the transfer market when they signed the powerful and abrasive prop-forward Andy Dannatt from St. Helens. At first the signing did not go down well with the more biased of Rovers followers because Dannatt was reared on the west side of the city, deep in Hull FC territory. He made his name with the Airlie Birds, gaining Great Britain test honours, and, at one point, he worked on the groundstaff at the Boulevard. After ten successful years with Hull he joined St. Helens but only stayed for a couple of years on this side of the Pennines. Dannatt had reached the veteran stage by the time he joined Hull Kingston Rovers but he enjoyed four happy years at Craven Park during which time he won over all the doubters and made 95 appearances, scoring a couple of tries. He was a member of the Hull Kingston Rovers pack which destroyed Hunslet at Wembley in 1997 when the Robins convincingly won the Challenge Plate by 60 points to fourteen.

STATS AND FACTS

APPEARANCES & SCORERS SEASON 2003

POSSIBLE MATCHES PLAYED 21 (SIMON SVABIC'S SUBSTITUTE TOTAL INCLUDING ONE NOT USED)

PLAYER	APP	SUB	TRIES	GOALS	D/G	PTS
Gavin Dodd	25	0	14	0	0	56
Iain Marsh	19	1	3	0	0	12
Jon Goddard	19	1	4	0	0	16
Paul Anderson	15	7	8	0	0	32
Joe McNicholas	8	1	2	0	0	8
Simon Svabic	15	11	3	64	1	141
Neil Roden	18	5	5	0	3	23
Steve Molloy	23	2	2	0	0	8
John Hough	21	2	4	0	0	16
Martin McLoughlin	5	11	0	0	0	0
Lee Doran	26	0	13	0	0	52
Chris Morley	20	4	4	0	0	16
Phil Farrell	20	0	6	0	0	24
Gareth Barber	11	10	11	31	0	106
Gavin Johnson	1	3	0	0	0	0
Ryan Stazicker	13	5	4	0	0	16
Danny Guest	1	15	0	0	0	0
Chris Campbell	9	0	5	0	0	20
Anthony Murray	4	1	1	0	0	4
Chris Irwin	12	0	4	0	0	16
Will Cowell	10	0	0	0	0	0
Darren Shaw	10	3	0	0	0	0
Keith Brennan	8	10	5	0	0	20
Dane Morgan	12	8	4	0	0	16
Adam Sharples	0	1	0	0	0	0
Jason Clegg	0	2	0	0	0	0
Paul Norton	9	1	1	0	0	4
Dan Potter	4	0	2	0	0	8

Roughyeds Kids



Hi to all you Juniors!

Hope you're all enjoying the school holidays and having lots of fun. (Only another 2 weeks to go mums and dads).

Today's mascot is 8 year old **Declan Taylor** who attends St Josephs school Declan's hobbies are playing and watching rugby and football. His

favourite player is Neil Roden, enjoy your day Declan and lets all get behind the lads and cheer loudly for them.

The juniors would like to thank our sponsors, **The Oldham Advertiser**, **Frank Elswood, A1 Upholstery, Third Axis Ltd.** and finally **Saddleworth Sports**.

Don't forget our next junior meeting on the 5th of September, at 6.30pm at Oldham's Rugby HQ.

Enjoy today's game, see you soon.

Carole & Janet



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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
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 W 12-10	1,691
JUNE			
01	HULL KINGSTON ROVERS	NL 1 L 10-23	1,300
08		NL C SF	
15	WHITEHAVEN	NL 1 D 22-22	1,096
22	BATLEY BULLDOGS	NL 1 D 20-20	821
29	ROCHDALE HORNETS	NL 1 L 14-58	1,425
JULY			
06		NL C FINAL	
13	FEATHERSTONE R.	NL 1 W 35-24	1,235
20	DONCASTER DRAGONS	NL 1 W 31-20	1,254
27	DEWSBURY RAMS	NL 1 W 32-26	1,098
AUGUST			
03	SALFORD CITY REDS	NL 1 L 22-32	1,765
10	LEIGH CENTURIANS	NL 1 L 2-38	2,287
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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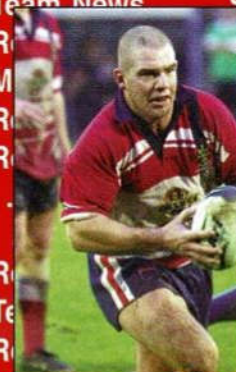
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