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Vikings Welcome

Good afternoon and welcome to the Halton Stadium for this LHF National League One clash with Oldham.

Last weekend's victory over Whitehaven saw a marked improvement in the team's defence from the previous week at Batley. The two points gained against one of our promotion rivals was a great way to start the second half of the season and with performances improving week on week we should be looking forward to the play-offs and the challenges they will bring. Damien Blanch was impressive on his debut and with Jordan James and Oliver Wilkes committing to the Club for the remainder of the season we are certainly strengthening the squad and giving ourselves every opportunity to achieve our goal of Super League in 2007.

It was good to see the Senior Academy playing a curtain-raiser last weekend and the Stadium groundstaff were delighted with the performance of the pitch. Hopefully we will be able to have other curtain raisers before the end of the season. Chairman Stephen Vaughan has stated this week the need for increased crowds. Analysis of the 2005 gates, where we averaged 6,800, showed 5,000 of these fans

were 'home' fans. We're now down to 3,000 home fans, a reduction of 40%. Whilst fans have voiced their opinions about the standard of the opposition or the style of rugby we are playing, last season we only won a handful of games and were never out of the bottom two whilst this season we are currently joint second having won seven out of nine league fixtures with a game in hand.

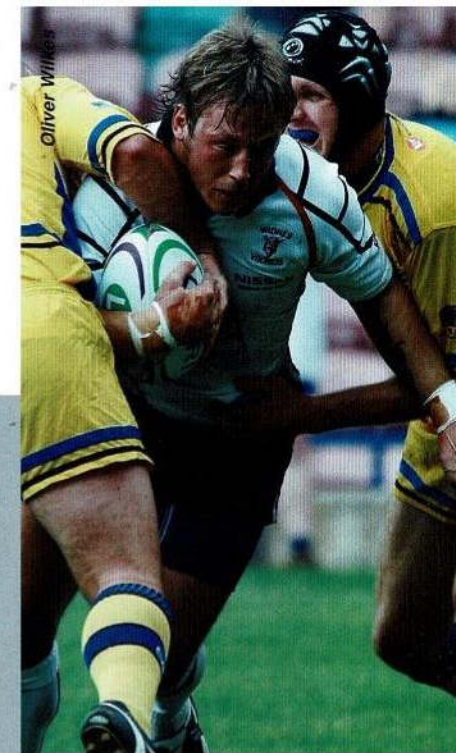
After today we have away fixtures at Rochdale, Hull KR and Halifax and if we maintain our winning run I'd like to think that we'd have average crowds of 4,000 for the final three home games.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome back the players from St Gerard's Widnes and Ravensbury Community School, Manchester following their success during last week's half-time game.

Enjoy the game

Pat Cluskey
General Manager

Cover photograph courtesy of Widnes Weekly News.



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steve mccormack

■ There was certainly a defensive improvement from the game at Batley to last weekend's victory over Whitehaven! We only conceded two tries, one from a kick and the other an interception. I take it you're happy with the way the players responded?

I am happy that we made a big improvement from the Batley game but I am still looking for massive improvements to this area of our game. Our commitment and attitude last week in defence was tremendous and I will be looking for another step up in defence today

■ We had a lot of possession during the game but on occasions failed to capitalise on our attacking positions. Have you been working on that area of our game in training this week?

We work on all aspects of performance throughout the week. We didn't kill the game off as early as we would have liked but we did create a lot of opportunities to do so. The team does need to find that "killer instinct" and we do need to convert more line breaks into tries. However, a lot of credit needs to go to the Whitehaven defence who worked tirelessly throughout the game.

■ With Oliver Wilkes and Jordan James signing for the season and Damien Blanch making an impressive start with a try-saving tackle and a smartly taken try, the squad is certainly looking stronger.

Yes it is definitely looking stronger. It was good to see Aaron Summers and Steve Nash performing well in the Senior Academy game last week and it gives the team that added depth we are looking for

■ The heat played a significant role in last weekend's game did you make any special provisions for that or for today's encounter – assuming we're still in the middle of a heatwave.

Our Conditioner, Andy Haigh, works very hard to make sure our players take in the required amount of fluids before and after every game.

The players are weighed when they arrive at the ground on match days and are weighed after the match.

Each player is required to take on board fluid after the game to ensure they are re-hydrated.

■ Today's opponents Oldham are without a win so far in the league but came close to upsetting Rochdale last weekend. Some might see this as a game to be taken lightly but I guess you wouldn't share that opinion!

Definitely not. We will be giving Oldham the respect they deserve. I have watched last week's game against Rochdale and they have made massive improvements. This game is important for both sides and we are expecting a very tough game.

■ With the next three games away from home is it important to get a good win today to leave the spectators feeling upbeat before they start on their travels to Rochdale, Hull KR and Halifax?

As a team we have seen a big change over the last few weeks with regard to the support we have been getting.

Since the York away game our supporters have been tremendous and it definitely does make a difference. We are hoping that the supporters will get behind us like we know they can. The team are aware that we have some very important games coming up, starting today.



WIDNES VIKINGS 2006

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CLUB CONTACTS

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MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

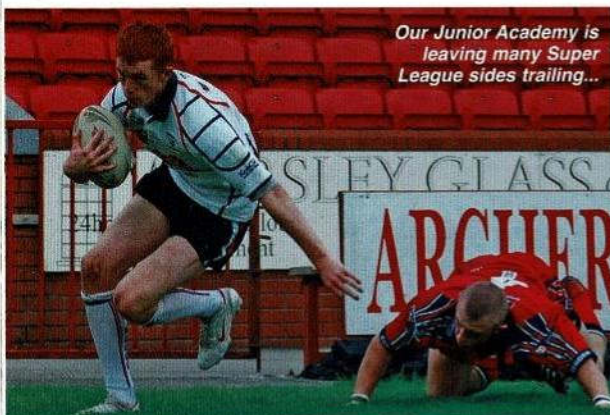
Designed and Produced by TOBINDESIGN

Edited by Pat Cluskey & Steve Fox

Editorial by Martin Birrell, Ian Cheveau, Paul Cook, Linsey Cullen, Steve Fox, Matthew Jenkins, John Lawless, Mark Naughton and Adam White.

Photography by Dave Williams, Andrew Varley, Stuart Bogg (Widnes Weekly News), Ron Sutton, Dave Gillespie (Widnes World).

Views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editors or Widnes Vikings RLFC



Our Junior Academy is leaving many Super League sides trailing...

the cook report

I think it's fair to say that some of the confidence that has been missing around the club for much of the season is starting to return.

During the recent run of four winning games Widnes have shown themselves to be more solid performers than they had looked at the start of the season. Last week's win against Whitehaven wasn't overly spectacular, but it got the job done and the defensive effort was significantly improved on the previous week at Batley. Fair enough, Widnes had plenty of the ball, but in stifling conditions they didn't let their overall game drop off and the visitors only reached

He made one try-saving tackle, turning a man on his back over the line, and then when his own scoring chance came, he was quick enough to win the race to the touchdown.

All in all it was a thoroughly encouraging debut.

Everyone is aware of how important it is to get into Super League, but the performances of the Widnes Academy sides would seem to highlight the fact even more.

In the younger age group, particularly, Widnes have had a fantastic season so far and obviously have a really good crop of young players. Now you can never say for definite how many will genuinely progress to become established first team players, but the club would obviously want

double figures from a last minute interception. Defending to that sort of standard will mean the Vikings will win most games.

Stern tests are obviously still to come, with the ultimate being away to Hull KR, but if Widnes make it five wins out of five against Oldham this afternoon then they will really set themselves up. Oldham have had a thoroughly miserable season to this point and, while I have every sympathy, I wouldn't want to see them start to reverse their fortunes today.

The Vikings need to generate as much momentum as they possibly can so that they can take advantage of any cracks appearing in the Hull KR armour.

It still promises to be an exciting race for Super League, especially when a month ago, there weren't too many offering much for Widnes's chances.

There has only been one opportunity to make an assessment, but I think Damien Blanch would have won many admirers for his efforts in his first game after joining from Castleford.

I'll be the first to admit to not having seen him in action before, but he looked strong running the ball out from acting half and always threatened to break a tackle.

ction from last weekend... Terry O'Connor takes on the Whitehaven defence

the team is on a winning run, quality players have been added to the squad and things are looking encouraging...

to be taking advantage of this generation in years to come.

That might not be so easy, however, if a lengthy spell in the National League looks on the cards. Player development was

set back when Widnes were last out of the top flight, and having done a terrific job to re-

establish the strength of the Academy set-up it would be sorely disappointing to see it affected by the Vikings' league status.

It was interesting to see Stephen Vaughan's comments about the revenue coming in through the gate on match days, especially given the fact that many of those attending regularly have already paid in the form of a season ticket. I thought the crowds for the last two home matches were slightly disappointing and while Widnes didn't set the world alight at the start of the season, you would hope that the recent run of form might start bringing a few more spectators back to the club.

If they could get the numbers up towards 4,000 that would start to make a substantial difference. Once people get out of the habit of going - at least to all the home games - it's very difficult to get them back into it, but their support is vital to the club's future.

I know stay-aways always say give us a winning team playing good rugby and we'll come back, but the team is on a winning run, quality players have been added to the squad and things are generally looking more encouraging than they have for some time.

