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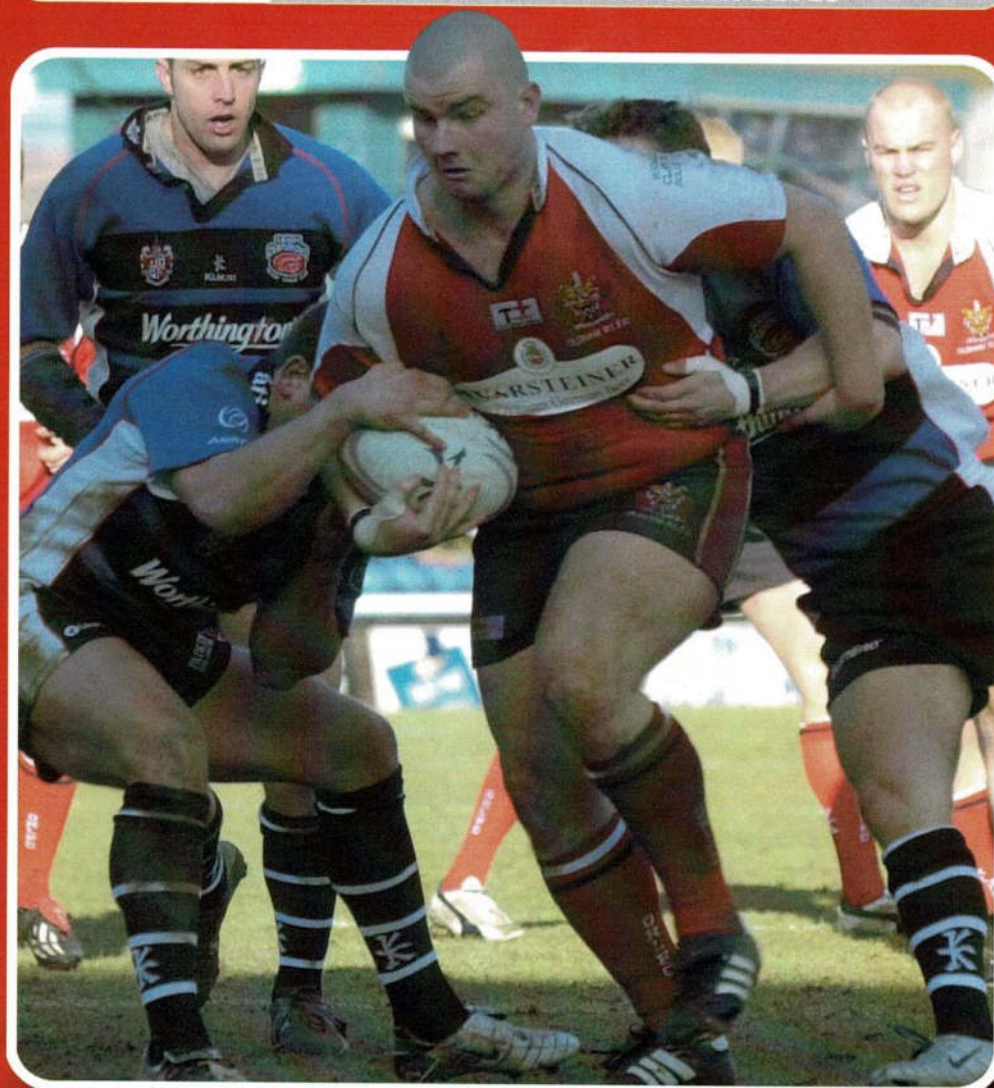
Oldham RLFC

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME £2.00



The Roughyeds

Powergen Challenge Cup 5th Round
v WARRINGTON WOLVES



BOUNDARY PARK
SUNDAY 14TH MARCH 2004
KICK OFF 3.00pm



The Roughyeds

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Football Club (1997) Limited**

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Club Shop: 0161 627 2141

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John Etty 1954-56

Derek Turner 1955-59

Bob Irving 1964-74

Martin Murphy 1966-82

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94



The Powergen Champion Schools Cup reached fever pitch on Wednesday as the Quarter Final stages took place across the country.

The elite of Schools Rugby League still battling in the competition were only two wins away from a Final appearance in Cardiff on the weekend of the Powergen Challenge Cup Final in May.

Following the initial entry of 1,000 school teams, making the competition the largest Rugby League tournament in the world, only eight remained in each age group going into Wednesday's fixtures.

Over 16,000 school children have taken part in this year's nationwide competition - with over 80% of those completely new to Rugby League.

"There has been some scintillating rugby league on display in this year's Powergen Champion Schools Cup," said Andy Harland, RFL National Development Manager. "The standard of rugby has been excellent, and the games are becoming more and more tense as the competition progresses. It should be another great week for School's Rugby League."

There are still a host of schools left in the competition across Lancashire vying for places in the Finals in Cardiff.

One interested spectator in the results of Oldham school Counthill is current St Helens skipper and Great Britain star Paul Sculthorpe. The former Man of Steel attended Counthill as a boy and will be cheering for his old school as they compete in the Year 11 Quarter Final.

1998-2003

Trans-Penine Cup

Finalists - 1998

Northern Ford Premiership

Club of the Year - 2000

Grand Finalists - 2001

MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, 175 - Jan 1998 - September 2003

CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farrell, 67 - *April 2nd 2000 - March 15th 2002

*John Hough was on the team for every match February 1st 1999 - April 16th 2001 (82)

TRIES IN A SEASON: Mark Sibson, 23 - 1999-2000

GOALS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 146 - 2000-2001

POINTS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 320 - 2000-2001

DROP GOALS IN A SEASON: Neil Roden, 7 - 2001-2002

TRIES IN A CAREER: Mark Sibson, 60 - 1999-2002

GOALS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 254 - 1999-2001

POINTS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 576 - 1999-2001

DROP GOALS IN A CAREER: Neil Roden, 18 - 2000-2003

TRIES IN MATCH: Mark Sibson v Wigan St. Jude's, 4 - Feb 8th 2000 at Boundary Park

Mark Sibson v Queensbury, 4 - Jan 28th 2001 at Boundary Park

David Gibbons v Chorley Lynx, 4 - Jan 30th 2001 at Boundary Park

GOALS IN A MATCH: Simon Svabic v Swinton Lions, 10 - Apr 6th 2003 at Boundary Park

POINTS IN A MATCH: Gareth Barber v Dewsbury Rams, 26 - Apr 2nd 2002 at Hurst Cross

(7 goals, 3 tries)

DROP GOALS IN A MATCH: Neil Roden v Workington Town, 2 - Dec 17th 2000 at

Derwent Park

John Braddish v Hull KR, 2 - Dec 16th 2001 at New

Craven Park

HIGHEST SCORE/WINNING MARGIN: v Yorks Wasps, 70-6 - Apr 1st 2001

at Huntington Stadium

v Queensbury (amt), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001

RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park



IN THE CHAIRMAN'S OPINION

with **CHRIS HAMILTON**

Well, after last Sunday it will be interesting to see how many of you are reading these notes.

The performance against Leigh was, as I have said on several occasions this week, unacceptable.

What was behind the collapse we may never know, as sometimes it is impossible to explain, but this week everybody at the club has pulled together and I know for certain that today will see a much improved performance.

When things go wrong, as they did last week, one of the strange things is that it makes me more determined to get things right.

Call it masochistic or whatever you want but the harder it gets the harder I try and that will not change. Nobody at this club is on easy street - from the office staff, to the coaches, to the players, to the Board and definitely you the fans.

Once again we are facing a period of two months where we cannot use our "home" ground and this is just an added difficulty we could do without.

As ever we will work out a solution - although the prospect of no income for two months would be a major blow to any club not just ours - and do our best to come up with something that will encourage you to come and support us.

At the present time we are waiting for people to let us know what grounds are available and when, as they also have remedial work to carry out and as soon as we are in a position to announce the decision, we will.

After beating Sharlston we now find ourselves up against a Warrington team who are being tipped to go all the way to the final in the Powergen Challenge Cup, and to be an outside bet for the Super League Grand Final - should be a doddle for us today then!!

Our opponents today are a shining example of how a club can raise its profile immensely by hard work and dedication and certainly over the last three or four years they have become a major force in the game.

The new stadium has without doubt led to a massive "snowball" effect and the level of support the Wolves are currently experiencing is certainly linked to that.

