

game line-up

OLDHAM R.L.F.C.

SADDLEWORTH RANGERS

OLDHAM SQUAD	Played	SADDLEWORTH RANGERS SQUAD
ANDY BAILEY		PAUL IBERSON
GARETH BARBER		SEVEN JAGGER
CHRIS CAMPBELL		TERRY WHALLEY
MIKE CALLAN		FRAZER COLEY
GED CORCORAN		DANNY ATTERSALL
WAYNE CORCORAN		ADAM KIRWAN
CRAIG DEAN		RYAN COLLINS
ANDY GOREY		LARS HAIGH
DEAN GORTON		NEIL KIRWAN
DANNY GUEST		JIMMY ROGERS
ALAN HADCROFT		EMERSON JACKMAN
GARETH HAYES		JAMES WHALLEY
IAN HODSON		TOM KILGANNON
CHRIS HOUGH		PHIL WOOD
JOHN HOUGH		JOHNNY HORTON
JAMES KIRKLAND		MICHAEL ROWE
CHRIS MAYE		JOHN DUFFY
DANNY NANYN		
CHRIS PERCIVAL		
MICK REDFORD		
MARK ROBERTS		
SIMON SVABIC		
ALEX WILKINSON		
LEE WINGFIELD		

match officials

REFEREE: Colin Morris **TOUCH JUDGE:** G Jones & L Todd
4TH OFFICIAL: N Price

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SUNDAY 12TH MARCH 2006 • K.O. 3.00pm

THE ROUGHYEDS

BOUNDARY PARK V SADDLEWORTH RANGERS

K.O. 3.00pm

SUNDAY MARCH 12TH 2006



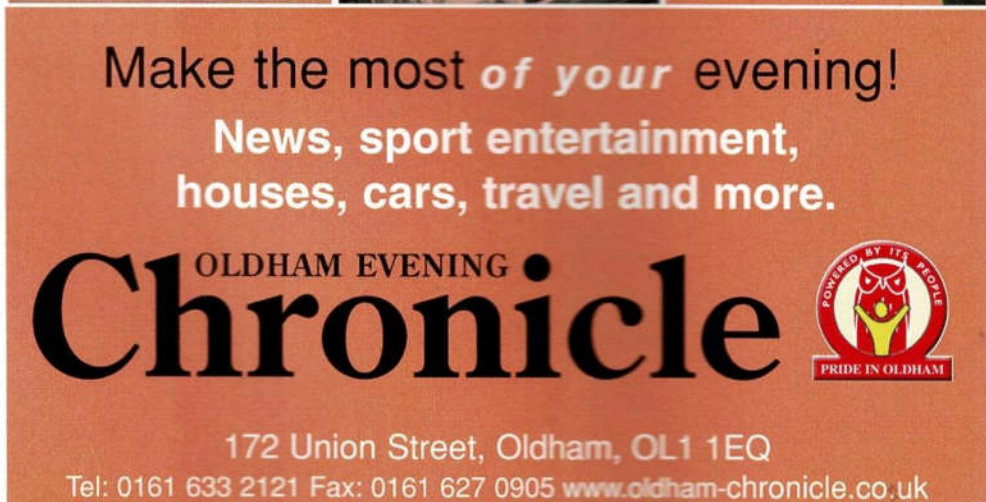
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player profile

craig dean

The Full-Back with a difference • p18



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Trans-Penine Cup
Finalists - 1998

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

MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, **209** - Jan 1998 - September 2005
CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farrel, **67** - *Apr 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, **70-6** - Apr 1st 2001 at Huntington Stadium
v Queensbury (amt), **64-0** - Jan 28th 2001 RLCC 3rd Rdn at Boundary Park

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

**The Roughyeds
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Football Club (1997) Limited**

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Frank Stirrup 1950-62
Bernard Ganley 1950-61
Sid Little OBE 1951-59
John Eddy 1954-59
Derek Turner 1955-59
Kevin Taylor 1962-77
Mike Elliott 1962-79
Bob Irving 1964-74
Martin Murphy 1966-82
Terry Flanagan 1979-89
Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

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. (www.digisport.co.uk)

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in the chair

with Chris Hamilton

Well, yet another uneventful week in the life of Oldham Rugby League Club!

After the heavy snowfall that effected the area at the end of last week, little did we know that the ensuing postponement of training on Friday because the out of town lads couldn't get to Oldham and subsequent frozen pitches on Saturday, meaning another session was cancelled and the postponement of last Sundays game at Halifax, would be partly responsible for us looking and appointing a new coach by Tuesday afternoon!

John Pendlebury asked for a meeting on Monday and informed myself and Sean that he had decided to resign his position at the club. To say we were stunned would be an understatement.

Like most of the other clubs in our division, we have been experiencing problems with training venues due to the bad weather, which is nothing new at this time of year, but the affect this had taken on John was obviously something that we were unable to repair. He expressed his frustration at the situation and we are obviously not in a position to be able to offer an instant remedy.

There was no going back on his decision and we were driving back to Oldham wondering what the next move was. As you will all now know we then moved on Tuesday to fill the position as, given the early stage of the season, we were adamant that we needed to get some kind of continuity and after discussing the news with Keith Brennan and asking him to take charge in the meantime, we then began the process of getting a new coach in.

We already knew of Steve Deakin's desire for the job and given his unfortunate departure from France, we knew he could be available and made contact with him.

Matters then progressed quickly and given both his and our circumstances we were able to make the announcement confirming his appointment late on Tuesday afternoon after again meeting with Keith.

The one thing we have learned over the

years is to be positive and to move on and this was reinforced by Keith's reaction to the whole situation and it goes without saying that we wish Steve all the very best of luck in his new job. He is without doubt a very experienced Coach and his desire to coach his home town club will no doubt stand him in good stead.

The events of the week have no doubt taken the limelight away from today's game which sees us up against Saddleworth Rangers. When the news originally came through to us about the draw, it's fair to say we were sceptical, given that it was Gavin Dodd who told us and it wasn't until we saw for ourselves that we believed it.

There are many connections between the two clubs, not least of which are Paddy Kirwan, our first coach and Emmerson Jackman who played for us in the first two years. There are also numerous lads who have played at Alliance and Academy level for the new club, so there will be no shortage of motivation in the away dressing room today.

A special mention must go to Ken Fisher, a former Chairman of the old club and Ronnie Hardaker, who was telling me the other day, has been connected with Rangers for fifty seven years - now that's a life sentence!

Ronnie also comes to watch Oldham regularly but there will be no doubt who he wants to win today! People like these are the lifeblood of the game and we can only hope that this game captures the imagination of the Oldham public and the attendance gives Saddleworth a financial boost as money raised from these games can be an absolute godsend to clubs like Rangers.

From our point of view, we must give Saddleworth the respect they deserve and make sure we are in the hat for tomorrow's draw.

As ever, thanks for your support, particularly throughout this week and please get behind the team.

Chris



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direct from the dug out

with Steve Deakin



Welcome to Boundary Park for today's Challenge Cup fixture which is special and unique in so many ways.

This is the first round of involvement for the professional clubs on a journey that will culminate in what should be (hopefully) the first major sporting final to take place at the new Wembley Stadium. Perhaps fans have warmed to trips to Scotland or Wales to watch recent finals, but nothing quite compared for atmosphere and selling our game world wide.

Secondly, it is one of those once in a lifetime games where the professional clubs play against an amateur team from the same town. Not just ANY amateur team but one that is coached by former Oldham player and coach, Paddy Kirwan.

