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The Roughyeds

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V KEIGHLEY COUGARS

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Gavin Dodd	2	Karl Smith
Lee Marsh	3	David Foster
Jon Roper	4	Matt Foster
Nick Johnson	5	Andy Robinson
Neil Roden	6	Adam Mitchell
Ian Watson	7	Matt Firth
Paul Southern	8	Phil Stephenson
Keith Brennan	9	Craig Nipperness
Martin McLoughlin	10	Jason Clegg
Lee Doran	11	Jordan Ross
Dane Morgan	12	Craig McDowell
Phil Farrell	13	Lee Patterson
Gareth Barber	14	Max Tomlinson
Adam Sharples	15	Chris Wainwright
Martin Elswood	16	Jamie Fielden
Steve Molloy	17	Richard Mervill

Match Officials:

REFEREE: R Connolly
TOUCH JUDGES: TD Beech, J Child
4TH OFFICIAL: MD Thomason

Oldham RLFC

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The Roughyeds

LHF HEALTHPLAN NATIONAL LEAGUE 1
V KEIGHLEY COUGARS



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"Once again the support the team received at Batley was superb"

IN THE CHAIRMAN'S OPINION

with **CHRIS HAMILTON**

Another Sunday, another important game.

After a very committed performance last week at Batley we must make sure we keep up the momentum today by turning in a good performance against a Keighley side who are fighting for their First division lives and will come prepared accordingly.

By all accounts they could have won at Rochdale last Sunday and they have nothing to lose today so we must not underestimate them.

By this time of the season most Chairman's nerves are shot with the constant chopping and changing in the league ladder and it looks as though points difference could play a part come the end of the season in determining the final placings.

It was interesting to see last week the last few fixtures that the clubs around us have to play and nobody can be sure how many points they will pick up between now and the end of the season.

The change to a ten team competition has meant that each week results can go either way and this season seems to have emphasised this even more.

The injury to Iain Marsh and the enforced loss of Pat Rich have stretched the squad a little but the return of David Gibbons to the club is a very welcome boost.

I don't think that either of the twins ever really wanted to leave Oldham in the first place but circumstances dictated that they did but I have been on at David for a while now about retiring too early and despite him telling me I should leave him alone (or words to that effect!) persistence has paid off and he is once again an Oldham player.

Without any shadow of a doubt he will add quality to the club and his influence will be vital as we reach this crucial stage of the season.

His never say die attitude and total professionalism will have an immediate effect on the players around him and hopefully will lift us on to bigger and better things at the right time.

Once again the support the team received at Batley was superb and the way the players returned the applause at the end of the game shows how much it is appreciated by them. I hope that today sees more people watching the game as the team deserves bigger crowds and with everything to play for over the next few weeks there is no reason why "fans" should not turn up.

It is also important to mention the efforts of the Senior Academy team recently.

For most of the season with our injury situation we have been unable to field our strongest team which would normally include at least two or three players with First Team experience and this makes all the difference alongside the younger players. The lads who have played this time have had to do it tough and have suffered some heavy defeats but have never let their heads drop and over the past few weeks with the injury situation easing we have been able to field a stronger side and results have been much better including last Saturday's impressive 56-6 win over Keighley which by a strange twist meant we moved off the bottom of the table and into a Play Off spot!

By now we will have played either Huddersfield or Salford and hopefully will have put up another good performance.

It hasn't been easy for the players or Mick Worrall over the last few weeks but they are all to be congratulated on their efforts.

Enjoy the game

Chris

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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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 2001
 *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

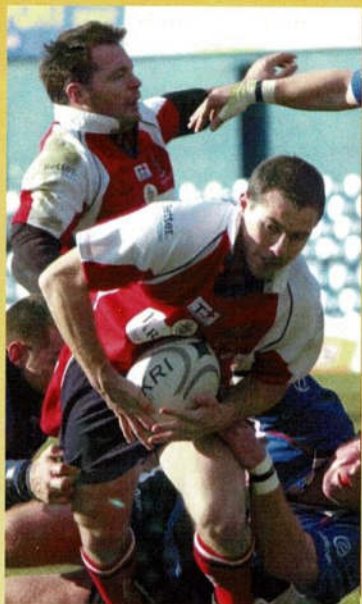
TRIES IN A CAREER: Mark Sibson, 60 - 1999-2002
GOALS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 254 - 1999-2001
POINTS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 576 - 1999-2001
DROP GOALS IN A CAREER: Neil Roden, 18 - 2000-2003

TRIES IN MATCH: Mark Sibson v Wigan St. James, 4 - Feb 8th 2000 at Boundary Park
 Mark Sibson v Queensbury, 4 - Jan 28th 2001 at Boundary Park
 David Gibbons v Chorley Lyons, 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 (am), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001 RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park

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COACHLINES

with **STEVE MOLLOY**

Welcome to the Cougars and all their loyal band of supporters for today's crucial National League One encounter, crucial, for different reasons obviously, but crucial just the same. We are trying to cement our position in the top six and hopefully the top four and Keighley are fighting against relegation to National League 2. But that is what is so unique about this league this year – there are no easy games as Keighley showed us at Cougar Park and obviously showed the cock-a-hoop Hornets last week. I'm always wary of sides that are in a corner, but even more so this season. We need to prepare as if we are playing a top-of-the-table side and put on a real professional display.

"Professionalism is vital and that's why we have brought Dave Gibbons back into the fold for the remainder of the season."

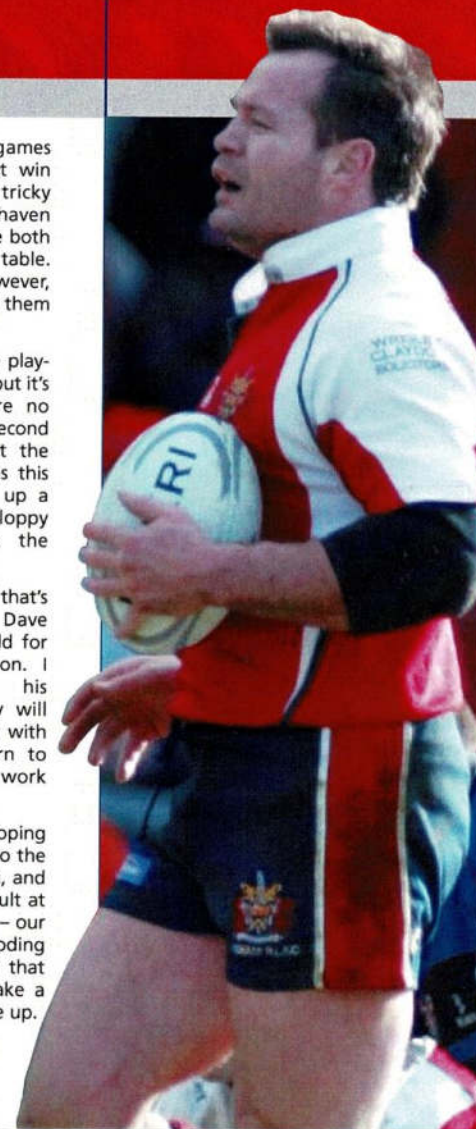
Our remaining home games including today are must win situations as we have tricky away fixtures at Whitehaven and Featherstone who are both above us in the league table. On the positive side, however, we have beaten both of them this season.

