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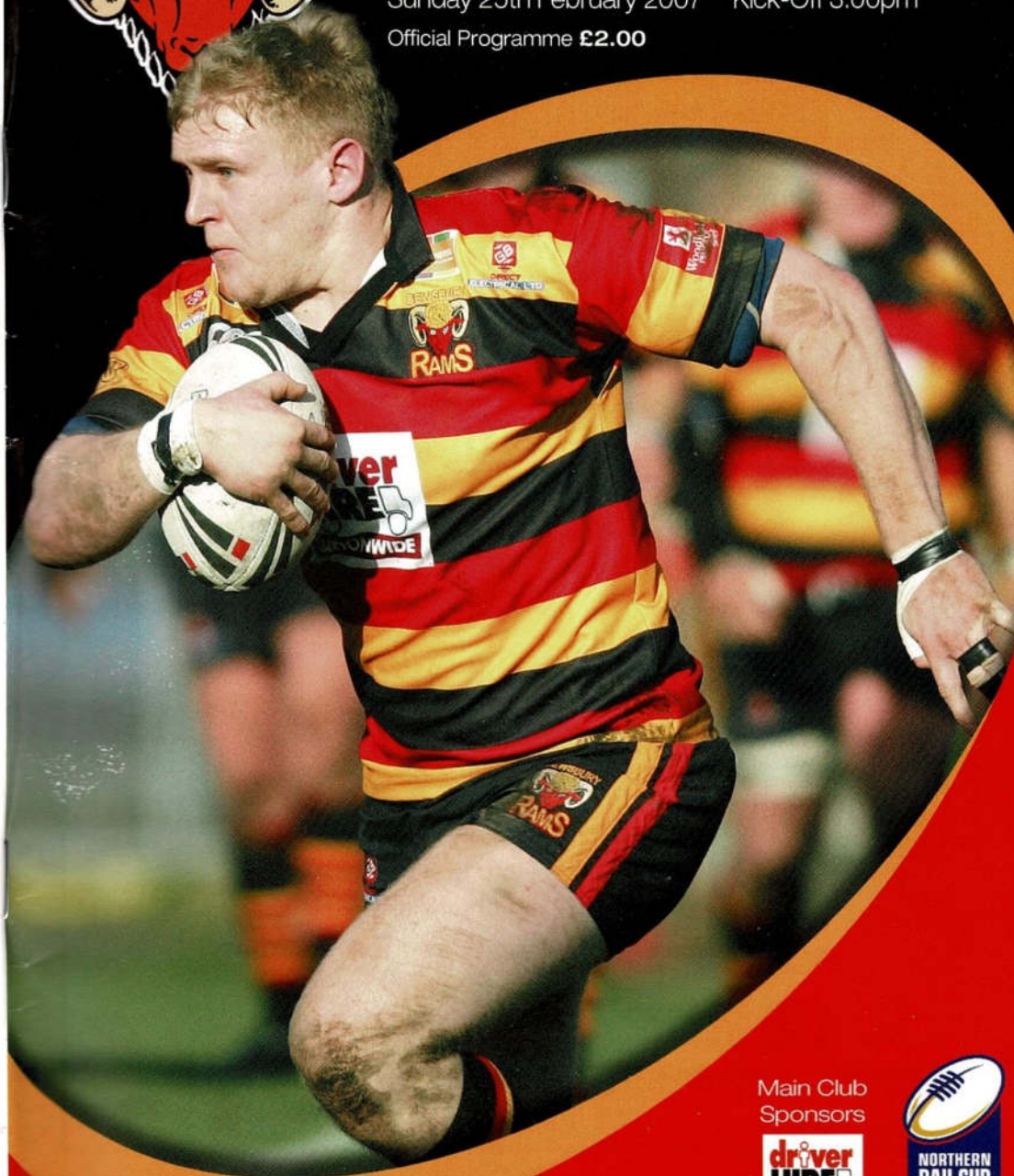
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ACHIEVEMENTS

**Northern Ford Premiership
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1999

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Runners-Up:

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1972/73

Yorkshire League

Winners:

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Finalist:**
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**National League 2 Grand
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**National League 2 Grand
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3,995 v Batley (26th
December 1994 at Ram
Stadium)

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Highest Against: 82-0
v Widnes (30th Nov 1986)

SEASON:

Goals:

170 by Barry Eaton
1999-00

Tries:

40 by Dai Thomas 1906-07

Points:

398 by Barry Eaton
1999-00

MATCH:

Goals:

13 by Greg Pearce v
Blackpool 4th April 1993

Tries:

8 by Dai Thomas v
Liverpool 13th April 1907

Points:

32 by Les Holiday v Barrow
11th Sept 1994

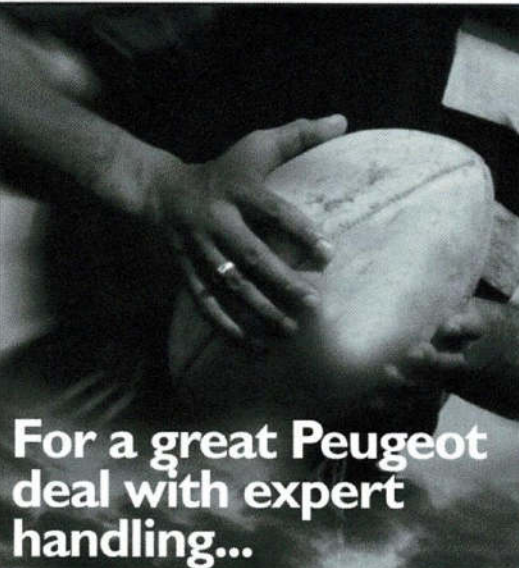
CAREER:

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1967-78 1984-86

Tries:

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Chairman's Report

MARK SAWYER HAS HIS SAY...

Today we welcome all the players, directors and supporters who have made the journey from Oldham.

It's an important match for us today to get back on a sound footing after an unexplainable poor performance last week, but we've got to give credit to how well Hunslet played. The Roughyeds will no doubt be looking to mimic the Hawks' victory over us but we have already seen what our lads are capable of and if they can reproduce the good form shown against Batley and Hull KR we will surely be in for an exciting afternoon's rugby.

I think most of the fans have got confidence in the players after a number of good performances recently, let's hope we can get back on track with another one today.

Mark Sawyer

Chairman

RAMS AGAINST RACISM

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Kelly's Korner

ANDY GETS HIS POINT ACROSS...



Hello all!

Well what a
difference a week
makes from the
euphoria of the
win over Batley
to the earth

quaking thump of a back to earth
defeat against Hunslet.

It was a very poor performance and definitely
one of the worst for some time. It was a big let
down to lots of people and it is not something
we have taken lightly. The review of preparation
and performance has been extensive and with
hard work will manifest itself into something
more positive over the coming weeks.

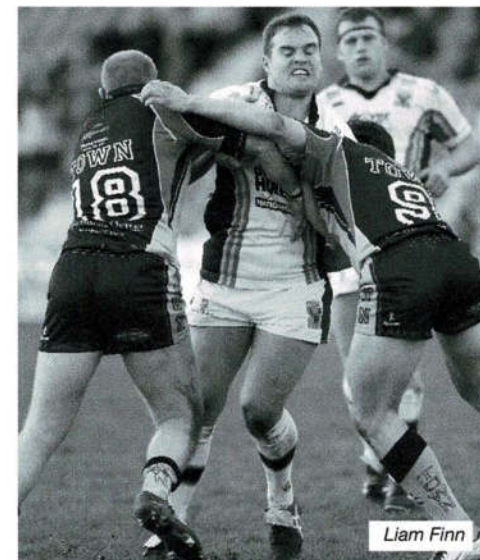
The players are an open and honest bunch and
have offered no diverse excuses for the loss
preferring instead to be honest about the whole
approach and looking for an opportunity to get
back on track. There can be no better time than
today!

Oldham I'm sure under coach Steve Deakin
would like nothing more than to compile our
misery here at the Tetley's Stadium so we must
be on our guard and perform well allowing the
right level of regard and respect for our
opponents and playing to the best of our
capabilities.