Thirdly and from a perhaps personal and selfish point of view, it is my first opportunity to write these notes as head coach of my home-town club.

Although I will be relying heavily on Keith Brennan and the senior players such as Hadcroft, Svabic, Dean and Barber etc, in the coming weeks, one thing that I will be stressing is the need to take every opponent on with respect and to give 100% in all we do.

Obviously this is a game that we should win but in this cup competition there are always surprise results. Hopefully this game will be a good yardstick on future performances and we will be able to create a team worthy of all your local support.

Finally, I look forward to catching up with you at Oldham's Social Club where we can hopefully form a good relationship. This club was once at the very top level in Rugby League and with a combined effort from us all I am hopeful we can return there.

Enjoy the game

Deaks

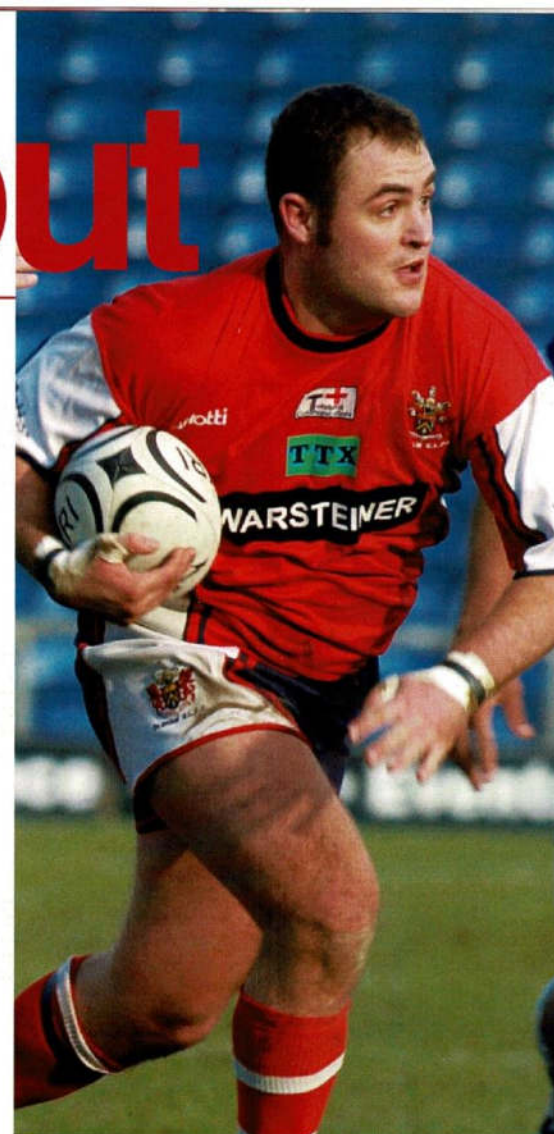


QUESTION & ANSWERS

with Steve Deakin

On this page in future programmes will be individual player stats from previous matches or letters to our coach with an answer from Steve. If you want to ask Steve a question either drop it in at the Waterloo St office, put it on the website or email to orlfcqanda@yahoo.co.uk.

Don't forget if you don't ask the question Steve can't answer it.



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roger and out

by ROGER HALSTEAD

HAVING spent more than 40 years covering Oldham RL for the Chronicle, I had long since given up hope of stumbling across anything "new".

Then along came a Powergen Challenge Cup draw that paired the Roughyeds with Saddleworth Rangers — the first time for 70 years, one month and four days that the town's pro club has had to do battle in the cup with one of its amateur sides.

Please stand up anyone in the ground today who watched Oldham beat Higinshaw 38-2 in a first-round tie on February 8, 1936!

The Oldham team that day lined up like this: Billy Griffiths; Albert Taylor, Sam Bardsley, Graham Macrae, William Fairbairn; Jimmy Jupp, Stan Spencer; Jack Read, Bill Howard, Lewis Rees, Norman Pugh, Alex Givons, Fred Ashworth.

Tries, then worth three points, were scored by Taylor (3), Bardsley (2), Read, Givons, Pugh, Macrae and Fairbairn and goals were provided by Rees (2), Ashworth and Taylor.

I feel it is appropriate to look back on yesteryear, given that over the course of the next few months I will be attempting to establish, with considerable help from a lot of people, an Oldham RL Ex-Players' Association.

We already have the Heritage Trust and their Hall of Fame — and what a wonderful job they have done in ensuring that the club's long and illustrious past is not lost in the mists of time — and the next step is to launch an organisation for former players.

Several clubs already have similar associations and, with a bit of time on my hands in retirement, I was privileged to be asked by the Roughyeds to set up a similar body for the benefit of all those hundreds of players who, over the years, have worn the Oldham jersey with pride and passion.

I think we can reasonably assume that there will be many such players in the ground today. Perhaps they can make a mental note of what is being planned and await further announcements. One hopes there will be a lot of people at today's game who perhaps, for various reasons, have got out of the habit of watching the Roughyeds. I do hope so. It would be nice to think that this history-making encounter will attract Roughyeds fans old and new, as well as many followers of all the town's amateur clubs, not just the Rangers faithful.

I view it as a celebration of rugby league in Oldham at all its various levels, taking in the

Roughyeds, and its satellite organisations such as the Support Group, the Independent Supporters, the Heritage Trust and Rugby Oldham, as well as the Service Area, the Oldham Amateur League and its member clubs such as Saddleworth, Waterhead, St Anne's, Shaw Rhinos, Higinshaw and Hollinwood.

The sport at all levels in Oldham will be on show today — and I'm confident it will do the town proud.

Which brings me to another point. Do we take for granted the things we have on the doorstep?

I spent the whole of January and February in rugby-mad New Zealand. The land of the silver fern and the long white cloud is rugby crackers; mainly for the union variety, but also for rugby league. It might have been summer but evidence of passion for the oval ball was everywhere, not least on national TV promotions for the forthcoming season which featured prominently a certain Luke McAlister.

Charlie's boy is a big star now over there, having broken into the All Blacks set-up and having caused the British and Irish Lions a few problems on their last tour.

Charlie, by the way, is coach of a team in Palmerston North, but I'm straying from the point. We were based in Napier. They call it a city, but with nearby Hastings it has a total population of around 150,000 — outside the major cities, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, that's a fair-sized town over there.

Point being? Most of the blokes are mad-keen on their rugby, but to watch decent rugby league or rugby union they face a five-hour journey by road to Auckland or a four-hour drive to Wellington.

In between there is nothing but small country towns, mountains, native bush, pine forests, valleys — and sheep. Most sports lovers in Napier are restricted to watching their sport on television. Put on something "live", like a one-day cricket match or a musical concert, and every seat in the house is snapped up weeks in advance.

Just how lucky are we? It might be worth thinking about when the teams we support, be it the Roughyeds or Saddleworth Rangers, ask for a helping hand.

ROGER AND OUT.

with Ian Wilson

The current debate about the change in the potential strength available to Brian Noble in the half-back positions for GB is an interesting one.



After a few years when the prevalence of overseas half-backs in Super League has been bemoaned by nearly everyone, suddenly there are supposedly lots of candidates knocking on the door in the crucial 6 and 7 positions. Instead of relying on messrs. Farrell, Sculthorpe and Sinfield, all really back-row players, there seems to be a positive glut of proper half-backs knocking on the door of international selection.

Are people deceiving themselves, or is it really the case that there is a genuine prospect of us going onto the field with a pair of half-backs capable of controlling a game against the Aussies or the Kiwis? They couldn't be expected to do any such thing, of course, unless the pack provides a good platform — but let us pre-suppose that this is given. Who are we talking about?