The advantage of a home play-off fixture is in our grasp, but it's important that there are no more slip-ups like the second half performance against the Hornets. Too many times this season we have backed up a strong win with a sloppy performance and lost the following week.

Professionalism is vital and that's why we have brought Dave Gibbons back into the fold for the remainder of the season. I am confident that his experience and versatility will prove valuable especially with Pat rich having to return to London due to work commitments.

Everybody at the club is hoping that now we are getting to the business end of the season, and on the back of a good result at Batley-which is never easy – our "speckies" will come flooding back and provide us with that little extra impetus to make a real mark in the final shake up.

Enjoy the game,
Steve



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IN THE CAPTAIN'S CORNER

with PHIL FARRELL

We had a great win and performance at Batley last week. Everybody had a big game and the difference between the Batley game and the game at Rochdale the previous week was that we had so much enthusiasm. I'm sure all of you on the terraces were concerned when we only had a 10 point lead after playing down the hill in the first half and your confidence can't have been increased when they scored first in the second half after a wicked bounce of the ball. Earlier in the season we would have folded at this point but the enthusiasm and spirit was tremendous. Everybody on the field was prepared to turn their blood into water to prevent them getting over our line.

We are learning to win it tough, especially away from home.

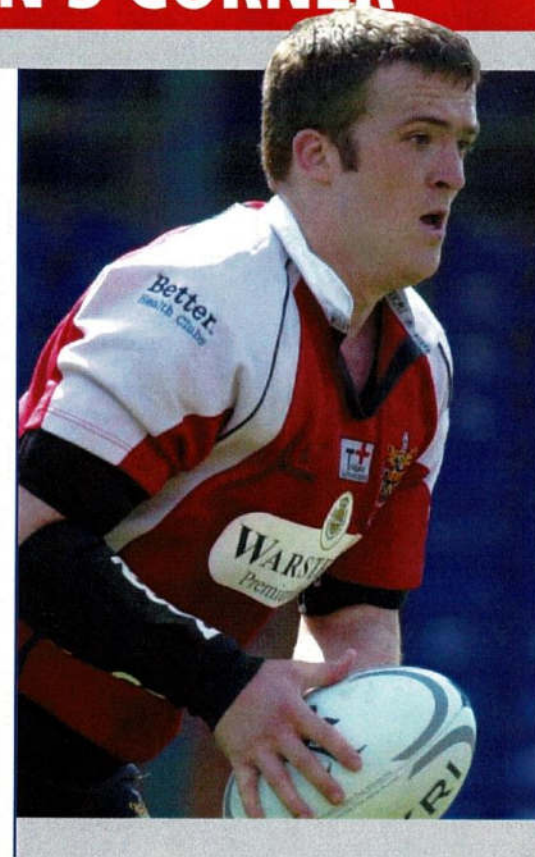
Although it is unfair to single out one player in what was undoubtedly a great team performance I have to say that I rate Gareth Barber as the best support player in the league. He is tracking everybody all of the time all over the field and is hungry to score tries. This is a skill in itself and don't forget he scored two tries through our left centre channel whilst playing on the right wing.

Gareth is typical of the squad this year. Everybody is prepared to give their best for the club whatever position they are playing as shown by "Barbs" on Sunday. This spirit is also epitomised by "Scruffy", (John Hough) who has not made a muff about being left out and put his hand up to play for the Academy last week. The spirit in the side is terrific.

This is made even better by the arrival of Dave Gibbons. He is the true professional and his arrival is a massive plus, he just seems to do everything right and I can't wait to team up with him again on the field.

Just as things were looking better on the injury front Iain Marsh' unlucky season continues. We still are not sure how serious the injury is and has ranged from a broken ankle to a slight strain. We told him he squealed like a pig on the pitch and when the prognosis was a slight strain we really gave him some stick.

Well it's Keighley today and the return of "Cleggy". He's never been off the phone, he can't wait to return in front of all his fans. I'm sure he expects roses to be thrown at him and a standing ovation has he trots on to the field. He thinks it's like Ellery returning to Wigan.



Seriously it is a must win game not only for us but also for Keighley who must win to prevent relegation. They are a tough side who never give in and fight for everything. We are confident however as we were at Batley because this game is all about preparation and when training as gone well as it did last week you can't help but feel confident. This week has gone well too so far and we had a good session on Monday with it's light hearted moments in the torrential rain. The "Rat Man" (Neil Roden) is not quite bald enough yet to be unaffected by the rain and ended up with tiny strands of hair plastered on his bald pate. The time is definitely approaching when we will have to change his nickname to "Bobby" (Bobby Charlton.)

Enjoy the game

Faz

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them every success for the season



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AS IAN SEES IT

with IAN WILSON

Given that Super League have now decided its promotion/relegation process for the end of season 2005, and, more importantly, perhaps, agreed to change its current rather farcical fixture formula for the 'extra' six games of the league season, perhaps it is time for the National League also to have another look at the structure of its season.

I take it that there are a number of elements of the season for NL1 and NL2 that are agreed:

- Some form of cup competition (the ATC or equivalent), which cannot be won by a Super League club, is highly desirable.
- The bulk of the season should consist of 'proper' league fixtures.
- The RL Challenge Cup, played at its new, later time of the season, should, in its early rounds, interrupt the normal flow of league fixtures.
- The current 10 teams per league set up should continue, certainly for 2005, and lead to a play off series and a Grand Final as at present. [For 2006, of course, there is the extra issue of two teams relegated from, and one promoted into, Super League. Two to be relegated from NL1? Or an 11 team league?]