It is not so long ago that you would have laughed at the prospect of any rugby league club having a brand new stadium exclusively for them but Warrington have demonstrated that it can be done and are to be congratulated on their achievement.

I am also delighted that their coach Paul Cullen is doing such a good job, as Paul made his mark coaching in the National League and is one of the people who hasn't forgotten the fact. Although now facing a different challenge, I bet he still wishes he was going to APC meetings chaired by yours truly!!

Anyway enough of Warrington, we have our own ideas about what might happen today and we have a number of players who have connections with the Wolves who will be especially keen to do well against them.

Steve Molloy, Will Cowell and Gareth Barber will all be playing against their first professional club and two of our injured players John Hough and Craig Farrimond will miss out because of injury.

I always remember speaking to Paul Cullen way back in 1997 when we heard a certain John Hough might be available and the rest is history, as John became our first ever signing. Paul spoke very highly of John so it just goes to show what a bad judge of character he is!

Today more than ever with a large Warrington support we need you to get behind the team - tough times need tough people - and we have them please cheer on the team.

Enjoy the game

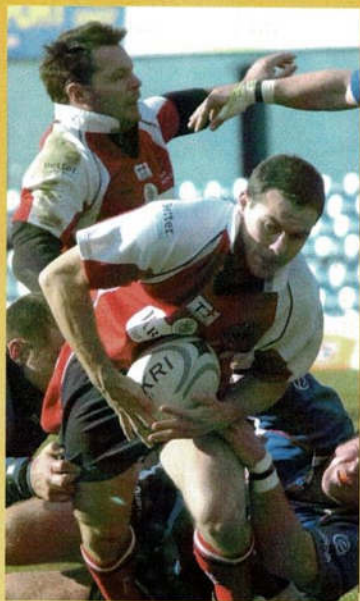
CHRIS HAMILTON

The views expressed in this matchday magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the management and staff of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd.

We would like to express our thanks to the Oldham Evening Chronicle, League Publications Ltd, Phil Burdge and all concerned for the use of photographs.

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COACHLINES

with **STEVE MOLLOY**

Welcome to Paul Cullen and his Warrington Wolves side for today's 5th round Powergen Challenge Cup tie. It's ironic that we should have drawn Warrington as this week is the anniversary of me signing for my first professional club, Warrington, at the tender age of eighteen years, back in 1987. Also after the postponed Charlton Rovers fixture I went over to watch Leigh v Hull FC and ended up sitting next to Paul and chatting to him throughout the game, little knowing that fate would draw us together the very next day.

Pitting ourselves against Super League opposition gives us the chance to put right some of the damage we did our reputations with last week's inept performance against Leigh Centurions. As a player and a coach I feel the frustrations of the paying public two-fold. I

can assure people that everybody at the club is working hard to erase the shortfalls that were apparent to all in that game, and that we are ensuring that we never ever again produce such a lacklustre performance.

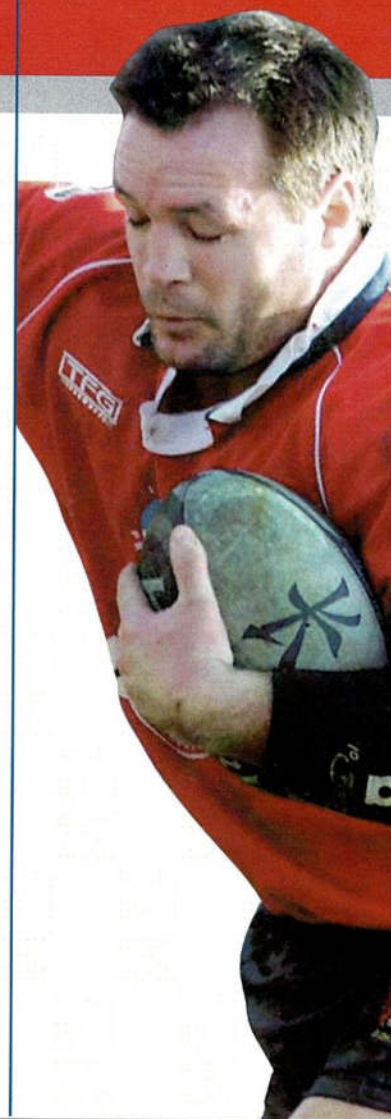
Today's game will see one of the teams progress to the last eight and with two of the favourites already eliminated it looks like it could be the year that we see a club from outside of the big four at Cardiff, which will make a refreshing change.

On a sour note, as well as the poor performance last week, we've lost the in-form Iain Marsh, with knee ligament damage, for what initially looks like a number of weeks. This, coupled with the news of our enforced vacation from Boundary Park, means that this has not, all in all, been a good week for the club. It is therefore imperative that we all show our support for the club and come out the only way we know! Fighting.

Enjoy the game,

Steve

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IN THE CAPTAIN'S CORNER

with PHIL FARRELL

The mood in the players' camp after the game against Leigh last Sunday was sombre. The lads knew they had not only let the supporters down but also themselves. As one player said, "There's no way there's 44 points between Leigh and us." But on the day that was the difference. Results and performances like this hit the players and coaching staff very hard and believe me on Sunday there was nobody more disappointed than them.

We must now, however, put all that behind us, whilst learning from the video what went wrong and why? All of us aspire or have aspired to play in Super League and so this week's game is an important one so that we can hopefully all play to our full potential. A long season lies ahead of us. In one way it might be a blessing in disguise that this has happened now, rather than later. We sorted one or two things out at training on Monday and I think it has given us all the kick up the backside that we deserved.

Certainly the game will be important for all the lads but especially for Steve Molloy, John Hough, Gareth Barber, Craig Farrimond and Will Cowell who all started their professional rugby careers at Warrington - those that are fit to play will be especially eager to do well.

We were all having a laugh the other day when we heard that "Molly" signed for Warrington as a professional exactly seventeen years ago this week, as an eighteen-year-old. We're all dying to get our hands on a photograph of the "old man" in those days and can't imagine what his hairstyle was like then.

I know many of you were disappointed last week, but we are also sure you will get behind us today as we strive to put things right and give a performance you and we, the players, are proud of - your support really is important to us and will, hopefully, help us to turn the corner and realise the standards we are all capable of.

Enjoy the game,

Faz



"Those that are
fit to play will
be especially
eager to
do well"

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WITH APOLOGIES TO GEOFF COORE

Unfortunately Geoff is in the West Indies and left us an e-mail attachment of his desk top rather than the article for this programme, so here goes.

There is no truth in the rumour that the staff at Oldham RLFC's Waterloo St offices have all had their ears pierced, permanently wear bandanas and are on the look out for a horse drawn caravan. Yes, it would appear, they are to become nomads in the rugby league desert as they are once again forced into a gypsy like existence for two months, as remedial work has to be carried out on their Boundary Park rented home.

Right from the start let's not get into any "they've got it in for us", scenarios. Let's face the facts, the ground is owned by Oldham Athletic and if work has to be done on it they're not going to do it in their own season are they? If the roles were reversed we would do exactly the same thing. What we have to question is why, after the large initial outlay on the pitch, this needs to be done? Was it expected? Is it going to happen again? And if so, how regularly? These are vitally important questions as they concern our immediate future, as there seems little chance, in the near future, of the ideal scenario – owning our own stadium, becoming a reality. Also we must take into account that the two-month's absence means a minimum of three and a maximum of five rearranged games. It could have been worse if it had been the same period in February and March when it would have been a minimum of six and a maximum of 9 games. To make matters worse one of the games involved is against Halifax, which I would think, would have been one of the prime games of the season for sponsorship on the day.

Taking all this into account, what is the answer? Well other than the ideal, our own stadium, I should say prior knowledge of the situation, well in advance is essential. If so this may allow these matters to be taken in account when the fixtures are being planned. Even if this is not possible it would at least allow the club to make alternative arrangements well in advance and match day sponsors would be aware of the situation when they make the initial arrangements.