I assume that the options being suggested are: Harris / Deacon; McGuire / Burrow; Pryce / Long; Briers / Bridge; Horne / Cooke / Brough; plus perhaps Orr, Robinson, Fitzpatrick, Rooney and Thorman.

Some of these, of course, have already been tried, and, whilst they may be decent players in Super League, have not quite the true class

to do it at the Test level. I am afraid I would include both Deacon and Harris in this category, and probably Long and Burrow, too. Then there is Briers and Orr — both good players, but not quite good enough, I would have thought. But there are still a fair few left — some maybe too inexperienced as yet, though Thorman sometimes shows the priceless ability to create scores through tight defences. For me, however, Pryce, McGuire and Horne are the front-runners for the Autumn Tri-Nations at this stage. But it is good to be selecting from what certainly seems a position of strength in these crucial positions, for a change. It says something about both Super League and our youth development, too.

I heard Richard Lewis doing what I thought was an excellent half-hour interview on Radio Five Live last Friday. Credit to the bloke, he may have come to us as a southern tennis softie, but I reckon he has done a very good job with an organisation which was in a terrible state when he took over. Never ask him the way to anywhere, though; he insisted about a dozen times that the Catalans play in south-west France!

40/20 VISION

in yer face

with Geoff Cooke

Bradford Bulls are the most successful side in Super League. In 2004 the club posted losses of £594,000 and in 2003 of £353,266.

Over the last few years it is estimated that cumulative losses amount to £1.7 million. If the team that wins everything in sight on a regular basis cannot at least break even then what hope for the rest of the clubs in the Rugby Football League?

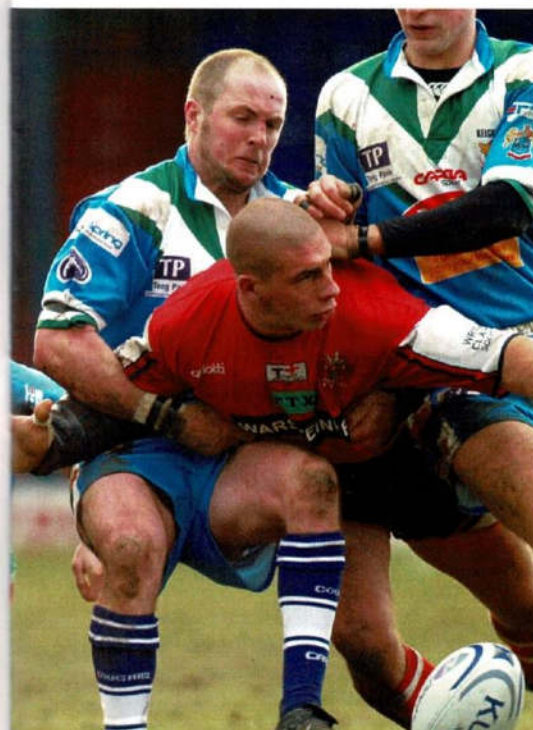
Bradford Chief Executive Gareth Davies seems quite sanguine about the matter. "The simple matter is the vast majority of professional sports clubs have some sort of level of debt. Only three of the Guinness Premiership rugby union teams are thought to be in profit and 14 of the 20 Premiership football sides are in the red, according to the last audited accounts."

"In 2005 our accounts – which have yet to be confirmed – are looking at [losses of] something like £520,000. I'm looking to reduce that to £300,000 this year. We are in the marketplace to bring in the right kind of investment but we will take a year to do that. There's no rush and we want to bring in the right person." Well that's alright then! £ 1.7 million in the red : nothing to worry about! Except , of course , when something similar happened at Wigan it cost them the loss of their spiritual home at Central Park. I don't know where businessmen at a high level come from because indebtedness seems to be a way of life for them. I only know if I was a Bradford fan I'd be worried.

Brian Noble was asked recently in the Guardian's sports pages why Great Britain's Rugby League team was chosen from so few clubs. His reply was less than



convincing if not downright evasive. The idea that no player from Huddersfield, Salford, Wakefield, Warrington or Castleford is worthy of pulling on a GB shirt is, frankly, ludicrous. Even players from Challenge Cup winning Hull F. C. are only on the fringe of selection. Yet the point was highlighted for me the other Saturday when Warrington skipper Lee Briers took the game against Hull by the scruff of the neck and turned a desperate situation into a comfortable victory with the kind of virtuoso display rarely seen these days. So, after years of so-called loose-forward stars donning the GB number 6 shirt is it not time someone like Lee Briers got his chance? After all it's not as though he's not done it at the top level: I well remember Briers led an inspired Wales to a half-time lead against Australia in a World Cup match at Huddersfield, a game Wales deserved to win until penalized out of it by the Aussies' favourite referee Russell Smith. And, over the years, would Mike Wainwright have been any worse a second-row than some who have boasted selection? And, more to the point for the future, are the likes of Hull's Paul Cooke, Huddersfield's Paul Thorman or Salford's Malcolm Alker less worthy of a national shirt than some of those who failed so dismally last Autumn against Australia and New Zealand?



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club corner

with Nigel Marland

What a week, I've written this column three times: first with John Pendlebury as coach; secondly with Keith Brennan as acting coach and finally with Steve Deakin as our new Coach.

You can't say we're not up to date in this programme. Then you have to search through all articles and pieces and omit John Pendlebury and replace with Steve Deakin and find photos of the new coach. On top of that first we weren't playing Halifax this week and then we were. Oh a match day programme editor's work is never done!

Seriously isn't it ironic, if you believe all you read in the newspapers, that much of the trouble this week is a result of the inclement weather and all this in the days of "Summer" rugby. It really is good news for summer rugby's opponents who will pour scorn on the fact that it means we don't get the postponements due to frozen and waterlogged pitches. I have to admit that since summer rugby commenced I am not aware of postponements being less frequent. The early fixtures every season seem to be blighted.

So once again the lads are forced to play two games in four days, which must put a great strain on part time players, and be a major cause of our injury crisis. Let's hope the lads put up a good show on Wednesday with Keith in charge and came through injury free for

today's fascinating match. I am sure other contributors will have had plenty to say on this subject so I'll just wish Steve all the best for his first game as coach and leave you with some interesting facts on Saddleworth on the next page, which Brian Walker has put together. Oh! I nearly forgot a warm welcome back to Roger Halstead after his post retirement holiday in New Zealand. Hope you enjoy his new column.

Nigel

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saddleworth rangers club facts

by Brian Walker

*The current Saddleworth Rangers club was founded in 1930 (see P16) although there was a club of the same name in existence during the late 1890's (they lost 42-2 to Huddersfield in the 1899 Challenge Cup). The new club played briefly at Dacres before securing the field facing the Woolpack Inn at Dobcross, moving to their current Greenfield ground in the early 50's. The club's first colours were red, yellow and green hoops.

*The move to Dobcross coincided with their first-ever Standard Cup final appearance, when, in 1932, they lost 16-0 to Higginshaw. Two seasons later the cup was brought back to Saddleworth for the first time when they gained revenge, beating Higginshaw 5-4 in the final.

The Ben Powell Trophy (awarded from 1956 onwards) to the Standard Cup final man-of-the-match was first won by a Ranger's player when it was presented to John Yates in 1960. Harold Whitehead scored a record 10 tries in a Standard Cup match when Saddleworth beat League of Services 85-0 in 1935.

* The Lancashire Junior Cup was first won during season 1962-63 when Barrow side Roose where beaten in the final.

