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THE ROUGHYEDS

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Player Profile

DANA WILSON

Finding his form with Oldham- Page 17

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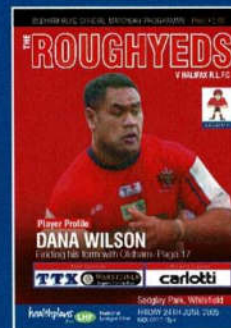
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We would like to express our thanks to the Oldham
Evening Chronicle, League Publications Ltd,
Phil Burdge and all concerned for the use of
photographs.

24th **JUNE** 2005

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Club Records - 1998-2004

Trans-Penine Cup
Finalists - 1998

Northern Ford Premiership
Club of the Year - 2000
Grand Finalists - 2001

MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, 189 - Jan 1998 - September 2004

CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farrel, 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: Nick Johnson, 25 - 2004

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. Judes, 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

James Bunyan v Featherstone Rovers, 4 - Apr 12th 2004 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, 70-0 - Apr 1st 2001

at Huntington Stadium

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

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The Chairman's Thoughts

with CHRIS HAMILTON

Let me firstly say how pleased I am to be writing this column given that had things not been agreed with the Revenue last week there would have been no club this week.

The last few weeks have been a roller coaster of emotions and entailed plenty of anxious moments before we finally got the nod from the Revenue late last Tuesday.

There is a lot of hard work to be done over the coming months and nobody knows that more than me but at least we now have the opportunity to show the Crown that we can repay the money owing to them.

We do need however, every one of you to help us to achieve our goal and every bit you do will be gratefully received and will make life that little bit easier.

I hope that more of you will be watching tonight's game than attended our last fixture here at Sedgely Park against Rochdale. I have no doubt in my mind that lots of people gave that game a miss because they thought that we would be on the end of a good hiding but lo and behold the game showed what we knew all along in that the only predictable thing about sport is its unpredictability!

We effectively won that game twice and I thought that the character shown by the side that afternoon was tremendous and we then kicked on from that up at Barrow.

Hopefully the lads will gain confidence from those games and take it into tonight against

tough opposition again in Halifax, who themselves have had more than a little financial trouble in the recent past.

Before the start of the season I would have tipped them to be right up there at the top of the division with the signings they had made and although they have struggled to find the consistency they would have liked they are still handily placed to mount a serious challenge for honours.

From our perspective a win tonight and other results going with form this weekend would see us in a Play Off position - what a different outlook that would give to a couple of weeks ago when it all seemed doom and gloom!

The squad has worked hard to turn things around and hopefully having done that the challenge is there for them to do even better as they are more than capable of.

Lets hope a night game produces one of the usual great atmospheres and an Oldham win.

Enjoy the game

Chris Hamilton

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Q&A

WITH GARY MERCER

Shandy asked:

Will you give Chris Hough and Marty Turner a few more games together?

Gary replied:

I believe a consistent half back pairing who are working well together is a bonus to any team. If you can keep the pair together without injury and their form is consistent, this is every coach's dream. Also it is only fair to give any pairing time to gel if you think they can hit it off together. So, yes, all things being equal I would like to see them together for a few games, however all things rarely are equal in this game and the chances are Chris will not be fit for tonight's game. Can I also add that we must not condemn previous pairings? They were playing behind a defeated pack. At Barrow Chris and Marty had the massive advantage for a halfback pairing of playing behind a dominating pack of forwards.

Old Man asked:

Was it a definite change of policy or just a one off to not make a substitution in the first half at Barrow?

Gary replied:

I am not one of those coaches who believe that after 20 minutes we should, whatever happens, start the interchange process. If it was possible and the team were coping I would be happy to keep my first 13 on the field all the time. In the modern game however this is almost impossibility. The big men get through a tremendous amount of graft and few are capable of 80 minutes giving their all. Also if you have confidence in your bench you can ask your starting 13 to give that little bit extra in the sure knowledge you have an equally effective player who can come on fresh. At Barrow in the first half we had so dominated the game and our completion rate was so good that the big boys hadn't had to do the defensive work they had in previous games and were able to stay on the park for longer. As a coach I hope this is the case in all our future games.



From The Touchline

with Gary Mercer

I am pleased to welcome my old club to Sedgley Park

this evening.

Anthony Farrell and Paul Dixon (both of whom I've played alongside) are coaches I have the upmost respect for. Like us, Halifax have had a mixed start and are looking to get a push under their belts in order to climb up the league to a position that they feel they are worthy of.

This will be our second of three home games at Sedgley Park and the lads enjoy playing there. Let's hope we can repeat the success we had there against the Hornets. There is no doubt our last two victories have been enjoyed by the lads and I think it will have done a lot for their confidence. I am noticing that the team are starting to gel and believe in themselves and this can only be a good thing. All we can ask for tonight is a strong, controlled, consistent performance from 1 to 17 and we will reap the rewards once again.

In the first 35 minutes in the last match at Barrow we managed to consistently keep to the game plan and the results followed. As soon as we go away from the things we do best it disrupts our team structure and that is just what happened in the last 5 minutes of the first half at Barrow and we leaked two tries. We must, however also credit Barrow who, after some strong words in the dressing room I expect, came out in the second half and played catch up rugby well but I felt we were always in control of the match.

Individually I know our pack got the plaudits but I also thought our centres and wingers were exceptional and it is a great pity Damian has picked up a serious hand injury as he has been in good form of late. What makes me so proud is that the lads have worked hard and it was good to see an Oldham forward pack taking control because then the half backs can start to play their football and the three-quarters can finish off with quality tries, which is just what happened.

Please get behind the lads again this evening and let's hope we can keep the momentum going.