Where from here? Personally I do not go for the reverse fixture argument – this would give the club far too many away fixtures at the heart of the season and how on earth could the club run for this period with no money coming in. Also, if we have serious intentions as a club, this cannot be the way out – well certainly not for all 3(5) games. If this is ruled out, as I think it should be, there would appear to be two other alternatives, to fit the fixtures in mid-week throughout the rest of the season or to play on alternative grounds – the three that come to mind are Hurst Cross, Staleybridge Celtic and Spotland. Many people's favourite, Hurst Cross, has the serious disadvantage of having no corporate facilities and we would have to get Rugby League permission to

play there again. I personally favour Spotland, which is an ideal ground for rugby league with excellent corporate facilities and known to all rugby fans. How this would work out with its use by the football club and Hornets I don't know – but this, to my mind, would cause the least disruption on a playing and commercial basis, if this option is chosen.

Ah well! I hope the office staff have some success with the caravan and all we can do is pray for the miracle, that is, OUR OWN LITTLE STADIUM.

On to other pressing matters this weekend – how much more sensible that the televised match is on a Saturday this week and will not interfere with the other games played on Sunday. I thought it showed the overriding power of television in the last round when we had back-to-back games on television in direct conflict with the other ties in the round – this coupled with the weather must have taken thousands off the gates.

As to the games themselves this weekend I fancy St Helens to beat Leeds on Saturday in a very close encounter. On Sunday I think Whitehaven will easily do away with Batley and expect Featherstone, London, Huddersfield and Hull FC to win their home ties. Wigan should have no trouble in France and no matter how much it pains me to say this, it is likely that Warrington will join these seven in the Quarter Final draw – but I certainly expect a much more spirited fight by the Roughyeds today.

Wouldn't it be good if the two National League sides guaranteed a place in the Quarter Finals drew each other – it really would be good for the National League – and personally – if it's not us – I would like it to be our friends from Whitehaven. They certainly deserve some luck with everything they are trying to do up there in Cumbria to develop the club further. On a final note I just hope that we can have a Powergen Challenge Cup Final this year that doesn't contain two of the top six sides and there appears a distinct possibility that this will indeed happen.



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TODAY'S OPPONENTS WARRINGTON WOLVES

Darryl Cardiss. One of the fastest British outside backs in the game, Darryl possesses the ability to elude tacklers and cover in defence at genuine pace. Sure to be a crowd favourite in the wide-open spaces of The Halliwell Jones stadium.

John Wilshere. The tall, pacey PNG international arrives at Warrington from St George Illawarra Dragons, and will provide a variety of options for the Wolves backline in 2004. Noted for his good hands under the high ball, Wilshere will be an excellent target for cross-field kicks.

Brent Grose. A strong defensive centre with a knack of picking off interceptions. With good pace and upper body strength, Grose is adept at beating defenders one on one close to the line.

Ben Westwood. A powerful running centre or winger. Rated a future Great Britain centre, with then club coach David Plange touting him "the next Keith Senior" on his arrival at Wilderspool in June 2002. Aggressive in defence, Westwood is difficult to put down when on the charge.

Graham Appo. The Wolves sensation of 2003 with 23 Super League tries including three hat-tricks, Appo made a dramatic conversion from fullback to stand-off midway through the year, finishing the season named stand-off in the Super League "Dream Team".

Lee Briers. Wolves' captain and stand-off, Briers is 6th on the club's all time points table with 1170 points in his seven seasons at Wilderspool. Long feted for his ability to break defences with his unpredictable play.

Nat Wood. A charismatic and confident halfback, Wood is the man who makes the Wolves tick from the middle of the field. Rated by coach Cullen "as tough and smart as they come, his ambition can take us to a Grand Final".

Chris Leikvoll. Powerfully built Australian front rower who arrives at Warrington from St George Illawarra Dragons, having played over 100 first grade games in the NRL since his 1997 debut.

Jon Clarke. Physical hooker who has an infectious competitive spirit, Clarke has become a popular personality around Warrington since signing for the club midway through 2001.

Mark Hilton. Universally known as "The Beast", the big-hearted front-rower has overcome a series of injuries earlier in his career to become one of Super League's form props over the last two seasons.

Darren Burns. Quietly spoken Queenslander who has been in excellent form since signing for Warrington in 2002. A second row forward with great ability on the ball.

Ian Sibbit. Tall and dependable Wolves Academy product who is a back rower by nature but has played nearly all of his Warrington first team career in the centres.

Mike Forshaw. Needs no introduction as one of the most respected personalities in Super League, the Great Britain loose forward arrives in Warrington fresh from Grand Final success with Bradford Bulls.

Mark Gleeson. A terrific natural talent, Gleeson is a fine distributor from dummy half who is able to make yards around the ruck with his jinking footwork.

Jerome Guisset. Aggressive defender who is one of the hardest hitting tacklers in Super League, Guisset plays second row or prop and has found a greater level of consistency over the last twelve months.

Paul Wood. Warrington's latest Great Britain representative, Wood was called into the Ashes squad before a shoulder injury on his GB debut against New Zealand residents curtailed his Test hopes.

Warren Stevens. Paul Cullen's first act as Warrington coach was to bring the strongly built offloading prop with him from Whitehaven. Gives a physical presence to the Warrington pack and has become fitter in his second spell at the club.

Paul Noone. One of the brightest of the club's recent Academy products, Noone is a back rower with an excellent all round game.

Gary Hulse. Popular club man who fills halfback, stand-off and hooker roles and has great enthusiasm for the Warrington cause.

Dean Gaskell. Gaskell is renowned as a ferocious trainer who shows a maturity well above his years. With a full winter of conditioning behind him he could be close to a representative call in 2004.

Matt Sturm. A mobile forward with a high work rate, Sturm joined Warrington in 2002 from Workington Town, where he had been a huge hit with his form in the back row or prop.

Danny Lima. Samoan prop with an imposing frame, Lima joins Warrington from Manly Sea Eagles with the reputation as an "enforcer".

Mike Wainwright. Warrington-born back rower who made a successful return to his home town club in 2003 becoming an integral part of the team which made the playoffs.

Nick Owen Upcoming fullback and kick off specialist with outstanding variety and range on his restarts and drop outs.

Richard Varkulis Huge centre who converted from the pack to have a devastating impact on the 2003 Senior Academy competition.

Jamie Durbin. Highly rated young halfback who Warrington picked up from Halton Hornets aged 12. Made a cameo first team appearance against Wigan in 2003 but is likely to feature more regularly in the line up before long.

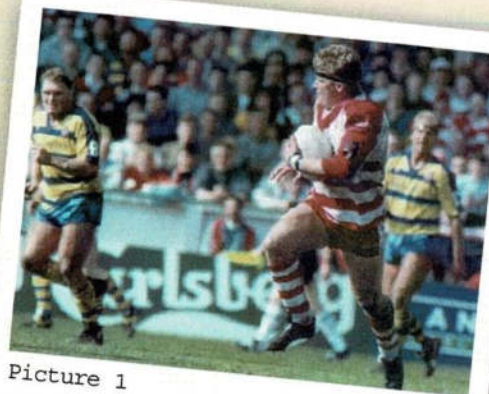


FROM THE PEN OF MICHAEL TURNER

"Roughyeds v Warrington Challenge Cup action"

Picture 1. Taken at the semi final on March 31st 1990 (was it really fourteen years ago?). Leo Casey is seen breaking through the Warrington defence. The Wire won the match played at Central Park (10 - 6). The attendance was 15,631. In the final Warrington put up a brave fight before capitulating to the all conquering Wigan team of the late 80s and early 90s.

Picture 2. This image comes from the second round tie played at Watersheddings on March 31st 1925 and shows home fullback Ernie Knapman attempting to escape the clutches of a Warrington defender. Oldham won the game (12 - 2) before a crowd of 14,707. The Roughyeds duly went on to win the trophy defeating Hull K.R. in the final at Headingley.



Picture 1



Picture 2

IN THE NEWS

Overall last week seems to have been a very good week for rugby league in general, it's just a pity that this didn't spread into Oldham where, all in all, the week was pretty disastrous. First of all we learnt that we would be forced to leave Boundary Park for two months of the season, meaning at least three home games would have to be rearranged, then we put in an inept performance against Leigh and just to make matters worse our Player of the Month for February picked up what looks like a serious knee injury, which could put him out of the game for some time. So let's leave the bad news behind and talk about everything good about the game over the last week.