Hope you enjoy the game

See you later

Andy Kelly



Liam Finn



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Tony Scargill

OLDHAM ROUGHYEDS....

LOOK TO BOUNCE BACK

It goes without saying that in the life of
Oldham Roughyeds there has never been a
more traumatic season than in 2006.

Crippled by the requirement to make regular payments to the Inland Revenue the clubs resources were stretched to the limit and an unwelcome record of 18 defeats in 18 games in National League One was a real heartbreaker for the fans. However the club's open policy of getting their finances in order before any success on the field has meant that at least the club survived and now has a bright future ahead of it. They are coached by Steve Deakin who has been on the coaching circuit for 24 years. He has coached both in Super League and in France where he saw success as the head coach of Cannes. He has a great enthusiasm for the game as has Chris Hamilton, chairman of the club for many years and now Chief Executive. Chris also has a wealth of knowledge and has managed to keep the club afloat with the support of others such as fellow director Sean Whitehead. It would seem that, with the big investment in players at clubs such as Featherstone Rovers and Celtic Crusaders, National League 2 will be harder than ever to win. However a place in the play offs is well within Oldham's reach and once you're into the play offs anything is possible.

In their two Northern Rail Cup games to date Oldham have been beaten 24-8 at home by Rochdale Hornets and 28-18 at home by Swinton Lions. In spite of losing these opening two games Oldham look a much improved outfit and the Rams can't afford to underestimate the challenge they pose especially after last Sunday's 16-8 defeat for the Rams at Hunslet who are another team looking to go well in NL2. There has been a big change in playing personnel and by my reckoning 13 out of the 17 players that played against Swinton were new to the team from 2006. This is a massive turn round and it may take several weeks for them to gel together as the coach would like. A crowd of over 1,000 was at Boundary Park last Sunday which is another pointer to a healthier future. The Rams have struggled to attract four figure crowds during their time in NL2 although this season will be a different picture with large travelling support expected from Widnes and Castleford. With several notable sponsorship deals for Oldham in recent weeks including a five figure deal with Capio Oaklands Hospital it seems the real seeds of success are being shown and with regular footage on satellite television Channel M there's no shortage of exposure for potential sponsors. We just need all that revival stuff to be put on hold until after the Northern Rail Cup - or at least in the two games against us!

This game is of course a cross group match. Groups 3 and 4 each have three teams so while the Rams play Oldham, Batley play Rochdale and Hunslet play Swinton. Both groups are far from clear cut as far as a group winner is concerned with all 6 teams still in with a shout at the moment with both Oldham and Dewsbury benefiting last Sunday from the new bonus

point for defeat by 12 points or less. Results are so unpredictable. Hunslet lose at Swinton but beat Dewsbury. Dewsbury beat Batley but lose to Hunslet. Batley go on to beat Rochdale - no wonder the groups aren't settled.

So Oldham's one point last Sunday went into the record books for the first in the club's history and it's a long history if you discount the various changes in ownership. Oldham have won the Rugby League Championship three times, the Challenge Cup three times, the Lancashire Cup nine times, the Lancashire League seven times, the First Division once and the Second Division three times. They won the Divisional Premiership in 1988 and 1990 and were runners up in 1992. They were runners up in the Trans Pennine Cup (a forerunner of the National Rail Cup) in 1998 when they were beaten 28-12 by Batley at Mount Pleasant in front of a crowd of 2,696. Their most recent appearance in a major final came in 2001. They finished 4th in an 18 team single division Northern Ford Premiership. They beat Leigh 15-14 away and Rochdale 39-32 away to reach the final against Widnes. However it was the Widnes team coached by former Rams coach Neil Kelly and containing former Rams Richard Agar, Sean Richardson and Matthew Long that won the race to Super League as they won the game 24-14.

Tony Scargill



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Sponsorship News

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Greens Health & Fitness touch down with Dewsbury Rams

Greens Health & Fitness, Wakefield, has helped the Dewsbury Rams RLFC to take on its competition in style this season, with the sponsorship of new shirts and stadium signs.