It's up to us all to try and get an extra person down to the game and either back in the habit of watching, or watching for the first time. Their support, and ours, could be crucial to the club's future.

pic courtesy of Widnes Weekly News

Paul Cook

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Ken Ryder

A warm welcome to Ken and his guests. Ken is a long-distance fan travelling from Driffield in East Yorkshire for every game and was one of the entrants in the 'Name the Stand' promotion.



RUNCORN & WIDNES

Weekly News

Herald & Post

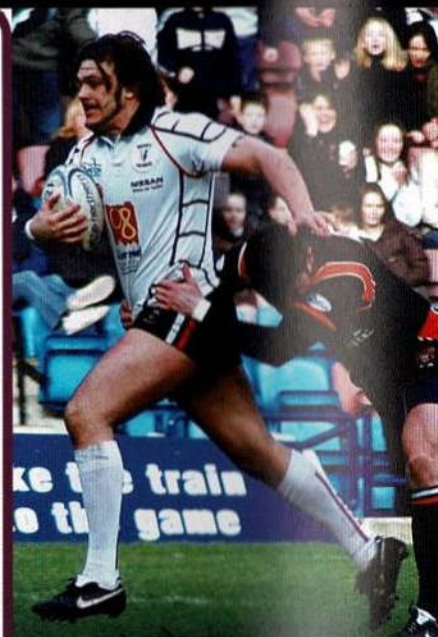
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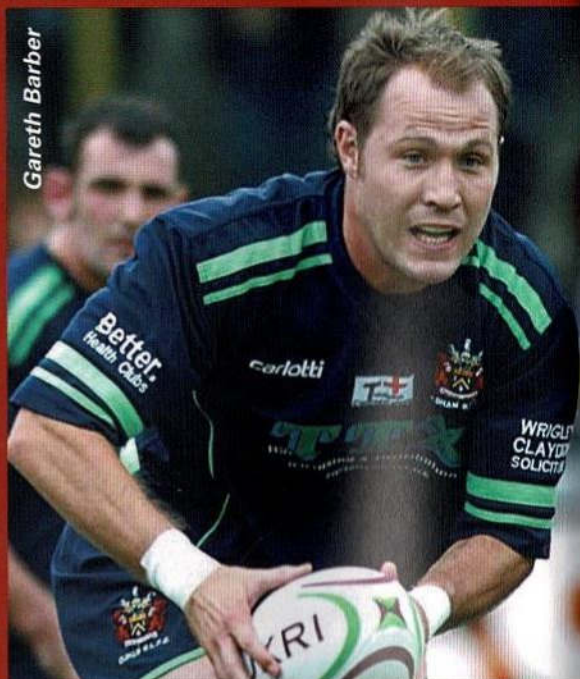
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Top Gun

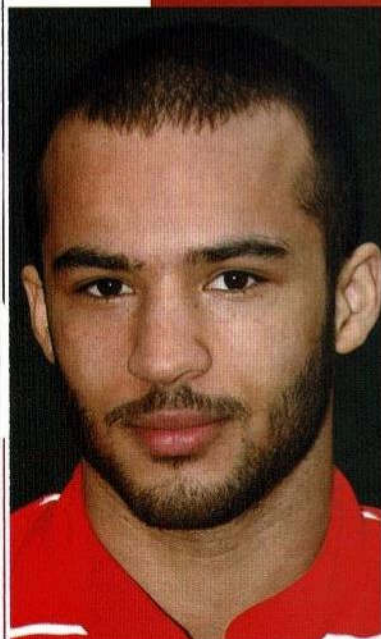
■ Oldham have struggled all season but in Gareth Barber they have a player with the ability to open up opposition defences. The talented utility back has enjoyed success in the halves and at centre but is currently playing at full back where he is an exciting attacking threat. Oldham born but a Warrington junior, Barber joined the Roughyeds in 2000 and has been an important player for the club ever since. In 2001 he earned selection in the National League under 21s side. This year Barber has scored five tries and kicked 23 goals to be Oldham's leading points scorer and is one player who could spark a survival bid.



Gareth Barber

Shooting Star

■ Desi Williams is a young player hoping to kick-start his career on loan at Oldham after once being tipped for Super League stardom. A three-quarter with pace to burn, Londoner Williams joined Wigan after coming through the ranks at London Skolars, and he made his Super League debut in 2004 – the same year he represented England Academy on their southern hemisphere tour. He made just two appearances in the Wigan first team though and left for Hull KR at the end of last season. But with Rovers boasting such a strong squad Williams has been loaned out, first to Barrow, and now to Oldham where he will spend the rest of the season. Still a youngster at just 20 years old, Williams' potential remains and Oldham will be looking to unlock his promise in the coming months.



The Boss

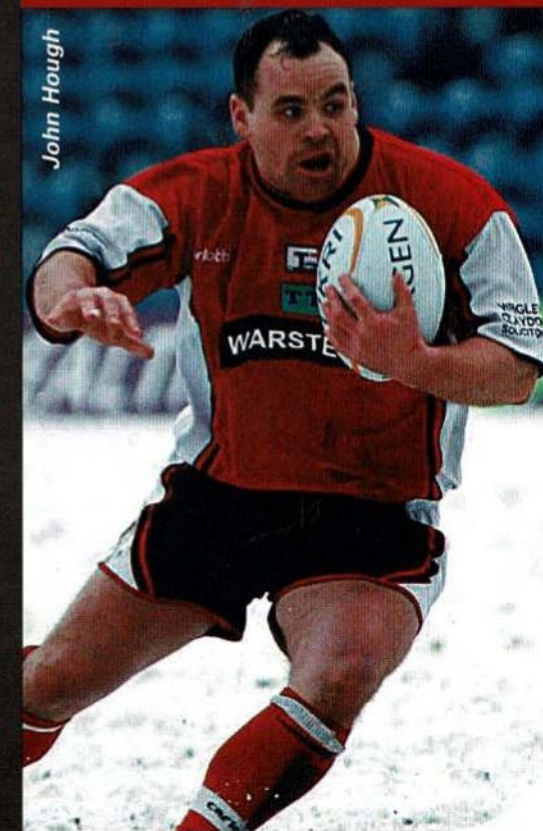
■ Steve Deakin was supposed to be spending 2006 leading Catalans Dragons into Super League. Instead he's facing the very different challenge of turning around the fortunes of his home town club. Deakin was a shock Super League casualty before the season had even begun, but a new opportunity soon arose when John Pendlebury vacated the Oldham hotseat. Deakin brings vast experience to the role having spent nearly a quarter of a century in coaching at a host of different clubs. Notably he has worked in Super League as assistant coach at London Broncos and Sheffield Eagles. As a head coach he has enjoyed success at Keighley Cougars and in France with Cannes and UTC. His Super League chance never came across the channel but he may just get equal satisfaction from the challenge of rejuvenating his home town club.

Unsung Hero

■ John Hough has seen all the highs and lows of life at Oldham Rugby League Club since becoming the re-formed club's first signing back in 1997. The hard working hooker helped guide the new club through a difficult first year and eventually into one of the division's top sides by 2001. A signing from Warrington, he featured briefly in Super League making 9 appearances in '96 and '97. Now in his ninth season at the club, 30 year old Hough has made over 200 appearances for the Roughyeds. That experience combined with his work ethic and organisation make him a key figure in the club's relegation battle.

Tough Nut

■ Phil Farrell is set to make his second debut for Oldham today after re-joining the club last week. The tough back rower was a popular player during his first spell with the club and will add experience and quality to a young pack. Farrell first joined Oldham from the Wigan academy in 2000 and was a key member of their Grand Final team the following year with his performances earning him selection in the division's all star team. He continued to be one of Oldham's top performers before leaving the club for rivals Rochdale at the end of 2004. Perhaps his finest moments have come with the Oldham club though and his return provides a timely boost for the Roughyeds.



John Hough

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his&hers...

In each programme this season we will be asking a Vikings player and their partner to lift the lid on home life, this week Linsey Cullen talks to Gary & Michelle Hulse...

Linsey: Firstly Michelle, we have heard you met Gary at a bar in Warrington, but what was it that attracted you to him?

Michelle: His looks at first, and then his kindness, he's such a nice and genuine person.

Linsey: Hand on heart, who takes the longest to get ready to go out between the pair of you?

Michelle: That's definitely me, he is so quick compared to me. It's not that I take particularly long doing any one thing, I

just get easily distracted and take my time.

Linsey: Is Gary the romantic type or does he only bring flowers home when he's in the dog house?

Michelle: No, he's definitely a romantic. Not so long ago he went out and bought me loads of clothes all on his own. He picked them all, and I loved every single thing he bought, he's really thoughtful like that.

Linsey: OK stop it, you're making every woman reading this very jealous, he must have a flaw?

Michelle: I guess he has OCD about everything being in order, he's a very organised person. He also has to be the person who locks the house up at night, just little things like that really. And the typical man thing of, when he's looking for something, he'll glance in a place and say he's looked there, then I'll go and look and find it straight away.

Linsey: Does he help out around the

house or does he disappear when the duster comes out?

Michelle: No, he's actually quite good around the house, the only thing is when he's cleaning up, you have to follow him round and do it properly. But when it comes to things like nappy changes he's really good, and he dresses Honor and plays with her. He can work the washing machine and he can cook, although he makes a right mess, his speciality is hotpot.