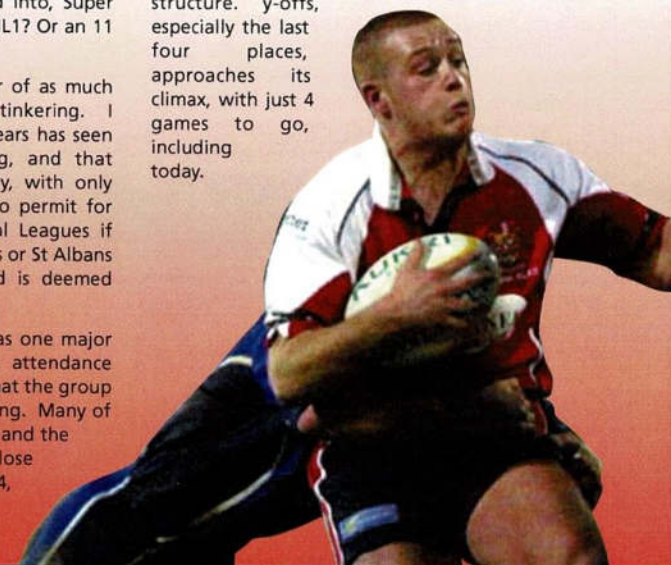
As a general principle, I am in favour of as much continuity as possible, and minimal tinkering. I think we all agree that the last ten years has seen enough change for the time being, and that consolidation is the order of the day, with only evolutionary change – for example, to permit for movement into the semi-pro National Leagues if and when a club such as Coventry Bears or St Albans Centurions (or Bramley?) wishes, and is deemed ready to, join them.

However I think the current season has one major fault – and I strongly suspect that attendance figures would support this view. It is that the group stage of the ATC goes on for far too long. Many of the later games are of little relevance, and the start of the league seems to lose momentum very quickly. And, in 2004, what a terrible waste of a traditional

Rugby League day – Good Friday – for it to be the 8th and final ATC group fixture!

My solution would be to play just 4 group qualifying games, and then to spread out the knock-out stages as now, though earlier in the season, with the final played before the Challenge Cup. And to replace the four last games by four extra league fixtures – a la Super League, though organised in a fair way, obviously. [It is not beyond the wit of man to devise extra fixtures, still based on previous year's league positions, but with position one having slightly 'harder' games than position two, and position 2 slightly harder than position 3, etc., etc. If no-one at Red Hall can manage that, I am certainly willing to offer my services!]

That would give 22 National League Fixtures, to be followed by the play off series. And, of course, there would also be rather more logic in the play offs when the 10 teams in each league have not played each other the same number of times. More important, though, I think the whole season would have more competitive games, and a more coherent structure. y-offs, especially the last four places, approaches its climax, with just 4 games to go, including today.



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in yer face

with Geoff Coore

I caught the after match chat following the Salford v. Widnes fixture last week and was outraged by Mike Stephenson's comments. Not only was the administration of Rugby League and roundly and unjustifiably condemned but the well-being of the game as a whole was totally ignored. The composition of Super League and the fixture format and its deficiencies are largely in the hands of the clubs themselves and not of Red Hall. Yes, it's ridiculous to have a fixture format which can place a club at a disadvantage by finishing sixth because the following season they will have a harder fixture list than the club finishing seventh (as per London Broncos this year). Well, I read this week that the clubs are already proposing a new system of odds and evens which should alleviate the unfairness in a season when two sides will be relegated. Of course, much of the difficulty could be removed if clubs had the same courage as Widnes who proposed extending the league to 14 clubs and taking less money. Not unexpectedly self-interest prevailed and the other teams turned down what is an eminently sensible suggestion.

Meanwhile Mr. Stephenson seems to think that abolishing promotion and relegation will somehow improve Super League. Well, I have news for Mr. S., abolishing relegation will cause Super League to stagnate because without it you can bet your bottom dollar the same old faces will be propping up the league year after year. After all there's nothing quite like the fear of the drop for concentrating minds; just look at the performances of London Broncos in the last few weeks (and, come to that, of Castleford last week). With nothing to play for can you imagine how exciting Salford v. Castleford would be at the end of a long, hard season?

And the obverse of Mr. Stephenson's idea is to condemn every club in the National

Leagues to perpetual second best status.

Where's the incentive in that? In fact under the Stephenson format every National League chairman might as well pack up and go home. If you can't progress up the ladder what's the point? Would the likes of Leigh, Whitehaven or Oldham put the incredible effort they do if there was no hope of progression? It's all so typical of the attitude of the privileged and cosseted: I only watch Super League so sod the rest of you! And that from a son of Dewsbury! Clearly one who's forgotten his roots.

It didn't take long for my comment about head tackling in the last programme about the dismissal -or not- of offenders to become pertinent. One week in fact. If you went to Rochdale you'll know exactly what I mean. Strange isn't it that Oldham's two most dangerous players on the day, Martin McLoughlin and Lee Marsh, didn't complete the match because of head injuries?

The news of the return to Oldham of David Gibbons (and, hopefully, of twin brother Anthony next season) is just the sort of tonic Oldham fans need. I, for one will be thrilled at their return as I rate the pair among the very best to have represented the new Oldham club. Great players, great attitude, great clubmen. What more can you say?



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FROM THE PEN OF

MICHAEL TURNER

Roughyeds v Keighley

Photo 1. Current player coach Steve Molloy looks to off load to Anthony Gibbons. Action from the encounter at Cougar Park on June 2nd 2002. Oldham won an exciting match 34 - 32 thanks to five goals from Gareth Barber and tries from Mark Sibson (2), Keith Brennan (2), Lee Doran and Paul Norton. The attendance was 1,188.



Picture 1

Photo 2. It's prop power again as Charlie Bott scores the only try of the game at Lawkholme Lane in the Challenge Cup first round tie on February 8th 1964. Frank Dyson added four goals as the Roughyeds ran out winners 11 - 4. The attendance was 6,000.



Picture 2

Also can I urge all Rugby League supporters, especially Roughyeds fans, to go along to "Gallery Oldham" over the next few weeks to take a look at the "Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust" exhibition. On display is the finest collection of Rugby League memorabilia ever assembled.

In The News

Well only one more certain home game, but all of us are hoping we can secure a home tie in the play offs. There is no doubt in my mind that the squad are at their strongest now compared with any other time in the season. Talking to the players there seems to be a great spirit in the camp and there is no doubt that the arrival of David Gibbons can do nothing but make an already strong situation even stronger.