Firstly isn't it good to hear that for the first time for a long, long time there are no rugby league clubs in administration. Both Featherstone and Workington Town came out of administration last week, long may this situation continue. And it must be said the signs are good, if we are to take note of the attendances at Super League games and television audiences last weekend. With three Super League games drawing over 10,000 crowds and all games drawing significantly higher crowds than the equivalent fixture last season optimism must be high. Almost 70,000 people watched the opening round of Super League and there was a 10% increase in TV audiences for the St Helens v Bradford Bulls opener. This was particularly pleasing, as it seems to show that people are not staying away from live games of Super League to watch television.

Just a dampener though, the same optimism over crowds is not the same in the National League, where attendances have been relatively disappointing and one wonders, with their lack of exposure on television, if people are staying away from National League games to watch Super League on television. This was particularly apparent I think when BBC televised back-to-back Challenge Cup matches on Sunday afternoon in direct conflict with matches involving National League sides. Many supporters of National League clubs feel that until the quality and entertainment available at National League rugby matches is shown to a wider public on television we will struggle to get the crowds back. Don't get me wrong, I feel the powers that be have done a great job - television wise - for Super League, but really feel they should be redressing the balance somewhat in favour of National League clubs if these clubs are not only to be successful but in some cases survive. Surely the time when not one single club is in administration is just the time for the RFL to actively attempt to get some form of television deal for National League clubs.

NM



It is good to see that the general upbeat attitude in rugby league at the present time seems to be showing itself in a greater all round confidence as we see in the choice of venues for the forthcoming Tri Nations competition in the autumn of 2004. Mention is already being made of the first Rugby league game at The City of Manchester Stadium and the use of Craven Cottage, after a £5.4 million refurbishment and those games will be played over the weekend and not in midweek. This is all very positive news and can only be good for Rugby League.

On a slightly more negative final note, I personally hate the latest gambling craze where it seems vast amounts of money are being gambled on who will be the first Super League Coach to be sacked. Surely these people are under enough pressure as it is without this added one. First Widnes Viking's Neil Kelly was under the axe after their poor start to the season. But it appears he can relax now, as Graham Steadman, seemingly safe at 7-1 last week, has had a lot of relatively big money put on him to get the sack. So much so that Littlewood's Bet Direct have suspended all betting for the time being after Castleford's heavy defeat by deadly rivals Leeds Rhinos. Odds will be re-priced shortly say Bet Direct but surely there is enough pressure on coaches from fickle fans without this added pressure from bookmakers and punters. Let's hope Maurice Lindsey isn't laying odds!

AS IAN SEES IT

with IAN WILSON

Frank Stirrup; Roland Barrow; Dick Cracknell; Alan Davies; Terry O'Grady; Frank Daley; Frank Pitchford; Harry Ogden; Jack Keith; Ken Jackson; Charlie Winslade; Sid Little; Bryn Goldswain.

The team? Oldham's, of course, for a match on Saturday, May 14, 1955. The occasion? The League Championship Final, which brought to an end season 1954-5. The opponents? Warrington.

In those days, The Northern Rugby League consisted of 31 teams (including Bramley, Liverpool City, Blackpool Borough and Belle Vue Rangers!) and, since not all teams played each other twice, the championship was decided by a top four play-off, played after the Wembley final of the Challenge Cup: sounds familiar! Oldham and Warrington had each won 29 and drawn 2 of the 36 league games, and so finished 2nd and 1st. (Warrington had a slightly superior points difference) in the League, with Leeds in 3rd and Halifax 4th.

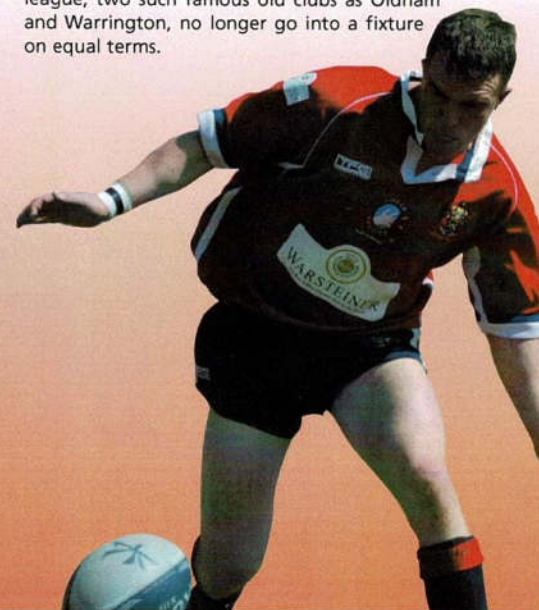
The top two sides duly won through (we beat Leeds 25-6, with tries from Davies, Barrow, Cracknell and both props!) and, on a filthy day, attracted 49,000 to the final. I know, because I was there! [it was, in fact, my first ever live R.L. game, as a wide-eyed and very excited 8-year-old, taken by my no less excited father, who used to regale me regularly with tales of the great Oldham sides of the 1920s who he in turn had followed as a youngster living in Hobson Street.]

The tale of the game itself is easily told, and well known. We were keen to play an open game, and a fine spring day, on a hard pitch, would have suited us fine. Unfortunately, the conditions were more akin to those expected in December, and a rather more basic 'Wire' side took the trophy. The inevitable Brian Bevan try was cancelled out by one from Frank Pitchford, but two Harry Bath goals made the final score 7-3.

For many years after that game, although we regularly played each other in the league, of course, Oldham and Warrington were kept apart in the Challenge Cup, until we were paired together no less than six times during the years 1986 to 1996. We won twice in '86 and '95 and they won the others,

including, infamously (from an Oldham point of view!) in the semi-final at Central Park in 1990. But, apart perhaps from a 26-4 score line in '96, the games were invariably tight, with each side justifiably believing that they had a realistic chance to win on each occasion.

But, as they say, that was then, and today is now. Warrington are a fully professional, quality Super League side, and we are not. Although it is not completely unknown for National League sides to defeat Super League outfits (just ask Huddersfield, for example, who were unceremoniously dumped out by Hunslet only last season) we all know in our heart of hearts that it is very, very rare. So we go into today's game as massive underdogs, and will probably have to settle for, hopefully, a brave effort and a decent financial payday. I hope I am wrong, needless to say; and another National League side, at home, in the quarterfinals would be something of an unexpected treat! But it is just a bit sad that, in the brave new world that is post-Murdoch rugby league, two such famous old clubs as Oldham and Warrington, no longer go into a fixture on equal terms.



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Alan Davies

1950 to 1961

Of all the big-name players who graced Watersheddings in the "Fabulous Fifties", Alan Davies was king. One of the greatest centres the sport has ever produced, Davies was the complete rugby league player



John Hough

1998 to present

John, a local lad, made Oldham RL history on December 2, 1997, when he became the new Roughyeds club's first signing. With 180 appearances, he is now contracted for 2004 and looking forward to his 7th season as a Roughyed



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With Brian Walker



Thanks to lottery grants ITN has made the whole of the British Pathe archive available on line. Arguably the world's most prestigious newsreel archive, the collection (1896-1970) includes 85 rugby league features. Available to view are flickering images of the 1920's Challenge Cup finals Oldham v Swinton and Oldham v Hull KR and a number of international matches from down the years which include Oldham players. The website address is www.britishpathe.com.



ITN itself claims 1,361 rugby league related items available on www.itnarchive.com (type in rugby league) which also provides a link to the old British Paramount and Gaumont newsreels.



Anyone who enjoys reading rugby books should contact Rugby Reading a book distributor down in Bognor Regis who offers a mail order service on a stock of hundreds of second hand union books. To obtain a catalogue send an e mail to philmead@bognor.u-net.com



I came across another interesting web site RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD (not the magazine) on www.rugby-league-world.com. Lots of up-to-the-minute informative stuff.



NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



NATIONAL LEAGUE INVASION!

THIS afternoon's Powergen Challenge Cup Fifth Round sees six National League clubs remaining in the competition – with two guaranteed to progress to the quarter-finals.

The two all NL clashes take place at Batley, who entertain Whitehaven, and Featherstone, who take on York, and all four clubs will doubtless have their eyes on a lucrative last eight clash.

There is also the possibility, of course, that the two teams to progress could draw each other – putting a non-Super League outfit in the semi-finals for the first time since Widnes in 1996.

At this stage, that is all speculation. For now, that quartet of clubs will have their eyes firmly set on this afternoon's clash.