Linsey: Imagine a top Hollywood

director came up to you and said 'Michelle I want to do a film about your life,' who would you get to play yourself, and who would play Gary?

Michelle: It'd be Brad Pitt for Gary, because he's my favourite actor. He's Gary's too, but he just copies that off me. And for me I'd say Nicole Kidman because she's a really good actress.

Linsey: If you won the lottery at the weekend, what would you do with the money?

Michelle: I'd buy a great big mansion, and do the same for my mum, I'd buy my dad a top of the range sports car, spoil the rest of my family and invest the rest.

Linsey: Describe Gary as a player in three words

Michelle: Hardworking, reliable, 100%

Linsey: Describe him as a husband in three words.

Michelle: Fun, bubbly and kind, he would do anything for you, he'd give you the world if he could,



Linsey: Gary, it's been quite a while now since we've seen you in the black and white of the Widnes Vikings, when are you expecting to make your return to the field of play?

Gary: This has been the longest I've been out with an injury, and thanks to the great rehab I'm having it's looking like I'll be back in four weeks.

That's pretty quick for the type of injury I had, I just can't wait to get back out there. It has been so frustrating, but the club have been really supportive, and this time has made me mentally much tougher.

Linsey: How has your wife been through this time, because is must be quite difficult not playing?

Gary: She's been great, I'm sure I've been annoying her but she just tells me to get on with it and try and keep my head up, she's really supportive.

Linsey: How long have you and your wife, Michelle, been together for?

Gary: We got together in 2001, so five years now, and we've been married for two years. I first saw her in Churchill's in Warrington (Now 53 degrees North), and I was attracted to her looks and the way she danced. We have two children, Ryan is nine and Honor who was one recently.

Linsey: So was Michelle a rugby league fan before she met you?

Gary: No she was never really into it before she met me, but she comes to the games now when I'm playing to cheer me on.

Linsey: Word for word, what was the last text message she sent to you?

Gary: I love you so much x.

Linsey: What would you say is the best thing about her?

I love everything about her, I'm just so lucky to have found her.

Linsey: Okay before everyone starts weeping, let's talk rugby for a while. Do you have any superstitions on matchdays?

Gary: I don't think they're really superstitions, but I tend to be sick in the toilets before the game.

And I have to have everything lined up in order at my peg, my kit has all got to be organised and in line. I have specific meals on the night before a match too, I get to pick what we have for tea, Michelle picks the rest of the time.

Linsey: Are you hard to deal with after a defeat?

Gary: I must be difficult yeah, but Michelle tends to just keep my head up, she takes some of the pressure away from me in the way she deals with it.

Linsey: So is she good around the house, your very own domestic goddess?

Gary: Yeah, she's a real housewife! No, seriously she's really good around the house, she does practically everything and it is hard work.

With having the children as well it's like she's working full-time, she cleans, irons, washes, everything. Her signature dish in the kitchen is spag bol.

Linsey: Who would you get to play yourself, and who would play Michelle in a Hollywood film of your lives?

Gary: To play me it would have to be Brad Pitt, well, he's cool and sexy isn't he? Similar to myself really!

As for Michelle, I'd choose Sienna Miller, and I don't think I really need to explain why!

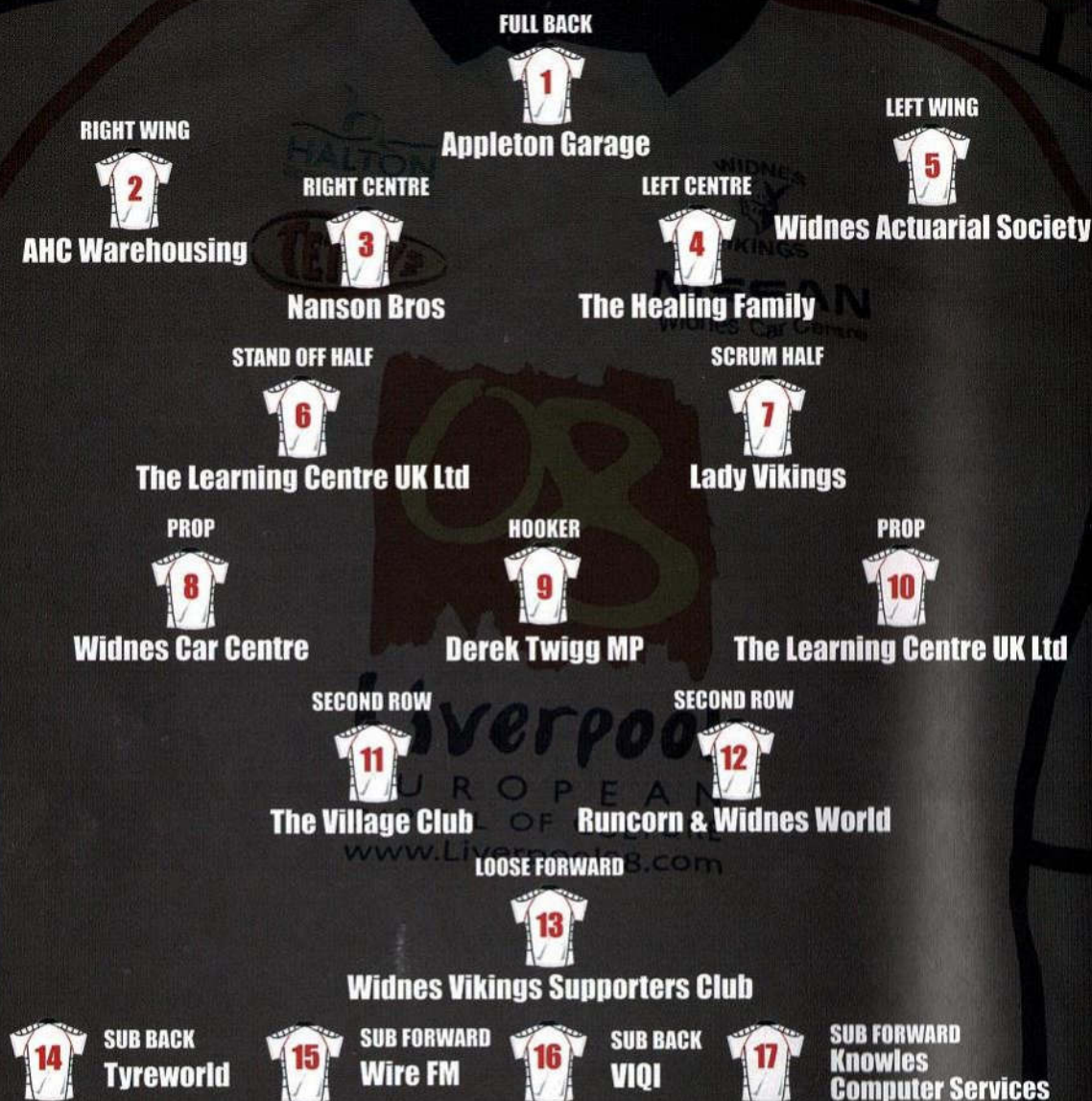
Linsey: Describe yourself as a player in three words.

Gary: Honest, skilful and reliable

Linsey: And as a husband?

Gary: Sexy, loving and thoughtful

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Paul Cullen

john lawless



We've all got to come to terms with this success and failure thing.

Or to be more accurate in a sporting context, this winning and losing thing. In tabloid-land, every defeat is 'disastrous' and every victory 'heroic'. Sometimes, of course, this may be fair comment.

But given the margin between victory and defeat can be so slender, it is often complete nonsense.

This phenomena particularly affects young people.

Modern commercial imperatives mean the popular media has to 'sex up' every story. The effect of this is to influence people into abandoning their more rational critical faculties.

The same bloke who told me a couple of weeks ago that England footballer Owen Hargreaves should never win another cap and be sent to Siberia, has since sidled up to me and, apparently oblivious to his own previous outburst, said he thinks he should be an automatic choice for the next World Cup.

And I can tell you he was absolutely serious on both occasions (except about the Siberia bit - I think?).

In political circles the modern term for this is flip-flopping.

David Cameron likes to accuse Tony Blair of flip-flopping and vice versa.

Personally, I prefer to call it 'being a bit thick'.

The people who bear the brunt of this in team sport, even more so than the players, are the coaches.

It doesn't take long these days for a groundswell of opinion to put pressure on a coach.

Just a few under-par performances in fact. Warrington boss Paul Cullen must know what this feels like.

With the topsy-turvy season the Wolves are having, I can imagine his mailbag this season has consisted entirely of marriage

proposals and death threats. This is where a club's board of directors has to back their judgement.

If you always listened to the braying of the mob, you'd be getting through five coaches a season.

Brisbane Broncos have had their ups and downs over the years but have stuck with Wayne Bennett because they know he's a good coach.

There's a lesson there I think.

Did you know, today's visitors Oldham appeared in four of the five Challenge Cup finals before it moved to Wembley in 1929 but never got to play under the Twin Towers?

I've always had a soft spot for the Roughyeds and I hope they can become a real force in the game again.

Unfortunately, there are those in rugby league who are currently comfortable with their own position and would like to put measures in place which will make it ever more difficult for the likes of Oldham to regain former glories.

Perhaps we should have introduced 'franchises' in about 1928.