*Rangers joined the National League second division in 1989 and were promoted after their first season. They became National League champions in season 1992-93 and won the National League Cup in 1991, 93 and 94 after being runners-up in 1990. The 1992-93 season will go down in their history as the best ever, when besides winning the National League

Championship and the National League Cup, they also won the National Amateur Challenge Cup.

*In 1993 Saddleworth beat Rochdale Hornets in a Watersheddings pro/am 7-a-side won by Oldham.

The same season Oldham 'A' won a pre-season match against Rangers 36-24. Roughyeds' hooker John Clarke scored four tries on his debut. The teams were: Oldham; Hudspith, Gumbs, Yeoman, Trialist, N. Clarke, Mitchell, Badby, Pye, J. Clarke, Fogerty, Heaton, Norman, Edwards. (Subs. not printed). Saddleworth; Garratt, Wilde, Cooper, Gallagher, Coates, Garforth, John, Dobb, Smith, Proctor, Fleming, Maudsley, Garrett Subs; Mort, Guilfoyle, Greenwood, Fletcher, Wallace.

* Before today's game Rangers have faced professional opposition in first class matches on six occasions, three times in the Regal Trophy and three in the Challenge Cup. In the 1990-91 Regal they lost in the first round 30-10 at Spotland to first division side Rochdale Hornets, the following season lost 30-0 to Workington in the preliminary round held at Watersheddings, then in season 94-95 put up a marvellous performance in the first round against Swinton at Gigg Lane before going down 32-26. In the 1993-94 Challenge Cup tournament the Greenfield side narrowly lost 16-13 in the third round at Highfield, lost 66-16 in the same round of the 97-98 campaign away to Keighley before in 1999 they put up a most creditable performance at Whitehaven before losing 22-6.

AROUND & ABOUT

with The Heritage Trust

Dave Hadfield, rugby league correspondent for the Independent wrote in his recent book Up-and-Over - - a Trek through Rugby League Land, "You can climb a steep footpath from Greenfield station and look down onto the pitch on the valley floor below. It is, I would submit, the best view of a rugby league ground in the world - one that the gods would choose if they were keen followers of the National Conference and didn't want to pay £2 to get in".



Emerson Jackman

A couple of Saturday's ago, being too old a goat to attempt the climb, I gladly paid £2 to watch a young Saddleworth Rangers first team enhance their growing reputation as knock-out kings by ousting Haydock Warriors from the National

Cup. And, without fear of wrath from any tight-fisted deity, can personally vouch that on a sunny winter's afternoon, the view from that valley floor out towards the snow-topped Pennine hills is as spectacular as it gets.

Whilst this scenic wonderland would long

hold the attention of most landscape artists, as far as I know, not once has it been responsible for halting the regular interchange of players, coaches and officials (whether direct or indirect) between the Saddleworth and Oldham clubs. Since the Roughyeds revival in 1997 the likes of Andy Proctor, Emerson Jackman, Steve Wilde, Jimmy Cowans, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Mick Coates (Jnr), Sean Cooper, Martin Maders, Stuart Fraser, Brian Quinlan, Mick Farrell, Keith Brennan and Paul Brassington have all pulled on the first team jerseys of both clubs as has current Oldham half-back Craig Dean who starred for Rangers in the 2003 Standard Cup final.

Tom Kilgannon, Jimmy Rodgers, Danny Corrigan, Andy Hollingsworth, Steven Lees, Dave Norcross, Anthony Whitehead, Paul Iberson, David Hulbert and Michael Rowe are representative of a number of Saddleworth youngsters who have tested out their skills in the Oldham Academy whilst Steve Mills turned out in the 'A' team.



Tom Kilgannon

Mark Lord, Chris Willis, Sean Gartland, Mick Coates, Mick Worrall, John Henderson, Andy Proctor and Terry Flanagan are latter-day coaches who have had an association with both clubs and have between them improved the playing standards of dozens of Oldham and Saddleworth youngsters. Nobody will be prouder today than current Rangers' boss Paddy Kirwan who played over 150 first team matches for the Watersheddings outfit before coaching Oldham Bears and later the re-born Roughyeds.

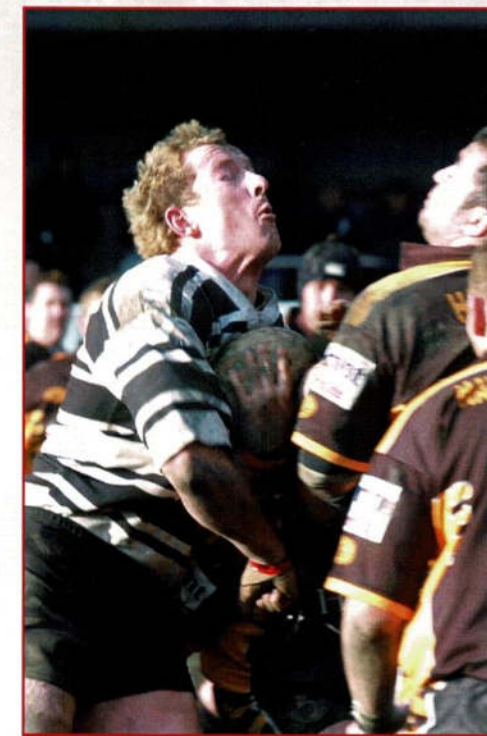
Oldham director and co-owner Sean Whitehead was a star in the all-conquering Rangers side of the 90's and Saddleworth's president Ken Fisher was a proud chairman of Oldham during the 1960's.

The Saddleworth side that turned out against Haydock included youngsters Simon Parrish son of former Oldham goal-kicking ace Mick, Liam Hall, son of former Oldham, Rochdale, Wigan and Great Britain number nine Martin and both Neil and Adam Kirwan sons of Paddy. 73 years earlier a

Saddleworth forward by the name of Bert Brown made his debut in the Oldham second-row against St Helens, the first of an array of players and coaches, who, in addition to those mentioned above, have had a foot in both camps and which includes: John Watson, Johnny Noon, Peter Bamford, Colin Smith, Des McKeown, Dennis Maders, Ray Hicks, Brian Gartland, Derek Foy, Martin Foy, Des Foy, Stephen Dobb, Pasquale D'Adamo, Joe Warburton, Glen Liddiard, Steve Robinson, Tim Street, Craig Mort, Paddy Mitchell, Chris Eckersley, Neil Flanagan, Barrie McDermott and Nick Johnson.

And long may it continue.

Brian Walker



Jimmy Rodgers



visiting today

Saddleworth Rangers

Rangers were formed in 1930 as the result of a fascinating piece of social history. A rugby union club had existed previously, its first team being comprised of mill owners and managerial staff, while the seconds was chosen from manual workers.

The latter group, unsurprisingly to our eyes, became dissatisfied with this and, as a result, Saddleworth Rangers ARLFC was born. The club has flourished since this time, winning many honours and sending plenty of notable players into the pro game.

Currently the club is engaged in a successful rebuilding programme, after some years in the doldrums. The club has re established strong links between the successful youth section and the senior section. This was cemented in the summer when the under eighteen side undertook a tour of Western Australia under the guidance of Terry Flanagan, Mick Swift and Paddy Kirwan, the latter having led the current first team to great cup runs in both the Powergen Challenge Cup and the GMB BARLA National Cup this season. The club has a longstanding and loyal committee, which is led by President Ken Fisher, Chairman Ronnie Hardaker and Secretary Colin Clare; all three men having put in more years than they would care to remember. The club is also indebted to many more committeemen and volunteers who put in the vital time and effort to make the club tick, particularly within the thriving junior section, which has just led Rangers into acquiring, coveted Clubmark status.