The £17,000 sponsorship deal, set up by Richard Kelly of Independent Sports Marketing, coincides with the Rams being promoted to National League one. The 1st team shirts will display Greens logo on the shoulders, with the Senior Academy sporting a full sized logo.

Murtagh Mulholland, General Manager of Greens Wakefield, said: "We decided to sponsor the Rams as they are a local club who didn't have a sponsorship deal in place. They have just been promoted to League One so

hopefully with our support they can continue to improve and make it into the Super League."

Dewsbury Rams also have the opportunity to go down to Greens for regular training sessions where personal trainers will work on improving fitness levels. Greens were presented with a framed signed shirt and signed ball at Sunday's game, which will go on display at the health and fitness club.

Murtagh added: "We went to our first game on Sunday and all the team had a great time. We plan to attend regularly once the season starts and really show our support."

Rams' Chairman Mark Sawyer said: "This is a major coop for us attracting such a high profile sponsor; it gives a

massive boost to the club in moving forwards into National League One and helps with the funding both for the First Team and the Senior Academy.

He added: "It was good to see Murtagh and the team from Greens enjoying themselves at the match on Sunday and hopefully they'll become regular visitors this season."



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Trevor Gibbons

WITH HIS VIEWS



It's that time again, when anything is possible, the first home game of the season.

And if that wasn't enough to put a bounce into the step of Rams supporters

there's already a big derby win over the Dogs to savour. Go on take a moment now to have another little smirk, you know you want to.

Once again summer rugby has kicked off in the traditional blizzards and breezes, who said winter rugby went away? With the season a couple of weeks old I've seen enough clarty middens to last a whole season.

I even took a strange satisfaction in seeing the rain lash down in Perpignan as Wigan scrambled a wet win the other weekend – every time I turn on the telly nowadays I seem to see a programme featuring people desperate to escape the UK and renovate some dump in France so it was nice to see the sun don't shine all the time.

As ever some things change... I have to get used to all the new strips again. Will we see Oldham wearing the classic red and white hoops and BLUE shorts again (see I've got a long memory... kids – ask grandpa). And talking of wet weather, I once took a special trip over the tops to have a last look round Oldham's deserted Watersheddings, double-decker stand and all, when it was announced the historic old ground was to close. Now that was the wettest, and most aptly named, ground I ever

visited in t'Northern Union.

Inflation has reached the rugby league points system, three for a win and a bonus point up for grabs if you lose by a margin of 12 points or narrower... all a bit complicated for a simple lad like me. Let's see if it makes much difference.

But some things stay the same – The whistle goes, it's the first home game, everything to play for, the ref is advised to get some new specs, but above all – 'C'mon Dews!'

Trevor Gibbons

BBC Radio Leeds rugby league commentary team



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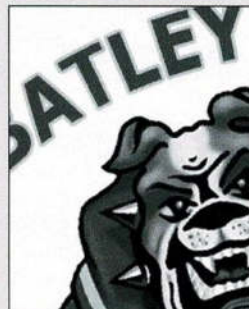
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Thoughts of a **Grazing Ram**

BY DAVID HYOMES

I am writing these thoughts before our away match at Hunslet but regardless of anything that happens at the South Leeds Stadium I would like to thank, on behalf of all Rams supporters, every single Dewsbury player who took to the field in our opening Northern Rail Cup match at Batley.

Magnificent running, handling, backing up, inspiring invention, piercing line breaks and crunching non stop defence to the very end. I actually heard David Bates implore to the team to get it sorted even near the end when we were already 49-6 up! No clocking off and giving any cheap points to the Bulldogs at the end.

Anybody who wondered why we had signed Dean Lawford now knows the answer unless they spent eighty minutes at Mount Pleasant wearing a blindfold. Kevin Crouthers was superb throughout whilst Rob Kelly had his best ever game in red, amber and black. Luke Haigh constantly had Batley back peddling. Kane Epati looks to have settled in superbly and had a great partnership with Danny Maun. As for Andy Bostock, he had the Bulldogs terrified every time he ran at them.

After our friendly against Hull Kingston Rovers I had the rare experience of getting a lift home with one of our opponents. Robins full back Ben Cockayne gave me a lift back to Normanton. It was brilliant discussing the game with someone who had just played against your team. Ben was keen to know who our big fair haired centre was and where we had signed him from. He went on to say that Andy Bostock was one of the strongest blokes he had ever played against.