John Lawless
Liverpool Echo



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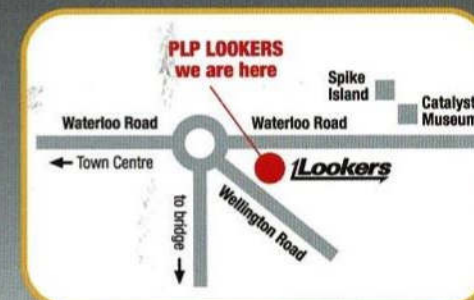
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Simon Finnigan

danny lockwood

How many times in recent years would a Leeds versus Bradford game have been kicked off the Friday night telly for a Wigan-Wakefield clash?

Or indeed for any kind of a relegation dogfight - and especially with nine games still to play?

Wigan fans are angst-ridden about the amount of gleeful shin kicking they've been getting from the wider Super League fan community this season. They shouldn't - it's a compliment guys. That makes you the rugby league equivalent of Manchester United. Ask an Elland Rouser his two favourite teams and he'll say "Leeds United and whoever's playing Man U". And they're not even in the same division!

It just happens that the most successful rugby league club of the past 25 years (if not the last 10) has been the first of the 'big four' to be drawn into a buttock clenching relegation battle. It sure concentrates the mind, doesn't it lads? Imagine Bradford finding themselves in the same mire. Leeds fans wouldn't wet themselves through a fit of giggles, no? Wigan supporters would generously have a whip round to pay for stress counsellors on the terraces at Knowsley Road, were the situation reversed? Yeah, right.

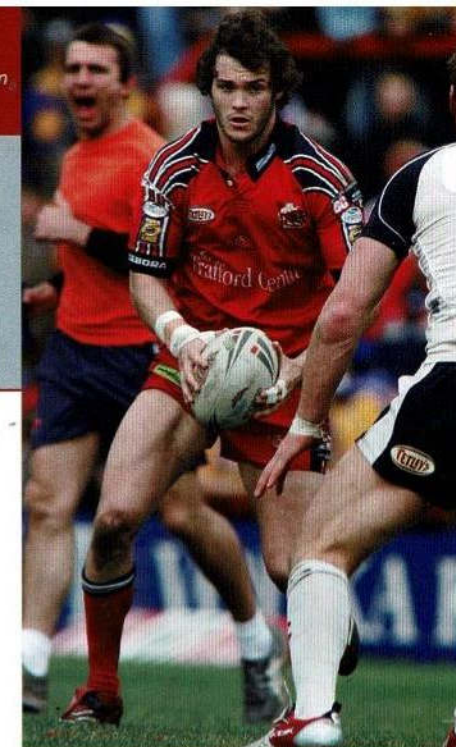
The ebb and flow of form and results has created the most fascinating engage Super League campaign yet, and no side has been immune. As the rounds tick down, it is clear that the season's critical outcomes could be decided by a club's sick-list more than ever.

The leaders have the strength in depth to survive Paul Sculthorpe's loss, Hull have barely noticed Kirk Yeaman's absence, but Huddersfield and Warrington ought to switch training sessions to the car park of the local infirmary for convenience. And Salford, thinner than

most for depth, suffered two hammer blows on Sunday to Andrew Dunemann and Simon Finnigan.

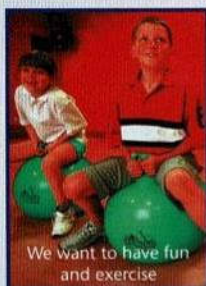
The latter two have enough points in the bag for safety, but the Giants, with a Challenge Cup semi final looming as well, can be forgiven for looking over their shoulders and hoping to see either Florence Nightingale or John Wayne and a troop of 7th cavalry on the horizon, before Wigan, Harlequins and Wakefield appear. Fascinating stuff, and vindication, if any were needed, of the Salary Cap. A few months ago the RFL's finance director, Nigel Wood, took time to show me exactly how clubs had 'performed' in terms of budgets against the Salary Cap, compared to just a few years ago. It showed a real levelling of the financial playing field - and was before anyone was predicting Wigan for anything other than a top four placing. We're now seeing that development mirrored out on the actual playing field - and with talented players 'trickling down' to the LHF National League 1, surely the game as a whole is feeling the benefits.

Danny Lockwood
Publisher, League Weekly



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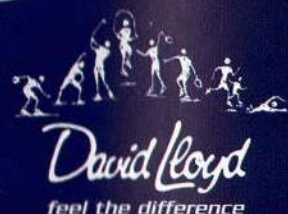
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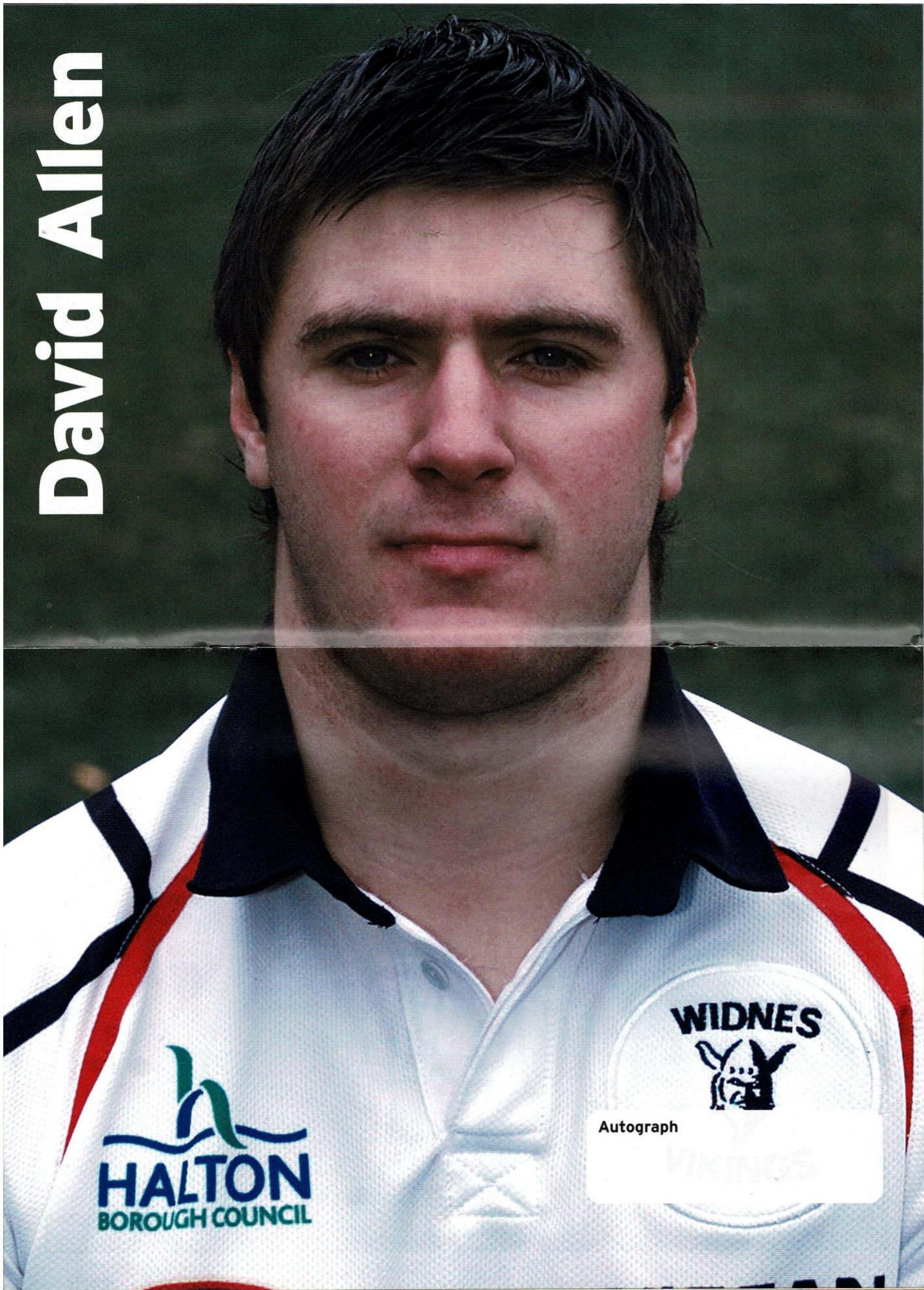


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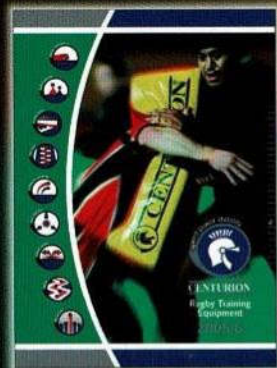
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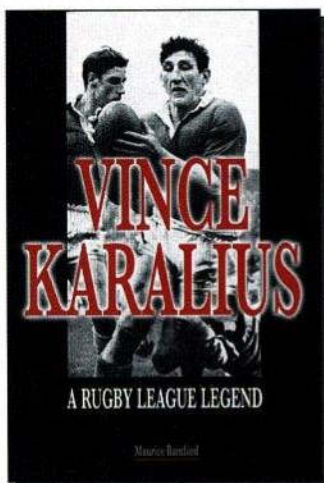
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Maurice Bamford

About the Book

Former Great Britain Rugby League coach, Maurice Bamford, tells the story of one of his heroes from the game: Vince Karalius.