I was looking at my League predictions at the start of the season and overall I am quite pleased at it's accuracy. Certainly Featherstone and Doncaster have done better than I expected and Hull KR and Halifax have done much worse. The dark horses are certainly Rochdale Hornets who if they continue this present revival in a majority of home games could sneak into the play-offs. But as we have said all season it just couldn't be closer and the tightness of games has led to some superb rugby league. What a pity that so few people are actually watching it.

With that in mind it is great news that the BBC are to screen "Rugby League Raw" again during the play offs and Sky are to televise the Finals again. Hopefully this can show "ex-fans" just how good the product outside of Super League really is and encourage these people to return to the terraces.

Thanks to all those who have already sponsored our Chairman, Chris Hamilton on his sponsored run with referee Michael Dawber for BREAKTHROUGH BREAST CANCER. He is already starting to lose the pounds, or so he tells me, as his strict training and dietary regime continues. For those of you yet to contribute, sponsorship forms are available at the Club shop, the Oldham Chronicle and the Oldham Advertiser offices

Whitehaven RLFC are putting on an Entertainment / Quiz evening on the Saturday night before the game next week for any Oldham fans staying over

for the weekend. 7.30 onwards at the Social Club in the ground.

The Academy

Well I set off writing this as if it was the end of the season for the academy lads, but after a call from Steve it seems that after the tremendous 56 to 6 win over Keighley last Saturday that we have made the play offs, as of writing this I am unsure of the opponents but who ever it is if we can keep on playing with the determination and fight we have shown in our last few outings then who knows.

I must say the lads have been steadily improving over the season and showing great enthusiasm and team spirit. The fact that in the last 2 games we have only let in 2 tries in 160 minutes of rugby is no mean achievement in the modern game.

I would personally like to thank all the lads who have put on the shirt this season for Oldham, even the lads who have now gone back to their amateur clubs, and I wish them all of the best for the up and coming season.

I hope this is not the last message from the academy and we can excel ourselves in the play offs, but if it is then a huge thank you for your support at the academy games from both myself and all the team, if its not then please get behind us in the semi's.

Yours in rugby, Mick

STOP PRESS! By the time you read this we will have played the first play off game last Thursday against Salford City Reds away from home. It is hoped that David Gibbons could mark his return to Oldham by playing in this game. Just to show you how tight it was to get into the play offs I have included the final table below, as you can see we scraped in as we had a 5 points better points difference.



	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Diff.	Pts
Leigh	14	13	1	0	415	27
Huddersfield	14	10	1	3	278	21
Salford	14	10	0	4	126	20
Featherstone	14	7	0	7	56	14
Doncaster	14	5	0	9	-161	10
OLDHAM	14	3	1	10	-218	7
Doncaster	14	3	1	10	-223	7
Keighley	14	3	0	11	-273	6

TEXT YOUR MAN OF THE MATCH

Oldham RLFC is the first club in the National Leagues to set up a text messaging service for fans.

Fans can vote for their **MAN OF THE MATCH** and **WIN**
A **VIP DAY OUT AT THEIR CLUB & £50 CASH.**

Just TEXT mom (space) oldham (space) and the player's number to 89303

E.G. mom oldham 9 (For Oldham fans)
or mom keighley 7 (For Keighley fans)

You can vote up to midnight on the day of the game and the winner will be announced on the following Wednesday. (Winner chosen at random by computer from all entrants who chose most popular player)

The service will be used on an ongoing basis for further competitions and debates. Oldham RLFC will benefit financially from every text. Text costs £1.50 each.

STATISTICS

Player stats for season 2004



Player	Appearances (Including Subs) [Max. 27] (inc Law Cup)	Tries	Drop Goals	Goals	Total Points
Jon Goddard	26	10	-	-	40
Will Cowell	18	8	-	-	32
Iain Marsh	15	10	-	-	40
Gareth Barber	24	6	-	18	60
Nick Johnson	27	23	-	-	92
Simon Svabic	20	2	-	25	58
Ian Watson	25	6	6	2	33
Paul Southern	19	2	-	-	8
John Hough	11	-	-	-	0
Dane Morgan	26	8	-	-	32
Lee Doran	27	3	-	-	12
Martin Elswood	19	2	-	-	4
Craig Farrimond	5	1	-	-	4
Gavin Dodd	23	11	-	-	44
Gavin Johnson	7	-	-	-	0
Adam Sharples	7	-	-	-	0
Neil Roden	18	15	-	-	60
Martin McLoughlin	26	-	-	-	0
Steve Molloy	18	-	-	-	0
Lee Marsh	23	14	-	15	86
Keith Brennan	23	5	2	-	24
James Bunyan	14	7	-	-	28
James Lomax	2	-	-	-	0
Pat Rich	14	2	-	49	110
Phil Farrell	14	4	-	-	16
Danny Nanyin	1	-	-	-	0
Adam Clayton	1	-	-	-	0
Chris Brett	1	-	-	-	0
Jon Roper	4	-	-	10	20

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Unrivalled coverage of Oldham Rugby League spanning 3 centuries!

Joe Ferguson

1899 to 1923

Arguably the greatest ever Oldham player, Joe made a record 627 appearances for the club. But for the First World War his appearances may have crept up to 700, a fantastic record



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



Across the decades, the Chronicle has kept its readers on the ball with match reports, news and views from Oldham Rugby League Club — the Chronicle's reporters and photographers have been there for every game.

From the club's first game in 1895 to its most successful post-war season in 1956-57 to the present Oldham Roughyeds, the Chronicle has been on the touchline!

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WALKERBOUT

With Brian Walker

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The Roughyeds
The Story 1876-2004
21 August - 18 September 2004

This exhibition celebrates the history of Oldham's rugby team, nicknamed the Roughyeds, and includes memorabilia from throughout the team's history.

The fascinating and unique collection on show was created by the Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust, and is recognised as one of the best club rugby collections of important memorabilia in the world.

The trust was formed in 1995 by a group of dedicated supporters who wanted to celebrate and preserve the history of the Roughyeds. The collection was put together through purchases made by the trust and the generosity of the many people who have donated or lent material.

Johnny Noon is stopped by Wakefield's Neil Fox, c.1960



galleryoldham
May - November 04



TODAY'S OPPONENTS KEIGHLEY COUGARS

JAMES RUSHFORTH

First team captain, leads by example, scores plenty of tries from the full back berth.

KARL SMITH

Local boy, product of Keighley Cougar Cubs, strong vocal winger/centre.

MAX THOMLINSON

Exciting winger, scorer of some spectacular tries for the Cougars. Very strong.