Both Batley and Whitehaven go into their game on the back of monster local derby wins – the Bulldogs thrashing Dewsbury 70-12, and Haven seeing off Workington 54-12.

Haven are strongly fancied to go well under respected coach Steve McCormack this season, but home advantage to Gary Thornton's Bulldogs will redress the balance. It looks too close to call.

At Lionheart Stadium, Featherstone and York will take on each other for the second time in

eight days – the Knights having triumphed 18-16 last Sunday.

Whether that game will have any bearing on this afternoon's match remains to be seen. But it throws an added ingredient into an already spicy pot – Knights coach Richard Agar, fullback Nathan Graham and centre Chris Langley were all Fev players last season.

And if that wasn't enough for the Featherstone faithful, next week sees the arrival of their former coach, who will take charge of his new Dewsbury Rams side for the first time.

But for now, all eyes are on the Challenge Cup.

And let's not forget the two other remaining National League sides – Oldham and Doncaster.

With the Roughyeds entertaining Warrington, and Doncaster travelling to Huddersfield, both look to be up against it in taking on established Super League sides.

But they still have much to gain from today's matches.

With a Nationwide League club already certain to be in this year's soccer FA Cup Final, it looks as if 2004 could be the year of the underdog.

Enjoy today's game.

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PLAYER PROFILE

PAUL SOUTHERN

PAUL Southern has a 'BIG' job on over the course of the 2004 season because he is the Roughyeds' front-row replacement for Danny Guest, Paul Norton and Jason Clegg.

Cleggy, of course, didn't play much last season and he is now plying his trade with Keighley Cougars. Danny Boy and 'Knocker' both called it quits, leaving a big hole at prop which Steve Molloy filled with the capture of former Salford man Southern from our neighbours and derby rivals Rochdale Hornets.

Weighing more than 17 stones, Southern came to Boundary Park with two more of his Spotland colleagues from last season, centre James Bunyan and scrum-half Ian Watson.

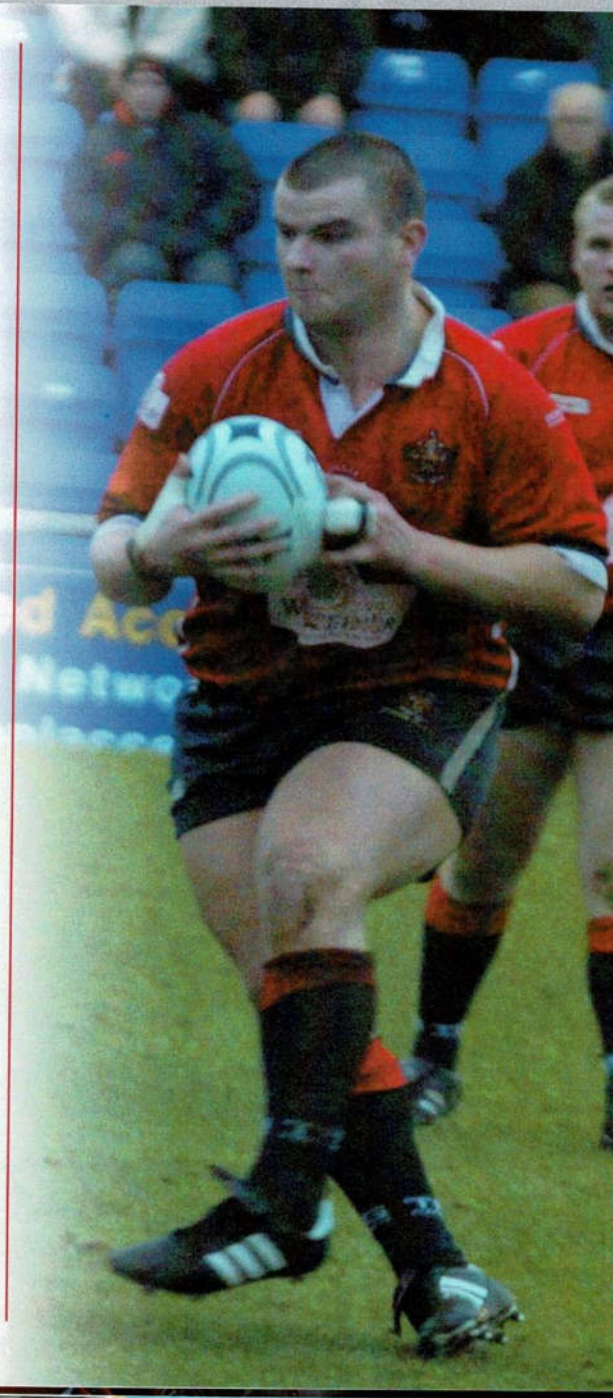
Like Watson, prop Paul hails from the Eccles-Salford area and he spent nearly eight years with the City Reds at the Willows, for whom he signed as a teenager from local amateur club Folly Lane.

In total he played 112 Super League games for the Reds and that's more than anyone else currently on the Oldham books, including player-coach Steve Molloy.

Molloy did 99 with Huddersfield and Sheffield, but the Roughyeds boss is seven years older -- Steve was 35 only last Thursday and Paul makes up 28 in the coming week -- and many of Steve's best seasons were pre-Super League when he was a young fellow with first Warrington and then Leeds.

However, one must not digress. At Rochdale last season Southern was a key member of a team that finished third in National League division one and came within a whisker of reaching the play-off semi-finals after a heartbreak end to a magnificent play-off tie with Hull KR at Spotland.

He was Rochdale's man of the match in a 43-26 win against Whitehaven at Spotland on July 5 and he had such an impressive season that he was one of three Hornets players named in the National League first division mythical dream team, alongside his fellow forwards from Spotland, Paul Smith and David Larder, the two second-row men.



PAUL SOUTHERN CONT...

The 'form' team was: Gary Broadbent (Whitehaven); Damian Munro (Leigh), Alan Hunte (Salford), Danny Maun (Batley), Alasdair McClarron (Hull KR); Cliff Beverley (Salford), Gavin Clinch (Salford); Paul Southern (Rochdale), Paul Rowley (Leigh), Andy Coley (Salford), Paul Smith (Rochdale), David Larder (Rochdale), Adam Bristow (Leigh).

Rochdale's much-publicised financial problems at the end of last season caused a mass exodus from Spotland and Southern was soon heading over Summit Hill to join up with the Roughyeds.

The signing was announced on November 25, 2003, Paul having signed a one-year deal.

He said in the Oldham Chronicle at the time: "Oldham are ambitious and Super League is their goal. It's my goal, too, it has to be."