Maurice relates how young Vince signed for the great St Helens club in 1952 and quickly carved out a reputation as one of the toughest and most skilful forwards in the game, winning many trophies

with the team, including the Challenge Cup in 1956 and 1961 (as captain). Selected for the 1958 tour down-under, he established himself as the scourge of the Australians and earned the nickname from the Aussie press: 'the Wild Bull of the Pampas'.

Moving on to his home town club, Widnes, Vince captained the team to victory in the Challenge Cup in 1964. Then returning as coach in 1972, he steered the club to the Lancashire Cup and the Challenge Cup in 1975 and developed a skilful, athletic team that earned the title 'Cup Kings' over the next decade. After a sojourn coaching the mighty Wigan, Vince returned once more to Widnes and again guided the club to Wembley glory in 1984.

In 2000, Vince Karalius became one of the few players inducted into the Rugby League Hall of Fame in recognition of his awesome ability on the pitch and his technical and tactical 'nous' as a coach.

Maurice Bamford captures the essence and character of this tremendous hero in *Vince Karalius: A Rugby League Legend*.



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AWAY TRAVEL

Our next three fixtures are away from home and the Vikings Supporters Club are running coaches to all three games:-

Sat July 15

Rochdale Hornets,
depart 1pm, fare £6.50

Sun July 23

Hull KR
depart 11am, fare £11.00

Sun July 30

Halifax
depart 12.45pm, fare £7.50
Bookings can be made
with Alan Rae on 07837
283634

Alan will also be in the
Club Shop each
Wednesday between
9.30am and 12.30pm to
take bookings.

STUART MARTIN

On Tuesday night in the
Bridge Suite there will be a
fundraising night in aid of
Stuart Martin, a Senior
Academy player whose
career was finished
following an eye injury
sustained in last season's
Grand Final at Leeds.
This is a joint event

between the Vikings
Supporters Club and Trust
in Widnes and will feature
'The Weakest Link' quiz.
The Vikings players will be
the contestants and there
will be a special 'Ann
Robinsonesque'
quizmaster. The evening
will also include raffles and
a dutch auction. Admission
to the event is £4 adults
and £2 concessions.

CLUB POET

We are pleased to
present the third offering
from our Club poet Janet
Eaton.

Lifelong supporter Janet
has approached the Club
with the intention of
writing a poem to be
published in each home
match programme.

THE DREAM

*I am missing going to St
Helens
Putting the pressure on Paul
Wellens
From there going down to
Wire
Hoping our winger plays like
Offiah*

*The season would then lead us
down to the Quins*

*Behind us hoping we had three
wins
Then across to Bradford to
meet every bull
Where eighty minutes is never
dull*

*The Galpharm would be our
next stop
Two points from the Giants and
we are top
Taking on route a jaunt to
France
Leaving the Dragons in a
trance*

*A trip down the road to the
Willows
To leave them crying on their
pillows
At the JJB we would run up a
winning score
Despite the attentions of
Fielden and Orr*

*A journey far north to
Humberside
To watch the Airlie Birds lose
to our side
Then off to Belle Vue to meet
the Cats
Two points more under our
hats*

*To beat the Tigers is our final
aim
To win Super League is our
claim
Leeds in the final of the
Challenge Cup
Oh what a time to wake up!*
Janet Eaton



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This will take place at the Halton Stadium on the following dates:

Age 7-9 yrs

Monday & Tuesday 24th & 25th July, 2pm - 4pm

Age 10 - 12 yrs

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 24th, 25th & 26th July, 10am - 12 noon.

These events are always sell-outs and places are limited to 120 children in each age group so early booking is advisable.

The price for the summer school remains at £5 and booking forms are available in the Vikings' Club Shop

TODAY'S MASCOTS

This afternoon's mascots are brothers Daniel and Jonathan Dearden. Daniel, who will be 11 in ten days time attends West Bank CP School and plays for West Bank U12s. Not surprisingly his favourite hobby is rugby and his number 1 Vikings player is Dennis Moran. Brother Jonathan was 6 last month and is on the hunt for a rugby league team to sign for! With both rugby league and wrestling his favourite hobbies Jonathan's top Viking is Terry O'Connor.



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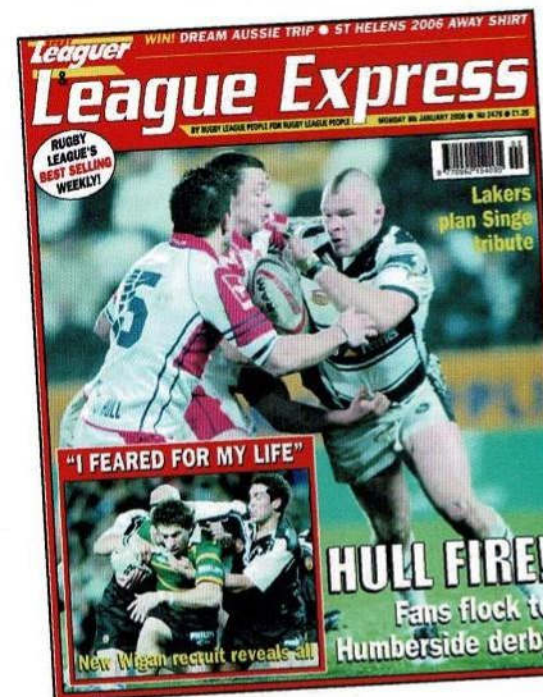
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programme notes

Widnes v Oldham, 2 February 1963

This game in early February has gone down in Widnes history, but not for the reasons anticipated by the programme editor in the following set of notes!

"Would you believe it! The last RL game played at Naughton Park was way back in December - the 22nd to be exact - when Widnes beat Wigan by 14 pts to two. We managed to get in that fixture when three other games in the first division and two in the second were called off. Today we are keeping our fingers crossed hoping that the pitch will be fit for play. Never in the history of the club has so much time trouble and expense gone

than ever in an effort to fulfill the fixture with Oldham and we think that we may be one of the few clubs who are able to play this afternoon.

Following successful experiments on the turf near the touchline your officials decided to go ahead with the chemical treatment, an idea which comes from a local company. The chemical is said to be non-injurious to the grass, and any apparent rough treatment to the turf occurred during the massive ice removal operation. If the scheme works well Widnes club will again have given a lead to the Rugby League. We felt that an all-out effort should be made this week to give our players

of distinct promise, went from St. Helens to Oldham. And it will be some time before we see Malcolm Price, the Oldham centre, in action again. He suffered a nasty ankle injury on his last appearance here - and then this season he was hurt at Rochdale and was in hospital for a long spell. Their former scrum-half, Frank Pitchford, is now with Wigan where he has teamed up with a former colleague, Alan Davies.

Oldham however, have a young and capable team which deserves a much better position in the first division of the league. Players like Peter Smethurst, Geoff Robinson, Johnny Noon, Vin Nestor, Alan Kellest, Patterson and Sims have done fine service for the club and young Bott is said to be a player with a big future. The game with Oldham always produces some excellent football and we hope that the same type of rugby will be seen today.

The RL Challenge Cup competition draw was not very kind to us and once again we face our old adversaries, Swinton. The Lions beat us by a narrow margin in this season's Lancashire Challenge Cup tournament at Station Road, but it was a game where the result hung in the

balance for some considerable time. There will be a big following for our team. Needless to say, stand tickets are available for this cup tie and can be obtained after the game at the ticket office and each evening next week from 7pm to 8-30pm.

We should warn supporters that there has been a good demand for tickets and those who have not yet made an application should do so to avoid disappointment. Yates Tours are also booking steadily for this game and here again the proprietors would be pleased if supporters who intend to see the cup tie would make their arrangements as soon as possible."

The game did go ahead, Widnes winning 3-0 to boost our title hopes, but the 'wonder chemical' famously turned the playing surface into a sticky mess for months afterwards! More bad weather delayed the Swinton cup game for another month...we only won through that tie after a second replay, all three matches (plus a league game v Hull) being played in the space of eight days. Subsequently we went out of the cup at the quarter-final stage against Hull KR and then Swinton pipped us for the Championship with a superb late run of form.

CHART TOPPERS

NME Top Ten for 2 February 1963

1. Diamonds - Jet Harris & Tony Meehan
2. Globetrotter - Tornados
3. Dance On - Shadows (pictured)
4. Bachelor Boy - Cliff Richard (pictured)
5. Like I Do - Maureen Evans
6. Don't You Think It's Time - Mike Berry & The Outlaws
7. Little Town Flirt - Del Shannon
8. The Wayward Wind - Frank Ifield
9. Return To Sender - Elvis Presley
10. The Next Time - Cliff Richard



into making the playing area suitable for a game.

Before the War there was a celebrated occasion when we used scores of braziers to loosen the frost and ice, an idea which was copied by other clubs. We have used straw many times but this is very expensive business. It requires extra insurance, laying and taking off the straw and then laying it again. But this week the officials have gone to more expense

match practice and our supporters the chance to enjoy a Rugby League match again.