MATTI FIRTH

Former Halifax Blue Sox scrum half 8 Super League appearances, the organiser behind the Cougar pack. Superb tactical kicker.

PHIL STEVENSON

Longest serving Cougar player. Cornerstone of the Cougars pack, strong go forward player with good footwork for his size.

SIMEON HOYLE

Fast elusive hooker, BARLA International, best No9 outside Super League on his day.

DAVE FOSTER

Former Blue Sox back row/centre. Very strong player, big hit tackler, tireless work-rate.

MATTHEW STEEL

19 year old local boy, last years Academy skipper, very exciting prospect, established himself in the Cougars second row this season.

ADAM MITCHELL

Very versatile footballer, can play anywhere in the back division, made No 6 jersey his own this season, excellent goal kicker, superb attitude.

ANDY ROBINSON

Signed from Dewsbury Moor ARLC represented Great Britain at open age, scored winning try in Cougars Grand Final success last season - very powerful winger/centre.

STUART CALVERT

Very promising youngster came through the Cougars junior ranks. Dogged with injury last season, hopes to establish himself in the first team this season.

LEE PATTERSON

Very versatile footballer, can play back row-stand off-centre. Former Sheffield Player.

DANNY EKIS

Prop - 21 year old former Halifax Academy star. Very explosive front rower, fast becoming a favourite with Cougar supporters.

MATT FOSTER

Matty is back in his second spell with the Cougars. He played throughout the Cougarmania period. Very experienced, top try scorer last season.

RICHARD MERVILL

Big powerful front rower. Former Halifax Blue Sox Academy & Under 21's player, superb start to this season.

CHRIS BEEVER

Former Huddersfield Giants and York City Knights. Full Back / Winger. Very fast and elusive player. Deceptively strong.

CRAIG MCDOWELL

Former Bradford Bulls Academy. Big strong Cumbrian loose forward. Excellent ball skills.

JASON CLEGG

Giant front row forward, signed from Oldham. Already a firm favourite with Cougar fans.

CHRIS PARKER

Former Bradford Bulls, Keighley born. Back row forward, tireless work rate.

CRAIG NIPPERESS

Former Newcastle Knights half-back. A very strong skillful player. Can cover 6, 7 or 9.

CHRIS WAINWRIGHT

Former Cougar academy utility player, has ability to play anywhere, tough uncompromising professional.

CHRIS ROE

Local youngster, 19 year old from rower. Senior Academy skipper, played several first team games this season.

EDDIE WILSON

19 year old back row forward, signed from Leeds Rhinos, very exciting prospect.

ADAM WEBSTER

19 year old fullback, made try scoring first team debut this season.

JAMIE FIELDEN

6' 5" 20 stone front rower, signed from Doncaster. Giant forward with good handling skills for a big man.

DANNY MURGATROYD

6ft, 16 stone Prop / second row, 23 years old. Signed from Clayton ARLFC after impressive trial games for the Under 21 Senior Academy.

MATTHEW BRAMALD

Former Featherstone player, signed from Batley, very experienced with many tries to his name. Wing / fullback.



PLAYER PROFILE

MARTIN McLOUGHLIN

MARTIN McLoughlin -- Macca to his friends and team mates at Oldham -- is a forward in form . . . and that's a huge plus for the Roughyeds as they bid to consolidate their place in the upper reaches of the LHF Healthplan National League first division.

The 24-year-old former Wigan and Barrow forward is reaching his season's peak at the very time Steve Molloy's men are pushing for a third-place finish in the league under intense opposition from Doncaster, Featherstone Rovers and Hull KR.

It's been an eventful few weeks, too, for Macca, who is emerging as one of the most promising young front-row forwards in the National League.

He had a relatively quiet first four months of the season, but it was to prove the lull before the storm. In 13 of the first 16 games of the 2004 campaign he was used as a substitute, coming off the bench to give Molloy, Paul Southern or Dane Morgan a breather.

It all began to change in the Arriva Trains Cup qualifier at Doncaster on April 25 when Macca was sent off by referee Steve Nicholson in the 27th minute of a fiercely-fought contest in almost unbearable heat.

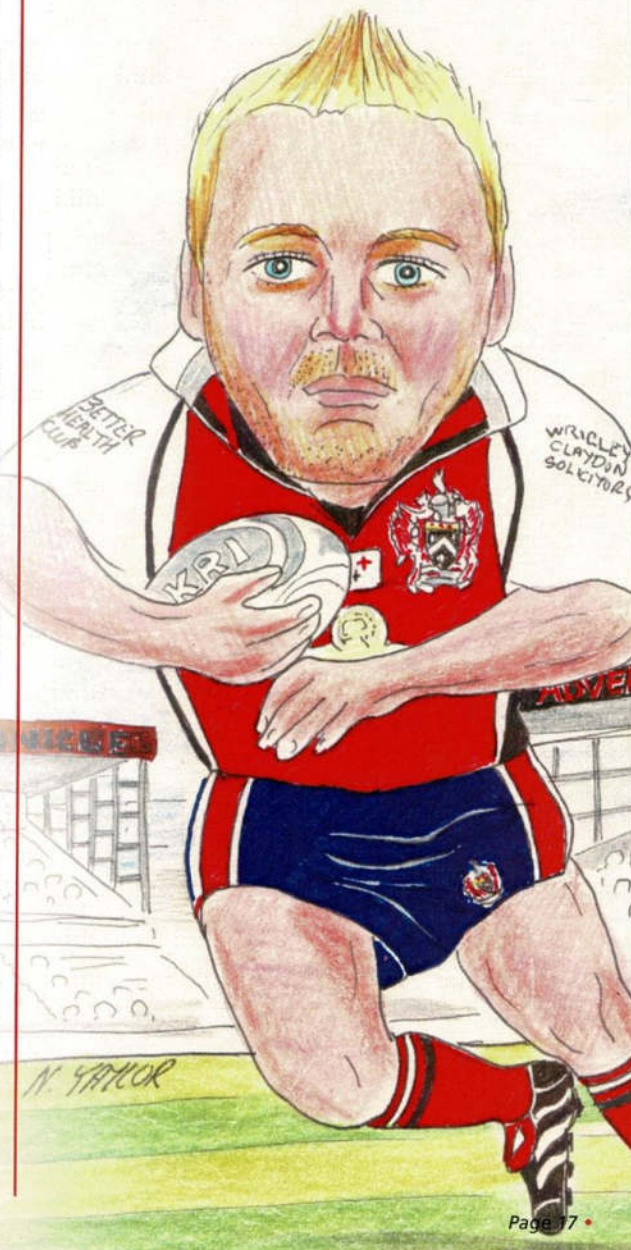
He was alleged to have gone in high when tackling a Dragons forward, but player and Oldham club contested claims that it was malicious or deliberate and the judiciary upheld their view that, while the challenge was higher than it ought to have been, it was not intended to cause damage.