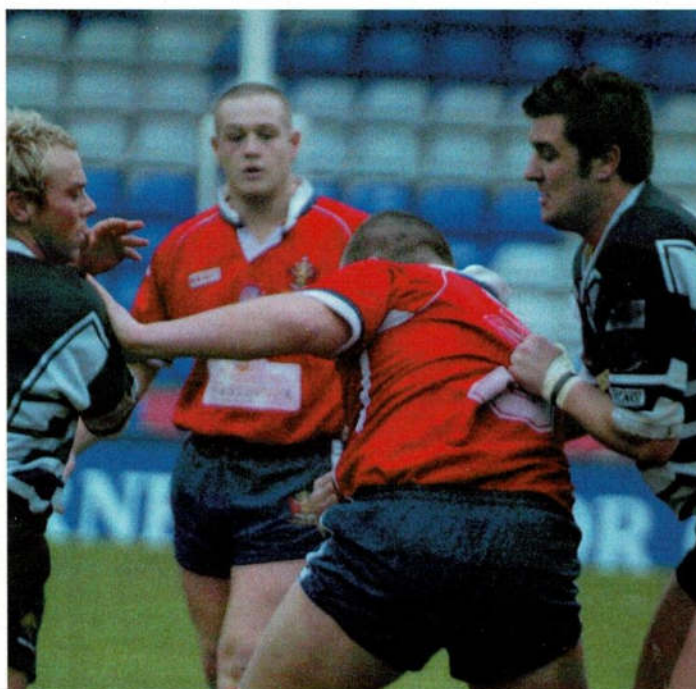
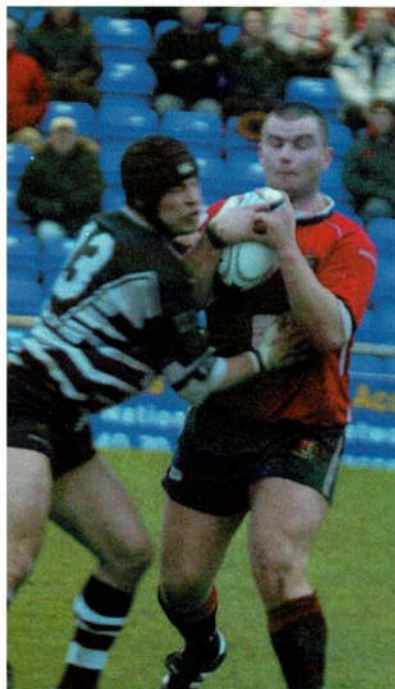
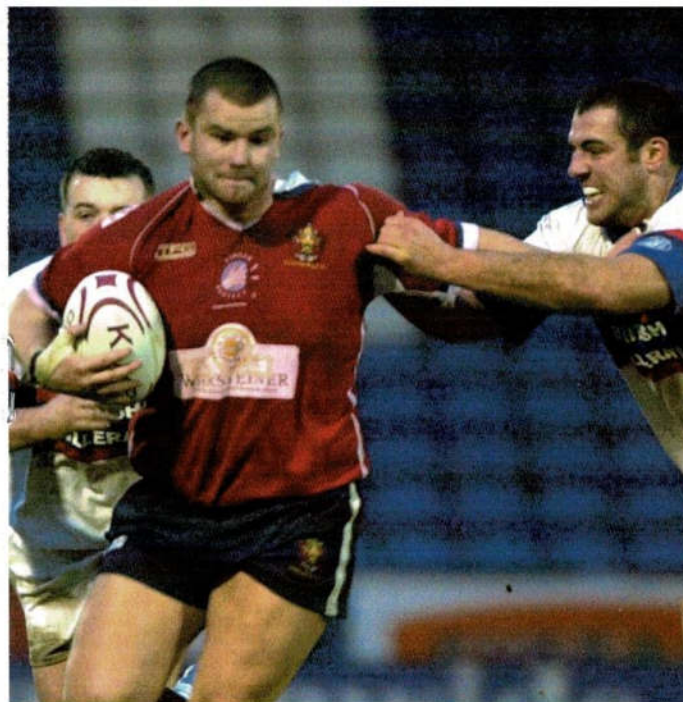
Added Molloy: "I have a lot of time for Paul, whom we pursued last year before he went to Rochdale. I've played against him many times and I have always respected him as a good front-rower who always keeps himself very fit."

"He is one of the few props in the game who can do 60 or 70 minutes and it is testimony to the skill, expertise and experience of the guy that he was a massive influence at Rochdale."

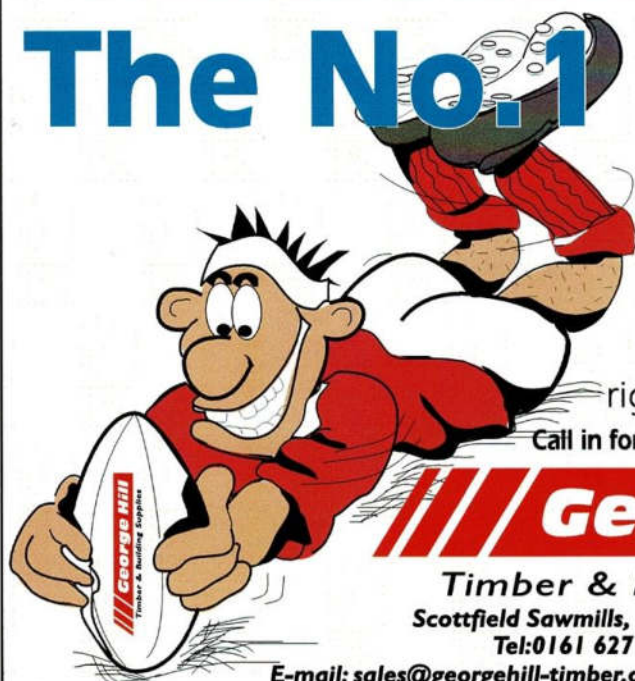
Mr Chris Hamilton, the club chairman, said: "As a player of vast experience he will, we hope, have a positive influence on others in terms of attitude and how they play."

At Rochdale in 2003 Southern went gradually better as the season wore on --- and the Roughyeds are hoping he will have an encore treat in store for the Oldham faithful.

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Representing us out on the pitch today is 14 year old Nicola Woodward. "Nic" attends Middleton Technology School & enjoys reading & Rugby, her favourite player is Martin Elwood.

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Good Luck to Steve & the "Lads"

See you soon.

Janet & Carole



TODAYS MASCOT

Nicola Woodward

Age: 14

Hobbies: Reading & Rugby

Favourite Player: Martin Elwood

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Time rolls on and once again Easter eggs are on the scene. Well, as last year, we are fortunate to have had a very large egg generously donated to us by Lees Village Service Station for our Easter Draw. Proceeds from this draw will be shared equally between our fundraising for Oldham RLFC and Breakthrough Breast Cancer, the Club's adopted charity. The draw will be made at the Swinton match on 4th April

In the meantime don't forget our General Knowledge Quiz Night in the Social Club lounge on 25 March at 8.00pm

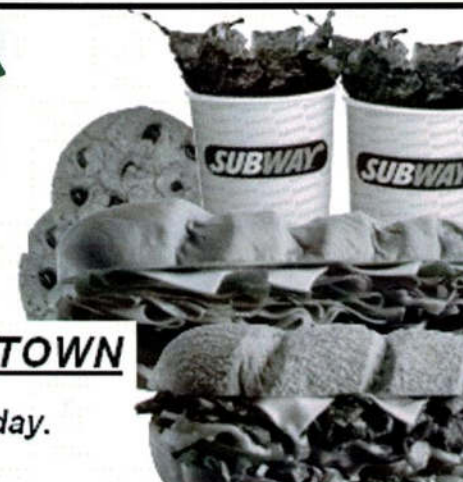
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ON THIS DAY

DON YATES LOOKS BACK TO MARCH 14TH YESTERYEAR

Forty-five years ago, on Saturday 14th March 1959, Great Britain met France before a Headingley crowd of 21,948. There was no stopping the Lions that afternoon as they ran in twelve tries to win by 50 points to fifteen. At full-back for Great Britain in that test was Eric Fraser, one of the great Warrington players of that era. He was a reliable defender and a useful attacker who occasionally was given the goal kicking duties although he was never regarded as being Warrington's principal marksman. Great Britain relied upon him to kick goals that day and he duly obliged with seven successful shots. There were two Oldham players involved in that match. World record signing Ike Southward, himself a reliable goal kicker, was on the wing and Alan Davies was at centre. Davies scored one of the British tries. Another personality from Warrington involved in that match was the referee, Charlie Appleton.

The first time that Great Britain sent a touring team to Australasia was in 1910. In order to assist the selectors with their choice of tourists, a couple of 'tour trials' were staged. The first trial was played at Headingley, Leeds on Monday 14th March and took the form of a match between 'First Selected' and 'Yorkshire Probables'. There was one player from Oldham and one from Warrington included in the 'First Selected' team. Both were forwards, Bert Avery (Oldham) and Frank Shugars. The 'First Selected' XIII won the match 27-16 with Bert Avery scoring a try. Only two players from the winning squad failed to gain selection for the tour with both Avery and Shugars being members of that historic Lions squad.