Gary



Gavin Dodd

Rochdale

05/06/05

Game time **73 mins**
Carries **15**
Metres gained **120**
Average metre gain **9.2**



Ricky Bibey

Barrow

12/06/05

Game time **80 mins**
Tackles **19**
Misses **2**
Hit Ups **17**
Metres gained **86**
Average metre gain **5.1**



Dana Wilson

Barrow

12/06/05

Game time **62 mins**
Tackles **22**
Misses **2**
Hit ups **12**
Metres gained **84**
Average metre gain **5.1**

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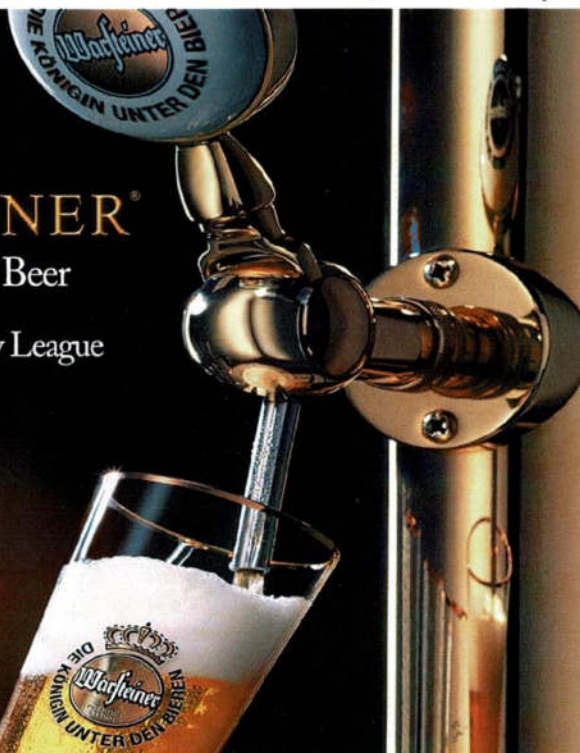
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My response was that there wasn't anything positive to say, and that mere repetition of the current state of affairs, both on and off the field, was a pretty pointless exercise. So it is great now to give brief consideration to the more positive developments of recent weeks.

In playing terms, after the huge low of the humiliation against Whitehaven, and the disappointment of the defeat to what I thought was a poor Batley side, how marvellous it was to watch the eventual outcome of the roller-coaster affair against Rochdale and then the first half-hour in particular at Barrow. In neither case could you say that we played to our potential for the full 80 minutes, so that there is still clearly a long way to go. But the picking up of the four league points, and even more the fact that this resulted at last in some smiles on the faces of the players - not to mention the long-suffering loyal supporters - can surely give a genuine prospect of more progress in the weeks ahead. Confidence is so important in professional sport, and such a delicate flower, and to see it begin to blossom is perhaps the most important gain from the two wins. The contributions made by some of the youngsters seem to have had positive effects too on the performances of some of the more experienced players, which is often the sign of a club on the upward path. Team spirit is best shown by defensive commitment, of course, so that the concession of 'only' low 20's in the past three games, from an average of a horrendous 36.5 in all games before that, is also a good sign. This is not to say that we aren't still conceding some soft

As Ian Sees It!

I have not referred much to Oldham RLFC in recent programme jottings, much to the disgust of my greatest critic - my wife!



tries, of course! But, overall, we seem to have something to look forward to, at last.

Turning to off-field issues, it is of course fantastic that we still exist - and very hearty congratulations, and indeed thanks, are due to all involved in bringing about that achievement from the position we were in.

It is, though, merely a stay of execution, unless there are dramatic changes at the club, it seems to me. I have no knowledge of the detailed history behind the problems, but I would have thought that solutions, if there are to be any, must be predicated on careful analysis of the present and the recent past. Two obvious initial questions: how did the debts arise, and why were they allowed to accumulate to the extent that they were? The issue is clearly one of cash flow, and although we all know of the horrendous problems resulting from the ground situation, there is no point in just wringing our hands about them; we need a realistic assessment of what can be achieved in the short-run, and some radical thinking for the medium-term future if we are to continue in existence. More cash inflows simply have to be generated, and this almost certainly would require more investment, in terms of both money and people. Is there potential investment out there? If so, how can it be attracted? How do the current management view it? How can everyone who wishes to be involved in another revival of the club be brought together? Begging bowls are clearly not enough. We need some 'blue skies' thinking, in my view.

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In Yer Face!

with GEOFF COOKE

The wins against Rochdale Hornets and Barrow Raiders finally kick-started Oldham's LHF Healthplan National League One season and lifted the club off the bottom of the league table.

Together with the news that the court winding-up order against the club had been lifted these results and this decision finally brought a glimmer of hope in what had been a tragically difficult time. On every front there is still much work to be done but at least the prospects going forward are brighter than they were. If we can get a Supporters Trust up and running at the public meeting in July some longer term planning can be undertaken to secure the future of the professional game in a town which, for all the trials and tribulations, remains a hotbed of rugby league.

To revert to the two victories, what I liked about the Rochdale game was that when the going got tough Oldham knew how to win. This has not always been the case in the past but the Munro interception followed by the cool manner in which the winning drop goal by Turner was managed after Svabic, the intended kicker, had been closed down showed maturity under pressure.

Similarly, at Barrow when the home side threatened a comeback, Munro's interception try early in the second half killed off their hopes. In both games Oldham had dominated for long periods and what was encouraging was that this dominance was converted into points. With the pack providing the momentum the backs were freed up to show some creativity and skill. Against

Rochdale Ian Hodson was the stand out player and against Barrow it was Dana Wilson producing his best display in Oldham colours. In both games Ricky Bibey provided go-forward and offloads while Simon Svabic provided the ball-handling skills. At the same time James Kirkland beavered away and Chris Hough proved to be a shrewd acquisition as link man.

While things have been going wrong I have been loath to criticise because no-one knows better than the players and coaching staff how demoralizing it can be. So, on the back of two wins can I pick out a couple of points? At 28-0 up against Barrow with the home side dropping off tackles regularly I did not think a kick and chase for Nick Johnson on the second tackle was the best option: it gave Barrow possession and was the catalyst for a twelve point comeback before half-time. And of James Kirkland's excellent midfield break I'd be saying to the lad 'well done BUT don't ever let me see you ignore Gavin Dodd roaring up on your inside with a clear run to the line again'. To be fair Kirkland's break was capitalised on as Oldham moved the ball quickly for Wilkinson to score, but in a tighter game you'd want the points from the break in case a better side's scrambling defence denied you on the second phase.