McLoughlin was found guilty with a sending-off-sufficient verdict, whereupon he won a starting spot for the next few games while Southern recovered from a broken bone in a hand and a recurrence of a long-standing groin injury.

Macca, who had spent much of the season up to then somewhat in the shadow of his more senior props Molloy and Southern, not to mention Dane Morgan (who had hopped between front and second rows), was gradually beginning to make his mark.

He had a great game at Blackpool against Batley when three props were absent due to injury -- Molloy, Southern and young Adam Sharples --- and when he and Morgan shouldered most of the heavy work up front.

Two games later, against Whitehaven at Chorley, the Roughyeds produced one of



MARTIN McLOUGHLIN CONT...

their best wins of the campaign with McLoughlin and Morgan in the front-row, although Molloy did return to action from the bench after missing two games with a neck injury.

It was to be the player-coach's first and last appearance for several weeks. He damaged a shoulder in training on the Friday night before the next match at Doncaster and with fitness doubts continuing to haunt Molloy and Southern, it was Macca's big chance to establish himself higher up the prop pecking order.

He has been first choice No 10 in the last three games against Hull KR, Rochdale and Batley and on each occasion he has impressed as a man who is starting to hit his best form at the right time as the business end of the season kicks in.

He was devastating at times in the shock defeat at Rochdale where he suffered a badly cut eye in the second half while in the act of setting up a try for Neil Roden with a terrific drive and a clever offload to the man in support.

As Roden, his old school chum, strode away to dive over the line for a try that put Oldham back in front in a derby thriller, McLoughlin was hurt in a three-man tackle and had to leave the field, never to return.

The incident was placed on report and, as a consequence, Rochdale forward Gareth Price was called to the RL disciplinary committee to answer a charge that he committed an offence in the tackle.

McLoughlin needed several stitches, but he was able to play the following week at Batley, with the

wound protected, and he had another powerful game in a splendid Oldham win, 34-18.

Macca is enjoying his rugby right now, not that he has ever been anything but happy at Oldham. "It's great here," he said the other night after training. "And on a personal note I think my form is following a similar pattern to last year when I started to come good towards the end of the regular season."

"I've had a lot more starts in recent weeks and that has not only increased my confidence, but it has given me more game time and, in turn, that has helped my general match fitness."

A Wiganer, Macca signed for the Warriors as a youngster but eventually moved to Barrow when the men from Craven Park were being coached by New Zealander Cameron Bell.

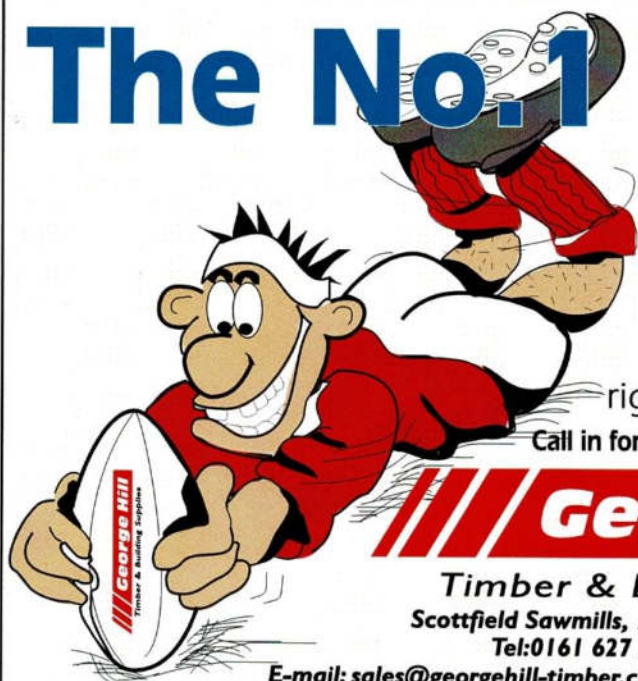
Cameron's son Dean - the former Wigan and New Zealand Test centre --- knew all about Martin from his days in charge of the youngsters at Wigan and when he recommended the young front-rower to his father it was just the tip Barrow needed to pursue their interest.

McLoughlin eventually moved to Barrow where Bell snr. used him mainly in the second-row as a wide running forward. He had one excellent season with the blue and whites before cash problems hit the Shipbuilders and many of the players moved on.

Macca was recommended to Oldham by Neil Roden's father Jack, a senior scout for the Wigan club, and the rest, as they say, is history.



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Hi KIDS

Not much happening on the Juniors front at the moment as most of you are going or have been away on your hols. However even though the regular season is drawing to a close we will still be keeping in touch with you via letters or phone calls so don't worry about missing any of the events we have planned.

Carole and I would like to take this chance to mention all of our "Kids" who were mascots at away games. Unfortunately we don't have enough space to show your photographs but a great big thank you to Michael Tibbs, Steven Gibson, Jessica Bowers, Callum Cameron, Alfie Baldwin, Joshua Molloy and Reece Halstead for doing a great job representing ORLFC. Thanks also to your mums and dads for making what for some of you were long and tiring journeys.

Today's mascot is 7 year old Charlotte Trelfa, who as well as being a big Roughyeds fan enjoys reading and swimming. Charlotte did go to Bare Trees Primary School but has moved house during the holidays and may well be having a change in September.

Enjoy your day Charlotte and don't forget Carole and myself will be borrowing your make-up.

Thanks once again to our sponsors Saddleworth Sports, FR Elsworth Ltd, The Oldham Advertiser, Cartridge World Oldham, Warburtons Bakery, ASDA Chadderton & A1 Upholstery.

TODAYS MASCOT

Charlotte Trelfa

Age: 7

School: Previously at Bare Trees Primary School

Enjoys: Reading and Swimming

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A **BIG thank you** to all who supported our recent Barbecue. The event does involve a lot of time and hard work, but it is rewarding to have the positive feedback that we have received. The timing was certainly right - a good win against Hull KR and what a lovely summer's evening.

Why not come down to the Social Club for our next Quiz Night to be held on Tuesday 14 September. You will almost certainly know someone there, and will definitely enjoy a pleasant evening, in good company. Don't forget - all proceeds are to help YOUR CLUB.