Before the Batley game we were perhaps unsure what our rebuilt team could offer. Like any team this year we will have our bad days but we now know just what this team is capable of. The great thing is we still had plenty of quality sat in the stand either injured or unavailable.

Today we welcome Oldham for our first home match. If the game's ruling body invoked a rule that all clubs could only field players born in their home town there is little doubt that Oldham would be one of the strongest sides in the elite division.

It must have been round about 1970 when Oldham became my first ever away match in Lancashire. The M62 was not in existence and the journey to the atmospheric Watersheddings ground was quite an expedition. The day looked certain to end in disappointment with Oldham leading 16012 and the referee about to blow the final whistle. However it was Mike Stephenson who saved the day when he shot under the posts for a try. It was three points for a try then so we were still a point behind and it was left to Nigel Stephenson to keep his nerve and kick the conversion for a 17-16 Dewsbury win. I had travelled on the supporters coach with the lads from school and we were jumping around and waving our scarves in glee!! We were in the era of the skinhead culture back then and a group of Oldham skinheads had noted our celebrations. We managed to battle our way back to our coach but not before my mate Mick Hinchcliffe who hailed from Saville Town had his scarf stolen. Happy days!

David

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Remember this?

TONY SCARGILL LOOKS BACK

There's no doubt that fortunes change quickly in sport and looking back over the years may revive some long lost memories among us old 'uns (apologies to all our younger fans!)

5 years ago

Swinton 12 Dewsbury 75

Rams tries – Adrian Flynn 3, Nathan Batty 2, Andy Speak 2, Chris Kitching, Andy Fisher, Jim Leatham, Chris Parker, Jim Elston, Chris Redfearn, Goals – Carl Briggs 11 + one field goal

No game for Oldham that weekend but the weekend after it was –

Huddersfield 28 Oldham 18

Oldham tries – Joe McNicholas 2 Neil Roden, Goals – John Braddish 3

10 years ago -

Leeds Rhinos 48 Dewsbury 22 (Challenge Cup 5th Round)

Tries – Ian Bates, Shane Williams, Danny Wood, Goals Barry Eaton 5

Wakefield 14 Oldham 22 (Challenge Cup 5th Round)

Tries – Darren Abram, Paul Atcheson, Francis Maloney, David Bradbury, Goals – Francis Maloney 5

Franny played 29 games for Oldham that season scoring 10 tries and kicking 60 goals and a couple of field goals. The season included the World Club Challenge and Oldham's magnificent 20-16 win over North Queensland Cowboys, one of only four wins in the series by an English team against their Australian counterparts.

15 years ago – 21st February 1992

Workington 33 Dewsbury 7

Try – Paul Delaney, Goals – Nathan Graham, Paul Shuttleworth field goal

Oldham 56 Carlisle 16

Tries – Gary Christie 2, Nigel Heslop 2, Darren Abram, David Bradbury, Sean Devine, Iva Ropati, Mark Sheals, Se'e Solomona, Goals Tommy Martyn 5 Martin Strett 3

That was the season we both reached the play offs and met at the Watersheddings in a 14 all draw with Dewsbury snatching a dramatic victory in the replay at Mount Pleasant 20-18.

The last time we met –

27th July 2003

Dewsbury 26 Oldham 32

Dewsbury tries – Sylvain Houles 2, Paul Hicks, Craig Miles, Goals – Jamie Benn 4 and 2 field goals

Oldham – Lee Doran 2, Keith Brennan, Chris Morley, Gavin Dodd, Neil Roden Goals – Simon Svabic 4

Attendance 1,098

The Rams were relegated from NL1 that season with Oldham finishing in 5th place.

Tony Scargill

CHEERLEADERS

Hello – we're back again!!

Welcome back to the Tetleys Stadium for the first "proper" home game of the season. We've had three friendlies of course all of which have been a little bit different with a couple of great attendances against Bradford and Hull KR to help bring some much needed funds into the club. Talking of funds and it's great to report that we're off to a flyer again this season and we have already agreed to give the club a sizeable donation in return for the sponsorship rights to Rob Kelly. We just need Rob to make sure he gets on the team sheet every week and scores a few tries – no pressure on you there Rob!!!