And so to Halifax. The Shaymen have had an in and out season, their high point the elimination of Castleford from the Challenge Cup and their low point the surrendering of a big lead at Doncaster. At their best 'Fax are a formidable side but a lot depends on Dean Lawford, arguably the best halfback in the division. It is not coincidence that their poorest performances have been while Lawford was out injured. Nevertheless, Ben Black and Pat Weisner are also quality playmakers while hooker Ben Fisher is a dangerous operator from dummy half. The clash between Ricky Sheriffe and Nick Johnson is one to whet the appetite, as is the rivalry of fullbacks Damien Gibson and Gavin Dodd. Finally watch out for David Larder a second-row thorn in the Roughyeds' side wherever he has played and a player Oldham have twice tried to sign.



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In The News

Such a lot has happened since the last programme. WE have won our last two matches and Chris and Sean have once again worked miracles and saved the club.



We must not however rest on our laurels as the hard work now begins as the payments over the next 12 months of £18000 have to be kept up as well as running the club on a day-to-day basis, which is not going to be an easy task.

It is essential that we try and improve crowds and as I mentioned the other week one of the best ways to do this is to have a winning team so let's hope our recent good run encourages people who, perhaps have not been recently, to get back into the habit.

It is also essential that people support the events being organised on behalf of Club 180 and the supporter's organisations. These will play a vital part in the club running successfully on a day-to-day basis and also clearing the debt.

The Prediction League has seen some quite dramatic changes since the last programme as you can see below. Anybody who has not filled in his or her Rounds 10 to 18 should do so immediately. The details are on the website as is the email address. For those still using snail mail they should be mailed to the club's offices on Waterloo St headed Prediction League. If you need a new form and do not have access to the Internet please phone Ashley on 0161 628 3677.

If people who filled in all rounds 1 to 18 wish to enter a new set of results for rounds 10 to 18 this is permissible. But remember all new predictions must be in by 2 July.

NM

PREDICTION LEAGUE ROUND 8

1	Nigel Marland	113	(10)
2	Brian Walker	101	(10)
3	Chris Hamilton	97	(15)
4	D Schofield	94	(15)
5=	M Ackroyd	93	(6)
5=	Ashley Baxter	93	(11)
7	T Boycott	92	(8)
8	J Davies	89	(15)
9	S McDonagh	87	(15)
10	P Gough	86	(16)
11	Paul Norman	84	(15)
12	Paul Hulbert	83	(10)
13	Michael Kivlin	79	(6)
14=	G Cheetham	78	(12)
14=	S Jackson	78	(6)
14=	D Else	78	(6)
17	S Somerville	77	(15)
18=	S Whitehead	76	(10)
18=	D King	76	(10)
20=	R Halstead	75	(8)
20=	G Cooke	75	(8)
22=	David Lord	73	(4)
22=	S Crossley	73	(6)
24	Nick Henry	71	(16)
25	D Stevens	67	(11)
26	Susan Kivlin	63	(6)
27=	John McAndrew	62	(4)
27=	Ann Marie Kivlin	62	(6)
29	S Hague	61	(12)
30	Janet & Carole	52	(2)

() last round's score.

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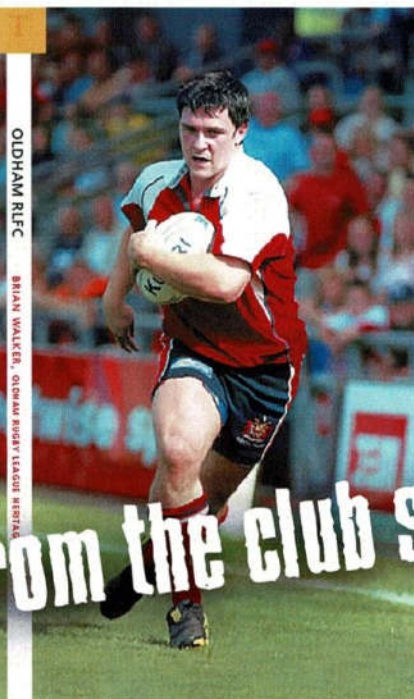
Oldham is a proud club with a great tradition. Founded in 1876 as a rugby union side, it grew swiftly and during just its third season John E. Rye became the first of many of its players to gain representative honours when he was selected for Lancashire. Oldham were the first Lancashire team to lift the Challenge Cup when Huddersfield were beaten in 1899, the beginning of a truly golden era in the history of the club. For the next thirty years it would never be far away from the honours and this period included a sensational spell during the 1920s when it appeared in four consecutive Challenge Cup finals.

The skilful side of the 1920s is still fondly remembered, the names of Davies, Cucknell, Garley, Winslade, Jackson, Little and Co. etched into the memory of those supporters who were amongst the 62,000 crowd at Oldham Stadium to watch the 'Roughyeds' beat Hull 15-14 and lift the 1957 Championship. Remarkably, the team from the old cotton town has not won a major trophy since, despite, in 1996, being a founder member of Super League and the following year playing in Australia in the World Club Championships. Unfortunately, in 1997 pressing financial problems forced the club into liquidation.

Professional rugby league was not allowed to die in the town, however, and due to the efforts of a group of enthusiasts a new Oldham club was formed and entered into the Second Division Championship of 1998.

The story continues right up to the present day. With over 200 photographs, many extremely rare and dating back to the club's formation, this book brings to life once again many of Oldham's heroes. This is a timeless record of a famous rugby league club that boasts over eighty international players, and is a must for any supporter, young or old.

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AND THE FUTURE?

Having read Roger Halstead's recent articles in the Oldham Evening Chronicle covering both Oldham's match attendances and the intentions of the RFL to cease automatic promotion to Super League as from 2009 I decided to take a look at the stats and facts from a different slant. Starting with a 30 year review of attendances split into five year blocks and because I fear 'Super League' threatens Oldham's existence for a second time, I then looked at what's gone on since 1996.

During the five seasons between 1975/76 and 1980/81 professional rugby league fought its way out of the doldrums. Aggregate league match attendances shot up by around 50% from 1,102,421 to 1,647,422. Last season (2004), despite the move to summer rugby, the razzmatazz of Super League and 30 years of marketing that's almost exactly where they remain; 1,633,120 to be precise.



During season 1975/76 Oldham's avr. league match attendance was 2,326 as against the RFL's avr of 2296 (422 games).
 1980/81 Oldham's avr. league match attendance was 3220 as against the RFL's avr of 3660 (450 games).
 1985/86 Oldham's avr. league match attendance was 4333 as against the RFL's avr of 2583 (546 games).
 1990/91 Oldham's avr. league match attendance was 5094 as against the RFL's avr of 2516 (612 games).
 1995/96 Oldham's avr. league match attendance was 3187 as against the RFL's avr of 2813 (330 games) (shortened Centenary Season)

The above figures would probably place Oldham well into the top half of any mythical league table based on attendances over the last 30 years.