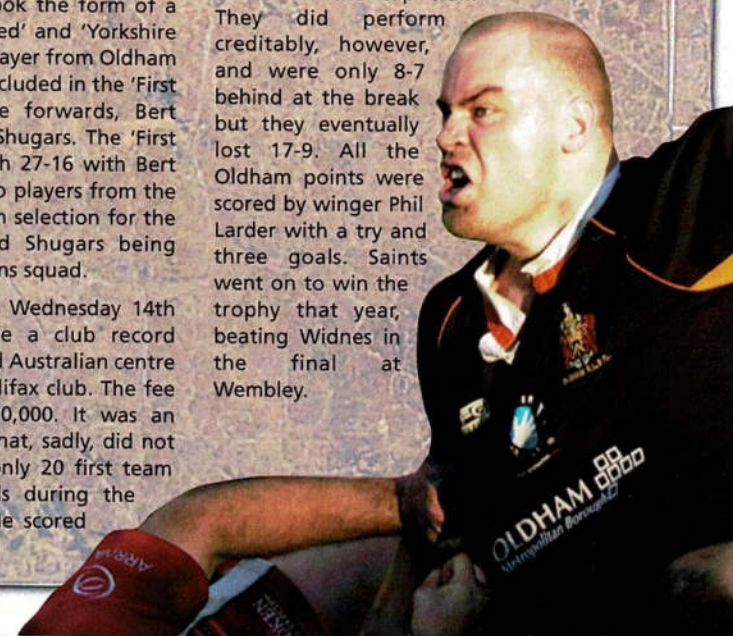
It was on this day in 1990, Wednesday 14th March, that Oldham made a club record signing. That day they signed Australian centre Tony Anderson from the Halifax club. The fee paid for Anderson was £70,000. It was an ambitious signing but one that, sadly, did not pay off. Anderson played only 20 first team matches for the Roughyeds during the following twelve months. He scored

just three tries before retiring because of a persistent knee injury. Since then he has taken up coaching and is currently head coach with the club from whom he joined Oldham, National League One rivals Halifax.

In 1925 Oldham won the Challenge Cup and, in so doing, knocked Warrington out of the competition at the second round stage. In the quarter-finals, played on Sunday 14th March, the Roughyeds faced a tricky tie at home to Featherstone Rovers. Oldham prepared well and made no mistakes on the day as they hammered Rovers 26-0 with tries from wingers Sid Rix, who touched down twice, and Reg Farrar, centre Evan Davies, scrum-half George Hesketh and second-row forward Albert Brough, who also landed four goals. The Roughyeds then disposed of Rochdale Hornets before beating Hull Kingston Rovers in the final at Headingley.

On Sunday 14th March 1976 Oldham travelled to Knowsley Road for a difficult quarter-final tie against St.Helens. The Roughyeds had won a league match at that venue five weeks previously but they were unable to knock Saints off the cup trail.

They did perform creditably, however, and were only 8-7 behind at the break but they eventually lost 17-9. All the Oldham points were scored by winger Phil Larder with a try and three goals. Saints went on to win the trophy that year, beating Widnes in the final at Wembley.



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Player	Appearances (Including Subs) [Max. 8]	Tries	Drop Goals	Goals	Total Points
Jon Goddard	8	3	-	-	12
Will Cowell	8	3	-	-	12
Iain Marsh	8	6	-	-	24
Gareth Barber	8	1	-	8	20
Nick Johnson	8	5	-	-	20
Simon Svabic	7	-	-	19	38
Ian Watson	8	2	-	2	12
Paul Southern	7	1	-	-	4
John Hough	5	-	-	-	0
Dane Morgan	8	3	-	-	12
Lee Doran	8	2	-	-	8
Martin Elswood	4	-	-	-	0
Craig Farrimond	4	-	-	-	0
Gavin Dodd	8	3	-	-	12
Gavin Johnson	2	-	-	-	0
Adam Sharples	3	-	-	-	0
Neil Roden	5	2	-	-	0
Martin McLoughlin	7	-	-	-	0
Steve Molloy	6	-	-	-	0
Lee Marsh	7	3	-	1	14
Keith Brennan	5	-	-	-	0
James Bunyan	5	1	-	-	4

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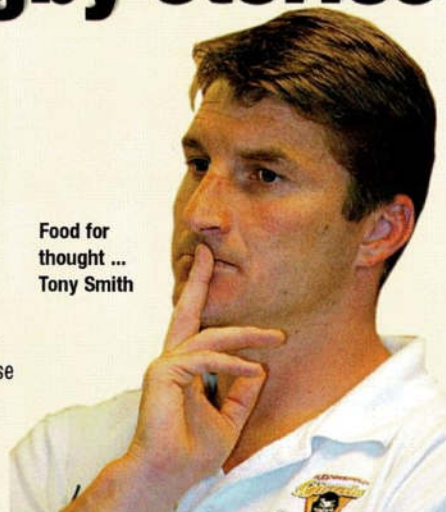




**By Danny
Lockwood**

**Publisher
League Weekly**

rugby stories



**Food for
thought ...
Tony Smith**

IT'S alright all of this extra television coverage that everyone's talking about, but has anyone considered the poor old referees? With warts and all coverage of every 50:50 call they make, and cameras everywhere except peeping out of the end of their whistles (and some smart-alec Sky producer will be onto THAT before you've read this page), the poor so-and-so's are going to need Post Traumatic Stress counselling. Indeed I hope that Stuart Cummings negotiated an overtime bonus into his contract, because to read the weekend's match reports, every coach and his mum wants a word in his shell-like over this, that or t'other referee.

The need for psychiatric counselling for the men in the middle might not be a bad idea, especially the Super League refs, who haven't had anyone to talk to since Jimmy Lowes hung his boots up. Altogether more useful however would be a set of ear plugs all round, to help ignore the bleating. Every now and again a winning coach will have a bit of a moan, but it tends to be the domain of the losers. Rhino coach Tony Smith made a good point last Sunday. A Castleford 'try' was pulled back for a forward pass which would have stood under Stevo's beloved "momentum rule". Graham Steadman thought it could have been the turning point. Rhino coach Smith reflected that the Tigers got there because Danny McGuire had apparently been illegally stripped of the ball moments before, when about to score. A six and two-threes, chaps?

If referees make more mistakes than an individual player, it's because they have immeasurably more decisions to make in a game – a game that gets faster and faster. I doubt they make more mistakes than the collective 34 blokes who at one time or another will consciously try to pull the wool over a ref's eyes, be it interfering at the tackle, not playing the ball correctly, obstructing at a high kick or sneaking a yard or two offside when he's not looking. But it's not in spectators' natures to howl in indignation at successful cheats, rather at the poor ref who for some unbelievable reason doesn't have eyes in the back of his head.

So, Lockwood's a ref lover, is he? Listen, I'd rather my daughter bring home a van-load of Iraqi refugees than a nicely-spoken, clean-shaven, university-educated referee. I'd at least know what they were after. Him? I'd want a psychiatrist's report, given his apparent predilection for masochism. I simply think our refs are variously good, bad and indifferent; they have blinders, make blunders, but don't take backhanders. They're just human, and operate under a microscope of expectation that is frankly impossible to satisfy. At least not for both teams on any given match day.

Some folk have suggested that we import Aussie refs. Those people obviously didn't see Tim Mander in the Ashes. Mind you, that did involve a British and Australian team and it is just not in any Antipodean ref's nature to give any Pom a fair shake when it's north vs south hemisphere. England's rah-rah boys were woeful last Saturday, but Kiwi ref Paul Honiss murdered them; likewise Silth African Andre Watson in the World Cup final. Nothing particularly bent about them, they're just carrying 300 years of colonial baggage around the paddock, and it's proven to affect the eyesight (see the fine tome 'Lockwood's Natural Laws of Antipodean Myopia', chapter 32).

Or maybe it's just that I'm just being one of those sore losers. Anyone got Stuart Cummings's phone number...?

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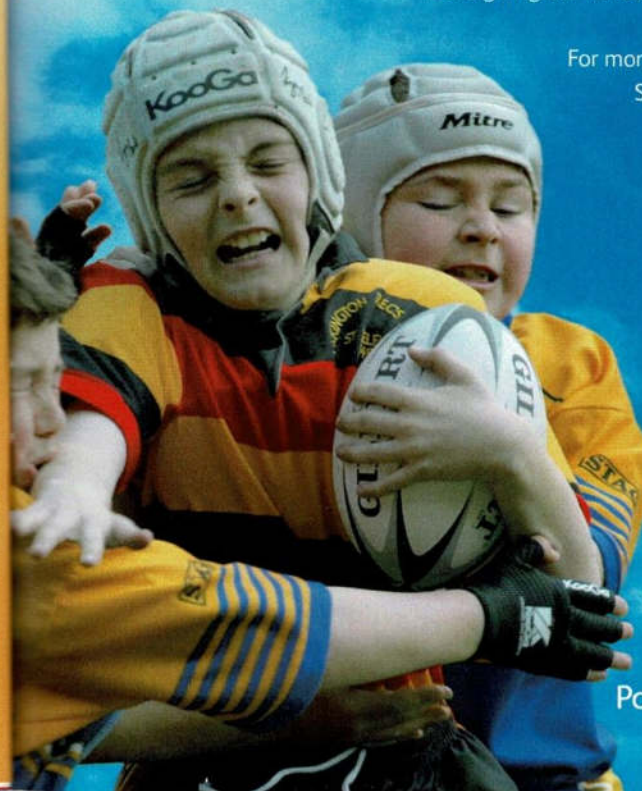


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We're delighted to sponsor the Powergen Champion Schools Tournament, the largest knockout Rugby League tournament in the world. The competition helps more than 16,000 young players from over 800 UK teams train and learn through this energising sport. As sponsors of the Powergen Challenge Cup we're giving our full commitment to this prestigious tournament.