It may be that the club, in conjunction with the Bowmans Chemicals Ltd, of which Mr. Charles Appleton, the well-known referee is a long-serving employee, will have put an end to postponed games because of ice and frost. It must be remembered that this treatment is more of a preventative than a cure for frozen grounds. The manufacturers maintain that a ground treated before the heavy frost period, say mid-December, will give protection against these completely frozen grounds. We are extremely grateful for the interest taken by the management and staff of Messrs. Bowmans Chemicals Ltd, whose efforts, combined with the tremendous preparatory work put in by the Park Superintendents staff has made play possible today.

There have been a number of changes in the Oldham personnel in the past 12 months. Their former Liverpool City player and prop forward Bill Payne is now at Warrington and the same remarks apply to Keith Holden their centre-three quarter. Holden was part of a deal with Warrington and Oldham in which Harry Major, the Wires forward, went to Watersheddings. Then Peter Goddard, the Watersheddings' forward, was transferred to St. Helens, and John Donovan, an inside back

IN THE NEWS

On 18 January 1963 the leader of the Labour party, Hugh Gaitskell, died at the age of 56 after a sudden deterioration in his heart condition. He was credited with modernising the party and had been expected to lead them to victory at the next General Election.

In March Dr Richard Beeching published his report branding large parts of Britain's railway system as uneconomic and suggesting that a quarter of the network could be axed.

June saw the resignation of Secretary of State for War, John Profumo, after he admitted having lied to Parliament about his relationship with 21-year-old call girl Christine Keeler.

FILM & TV

1963 was the first year in which the BBC used a globe as their symbol - they continued to use it in various forms until 2002.

November of that year brought the debut of a sci-fi series called **Doctor Who** with William Hartnell in the lead role.

On ITV the legendary pop music show **Ready Steady Go!** began its three year run. The show aired on Friday evenings with the by-line "The weekend starts here!" Early episodes were presented by Dusty Springfield.

At the cinema in 1963 Rod Taylor and Jessica Tandy were being terrorised in Alfred Hitchcock's **The Birds**. Peter Sellers (pictured), Lionel Jeffries and Bernard Cribbins starred in the crime comedy **The Wrong Arm of the Law** and Sellers also appeared in the Boulting Brothers satire **Heavens Above**.

There were Oscar nominations for Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts in the Rugby League drama **This Sporting Life**. The role of the ageing talent scout was played by William Hartnell and this appearance led directly to him being offered his part in Doctor Who.



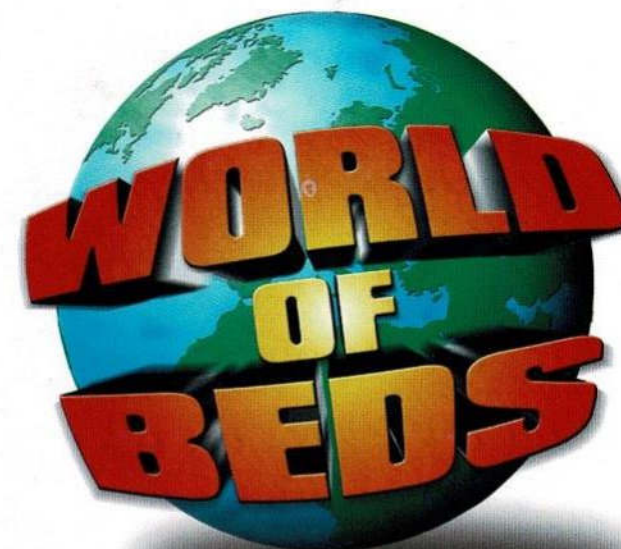
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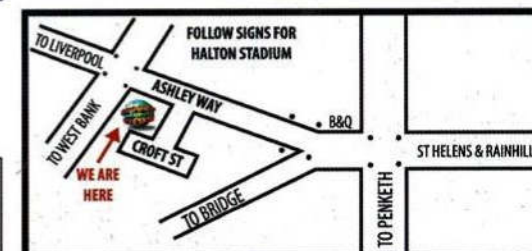


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foundation academy

Last weekend we officially signed eight of our Foundation Academy players on two year contracts.

The majority of these players have been developed by our World Class Accredited Scholarship Scheme. The players and their parents were treated to lunch here at the

BEN ROBINSON

It is with great sadness that the Club has learned of the death of



former Academy player Ben Robinson. 21 year old Ben, younger brother of former Vikings' player John, was killed in a traffic accident in Wigan last weekend. The Club sends its condolences to John and all his family at this very sad time.



Stadium before the signing took place on the pitch at half-time. Once again we are indebted to VIQI who contributed £400 per player to the signings. The players who put pen to paper last weekend were: Robert Holbrook, Tommy Arrowsmith, Dave Houghton, Chris Headen, Josh Simm, David Dourley, Sean Gilmore and, seated, Stuart Harland and they are pictured with Player Performance Manager John Foran. Today, at half time we will be signing a further six of the Foundation Academy players, again with the help of contributions from VIQI.

VIQI members typically contribute £1 per week to the scheme. If you wish to join and help fund future signings for the club please visit the following web page for the application form... www.widnesvikings.co.uk/viqiform.htm

GROUND RULES



RACISM

The use of racist and/or obscene language often causes offence to others and can lead to police arrest or ejection by stewards. Such language and behaviour is strongly condemned by The RFL, Widnes Vikings and Halton Borough Council and where appropriate spectator banning orders will also be implemented

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the event of an emergency evacuation, please remain calm and listen carefully to the Stadium Public address announcements and follow the directions of safety stewards.

MEDICAL ATTENTION-SPECTATORS

Spectators should note that at each Viking Home game, medical resources are on hand to deal with any injury or sudden illness within the stadium. Medical Equipment includes an automated external defibrillator for cardiac incidents. Early notification via any safety steward is essential in bringing a speedy response by trained medical resources. Red Cross personnel are usually stationed in the South East Concourse Bar first aid room and at the North East Corner Viewing area for people with disabilities.

GROUND RULES/REGULATIONS

These are displayed at turnstile entrances and within each concourse bar. It should be particularly noted that ALCOHOL must not be taken into or consumed in the seated viewing areas and on matchdays Halton Stadium is a non-smoking venue.

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Stephen Vaughan

talks to Ian Cheveau

Vikings owner Stephen Vaughan says he is determined to take the club forward after last weeks board reshuffle and he reckons fans can play a major role in that process.

Last week the club parted with ex-chairman Tony Chambers, financial director Tom Fleet and directors Alan Gregson and Graham Ashton after Vaughan's acquisition of the majority shareholding. A club statement claimed the directors all stepped down as the board felt the time had come to reduce in numbers and for the new chairman to be seen in full control. Vaughan joined the Vikings board at the turn of the year with a view of taking over the club in time.

But that was accelerated at the start of the season and after uncovering huge debts of more than £3000,000 and he is now urging the fans to come out in force for the remaining Vikings home fixtures. He and head coach Steve McCormack are hoping the Vikings can boost their 3,000 home gate by at least another thousand in a bid to make the club profitable once more.

One of the debts included a fee to Halton Borough Council which has just been paid for usage of the stadium and if the Vikings can't increase their crowd to more than 3,000 then Vaughan claims more money will be going down the drain.

He said: "I am appealing for our supporters to get in in their numbers because any crowd less than 3,000 means the club makes nothing whatsoever."

"We will take this club forward - we have to. The board will prop the club up financially and make up any shortfalls, but we would like to see more fans packed into the stadium which would help us out a lot with sorting the debt out."

"The figures are all in black and white and all this has been discussed and

documented in minutes. I have nothing to hide and there is no hidden agenda with me. I want the club to be returned to the fans not individuals."

Meanwhile Vaughan would like to thank parting directors Alan Gregson and Graham Ashton for their contribution to the club since he took over the reigns from Tony Chambers. He said: "I'd like to thank for their contribution they have put in over the last months I have been involved with them." McCormack claims he is playing his part in sorting the finances out by making sure the Vikings win on the field. He said: "Players have left the club and the coaching staff has tried to reduce salary-cap money. The fans have been particularly supportive over the past few games. We need even more of that and it helps towards the performance. The crowd want us to win games and we are doing that and want to stay that way."

Ian Cheveau
Widnes Weekly News

Read Ian Cheveau in the Weekly News every Thursday for the latest Vikings news, reviews and interviews.

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Bank name and address:

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A) £13 a quarter B) £26 per half year

C) £52 per year.

Please pay to: 60-19-24, NatWest Bank, 146 Widnes Road,
Widnes, Cheshire for the Credit of Account No. 29854083
Widnes Development Centre

Starting date: Signature:

Name:

Address:

.....

Post Code: Tel No:

vikings academy

In searing temperatures the Senior Academy side beat Whitehaven 40-8 last Sunday.

The Barge Chinese Restaurant Man of the
Match Paul Crook opened the scoring with a
try he converted himself.

The visitors landed a penalty goal through
Marc Bainbridge but further tries from Craig
Wilson and Aaron Summers plus another
Crook conversion gave Widnes a 16-2 interval
lead.

Darren Woods increased his side's advantage
early in the second period with Wilson's
second, Liam Grundy and Ryan Millington
also touching down, Crook landing four more
goals.

Whitehaven managed a consolation try
through Daniel Smith following good play by
Bainbridge who added his second conversion.
The Senior Academy have no game this
weekend but entertain Keighley Cougars here
at the Halton Stadium on Friday night, kick off
7.30pm

Meanwhile the Widnes Vikings Junior Academy side made it 10 wins from 10 with a 68-12 defeat of Castleford Tigers last Friday evening.