The problem starts from here.

During season 1996 (the first of Super League) the average Super League gate was 6,571 (Oldham's as founder members was 3,628), the average First Division gate 2,412 and the average Second Division gate 913. Eight years on (season 2004) Super League gates had moved up to average 8,570, whilst First and Second Division league match attendances nose-dived to 1,433 and 714 respectively. The number of fans watching league matches in the two lower divisions had fallen by a massive 192,000 from 385,790 to 193,269. Why? If the figures are to be believed the obvious answer would be that they've moved their allegiance to Super League. But, we know that here in Oldham that's simply not true. Yes, some former supporters may well have (and there are those who go to both) but not in their droves. Last season Oldham's average home league gate was 1300 (the average was 1,433). Before the advent of Super League the last time the club was outside the top division was season 1992/93 commanding an average league gate of 2,818.

Simply, the majority of those 'lost' fans just don't bother turning up. Before I digested these figures I would have said the reason they didn't was most likely because of Oldham's performance on the field but I'm now convinced that the majority of those missing fans stay away because of the way that Super League is been marketed giving the impression that life outside Super League is second rate. It's having a drastic effect on the attitude of those fans of the lower division clubs accounting for the loss to the tune of almost 50% of the fan-base. Lack of marketing, publicity and obtaining of sponsorship by the RFL for those clubs in the lower divisions have had catastrophic results! Most morning papers don't even carry the results.

Since the introduction of Super League four of its original 12 clubs have either disbanded or been placed in receivership and five of the clubs from the original two lower divisions no longer exist. You can add to that York who left the league mid-season 2002 and those who have been in and out of CVA's or administration. Never in the history of the game can there been such a traumatic period.

Clubs have lost fortunes chasing promotion or avoiding relegation and its surely time for change. I think there is an element of sense in the RFL's statement on promotion/relegation to and from Super League, but, if past experience is anything to go by, the RFL don't have the ability to bring in extra cash to help assure the future of those clubs outside the top level. So, the lower league clubs have now got to take on the responsibility themselves. A totally separate go-ahead marketing group other than that promoting Super League now needs to be formed to look after our interests. We can't survive otherwise. Breaking away from the RFL needs to be avoided but not at all costs and if Red Hall won't make an increased investment in our future we should do it ourselves. The current deal with News Corporation doesn't allow clubs outside Super League to negotiate a separate deal with terrestrial television for the coverage of live matches for example. Where's the fairness in that? Things need to change fast or more of our clubs will fold. In the meanwhile the cloth will have to be cut accordingly.

I believe that life outside Super League can be vibrant. Clubs can still strive for membership of Super League if they wish. But lets take our future in our own hands. Right now.

TODAY'S OPPONENTS

Halifax R.L.F.C

Brad Attwood - Queensbury based, although a product of the prolific Ovenden Club in Halifax, Brad went on tour to Australia with the Combined English Schools side in 2001. He can play any back position with equal facility but is rapidly establishing himself as a quality full back.

Chris Birchall - Re-joined the Club in April 2004 after leaving in August 2003 to play rugby union at Glasgow Warriors. Originally signed on a season-long loan deal from Bradford Bulls in 2002, the Leeds-born prop was one of Halifax's most consistent players last season. Made 19 appearances in 2004 scoring 1 try.

Ben Black - Made an instant impact and became a big crowd favourite with 10 tries in as many appearances as he helped the Club stave off relegation. Re-signed for 2005 with the financial assistance of the Supporters Trust and will be looking for a big season next year.

Anthony Blackwood - Signed in November 2004 from Leigh Centurions. The back-rower captained the Leigh Under 21's to Grand Final victory last season, winning the man of the match in the process.

Jamie Bloem - Signed a one-year extension in November 2004, which will end his career at The Shay. Has played in every position for Fax apart from the front row of the scrum and is a more than competent goal kicker. Bloem scored 219 points in 2004 - 9 tries, 91 goals and 1 drop goal as he went past the 550 career points mark for Halifax.

Andy Boothroyd - Mark is also an Hooker or back row forward who was part of the Junior Academy's Grand Final winning side of 2002. Son of Alan who played for Halifax in the 1990's, he made his first team debut in the away defeat at Leigh in June 2004. Brother Academy player at the club.

Jason Boults - Halifax-born 20-year-old prop forward signed from Bradford Bulls in November 2004. Jason was an ever-present for the Bulls in the Senior Academy Championship making 24 appearances in total including the Bulls' Grand Final victory over the Leeds Rhinos.

James Bunyan - A Scotland international, he was formerly with Rochdale Hornets, Huddersfield Giants and Doncaster Dragons. Scored two tries in the Grand Final victory over York City Knights.

Wayne Corcoran - Toured Australia with the North West Counties YRL in the summer of 2001. Kicks with his left foot in broken play but lands goals with his right boot!

Ben Fisher - The 23-year-old comes highly recommended by a number of sources - notably former teammate and current Fax number seven Ben Black and Norths head honcho Greg Florimo, who played out his career at The Shay in 2000.

Damian Gibson - Re-joined Halifax in November 2004 after being released by Castleford Tigers following their relegation from Super League. He has also represented Wales and scored 41 tries in 114 appearances during his first spell at The Shay.

Gareth Greenwood - Utility player re-signed in June 2004 having been dismissed 12 months earlier for disciplinary reasons. Made some impressive late performances at both hooker and second-rower and was a substitute in the Grand Final victory over York City Knights.

Alan Hadcroft - Combatative centre with a wealth of experience who became a big favourite with the supporters with his rock solid defence and strong running. Scored two tries in the Grand Final victory over York City Knights.

James Haley - Made his first team debut against Batley in May 2004 after being the leading scorer in the club's under 21's side. Scored 16 points from two tries and four goals in an outstanding man of the match performance as the Halifax under 17's won their grand final 26-12 against Leigh in 2002.

Andy Hobson - Re-joined the Club from Widnes Vikings in November 2004. A strong powerful runner, he once scored an incredible 114 tries in a season for King Cross Under 14's team, and previously played for Stanley Rangers ARLFC.