The gang of workers have been busy over the close season doing repairs and other maintenance issues including helping out with fence repairs. I dread seeing gale force winds on the weather forecast! Some of the Cheerleaders got busy washing down all the seats prior to the Bradford game. I'm sure some of the mums said "well they can't keep their bedroom tidy but when it comes to washing seats at the Rams that appears to be a different thing!"

As usual with every season there'll be a few new girls here. Most of the older ones have stayed with us but we now also have a few of the very young ones to add to the "aah" factor. They will be especially useful when it comes to twisting your arms with the bucket collections. So we're all here and ready for the season ahead. We've already had the superb spectacle of thrashing Batley followed by a very disappointing defeat by Hunslet which as someone who lives in Hunslet I'm glad I missed since I had to go away with work. Hopefully the real Rams will turn up this afternoon!!

Welcome to all the Oldham fans and we hope you have a successful season. Your club is heading in the right direction once again.

Enjoy the game

Janet Roper

Date	Opponent	Competition	KO	R	Att	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17				
February																										
Sun 11th	Batley Bulldogs	Northern Rail Cup	2pm	49-6	1,169	Preece2	Close1	Bostock1	Maun	Epati1	Maloney5G	Lawford10G	Hobson	Haigh1	Bates	Crouthers1	Bretherton	Weedon	Finn1/5G	Kelly	Robinson	Crawley				
Sun 18th	Hunslet Hawks	Northern Rail Cup	3.30pm	8-16	756	Preece	Ratcliffe1	Bostock	Epati	Maun	F.Maloney	Lawford	Hobson	Haigh	D.Maloney	Crouthers1	Bretherton	Weedon					Finn	Kelly	Robinson	Bates
Sun 25th	Oldham	Northern Rail Cup	3pm																							
March																										
Sun 4th	Batley Bulldogs	Northern Rail Cup	3pm																							
Sun 11th	Challenge Cup 3rd Round																									
Sun 18th	Oldham	Northern Rail Cup	3pm																							
Sun 25th	Hunslet Hawks	Northern Rail Cup	3pm																							
April																										
Sun 1st	Challenge Cup 4th Round																									
Fri 6th	Batley Bulldogs	Nat. League One	7.30pm																							
Mon 9th	Halifax	National League One	7.30pm																							
Sun 15th	Whitehaven	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 22nd	Northern Rail Cup Play-offs																									
Sun 29th	Doncaster Lakers	Nat. League One	3pm																							
May																										
Sun 6th	Rochdale Hornets	Nat. League One	3pm																							
Fri 18th	Sheffield Eagles	National League One	8.00pm																							
June																										
Sun 3rd	Whitehaven	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 10th	Castleford Tigers	National League One	3.30pm																							
Sun 17th	Leigh Centurions	Nat. League One	3pm																							
July																										
Sun 1st	Batley Bulldogs	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 8th	Widnes Vikings	Nat. League One	3pm																							
Sun 22nd	Rochdale Hornets	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 29th	Castleford Tigers	Nat. League One	3pm																							
August																										
Sun 5th	Halifax	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 12th	Widnes Vikings	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 19th	Sheffield Eagles	Nat. League One	3pm																							
September																										
Sun 2nd	Doncaster Lakers	National League One	3pm																							
Sun 9th	Leigh Centurions	National League One	3pm																							

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Table & Scorers

UP TO DATE STATS...