96.2

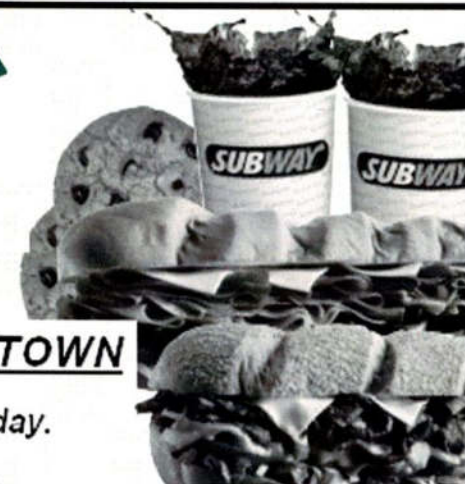
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ON THIS DAY

DON YATES LOOKS BACK TO AUGUST 22ND YESTERYEAR

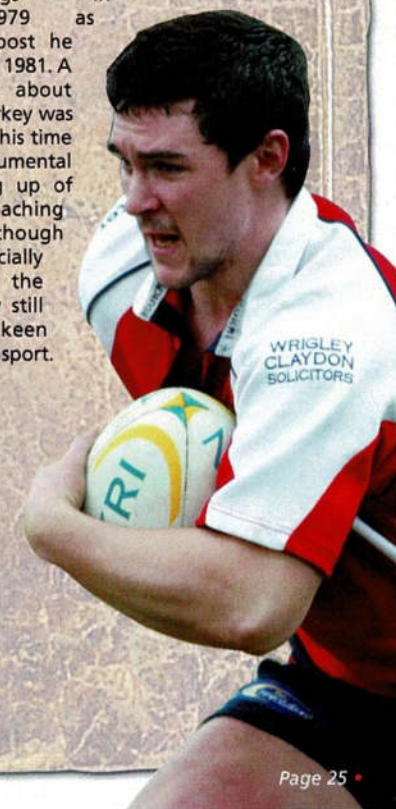
Although today's visitors to Boundary Park, Keighley, lie at the foot of the First Division table, they will provide dangerous opposition and are fully capable of springing a surprise. Five years ago, on Sunday 22nd August 1999, Keighley were hovering in mid-table when they entertained top-of-the-table Leigh. The visitors were expected to continue their winning ways but Keighley produced a superb performance and knocked Leigh off top spot with a memorable 29-14 victory. The former Oldham player Pat Rich was at loose-forward for the Cougars and played his part in the win. He scored a try and two goals. Winger Jason Lee (2), prop Steve Campbell and second-rower Phil Stephenson also scored tries with stand-off Christian Tyrer adding two goals and a dropped goal.

Oldham were reigning League Champions when they visited Barrow on Thursday 22nd August 1957. The Furness club also had a capable outfit in those days but they were no match for the Roughyeds who won 27-10 at Craven Park. Loose-forward Derek Turner (2), centre Dennis Ayres, prop Ken Jackson and winger Dick Cracknell scored tries with full-back Bernard Ganley adding six goals.

Two years later, on Saturday 22nd August 1959, Barrow met Keighley at Lawkholme Lane where the Cougars won 23-17. Winger Terry Hollindrake scored a try and two goals for Keighley in that victory. He is one of only two Keighley players who have played test match rugby whilst at Keighley, the other being Daryl Powell. Hollindrake is a local lad who joined the club from Keighley Albion. Equally at home whether at full-back, wing or centre, Hollindrake was a popular figure at Lawkholme Lane. He was an accurate goal kicker and prolific try scorer who enjoyed two spells with the club. He joined Keighley initially in December 1951 and was transferred to Hull nine years later. He then moved on to Bramley and had a spell back in local junior rugby before rejoining Keighley in October 1969 for another couple of years. During his two spells with the club Hollindrake made 249 appearances and scored 113 tries and 330 goals.

The 22nd August is a significant date in the career of Graham Starkey. It was on that date in 1964, Saturday 22nd August, that Starkey made his senior rugby league debut when he was centre in

the Rochdale Hornets team which defeated Salford 10-4 on the old Athletic grounds. He had joined Hornets from Old Rochdaliens RUFC the previous month. Starkey enjoyed five successful seasons with Rochdale, scoring 43 tries and 333 goals from 144 appearances. During his final two seasons at Rochdale, Starkey was player-coach and he continued in that capacity at Huddersfield after he joined them in 1969. In June 1970 Starkey returned to this side of the Pennines when he joined Oldham, again as player-coach. The fee was £2,000 and Starkey made his debut for Oldham on Saturday 22nd August 1970. It was not too successful a start for Starkey as Oldham lost 24-11 at York that afternoon. He landed four goals on his debut with diminutive scrum-half Ged Smith scoring the Oldham try. During his three years with the Roughyeds he made 14 appearances and scored five tries and 16 goals. Starkey left Oldham in June 1973 when he joined Wigan as coach but he returned to Watersheddings in January 1979 as manager, a post he held until May 1981. A deep thinker about the game, Starkey was well ahead of his time and was instrumental in the setting up of National Coaching Schemes. Although no longer officially involved in the game, Starkey still takes a keen interest in the sport.



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LEAGUE WEEKLY

Danny Lockwood, publisher

IT'S a funny old world. A Super League player can decapitate an opponent with a Samurai sword and the ref austere crosses his arms and puts it on report. This while paramedics try to gather up the rolling head and shove it in a bag of ice – yes, I think we could perhaps have definitely called that a high shot, ref! You know, of the 'red card' variety? Meanwhile the Batley Bulldog mascot, Battler, does a bit of hand-jiving behind Colin Morris's back – he thinks – and Group 4 is called in, complete with Armalite rifles, to march him off the premises. Let that be lesson number one young master Bulldog – Colin Morris really does have eyes in the back of his head.

This year more than any I can recall, our referees have been taking more stick from more and more angles. And no, not just losing coaches looking for a scapegoat, or fans who would swear on a stack of Bibles that so-and-so has got it in for their team. With respect, so-and-so never knocked on, threw a forward pass or missed a tackle. Crucial decisions or not, few matches are ultimately decided by the ability of the man in the middle. Moments are decided, not matches. And it's often how a team responds to those moments that is the measure of its champion potential. That does not detract from the fair criticism that is levelled at referees, because despite what I have just said, a ref having a particularly bad game can and does influence the outcome. Just as importantly, he can influence people's enjoyment of the spectacle – and it's the paying punters we have to look after. Watching professional sport is not cheap, at whatever level. The fans deserve the best we can give them. Don't let's feed their frustration and give them a reason to believe it's not worth their while.