Danny Jones - Teenage half-back who made his first team debut in the final Super League game against Widnes in September 2003. Made 3 appearances in 2004 and will be looking to force his way into the side for next season.

Dave Larder - Highly-rated second rower signed from Leigh Centurions in November 2004. The 28-year-old was a member of the Centurions' Grand-Final winning line-up and turned down a full-time Super League contract at The Coliseum to remain part-time.

Scott Law - Made a meteoric rise to fame after his form in pre-season friendlies earned him a first team slot. A converted full-back who has a neat sidestep, Scott was converted to prop whilst in the club's under 17's side which won the Division One Grand Final in 2002.

Dean Lawford - Signed from Batley Bulldogs in October 2004. The 27-year-old half-back played alongside coach Anthony Farrell at Sheffield, Leeds and Widnes.

Ryan MacDonald - Originally signed on loan in March 2004, Ryan made 4 appearances before returning to Widnes Vikings. Scottish international, he moved to Widnes from Dewsbury Rams after their promotion to the top flight in 2001.

Chris Morley - Another vastly experienced campaigner brought in for the 2004 season. International second row with Wales who has played Super League for St Helens and Warrington plus National League football with Leigh and Oldham.

Anthony Sawyer - A local product signed from Siddal ARLFC. Agile winger who has impressed in the Academy over the last couple of seasons. Also a talented footballer and cricketer at local level.

Jode Sherifem - Brother of Rikki, he has been a member of the Halifax Academy for a number of seasons and now looks set to move up to the first team.

Rikki Sheriffe - Signed December 2004 on another season long loan deal from Huddersfield. Finished last season as the Club's leading try-scorer with 15 tries in 22 appearances and was named in the NFL All-Star Dream Team.

Johnny Simpson - Had three seasons in the Giants' Academy sides before going back to his roots at amateur side Elland. He is a multi-skilled apprentice with Pennine Housing 2000 and recently modelled on their 2004 calendar!

Andy Spink - He has toured Australia with the BARLA Young Lions and the GB Academy, and played for the National League representative side against New Zealand in 2003.

Fereti Tuilagi - Freddie re-signed for Halifax in March 2004 after spending the last four years playing rugby union with Leicester Tigers and most recently Cardiff Blues.

Pat Weisner - Club Captain who started his career at Canterbury under the guidance in the under 21's of former Thrum Hall player Kevin Moore. Spent 2003 with Leigh before joining Fax last season.

Player Profile by Roger Halstead

DANA WILSON

DANA Wilson was the toast of the Roughyeds in their last game at Barrow after he had scored what coach Gary Mercer billed as the try of the season.

The big prop from Auckland has been threatening to come up with the goods while improving game on game in the past few weeks.

He and Ricky Bibbey have hit form together and their strong work in the engine room laid down the platform for the win against Rochdale Hornets in the Roughyeds' last 'home' game here at Sedgley Park and then the victory up at Barrow when Dana crashed in for his screamer.

The 22-year-old Cook Island international is the first to admit it took him several weeks to settle in. He was a long way from home, he missed his family, the team was struggling to gel and he knew he could do better.

But Dana -- real name Jonathan -- is a much happier and more confident young man now. Needless to say, he is enjoying his rugby a lot more, too.

"I'm finding my feet now," he said this week. "Everything is falling into place -- and I was delighted to read that Gary (Mercer) said my try at Barrow was the try of the season. I cut that out and sent it back to Auckland.

"I'm a lot happier with my football than I was up to a few weeks ago and I think the team can kick on and climb the table with our performances over the last ten games of the league season.

"By the time we've played Halifax tonight we'll be exactly half-way through the LHF Healthplan National League first division programme and we will have played each of our rivals once.

"We know exactly what we are up against now and as we are starting to gel as a team we all think we can do significantly better over the second half of the season than we did over the first half."

Like most young boys in Auckland, Dana played 'rugby' (that's union) in school and 'league' (rugby league) for a local club out of school hours.

Cont over...



Player Profile

DANA WILSON

“He and Ricky Bibey have hit form together and their strong work in the engine room laid down the platform for the win against Rochdale”



Cont...

He was aged ten when he joined Bay Roskill RL Club, but by the time he was 12 he was off to join the more prestigious Marist Richmond club, for which he played right through the age groups up to under-21s last year.

At Marist he was in good company. Sonny Bill Williams, just about the hottest rugby property in the world right now -- and that covers League and Union -- was a couple of years behind him as he moved through the ranks.

And two of his peers, Roy Asotasi and Motu Tony, went on to play for New Zealand.

Asotasi, also a prop, plays in the same Canterbury Bulldogs team as the peerless Sonny Bill Williams. Together, they played for the Bulldogs in the 2004 NRL Grand Final against the Roosters and then flew to England with the New Zealand squad for the Gillette Tri-Nations tournament with Great Britain and Australia.

"We all grew up together at Richmond," recalled Dana. "Sonny Bill Williams's Dad was my junior coach and Sonny Bill's elder brother was, and still is, my best mate."

"Sonny Bill's progress has been awesome since he joined the Bulldogs. Roy Asotasi was also snapped up young by Canterbury and he has also done well and gone on to play for New Zealand."

Some Roughyeds fans may not know that Dana had stepped foot on English soil once before he arrived to play for Oldham last February.

A couple of years back he and another fellow Aucklanders flew 13,000 miles from New Zealand to Manchester to play in the Challenge Cup at Victory Park, Chorley for a team from Russia, Locomotiv Moscow.

Coach of the Russian team was a New Zealander, who spread the word in Auckland that he could do with one or two reinforcements.

"It was an opportunity not to be missed," said Dana. "My family have always told me to take opportunities when they arise. That's why I was also keen to come to England to play for Oldham this season."

He actually left Auckland a year earlier to cross the Tasman to try his luck in Australia. He went to Sydney to play for Narrabeena, an 'A' grade side in the Manly competition and it was round about that time that he and his current Roughyeds colleagues Tere Glassie and Carlos Mataora were all picked to represent the Cook Islands in the Pacific Rim Cup.

All three were Auckland born, but they all qualified for the Cook Islands through parents or grandparents. Kevin Iro was named to manage the Cook Islands side and it was Iro's friendship with new Oldham boss Gary Mercer -- a former team mate in the New Zealand Test side -- that led directly to Dana, Tere and Carlos crossing the world to arrive in snowbound Oldham.