The Vikings opened the scoring after just 47
seconds as a break from Andy Marsh created
the opportunity for Neil Liu to outpace the
cover to score and tries from Scott Yates,
again created by Marsh, and Michael
Fairclough, all goaled by Yates, two from the
touchline saw Widnes 18 - 0 ahead in just ten
minutes.

On 21 minutes the Vikings went further
ahead as Fairclough went over from acting

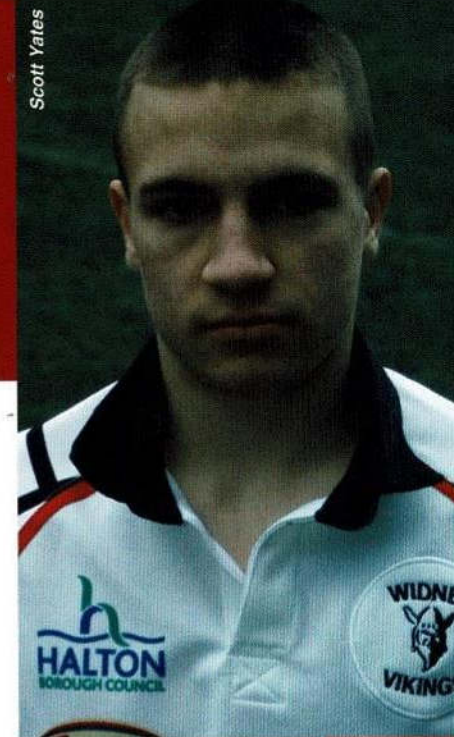
halfback and
six minutes
later substitute
Robert Draper
touched down,
Yates
conversion
making the
score 28 - 0.
However the
final points of
the half went
to the visitors
thanks to a
converted try on 34 minutes.

Within four minutes of the restart centre
Mark Murphy had increased the homeside's
lead and two minutes later Adam Sidlow
touched down, Yates converting both to put
Widnes 40 - 6 ahead.

The Tigers pulled back six points with a
second converted try but the Vikings
responded with five tries in the final quarter
through Ostick, who regathered his own kick
to dive over; Richard Myler following good
play by Draper and Murphy; Draper himself;
Andy White and Liu.

The Barge Chinese Restaurant Man of the
Match Award went to loose forward Andy
White for a non-stop performance from the
first to eightieth minute.

Today the Junior Academy side are playing
Wigan at Orrell RUFC and we hope to be able
to announce the final score once that game is
over. Next Friday they travel to St Helens
where they play the home side in a curtain
raiser to the Saints v Harlequins game, the
Academy match kicking off at 5.45pm



Scott Yates

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viking voyages

by Martin Birrell

GAME FROM YESTERYEAR

*Challenge Cup Final - 2nd May 1981
Widnes 18-9 Hull KR*

The 1981 final was the second time the Chemicks had tasted final success over the Robins, the first coming in 1964. Widnes nerves were settled early as Mick Burke caught his own kick through to score the opening try and Widnes never looked back. The black and whites led 11-4 at the break and Andy Gregory's quick try after half time

collected an MBE that same year for his services to the sport. Not only is Millward the most successful Rovers player of all time but he is also their most successful coach.

WHAT'S THE FORM?

What a season the men from East Yorkshire are having so far. They have defeated all in their path on route to the top of National League One and the Semi Finals of the Challenge Cup. Their

sealed the win. In front of a crowd of 92,496 Widnes collected their sixth Challenge Cup trophy.

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

A Rovers Legend
Roger 'The Dodger' Millward
Roger Millward was one of the genuine greats of English Rugby League from the mid-1960s up until the early 1980s. He was a superb player with Hull KR and Great Britain, as well as having a memorable guest stint with the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks in Sydney in 1976. His form in the 1970 Ashes series between Australia and Great Britain was nothing short of magnificent. Millward joined Hull KR in 1967 helping to steer the club to its championship success in 1979 and then their famous victory over rivals Hull at Wembley in 1980. Millward retired in 1983 after making over 400 appearances for the club. The Dodger

win at the Halton Stadium in May by 42-28 cemented their place at the top and convinced many fans that their team could gain that elusive Super League spot. Last week's win over Batley was their 10th consecutive in the league.

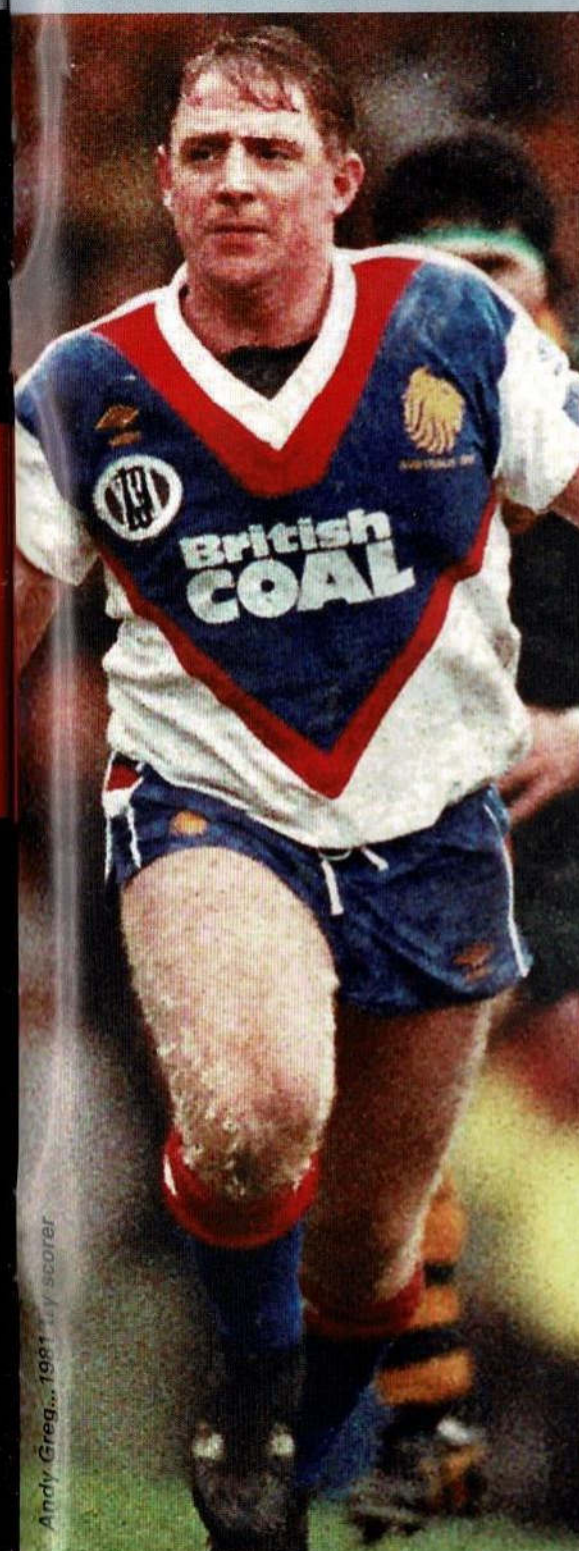
Rover's last five: W W W W W

DID YOU KNOW?

Hull KR's are the first English side since Widnes in 1996 to have made the Challenge Cup Semi Finals from outside the top division.

A SWIFT HALF

There is a good selection of bars inside the stadium depending on where you wish to sit. The Harry Poole Bar is in the North end of the Roger Millward Stand and has two fully stocked bars and room in the window to view the game, there is priority to disabled fans in this area. Away fans are welcome



Andy Gregory, 1981 try scorer

Hull KR v Widnes Vikings
23/07/06

**Craven Park, Preston Road,
Hull, HU9 5HE**

Website: www.hullkr.co.uk

Telephone Number: 01482 374648

Admission Prices...

Roger Millward Stand (Covered Seating):

Adults: £14, Conc: £10, Kids: £7

Standing: Adults: £12, Conc: £8, Kids: £7

before, during and after the game. The East Stand Bar (covered standing) situated under the East Stand has a fully stocked bar that serves drinks before the match and at half time.

BIT PECKISH?

There is a restaurant at the ground called the 10-5 restaurant. Away supporters are welcome but due to its popularity this must be booked prior to the day of the game. The restaurant

opens at 12 noon and serves a three course carvery which comes highly recommended. An ex-Rovers player will be in attendance before the game and entertainment is also provided inside prior to the game. Both bars mentioned above also serve the usual match day food such as pies and hot dogs.

THE WAY IT WAS

Our last five visits to Craven Park
Hull KR 24-10 Widnes (2/4/2000)
Hull KR 14-2 Widnes (16/5/1999)
Hull KR 26-8 Widnes (4/3/1998)
Hull KR 30-14 Widnes (22/6/1997)
Hull KR 10-32 Widnes (28/11/1993)

CAR PARKING

The club provides secure Car Parking facilities at Craven Park. The main Car park can hold upto 750 Cars while the East Stand Car park(Annandale Rd) will hold approx 150 Both priced at £2.