Rangers are proud of their tradition in the Standard Cup, having taken the trophy back to Shaw Hall Bank Road on numerous occasions, most recently in 2003 when they defeated St

Annes here at Boundary Park. On that occasion, Emerson Jackman was the winner of the Ben Powell Trophy. Rangers also hold an individual cup record through former player, Dave Cassells, who before emigrating to Australia, played in no fewer than 10 finals.

Over the years, Rangers have won all the major trophies in the game, both nationally and locally, with the early nineties being particularly profitable. In 1991, they became the first club to win the National Cup and the National Youth Cup in the same season.

Yet 1992 was a great season even by Rangers high standards, winning the National League, the National League Challenge Cup and the National Cup at Knowsley Road. This led to them being founder members of the National Conference and in 1994 they reached the National Cup Final for a record fourth time in five years.

The club is once again indebted to all its sponsors during the last season and in particular to main sponsors, Grimwood and Dix, for their continuing generosity.

David Challinor

Saddleworth Rangers Pen Pics

Terry Whalley

Terry has come through the youth section at Rangers to hold down a regular spot in the centre this season.

James Whalley

Another product of the Rangers youth section, who can always be relied upon to give his best in whichever position he plays.

Steven Jagger

Another youngster who has come through the junior section and has made a big impression on the wing this season. Has real pace and is capable of spectacular tries.

Fraser Coley

Returned to the amateur ranks after a spell at Leigh. Has impressed with his forceful running in the centre whenever he has played.

John Duffy

A rangy forward, who came to Rangers via Higginshaw. An awkward and direct forward, who is a handful for any opposition.

Lars Haigh

A prop forward, who has come on leaps and bounds this season. A long time Rangers player, who is currently battling his way back from shoulder injury.

Neil Kirwan

Neil is a student and former Waterhead junior, who has had a consistent season at hooker and displays good footballing skills.

Tom Kilgannon

Another who has come through the Rangers youth section and has made his way back to Greenfield after signing with Warrington as a junior. Extremely versatile with a good turn of pace. Currently relishing the captaincy role.

Aaron McCann

Answers to the name Stoney. A current under 18s player, who has shone at first team level with hardworking displays. A no nonsense approach to the game.

Jimmy Rogers

Signed for Oldham as a junior, but came through the junior ranks at Rangers. Has had problems with shoulder injuries, but this explosive runner is now back to full fitness and worrying defences. Has gained BARLA selection this season.

Emerson Jackman

Emerson will be keen to impress today, having signed

for Oldham in the late nineties. The veteran of the Rangers line up and has played the best rugby of his career over the last two years.

Shane Wilson

Veteran Jocky now plays, is on the committee and helps with coaching. A true Rangers loyalist, who never gives less than 100% anywhere in the pack.

Philip Wood

Recently returned to the club after his student years in Liverpool and is making a big impression in the back row of the pack. This native of Greenfield played in the Student World Cup in Australia for Ireland at hooker.

Michael Rowe

A hardworking prop, who has come to Rangers via Royton Tigers and the Oldham Academy. Currently on his way back from a back injury.

Eddie Newall

Another product of the under eighteens, who has shown promise on the wing. Scored a vital try against Hull Dockers in the current cup run.

Ryan Collins

A teenage prodigy, who signed for Bradford Bulls from Waterhead and joined Rangers this season. A goalkicking scrum half, who played a big role in the win at Walney Central.

Paul Ibersen

A Fitton Hill lad who has featured heavily over the last two seasons. Has had experience in the Oldham Academy set up. A punishing tackler, who is most at home at full back.

Danny Attersall

A young winger with a real turn of pace. He has established himself last year and enjoyed the tour of Australia in the summer.

Adam Kirwan

Younger brother of Neil, who is currently holding down the stand off spot. Played a big role in the win at Walney Central in the last round.

Simon Parrish

Son of former Oldham favourite, Mick, who is at home in the centre or the back of the pack. Has made his mark in senior rugby over the last couple of seasons..

Johnny Horton

Young player from a soccer background, who has taken to rugby league like a natural. At home at half back or hooker and is currently interesting Bradford Bulls

halstead's choice

by Roger Halstead

CRAIG Dean will always have a soft spot for Saddleworth Rangers . . . and that's down to Mick Slicker and the short time he spent with the Greenfield-based amateur club in 2003.

Now aged 28, and back in the pro game with the Roughyeds, the Leigh lad thoroughly enjoyed his stint at Rangers under Mick's command at a time when he was feeling his way back into rugby following two serious ankle injuries while first with Halifax and then with Leigh.

Slicker, in fact, has had a huge part to play in the Craig Dean story because the Oldham-based coach had charge of the academy at Halifax when Craig first burst on to the scene at Thrum Hall as a precocious 16-year-old.

Malcolm Reilly signed him for Fax and the Yorkshire club had high hopes of their starlet from Leigh East.

Slicker, now out of the game but starting to fancy a comeback, will never forget the little maestro who took the Fax academy side by storm.

"As a kid he was brilliant," recalled Mick this week. "He had the lot. He had great hands and he was like lightning. His attitude was spot-on, too.

"And if you gave him his head he had the ability to run the game. Put him behind a good pack and provide him with runners and he could put them through holes all afternoon."

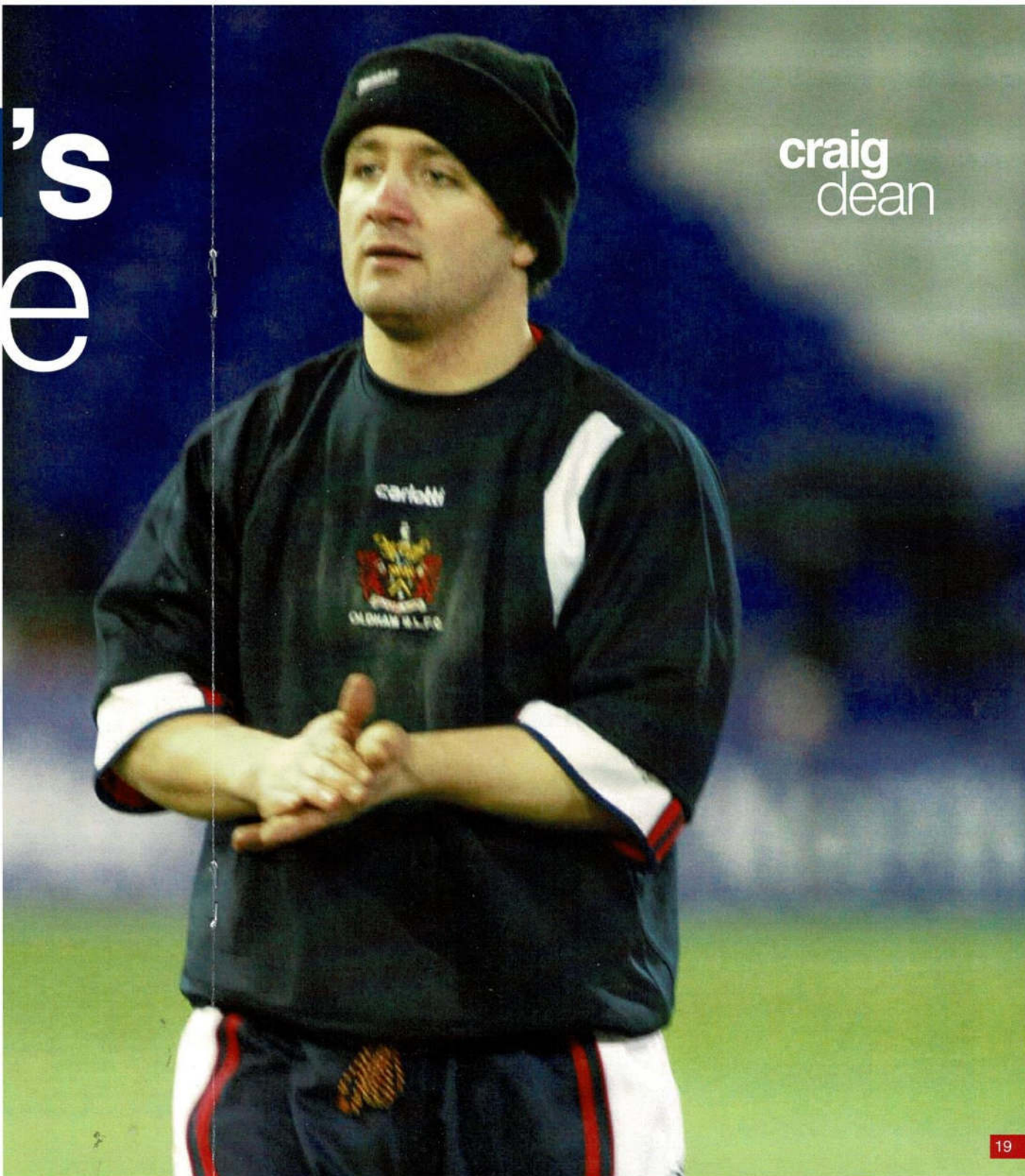
Sadly, things didn't work out for Dean as most good judges had predicted.