Northern Rail Cup Group 3

Pos	Team	Pl	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Dif	Pts
1	Dewsbury Rams	2	1	0	1	1	57	22	+35	4
2	Hunslet Hawks	2	1	0	1	0	36	44	-8	3
3	Batley Bulldogs	2	1	0	1	0	36	78	-42	3



Name App Tries Goals DG Poi

Liam Finn	2	1	3	10
Francis Maloney	2		5	10
Kevin Crouthers	2	2		8
Ian Preece	2	2		8
Andy Bostock	2	1		4
Kane Epati	2	1		4
Luke Haigh	2	1		4
Lee Close	1	1		4
Danny Ratcliffe	1	1		4
Dean Lawford	2		1	1
David Bates	2			0
Alex Bretherton	2			0
Andy Hobson	2			0
Rob Kelly	2			0
Danny Maun	2			0
Martin Robinson	2			0
Josh Weeden	2			0
Liam Crawley	1			0
Dominic Maloney	1			0

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National League Matters

BY ALAN EDGE

The long wait is over and it's here at last - the first home game of the 2007 season!

But first things first, I can just imagine what you are thinking - 'who is this bloke, invading our programme space?' Well, there's no easy way to break this to you, so I might as well be blunt - I'm a 'Leyther' (a Leigh supporter to the uninitiated!) Hang on, don't chuck the programme away, let me try to explain what I am doing here, attempting to inflict my jaundiced views on a wider audience!

Over three years ago, I was asked to write a 'one-off' piece in the Leigh programme (contrary to what you might think, there are Leythers who can write!) and have been stuck with the job, ever since.

Although I did 'enjoy' a season of writing in Super League, most of my programme notes have been for National League games. I feel more at home, (along with my team, I suspect) in the 'comfort zone' of the National League, where I can have a 'pop' at what we perceive are the 'powers that be' - i.e. Super League and the RFL! So, I would aim to produce a piece that is topical (hence one reason for the title) and humorous. (yes, there are Leythers with a sense of humour - you have to have one, to support Leigh!)

The other reason for the title is that National League does matter. Super League may be considered to be the pinnacle of our Sport - 'The Greatest Game' - but without the foundations, there can be no pinnacle. It's no good expanding outside the 'M62 corridor', when our base in the heartlands is insecure. It is essential that the Blackpools, Dewsburies, Barrows, etc. not only survive, but are encouraged to flourish. I believe that is how our Sport will become strong, and how we will once again beat the Aussies at our game.

So, do the 'powers that be' care? Well, the recent Sky TV deal would suggest that they might. However, am I alone in seeing negative aspects to that deal? We are told that Sky's offer was 'better' than Eurosport's, but there will be no money for NL clubs. Blimey, what were Eurosport offering - to take ten grand off each club?! What will be the impact on

'gates', on Thursday evenings? Widnes v Leigh starts at 6:05 p.m. - what would the gate have been the following day, Good Friday? Whitehaven's last home game with 'Cas' apparently attracted over 6,000 spectators - they'll be lucky to get half that, in the televised game! It could prove a very costly exercise for the televised clubs. Of course the argument is that we can attract better sponsorship, but unfortunately, most clubs have surely finalised sponsorship deals by now - unlike the RFL who remain 'sponsorless' at the NL level! Don't get me wrong, I'm not such a Luddite as to oppose live coverage - but surely all NL clubs should receive some payment, in compensation?

Ah well, I'd better climb off the soapbox now, and leave you to enjoy your game. See you again soon.

Alan Edge

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PAUL ASHTON (HALF BACK)

Son of former Watersheddings scrum-half star Ray Ashton, Paul is fulfilling a lifetime's ambition to play for his hometown club. Though born in Widnes, he was only a few months old when his parents moved to Oldham where his father carved out a career that earned him GB tour honours in 1984 during 212 club

appearances which reaped him 72 tries.

Aged 27, Paul learned his trade at Saddleworth before playing for Halifax, Rochdale, Keighley and Swinton. He was in the Cougars side, with his new Roughyeds team mates Simeon Hoyle and Richard Mervill, that won promotion to NL1 in 2003.

CHRIS BAINES (BACK ROW)

A young forward who also did enough for coach Steve Deakin last year, while on loan from Warrington, to win a contract for 2007. He proved to be a good, hard-working forward in his first season with the Roughyeds and the experience he gained will serve him and the club well in NL2.

He was in his third season of under-21s rugby at Warrington when he first got the chance to move on loan to Roughyeds. He had three separate and continuous one-month loan spells and when the Wolves said they would release him he had no hesitation in grabbing the chance to commit himself to Oldham for the remainder of 2006 and then 2007.