For more information on the Powergen Champion Schools Tournament call 0113 237 5016.



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Fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L
01/02/04	Chorley Lynx	AT Cup	Home	15.00	64-14	W
06/02/04	Castleford Panthers	Powergen CC	Home	19.30	16-8	W
15/02/04	Leigh Centurions	AT Cup	Away	15.00	51-32	L
22/02/04	Swinton Lions	AT Cup	Away	15.00	18-30	W
29/02/04	Sharlston Rovers	Powergen CC	Home	19.45	24-4	W
07/03/04	Leigh Centurions	AT Cup	Home	15.00	10-54	L
14/03/04	Warrington Wolves	Powergen CC	Home	15.00		
21/03/04	Chorley Lynx	AT Cup	Away	15.00		
28/03/04	Powergen CC Quarter Finals	Powergen CC				
28/03/04	Rochdale Hornets	AT Cup	Home	15.00		
04/04/04	Swinton Lions	AT Cup	Home	15.00		
09/04/04	Rochdale Hornets	AT Cup	Away	19.30		
12/04/04	Featherstone Rovers	NL 1	Home	15.00		
18/04/04	Powergen CC Semi Final 1	Powergen CC				
18/04/04	Halifax	NL1	Away	15.00		
25/04/04	Powergen CC Semi Final 2	Powergen CC				
25/04/04	AT Cup Play-offs	AT Cup				
02/05/04	Leigh Centurions	NL 1	Home	15.00		
09/05/04	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	Away	15.00		
15/05/04	Powergen CC Final	Powergen CC				
23/05/04	Rochdale Hornets	NL 1	Home	15.00		
30/05/04	Batley Bulldogs	NL 1	Home	15.00		
06/06/04	AT Cup Quarter Finals	AT Cup				
13/06/04	Keighley Cougars	NL1	Away	15.00		
20/06/04	Whitehaven	NL 1	Home	15.00		
27/06/04	AT Cup Semi Finals	AT Cup				
04/07/04	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00		
11/07/04	Halifax	NL 1	Home	15.00		
18/07/04	At Cup Final	AT Cup				
25/07/04	Leigh Centurions	NL1	Away	15.00		
01/08/04	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL 1	Home	15.00		
08/08/04	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00		
15/08/04	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Away	15.00		
22/08/04	Keighley Cougars	NL 1	Home	15.00		
29/08/04	Whitehaven	NL1	Away	15.00		
05/09/04	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Away	15.00		
12/09/04	Doncaster Dragons	NL 1	Home	15.00		
19/09/04	NL 1 & 2 Play-offs	NL1				
26/09/04	NL 1 & 2 Play-offs	NL1				
03/10/04	NL 1 & 2 Play-offs	NL1				
10/10/04	NL 1 & 2 Grand Finals	NL1				
17/10/04	NL 1 & 2 Prom/Releg. Play-offs	NL1				

Key

AT Cup – Arriva Trains Cup
Powergen CC – Powergen Challenge Cup
NL1 – National League Division 1

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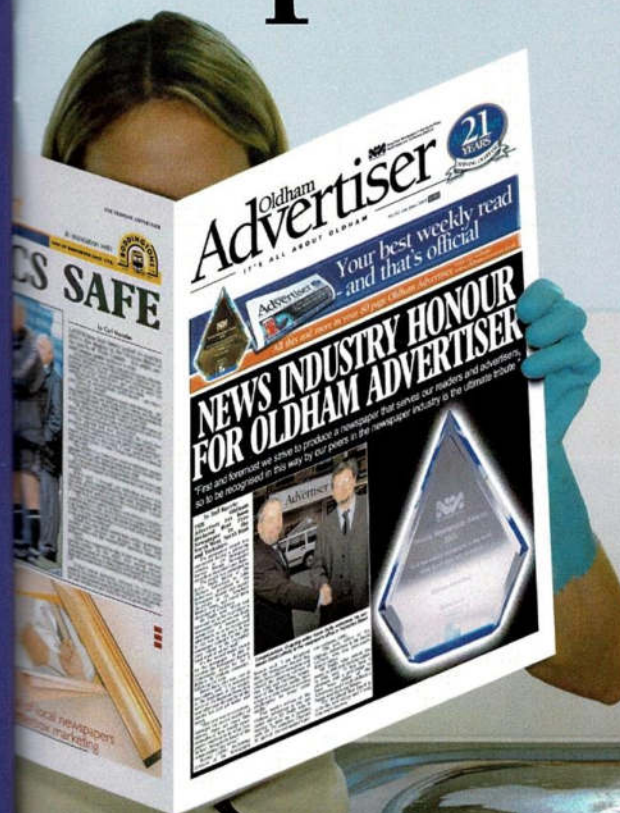
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OLDHAM



WARRINGTON WOLVES

Gavin Dodd	1	Darryl Cardiss
Will Cowell	2	John Wilshire
James Bunyan	3	Brent Grose
Jon Goddard	4	Ben Westwood
Nick Johnson	5	Graham Appo
Neil Roden	6	Lee Briers
Ian Watson	7	Nathan Wood
Steve Molloy	8	Chris Leikvoll
Keith Brennan	9	Jon Clarke
Paul Southern	10	Mark Hilton
Lee Doran	11	Darren Burns
Dane Morgan	12	Ian Sibbit
Lee Marsh	13	Mike Forshaw
Gareth Barber	14	Mark Gleeson
Simon Svabic	15	Jerome Guisset
Martin Elswood	16	Paul Wood
Martin McLoughlin	17	Warren Stevens
	18	Paul Noone
	19	Gary Hulse
	20	Dean Gaskell
	21	Mat Sturm
	22	Danny Lima
	23	Mike Wainwright
	24	Nick Owen
	25	Richard Varkulis
	26	Jamie Durbin

Match Officials:

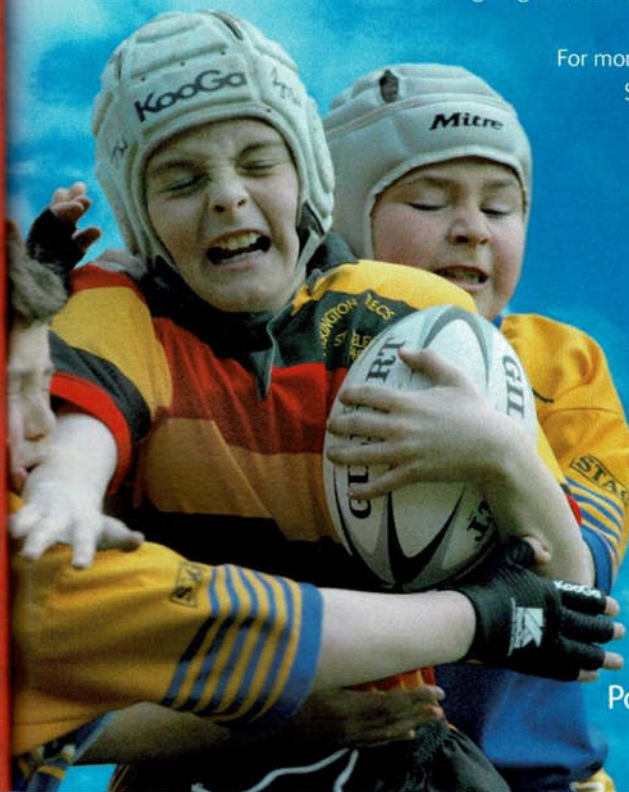
REFEREE: Steve Ganson
TOUCH JUDGES: K Leyland & S Tordoff
IN GOAL TOUCH JUDGES: TD Beech & P Taylor
RESERVE REFEREE: M Dawber

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