He snapped the ligaments in his left ankle in a match against Leeds and that, plus other injuries, caused him to leave the Yorkshire outfit the next season and go "home" to Leigh as a part-time pro where he could pursue his apprenticeship as a joiner.

Said Slicker: "He picked up a few injuries during a period when there was a big turnover of coaches at Halifax. He always had a wise head on him and he decided he would go down the road of learning a trade.

PLAYER PROFILE

craig
dean





craig dean

Continued...

long-term future long after his rugby days were over.

"He was looking ahead -- that was Craig all over -- and at Leigh he was able to combine rugby while learning his trade."

Once again, however, fate dealt him a cruel blow. He again tore the ligaments in his left ankle and this time the injury looked like ending his rugby league career once and for all.

"I spent the next two years out of the game, concentrating on my job," explained Craig. "I got into fitting kitchens and general building work with Alan Hadcroft and then, out of the blue, I got a call from Mick Slicker asking if I would consider helping him out for a few weeks at Saddleworth."

"I owed a lot to Mick and I was delighted to get out my boots again and go up to Saddleworth. I did about 11 or 12 games. They were a great set of lads. It was a good set-up and I liked it a lot."

"They were struggling a bit at the time. One of the problems was the difficulty in getting everyone turning up regularly for training. I felt sorry for the club and sorry for Mick. They deserved better than that."

"I also felt sorry for top club officials like Ronnie Hardaker and Ken Fisher. I always felt they would have given their right arm in the cause of the club if they had to."

"If my memory is right I think we managed to stave off relegation and we also reached the 2003 Standard Cup final against St Anne's here at Boundary Park. That was a bonus."

"It's ironic that I am now back at Boundary Park playing a cup tie for Oldham -- against Rangers. How will it go? I haven't a clue. It's one of those which we could win comfortably or which could quite easily be too close to call."

"We will certainly have to be on our mettle. That's for sure."

"Rangers will give it everything and if I know Emmy (Emerson Jackman) he will be determined to produce one helluva show."

"Once today's tie is out of the way, I hope Rangers do well over the rest of the season. A club like theirs deserves better

"It was a massive decision for a young lad. He was on a decent contract at Halifax, but he started at the bottom in joinery on little money, taking the view that he needed to safeguard his

than to be at the foot of division two in the Conference.

"I will never forget my short time there, and I always look out for their results every Saturday night."

Having got back his rugby appetite, Craig didn't need too much persuading to go part-time pro again, this time with Chorley.

"Timmy Street kept on at me to give it a go with them," he said, "and in the end I went along and signed on. Darren Abram was coach. We got in a few more lads and we had a great season. We reached the play-offs, but lost to Sheffield in the semi-final."

Come the end of that season there followed another spell in which Craig put work and family first, but once his great mate Alan Hadcroft signed for the Roughyeds there was always the chance that he would follow suit.

"Haddy and John Pendlebury both kept on at me," he recalled, "and in the end I signed a short-term contract which runs to the end of the Northern Rail Cup. By then I will have made up my mind whether I want to carry on or go back to work."

"Gut feeling? I want to carry on. But just at present I am juggling my time between family, work and rugby. As it works out the one night I am unable to train is Friday and in the past few weeks that's been the one night when the Roughyeds had a floodlit area to train on."

"It isn't an ideal situation, but John (Pendlebury) is doing the best he can in the circumstances."

Craig lives in Leigh with his wife Alison and their two daughters -- Quianna-Mae, who is five, and Luanne-Mae, who was one last Boxing Day.

He is happy to play anywhere in the team, but he can't disguise the fact that if he had a choice he wouldn't be wearing No 1 on his shirt, as he has in recent matches.

"With my stature I'm hardly the archetypal fullback," he said, "but John describes me as a fullback with a difference."

"I'm no long-striding six-footer, that's for sure, but John seems happy with what I'm doing at fullback and you play where you're picked. We'll see how things unfold as time goes by."

For now, Craig has a Challenge Cup third-round tie on his mind... oh, and the little matter of coming head to head with 'Emmy' and the rest of his old Saddleworth mates.

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journalistic license

by Matthew Chambers

To say today's game is much-anticipated would be to understate the case.

The very moment the final whistle sounded up in Walney to confirm Saddleworth's place in the third round of the Powergen Challenge Cup, questions beginning with "what if..." were heard sounding in the pubs, clubs and homes of everyone with even a passing interest in the Oldham rugby scene.

Invariably, the hopes of an inter-town game are dashed. The last time such a match-up took place was 70 years ago, as Oldham defeated Higginsshaw 38-2 - it's fair to say not many will remember that.

Memories will certainly be forged here today, though. Not least for former Roughyeds coach Paddy Kirwan, his lads Neil and Adam, Jimmy Rogers, Emerson Jackman and Michael Rowe. All have connections with the Oldham club, but all will have eyes only for black-and-white today. Saddleworth haven't had a great season in the league, but in the cup competitions there have been some tremendous ding-dong battles, especially at Greenfield.

Anyone lucky enough to have witnessed Rangers' thrilling 33-32 victory over Hull Dockers in the first round of today's competition will realise that their current position belies a side who can produce excellent, flowing rugby on its day.

It's the run of the mill fixtures in which Paddy Kirwan's side have let themselves down.

Still, today's game could hardly be described as that, especially given events behind the scenes at Oldham of late.

A slightly surreal period earlier in the week saw John Pendlebury resign over training facilities, and former Catalans Dragons coach Steve Deakin take over in the still-warm hotseat less than 24 hours later.

As a member of the Deakin clan, it won't have escaped Steve's attention that today's game - his first in full charge - is a little out of the ordinary.

It's a great occasion not only for the two clubs involved, but also for rugby in the town.

Too often the amateur and professional codes view each other's workings with suspicion, rather than embracing the positive aspects of what each offers.