I know Stuart Cummings and his department put more effort than ever before into developing referees across the entire spectrum of the sport. My observation would be that their good work is not yielding its fruits fast enough to keep up with the demands of fans, coaches and the ubiquitous lens of the camera. We're developing young refs specifically because they need to be very fit to keep with the pace of the game, but the result is often that they haven't accumulated the rugby experience to match. I feel some are even a bit starstruck out there. Very few, outside the top four or five, command natural respect from the players. In the National Leagues 1 and 2, where there is more devilry from the players and not necessarily the professional self-discipline of Super League, the situation is exacerbated – and they also get the more junior officials.

So what to do? How about more players as referees? Instead of developing just coaching career paths while they are still turning out, why not give active professionals the same opportunity with refereeing skills? Retiring from playing in their early 30s should give them a good 10 years or more at the top as a ref. I would also like to see the top referees go full-time professional, and in turn pump their increased expertise back into a refereeing Academy. If we want to do our fantastic sport justice, then we cannot afford to neglect this most crucial element of it.

And as for Battler the Bulldog? Well I hope he gets sending off sufficient ... and that someone persuades Mr Morris to lighten up a bit. A word in the mascot's ear should have sufficed.



Walkies ... Battler gets the boot

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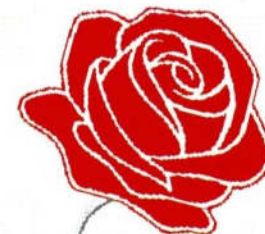
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NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



SEVENS HEAVEN?

CRICKET has enjoyed remarkable success with the "20/20" scaled down version of their sport - could Rugby League adopt something similar to help take our game to a wider audience?

For those who haven't seen "20/20", it is basically a shorter version of a usual game of cricket, played over 20 overs. But the sport hasn't just amended the game itself to tailor for new, and crucially younger, supporters.

They have also introduced a string of new innovations to make their game more watchable. And I'm not referring to the coloured kits and music over the tannoy.

One example is that players in the fielding team - usually including the captain - play the game with a microphone that connects them to the television commentary team. As a result, they can be asked what happened when they take a brilliant catch - just seconds after the incident.

The move has been hugely successful, with the semi-finals and final being played in front of a capacity crowd at Edgbaston recently.

So could Rugby League take a leaf out of their books?

The crucial thing to remember here is that cricket is not attempting to change its own game - it is merely providing an easily understandable and watchable product that gets new people interested in their sport.

The ideal model for League could be Sevens - an all action, non-stop version of our game that, with innovations similar to those in cricket's "20/20", could be a huge success.

Why couldn't a player, for example, be interviewed briefly on the pitch as he returns to his own half after scoring a try? We saw something approaching that in International games of recent years, when cameras went onto the pitch and followed players taking up their positions for kick-offs.

It would allow those watching to be able to instantly relate to the players on the field - as well as providing an insight into the game.

But already there is a major stumbling block - isn't there always with League? - in that the Australian clubs appear to have thrown a major spanner in the works by effectively killing off the recently relaunched World Sevens.

The 15 NRL club bosses rebelled against the Sevens at their meeting in Sydney last week, turning their backs on the public, who had enthusiastically embraced the concept.

The fans particularly warmed to players from the fledgling nations such as Russia, Samoa and Tonga, and the competition has been a significant factor in helping to foster the game in several developing nations.

The clubs do not want the tournament because the cost of paying their players, however, and the risk of injury on the eve of a new season.

There is already talk of switching the competition to another country - maybe even this one - and surely this is too good an opportunity to pass up.

A full report of today's game will appear in the 'Rugby Leaguer & League Express' on Monday.

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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	ATT
01/02/04	Chorley Lynx	AT Cup	Home	15.00	64-14	W	1096
06/02/04	Castleford Panthers	Powergen CC	Home	19.30	16-8	W	1003
15/02/04	Leigh Centurions	AT Cup	Away	15.00	51-32	L	2316
22/02/04	Swinton Lions	AT Cup	Away	15.00	18-30	W	783
29/02/04	Sharlston Rovers	Powergen CC	Home	19.45	24-4	W	1301
07/03/04	Leigh Centurions	AT Cup	Home	15.00	10-54	L	1805
14/03/04	Warrington Wolves	Powergen CC	Home	15.00	10-44	L	2859
21/03/04	Chorley Lynx	AT Cup	Away	15.00	10-40	W	370
28/03/04	Powergen CC	Powergen CC					
28/03/04	Rochdale Hornets	AT Cup	Home	18.00	56-12	W	1214
04/04/04	Swinton Lions	AT Cup	Home	15.00	42-15	W	983
09/04/04	Rochdale Hornets	AT Cup	Away	15.00	12-48	W	1305
12/04/04	Featherstone Rovers	NL 1	Home	15.00	50-24	W	1320
18/04/04	Powergen CC	Powergen CC					
18/04/04	Halifax	NL1	Away	15.00	6-25	W	1807
25/04/04	Powergen CC	Powergen CC					
25/04/04	Doncaster	AT Cup	Away	15.00	32-28	L	835
02/05/04	Leigh Centurions	NL 1	Home	15.00	20-60	L	2104
09/05/04	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	Away	15.00	29-22	L	2121
15/05/04	Powergen CC Final	Powergen CC					
23/05/04	Rochdale Hornets	NL 1	Home	15.00	26-24	W	1243
30/05/04	Batley Bulldogs	NL 1	Home	15.00	20-44	L	1541
06/06/04	AT Cup Quarter Finals	AT Cup					
13/06/04	Keighley Cougars	NL1	Away	15.00	28-33	W	1153
20/06/04	Whitehaven	NL 1	Home	15.00	31-24	W	751
27/06/04	AT Cup Semi Finals	AT Cup					
04/07/04	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00	31-30	L	996
11/07/04	Halifax	NL 1	Home	15.00	24-14	W	850
18/07/04	At Cup Final	AT Cup					
25/07/04	Leigh Centurions	NL1	Away	15.00	36-12	L	1841
01/08/04	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL 1	Home	15.00	29-24	W	1393
08/08/04	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00	30-24	L	1403
15/08/04	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Away	15.00	18-34	W	886
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

Oldham RLFC fully support the Let's tackle Racism in Rugby League campaign and welcomes all players and spectators irrespective of their ethnic or racial origins. Racism has no place in our game and racist chants are totally unacceptable.

Allow everyone to enjoy the game.

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