They had seen snow before ... but only on TV and at the movies.

Prior to coming they had impressed Iro while starring for the Cook Islands team that beat Tonga and then Fiji on the way to a final in which they accounted comfortably for the New Zealand Maoris.

"Tere played hooker, I was at prop and Carlos played half-back," said Dana.

"Not long afterwards Kevin (Iro) was talking to Gary about us and we were soon on our way to Oldham."

"It took me a bit to settle, I know, but I'm feeling a lot more at home now and I am really looking forward to what the rest of the season has in store for us."

Roger



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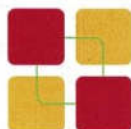
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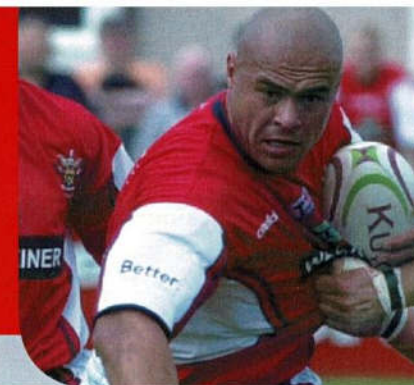
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On this day

Don Yates looks back to June 24th yesteryear



Four years ago, in 2001, Oldham reached the Grand Final of the Northern Ford Premiership and were a tantalising 80 minutes away from a spot in Super League. It was on this day during that epic campaign, Sunday 24th June, that the Roughyeds visited another promotion contender, Keighley, and registered an exciting 26-16 victory.

Oldham's most influential player that afternoon was current assistant coach Keith Brennan who played scrum-half from where he directed operations. He also set Oldham on the road to victory with a try in the second minute. Brennan went on to score a second try and was joined on the try scoring sheet by winger Joey Hayes, prop Leo Casey and stand-off Neil Roden. Centre Pat Rich added three goals.

On the same afternoon, Sunday 24th June 2001, this evening's visitors, Halifax, were in Super League action and were involved in a classic confrontation with Hull at The Shay. Four members of the Halifax pack that day had previously played for Oldham. They were skipper and prop Brett Goldspink, second-row forwards Paul Davidson and Shayne McMenemy and loose-forward Jamie Bloem. Although Hull scored five tries to the three of Halifax, it was Halifax who dominated long periods of the match and they were unlucky not to grab the points. Jamie Bloem kept Halifax in contention with seven goals which appeared to have earned them a draw until a stoppage time dropped goal from Steve Prescott snatched a 27-26 victory for Hull.

Another player who has turned out for both Oldham and Halifax, Paul Dixon, was in test match action on this day in 1990, Sunday 24th June. Great Britain played New Zealand in Palmerston North that day in the first test of that 1990 tour. The Lions won that test 11-10 after the Kiwis had led 10-4 midway through the first half. It took a late dropped goal from Garry Schofield to enable Great Britain to win. Second-row forward Paul Dixon was then with Leeds but he won the first of his 15 test caps with Halifax.

Thirty years ago England and Wales were involved in the 1975 World Cup competition. Both nations also took part in several tour matches during their visit to Australia and New Zealand. On Tuesday 24th June 1975 Wales defeated the Canterbury district 25-18 in Christchurch. At

stand-off for Wales that evening was David Treasure, the well travelled and talented inside back who, at that time, was on the books of Oldham.

Emmerson Jackman, who enjoyed a short spell with the Roughyeds during the 1998 and 1999 campaigns, was a member of the BARLA squad which toured Australia in 1998. Although that team only played matches against teams selected from the Australian indigenous population, they became the first ever rugby league touring team to return home from Australia undefeated. On Wednesday 24th June 1998 the tourists met the North Coast Aborigines at Coffs Harbour. Jackman played centre for BARLA that evening and played a significant role in the 20 points to ten victory. Jason Wilkes, Jackman's Saddleworth team-mate, and Paul Brassington of Waterhead were also included in the tour squad but neither played in that particular match.

The legendary Halifax forward Jack Wilkinson made two tours of Australasia, although the 1962 tour came after he had been transferred to Wakefield. He was one of the toughest forwards ever to play the game. On Thursday 24th June 1954 Wilkinson was prop for the Lions when they played the Northern Zone in Cairns, North Queensland. The Lions lost two wingers, Frank Castle (Barrow) and Drew Turnbull (Leeds), early in the tour through injury and so a number of players filled those positions despite a lack of wing experience. At Cairns stand-off Dickie Williams (Hunslet) and hooker Tommy Harris (Hull) appeared on the wings and each scored a try in the 39-18 victory. Late in the tour Wilkinson himself, all 6ft and 15st of him, played on the wing against New South Wales and actually scored a try in that infamous match which was abandoned because of brawling.

ROUGHYED KIDS + CO

Hi Kids

Well things are really looking up, two wins in a row for the team with hopefully another one tonight, and the fantastic news on Tuesday that Chris and Sean have managed to stop the club going under. I think we are all sleeping a bit easier now.

Carole & myself are still involved in helping to raise money to keep the nasty taxman at bay but will also be organising something for you "Kids" now that we know this great club of ours is still alive and kicking. Watch this space.

Our mascot for this evening is Joanne Crosby. This is her first trip to centre field and we hope she has a great night. Joanne's favourite player is Gareth Barber.

Once again a big thank you to all our sponsors who now appear under our new heading.

As always good luck to Gary and the Lads.

See you soon

Carole and Janet

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TODAYS MASCOT

Joanne Crosby

Favourite Player: Gareth Barber

OLDHAM RUGBY SUPPORT GROUP

It was with great relief last week, that we were granted a stay of execution, allowing us 12 months parole – 1 missed payment and we are gone!