Hopefully, the petty politics will be shoved to one side today, and everyone can enjoy a match that embodies the romantic element of sport.

Matthew



the bootroom

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Roughyed

Kids & Co

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This weeks mascot is the lucky winner of the competition run by the Oldham Advertiser, so unfortunately we have no details. We hope that they enjoy their day and bring the team lots of luck for todays game.

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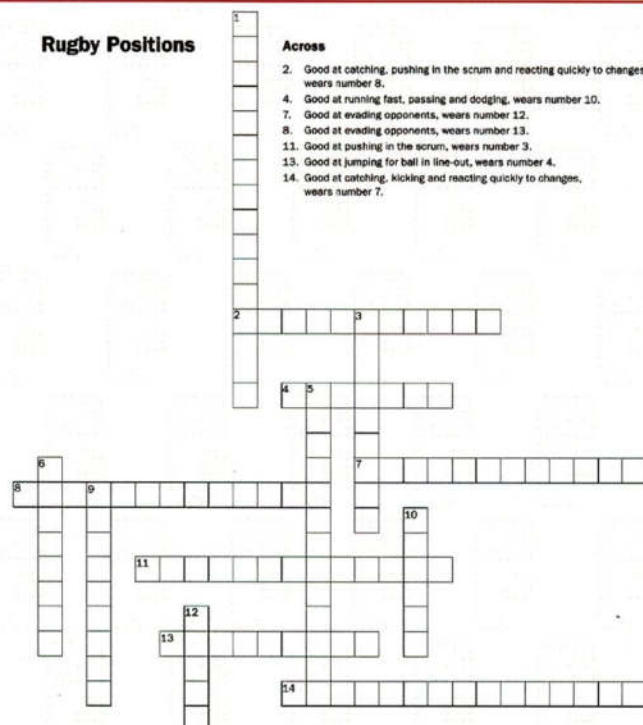
Today we have a half-time cross word about the positions that are played in rugby.

Good luck to the lads today we want to hear all you kids cheering for them (and you mums and dads).

See You Soon

Carole, Janet and Nicola

Rugby Positions



Across

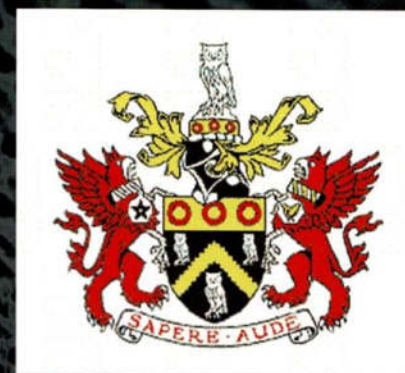
2. Good at catching, pushing in the scrum and reacting quickly to changes, wears number 8.
4. Good at running fast, passing and dodging, wears number 10.
7. Good at evading opponents, wears number 12.
8. Good at evading opponents, wears number 13.
11. Good at pushing in the scrum, wears number 3.
13. Good at jumping for ball in line-out, wears number 4.
14. Good at catching, kicking and reacting quickly to changes, wears number 7.

Down

1. Good at catching, kicking and reacting quickly to changes, wears number 6.
3. Good at running very fast, wears number 14.
5. Good at pushing in the scrum, wears number 1.
6. Good at catching and kicking the ball, wears number 15.
9. Good at working with forwards and backs, wears number 9.
10. Good at receiving ball in the scrum, wears number 2.
12. Good at running very fast, wears number 11.

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SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

Today sees a dream match for this level of the Challenge Cup competition. This is the perfect local derby and should whet the appetite of any rugby league enthusiast in Oldham. To add further local interest, the Club has just announced the appointment of Steve Deakin as the new coach following the dramatic turn of events this week. With such local flavour the attendance should be a barometer with which to gauge the overall enthusiasm for rugby league in the town, but only time will tell.

**QUIZ NIGHT - 21ST MARCH
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Best of luck to Steve Deakin in his new coaching role.

Sheila

on this day

Don Yates looks back to March 12th yesteryear

To-day's Powergen Challenge Cup opponents, Saddleworth Rangers, enjoyed their best ever season thirteen years ago.

During that 1992-93 campaign Saddleworth achieved the unique distinction of winning the National Conference League Championship, the National Conference League Challenge Cup and the National Amateur Cup. The following season they retained the National Amateur Cup. En route to that success, on Saturday 12th March 1994, they travelled up to Maryport, Cumbria for a tricky fifth round tie against Glasson Rangers. Saddleworth won that match rather more easily than the 14-10 scoreline would suggest. The only Glasson try came in the closing minute of the match, by which time Saddleworth had the contest won. They scored three tries through Andy Proctor, John Fleming and Paul Coates with Sean Whitehead adding a goal.

Since those halcyon days Saddleworth's fortunes have taken a dip but, under the guidance of former Roughyeds coach Paddy Kirwan, the club is now back on the upward trend. A fine balance of youth and experience has led to the transformation and this was no better shown than it was twelve months ago, on Saturday 12th March 2005. That day Rangers entertained title-chasing York Acon and soon fell behind to a penalty. The experienced Emerson Jackman led the way with the first Saddleworth try which was followed by touchdowns from recruits who came through the productive Saddleworth youth section, Simon Parrish, Matthew Bottom and Ewan Winston. After the interval Parrish grabbed a second try and Adam Kirwan completed the scoring with five placed goals and a dropped goal in the 31-8 victory.

Several talented players have gone on to play professionally after coming through the youth ranks at Shaw Hall Bank Road and this day twenty-one years ago was a significant date for one of them. It was on Tuesday 12th March 1985 that the former Saddleworth junior Gary Ainsworth joined

St.Helens on loan from Leigh. Ainsworth remained at Knowsley Road only for the rest of that 1984-85 campaign but it certainly was a memorable four months for the hard-working hooker. He made 16 appearances for Saints and scored eight tries. Ainsworth toured New Zealand with St.Helens at the end of that season but the highlight of his spell with Saints came when champions Hull Kingston Rovers were beaten in the end-of-season Premiership play-off final. He scored the second of seven St.Helens' tries during that remarkable 36-16 victory. Unfortunately Leigh and Saints could not come to an agreement over a transfer fee so Ainsworth returned to Hilton Park and the relative obscurity of Second Division rugby.

Sadly, it was on this day six years ago, on Sunday 12th March 2000, that the death occurred of the Saddleworth Rangers stalwart Roly Lloyd. He was 73 years of age. Roly had been associated with Rangers since the mid-1940s when he joined the club from Lees. At the time he was a quick-witted inside back who preferred to play scrum-half. When his playing days were over Roly joined the committee and was club secretary for a number of years. He also enjoyed a spell as chairman but was happy to serve Rangers in whatever capacity he could. Roly played for Rangers before they operated from their current Shaw Hall Bank Road headquarters. When that site became available he, and other Saddleworth officials and players, set about developing the ground, clubhouse and training facilities which, at the time, were the envy of the amateur game. Away from Saddleworth Roly served on the BARLA committee at the time of its inception. Roly Lloyd was rugby league, and Saddleworth Rangers, through and through. At times like these we should all remember that wise old saying, 'The people who drink the water should remember those who dug the well.'



Back row: Mark Roberts, Danny Guest, Ged Corcoran, Danny Nanyin, Ian Hodson, Andy Bailey.

Middle row: John Pendlebury (coach), Paul Hulbert (kit man), Mike Callan, James Kirkland, Gareth Barber, Alex Wilkinson, Dean Gorton, Lee Wingfield, Gareth Hayes, Keith Brennan (assistant coach).