DATE	OPPONENT	V	KO	Res	Att	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
FEBRUARY																						
Sun 12 Feb	Swinton	H	3pm	W18-10	3,887	Peachey	POT Connor	Woods	Kenny(36)	Dodd	Beswick	Coyle	1.0 Connor	Smith(21)	Summers	Cassidy(1)	Allen	Marsh	(Oyengbo)	Heaton	Crook	Doughue
Sun 19 Feb	Leigh	A	3pm	L20-27	4,045	Peachey(1)	POT Connor	Dodd	Kenny(36)	Woods	Beswick(1)	Coyle	1.0 Connor	Smith	McLennant(1)	Cassidy	Heaton	Allen	Doughue	Marsh(15)	Summers	Crook
Sun 26 Feb	Blackpool	H	3pm	W76-6	3,004	Peachey(2)	Cardiss(1)	Reid(1)	Dodd(1)	Oyengbo(31)	Marsh(31, 106)	Coyle(1)	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Heaton	Allen	Durbin	Smith(21)	Summers	Doughue
MARCH																						
Tue 7 Mar	Leigh	H	7:30pm	L10-25	4,133	Peachey	POT Connor	Reid	Dodd	Oyengbo	Marsh(6)	Coyle	1.0 Connor	Smith(1)	McLennant	Cassidy	Heaton	Allen	Durbin	Beswick	Summers	Alcock(1)
Sun 12 Mar	Hunslet Warriors (ccsa)	H	2pm	W38-0	1,308	Peachey(1)	Dodd(2)	Cardiss	Kenny(1, 36)	Oyengbo(1)	Coyle	Durbin	1.0 Connor	Beswick	Summers	Cassidy	Heaton	Allen	Reid(1)	Marsh	Nash	Alcock
Sun 19 Mar	Swinton	A	3pm	W64-16	1,016	Peachey(3)	Dodd(3)	Cardiss(1)	Kenny(1, 36)	Oyengbo(2)	Coyle(1)	Durbin(1)	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant(1)	Cassidy(1)	Heaton	Allen	Reid	Marsh(46)	Nash	Heaton
Sun 26 Mar	Blackpool	A	3pm	W42-12	1,017	Dodd	Oyengbo	Cardiss(1)	Kenny(1, 36)	Reid(2)	Coyle	Durbin	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant(1)	Heaton(1)	Allen(1)	Smith	Draper	Crook	Nash	Alcock
APRIL																						
Sun 2 Apr	Castleford (ccsa)	H	3pm	W14-4	4,205	Peachey(2)	Dodd	Cardiss	Kenny(36)	Oyengbo	Coyle	Durbin	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Allen	Smith	(Reid)	Summers	Nash	Heaton
Sun 9 Apr	York	H	3pm	W25-18	4,024	Cardiss	Dodd	Kirkpatrick	Kenny(21, 46)	Kirkpatrick	Coyle	Durbin	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Allen	Smith(1)	Summers	Heaton	Marsh(1)	Draper
Fri 14 Apr	Leigh	A	2pm	L4-53	3,761	Cardiss	Kirkpatrick	Dodd	Kenny(26)	Oyengbo	Marsh	Coyle	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Allen	Smith	Durbin	Heaton	Reid	Nash
Mon 17 Apr	Batley	H	3pm	W52-6	3,098	Peachey(1)	Dodd	Cardiss(1)	Kenny(41, 56)	Oyengbo	Marsh(1)	Coyle(1)	1.0 Connor	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Heaton(1)	Smith	Summers	Kirkpatrick(1)	Durbin	Nash
Sun 23 Apr	Barrow (NRC Dual Rld)	A	3pm	W40-22	1,458	Peachey	Dodd	Reid	Kenny(21, 36)	Kirkpatrick(2)	Marsh	Coyle(2)	Summers(1)	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Heaton	Smith	Smith	Crook	Nash	Tandy
Sun 30 Apr	Whitehaven	A	3pm	W38-16	3,048	Dodd	Kirkpatrick	Brownman(1)	Kenny(31, 76)	POT Connor(1)	Coyle	Watson	1.0 Connor	Smith(1)	McLennant	Tandy	Allen	Beswick	(Crook)	Cassidy	Heaton	Summers
MAY																						
Sun 7 May	Leigh (NRC on)	H	3pm	L12-54	3,534	Dodd	Kirkpatrick	Brownman	Cardiss(1)	POT Connor	Coyle	Watson(6)	1.0 Connor	Smith(1)	Cassidy	Tandy	Allen	Beswick	(Crook)	Heaton	Nash	Sidlow
Sun 14 May	Hull KR	H	3pm	L28-42	4,331	Greenwood	Brownman	Cardiss	Kenny(1, 46)	Kirkpatrick	Coyle	Watson	Summers(2)	Beswick	McLennant	Cassidy	Heaton	Allen(1)	Crook	Nash	Smith	Tandy(1)
Sun 21 May	Catalans (ccsa)	H	2:15pm	L16-34	3,014	Cardiss	Woods	Brownman	Kenny(21, 26)	POT Connor	Crook	Coyle	Summers	Smith(1)	McLennant	Cassidy	Draper	Beswick	Wood	Heaton	Strong	Nash
JUNE																						
Sun 4 Jun	York	A	3pm	W40-18	1,563	Dodd(1)	Kirkpatrick	Brownman	Kenny(1, 66)	Greenwood	Marsh(2)	Watson	1.0 Connor(1)	Smith(2)	McLennant	James	Wilkes	Beswick	Coyle	Cassidy	Woods	Tandy
Sun 11 Jun	Doncaster	H	3pm	W34-12	3,082	Dodd	Kirkpatrick	Brownman	Kenny(1, 56)	Greenwood	Marsh(1)	Watson	1.0 Connor	Smith(1)	McLennant	James	Wilkes	Beswick(1)	Coyle	Cassidy	Woods	Tandy
Sun 25 Jun	Batley	A	12:30pm	W38-36	1,227	Dodd(1)	Brownman	Cardiss(1)	Kenny(1, 56)	Kirkpatrick(1)	Marsh(1)	Coyle	1.0 Connor	Smith	McLennant	James(1)	Wilkes	Beswick	Woods	Cassidy	Allen	Tandy(1)
JULY																						
Sun 2 Jul	Whitehaven	H	3pm	W26-12	3,016	Dodd	Blanch(1)	Cardiss	Kenny(1, 56)	Kirkpatrick	Marsh(1)	Coyle	1.0 Connor	Smith	McLennant	James	Wilkes	Beswick(1)	Brownman	Allen	Cassidy	Tandy
Sun 9 Jul	Oldham	H	3pm																			
Sat 15 Jul	Rochdale	A	3pm																			
Sun 23 Jul	Hull KR	A	3pm																			
Sun 30 Jul	Halifax	A	3pm																			
AUGUST																						
Sun 6 Aug	Rochdale	H	3pm																			
Sun 13 Aug	Leigh	H	3pm																			
Sun 20 Aug	Oldham	A	3pm																			
SEPTEMBER																						
Sun 3 Sep	Doncaster	A	3pm																			
Sun 10 Sep	Halifax	H	3pm																			

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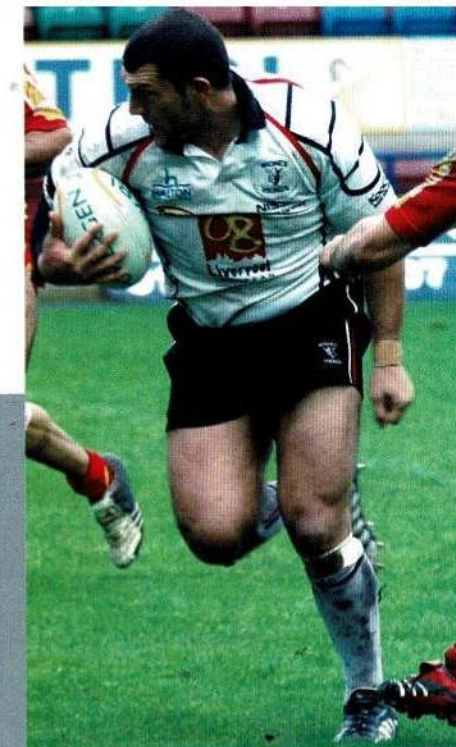
Barrie McDermott in the hot-seat

Nickname: Sir
DOB: 22/7/72
Place Of Birth: Oldham
Position: Prop
Previous Clubs: Leeds, Wigan
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 110kg
Marital Status: Married
Children: 3 (1 boy, 2 girls)
Bad Habits: Listening to Terry O'Connor too much
Half full or Half empty: Half full
Home or Away: Away
Harry Potter or Brian Potter: Brian Potter
Blonde or Brunette: Blonde
North Stand or South Stand: South Stand



Chinese or Indian: Italian
Kurt Sorensen or Terry O'Connor: Terry O'Connor - only because he'll moan too much
The Simpsons or South Park: Simpsons

Pub or Nightclub: Pub
Coke or Pepsi: Diet Coke
TV or music: Music
Physio or Rub: Physio
Rain or Snow: Rain
Bath or Shower: Shower
Cheese 'n' Onion or Salt 'n' Vinegar: Cheese 'n' Onion
Spiderman or Superman: Spiderman
Restaurant or Take Away: Restaurant
Super League or NRL: Super League
Snickers or Mars: Snickers
Fight or flight: Fight
Beauty or the Beast: Beauty



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