There now needs to be an intense period of hard work by all concerned, to achieve the stability that we all desire for Oldham RLFC. A summary of the position is as follows: -

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| COMPLACENCY | - | no time for that |
| CONJECTURE | - | won't get us anywhere |
| COMMITMENT | - | lets have plenty |
| COLLECTIVELY | - | lets all work together |
| CONCENTRATION | - | on the job at hand |
| COMMUNICATION | - | liaison between all the interested parties is essential. |

Our COMMON goal is to act now, so that we have a long-term future

SMS

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AND

SATURDAY 23RD JULY 05

O.R.L.F.C. Spectators match Vs Hollinwood at Melrose playing fields

Further details to be announced in the next programme

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OLDHAM RLFC PLAYER STATS 2005

Oldham match stats up to and including June 12

NAME	APPEARANCES	TRIES	GOALS	POINTS
J. GODDARD	11	3	-	12
W. COWELL	8	3	-	12
D. MUNRO	10	4	-	16
A. WILKINSON	13	5	-	20
N. JOHNSON	15	8	-	32
S. SVABIC	15	4	6 (+ 2 d-g)	30
M. TURNER	15	4	48 (+ 1 d-g)	113
P. NORMAN	7	1	-	4
G. BARBER	12	2	1	10
D. NANYN	8	-	-	-
R. BIBEY	13	-	-	-
T. GLASSIE	13	2	-	8
C. MATAORA	15	1	-	4
C. FARRIMOND	4	-	-	-
G. DODD	16	13	-	52
M. ELSWOOD	5	2	-	8
J. KIRKLAND	12	-	-	-
J. HOUGH	14	-	-	-
J. WILSON	15	3	-	12
S. HAUGHTON	11	6	-	24
M. ROBERTS	11	2	-	8
A. GOREY	4	3	-	12
K. BRENNAN	2	-	-	-
I. HODSON	5	-	-	-
D. TOOTILL	2	-	-	-
R. MILLS	3	-	-	-
C. HOUGH	4	1	-	4
A. SHARPLES	4	-	-	-
A. SANDS	2	-	-	-



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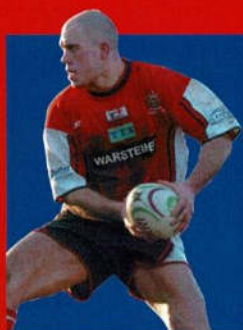
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For this season the format for this page will be to take a look at players who have represented both Oldham and the opposition of the day.

from the pen of MICHAEL TURNER

Today we entertain the Halifax club and offer a warm welcome to their players, officials and supporters.

In the very early days of the Northern Union there was little transfer traffic between the two clubs but just before the first world war "Fax" plundered two international forwards from the Roughyeds when he acquired Arthur Smith and Billy Longworth who between them had played just under 400 games for Oldham.

Another of the Roughyeds stars to go over the Pennines was wing or centre Abe Johnson. His 30 points in the match against Widnes on April 9th 1928 is still the club record. Abe played 146 matches for Oldham before moving to Halifax in 1930.

From the 1950s Alan Kellett was a popular Roughyed playing over 200 times for Oldham before going to his home town club.

Other notables to have worn both the blue and white and red white hoops include:-

John Blair, Paul Dixon, Tony Anderson, Gary Lord, John Fieldhouse and more recently, Damian Munro, Mark Perrett, Paul Davidson and John Roper.



Billy Longworth



Alan Kellett



John Blair

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Rugby Talk

Danny Lockwood

Publisher, League Weekly

WITH the quarter finals of the Powergen Challenge Cup taking place this weekend, a few engage Super League clubs will be grateful of the chance to regroup. Whether that takes the form of a team bonding session in Ibiza (unlikely), an arduous army training course with the SAS (even less likely) or a rest-cure in a health spa for battered bodies (highly probable) will be up to the clubs. To still be in the chase for Cardiff would have been nice. For Wakefield, Salford and Huddersfield especially, the chance to rest some aching limbs isn't a bad consolation prize. Would Widnes or Leigh swap a place in next year's Super League for a place at Cardiff? Well, what do you think...

Not everyone will share that sentiment, including Warrington's Paul Cullen, who would probably opt to play twice a week if he could, given the run of wins his lads are stringing together. With matches against Widnes, Wigan and London coming up before Leeds visit the Halliwell-Jones, that streak could still be hot. And what a tasty encounter that is in prospect.

Contrast that welcome breather in the schedules for the Super League teams however with the thoughts of many National League coaches, whose season has stopped and started more than my dad's old moped (not that you'd hear them complain any more, with Red Hall coming down on anyone who breathes a hint of criticism like a ton of bricks).

Last week the two Northern Rail Cup semis meant another break in proceedings for the other 16 clubs. What with the initial play-off qualifying round of that competition, the quarter-finals, plus the early rounds of the Challenge Cup, there's still a feel in some clubs that the LHF National Leagues haven't really got going yet. You might still find plenty of NL coaches glad of the break, but I suspect their chairmen could have a different view.

Half of the battle of running a club these days is getting your fans into the viewing habit; of Sundays being match days, week in, week out, and especially in the heart of the season. A 'blank' red hot BBQ day like last week provides just one more possible way to lose that continuity, of yet another handful of fans finding something else to do of a summer's day. And if it isn't quite a creeping death, it's at least something the fixture schedulers might consider.

Harvey Howard, until recently coach of Hull KR, and Featherstone boss Gary Price, have both been hauled over the coals because they quite sensibly questioned whether the cup/league schedules in the National Leagues were working to the game's best interests.

This season has again seen radical changes in scheduling. To not even question whether that is working is to subscribe to the worst kind of 'Emperor's new clothes' subservience.

The clubs and the fans deserve better than that. The sport needs better than that.