Front row: Wayne Corcoran, Simon Svabic, Andy Gorey, Alan Hadercroft, Chris Hough, Craig Dean, John Hough.



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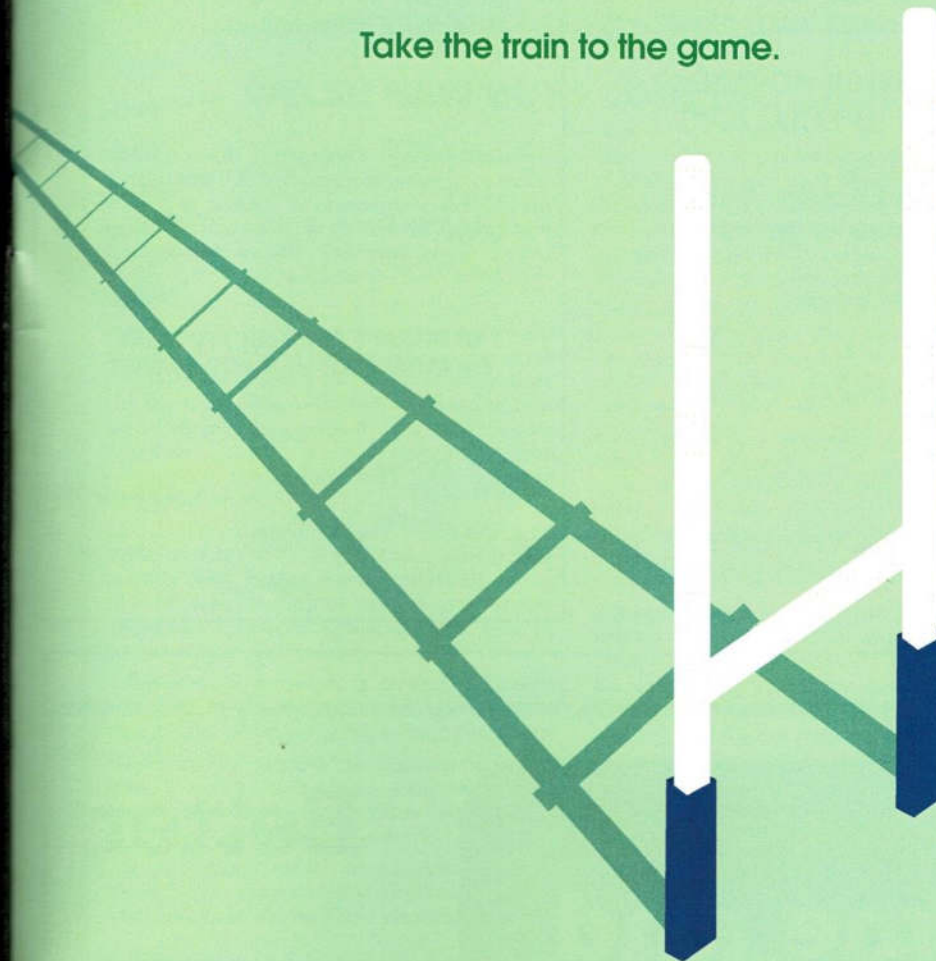
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with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



WELSH NEW BOYS LOOKING GOOD

WHEN Welsh newcomers Celtic Crusaders outlined their aim to gain promotion from NL2 in their first season, it raised more than a few eyebrows. But, although the opposition they have faced to date are some way short of the top NL2 teams, their start could hardly have been more impressive.

Sunday's 78-14 demolition of London Skolars was the Crusaders' fourth straight win, during which time they have racked 240 points and conceded just 30. Admittedly, the Welsh will need to beat much better opposition if they are to gain promotion from a tremendously tough competition. But to date, they could not have done much more.

Just as impressively on Sunday, they attracted a crowd of 1,421 in their first home game at the Brewery Field, setting them up perfectly, in the eyes of Australian coach John Dixon, for this weekend's Powergen Challenge Cup visit of Russians Lokomotiv Moscow.

"Our aim was to put on a display that would bring the fans back again next week against Moscow and I think we've done that," Dixon said.

"We're excited to have the Russians here next week. I don't know anything about them apart from how well they did in Russia last year so I know they'll give us a good game."

The Crusaders have even spoken about attempting to attract a 3,000 crowd to the game, which would be a remarkable achievement.

The Welsh-Russian meeting is one of a host of fascinating ties in today's Third Round draw. Of the other international meetings, Blackpool Panthers host French side Toulouse for the second consecutive year, while Limoux travel to Batley Bulldogs and Whitehaven take on Pia.

There are some intriguing local derbies, including Saddleworth Rangers' game with Oldham, and Keighley Cougars travelling to Odsal to face Bradford side West Bowling. Former West Bowling coach Glen Barraclough is now on the backroom staff at Cougar Park.

Similarly, on Thursday night Rochdale Hornets loose forward Tommy Goulden was due to travel back to his former club Leigh Miners Rangers, where he won the BARLA Player of the Year and captained the amateurs to National Conference League Grand Final glory.

Elsewhere, the draw this year has placed four National League Two clubs against each other. London Skolars and Gateshead Thunder meet in the capital, with both teams keen to progress to the next round and secure a potentially lucrative meeting with a Super League side.

And Swinton Lions entertain Sheffield Eagles at Park Lane, in a fixture that will give an early indication into both teams' prospective chances in National League Two this year.

* The exclusive Northern Rail Cup ratings can be found in the March edition of Rugby League World, out now

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2006 fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
22/1/06	Rochdale Hornets	Law Cup	A	14:00	42-8	L	1,114
27/1/06	Leeds Rhino's	Friendly	H	20:00	16-8	W	3,191
15/2/06	Rochdale Hornets	NR Cup	A	19:45	18-16	L	920
19/2/06	Halifax RLFC	NR Cup	H	15:00	26-42	L	1,268
26/2/06	Keighley Cougars	NR Cup	H	15:00	25-24	W	764
8/3/06	Halifax RLFC	NR Cup	A	19:30	66-8	L	
12/3/06	Saddleworth Rangers	POWERGEN CC 3RD RD	H	15:00			
19/3/06	Rochdale Hornets	NR Cup	H	15:00			
26/3/06	Keighley Cougars	NR Cup	A	15:00			
2/4/06		POWERGEN CC 4TH RD					
9/4/06	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	H	15:00			
14/4/06	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	A	15:00			
17/4/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	H	15:00			
30/4/06	Leigh Centurions	NL1	A	15:00			
14/5/06	Whitehaven	NL1	H	15:00			
21/5/06		POWERGEN CC 5TH RD					
28/5/06	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	A	15:00			
4/6/06	Halifax RLFC	NL1	A	15:00			
	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
11/6/06	York City Knights	NL1	H	15:00			
25/6/06	York City Knights	NL1	A	15:00			
2/7/06	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	H	15:00			
9/7/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	A	15:00			
21/7/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	H	19:45			
30/7/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	A	15:00			
	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP SEMI FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
6/8/06	Halifax R L F C	NL1	H	15:00			
13/8/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	A	15:00			
20/8/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	H	15:00			
26/8/06	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
3/9/06	Leigh Centurions	NL1	H	15:00			
10/9/06	Whitehaven	NL1	A	15:00			
17/9/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
24/9/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
1/10/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
8/10/06	LHF Healthplan Grand Final & Play Off Final						

Key
NR Cup - Northern Rail Cup
Powergen CC - Powergen Challenge Cup
NL1 - National League Division 1

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