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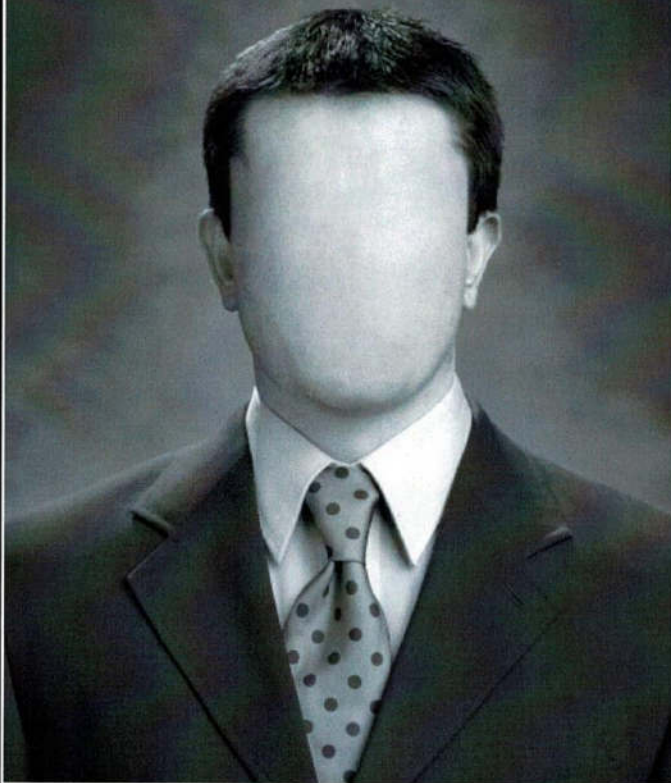
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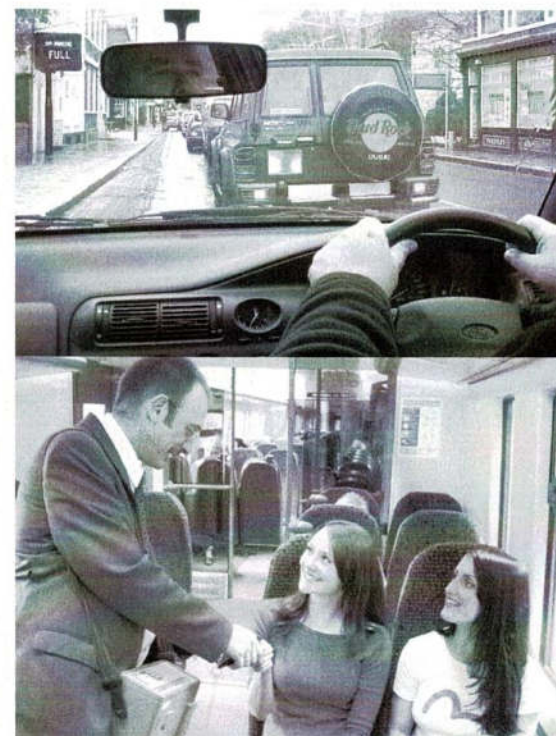
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NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



TIGER FEAT

IS the scramble for Super League turning into a one-horse race?

Castleford Tigers, second comprehensive defeat of their closest rivals Whitehaven inside three weeks suggests that everybody's favourites for promotion are a cut above the rest.

But the answer to the opening question is, of course, no.

And the Tigers coaching staff and players would be the first support that.

Cas, have already been beaten once by an NL1 side this season, losing at Halifax in the Powergen Challenge Cup. They were also given a mighty scare by injury-hit Featherstone the week before the Northern Rail Cup semi-finals, and Hull KR have also come close at the Jungle.

There are plenty of considerable hurdles still to clear as well, the Tigers have to visit both Whitehaven (who have been somewhat depleted in recent weeks, particularly in the pack) and Hull KR in the league.

Both will be keen to make amends for recent defeats.

But there can be little arguing that Castleford look the team most likely at present. Their Australian coach Dave Woods has made an impressive start to life in England, having inherited a squad with a healthy balance of

promising youth (the likes of Michael Shenton and Craig Hubby) and vast experience (Brad Davis and Deon Bird).

Two points clear at the top of NL1 and in the final of the Northern Rail Cup, the Tigers could hardly have made a better start in their bid to bounce straight back up to the top flight.

But greater challenges lie ahead.

The clamber to avoid relegation is also intriguing, especially because Oldham have finally found their feet. With two going down and the eighth placed team entering the NL2 play-offs, there is little room for error.

National League Two's leaders York City Knights have also turned a few heads to date, though their list of challengers stretches even outside the current top six.

Gateshead Thunder's recent revival has left teams looking over their shoulders. And such is the competitive nature of a fascinating division, that Keighley Cougars, the side relegated from NL1, are currently outside the play-off places.

At present, there are only London Skolars and Blackpool Panthers who will feel they cannot make a genuine Grand Final push.

Each of this week's fixtures has considerable implications, which is how any competition should ideally be.

Read the best match reports from all today's matches in Monday's Rugby Leaguer & League Express

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Fixtures 2005

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
09/01/05	Rochdale Hornets	Law Cup	Away	15.00	24-8	L	1,404
21/01/05	Leeds Rhinos	Testimonial	Away	20.00	22-10	L	5,196
30/01/05	Halifax	Friendly	Away	15.00	34-12	L	1,443
13/02/05	Blackpool Panthers	NT Cup	Home	15.00	22-20	W	1,446
27/02/05	Swinton Lions	NT Cup	Away	15.00	46-14	L	1,101
06/03/05	Swinton Lions	NT Cup	Home	15.00	30-37	L	1,116
13/03/05	Sharlston Rovers	Powergen CC 3rd Rd	Away	19.30	14-46	W	852
16/03/05	Rochdale Hornets	NT Cup	Away	19.30	68-26	L	1,161
20/03/05	Blackpool Panthers	NT Cup	Away	15.00	16-35	W	250
25/03/05	Rochdale Hornets	NT Cup	Home	15.30	10-54	L	1,544
28/03/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Away	19.30	20-20	D	1,463
03/04/05	York City Knights	Powergen CC 4th Rd	Home	15.00	28-32	L	1,282
10/04/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Home	15.00	22-44	L	1,266
17/04/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Home	15.00	20-32	L	2,054
24/04/05	Hull K R	NL1	Away	15.00	32-19	L	2,474
15/05/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Home	15.00	6-60	L	1,284
22/05/05	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Away	15.00	25-18	L	792
05/06/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Home	15.00	25-24	W	827
12/06/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Away	15.00	22-40	W	1073
24/06/05	Halifax	NL1	Home	19.45			
26/06/05	Powergen Cup Quarter Finals	Powergen CC	TBA	TBA			
03/07/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Home	15.00			
10/07/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00			
17/07/05	Northern Rail Cup Final	NT Cup	TBA	TBA			
24/07/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Away	15.30			
31/07/05	Hull K R	NL1	Home	15.00			
07/08/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Away	15.00			
14/08/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00			
21/08/05	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Home	15.00			
04/09/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Home	15.00			
11/09/05	Halifax	NL1	Away	15.00			
18/09/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
25/09/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
02/10/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
08/10/05	Grand Final	NL1	TBA	TBA			

Key

NT Cup - Northern Trains Cup

Powergen CC - Powergen Challenge Cup

NL1 - National League Division 1

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