JASON BOULTS (PROP FORWARD)

One of many new boys in the Roughyeds squad for 2007, 23-year-old Jason arrived on the recommendation of two of his former Halifax team mates, Jamie Bloem and Alan Hadcroft.

Alan, already established here as one of coach Steve Deakin's senior men, wasted no time in tipping off the boss when he learned from Bloem that Boult was ready to leave The Shay to take up a new challenge. At 16 stone and 6ft 2in, Jason can play his weight in the front-row, as he proved in his two seasons at Fax where he was an ever-present with 30 appearances in 2005 and then added 27 more in 2006 --- statistics which show he is as durable as he is consistent.

GENO COSTIN (SECOND ROW/PROP)

A non-quota Aussie, 22-year-old Geno is in England for the first time and hoping to make an impact in NL2. Former Halifax stand-off Carl Briggs, lined up originally to become Gateshead Thunder's new coach, planned to take Geno to the North-East with him. When that move broke down, Briggs pointed Geno in Oldham's direction, much to the delight of coach Steve Deakin.

ANDY CRABTREE (HOOKER)

One of half a dozen players signed by Roughyeds from Swinton Lions for 2007, Andy is eager to fulfil the early promise that earned him not only a spot on the books of Wigan Warriors but also a place in a talented Great Britain academy side that boasted several players who have gone on to big things at the highest level.

At Swinton in 2006 he faced immense competition for the specialist No 9 role, but he made nine appearances, three starts and six off the bench.

ANDY GOREY (WINGER)

A scrum-half in his Royton Tigers days, local lad Andy became a good full-back in the former Roughyeds academy side. He was under contract on the break-up of the academy side, but he pledged to fight for a place in the first team rather than go elsewhere.

ALAN HADCROFT (CENTRE)

Robust, and renowned for solid defence and strong running, 29-year-old Alan is also vastly experienced. He signed from Halifax for the 2006 season, but his campaign was marred by a series of shoulder injuries. He was the first player, not already on a longer contract, to sign for 2007, but then he dislocated his shoulder again in the final match of the season at Whitehaven.

JOHN HOUGH (HOOKER)

Cut 'Houghie' in two and you will find 'Roughyeds' running right through him. He was the first player to sign for the 'new' Roughyeds club when it was formed by Chris Hamilton and his fellow directors in the autumn of 1997, following the demise of Oldham Bears.

Currently two seasons into a three-year contract, 29-year-old Oldham-born John will have completed ten years with the club at the end of the 2007 season and will thus qualify for a testimonial.

DREW HOUSTON (SECOND ROW/CENTRE)

One of the two overseas quota men for 2007, 23-year-old Drew comes highly recommended by another new Roughyeds recruit, Simeon Hoyle.

Hoyle played in Australia in 2005 and liked what he saw of the Dapto pair, Houston and a former Keighley colleague Richard Mervill. Houston, once a youngster linked with Melbourne Storm, had two seasons with a Storm feeder club, Norths in the Queensland Cup, before heading south for Dapto, champions of the Illawarra competition.

SIMEON HOYLE (HOOKER)

Formerly with Keighley Cougars and Halifax, hooker Simeon was one of the first of the new boys to be signed up by Roughyeds for 2007. He is a hooker of the old school ---- a tough and industrious operator in defence while having enough know-how to make things happen from dummy half.

It was while he was at Keighley that, in 2003, he helped the Cougars to win promotion to NL1 from a third-place finish in the league. Sheffield, Chorley and Keighley finished neck and neck on 26 points, with Cougars third on points difference.

GARETH LANGLEY (WINGER)

Pacy, and a good finisher, 'Gaz' Langley comes to the Roughyeds after five years in one of the most professional learning and development schools in rugby league --- the youth and academy set-up at St Helens.

Born in the well-known rugby league district of Parr, near St Helens, 22-year-old Gareth didn't take up the sport with Blackbrook until he was 15.

CRAIG LITTLER (CENTRE)

How appropriate that Littler comes next Langley in alphabetical order . . . for that's exactly how they have lined up, as centre

and wing partners, in the Saints academy teams of the past four years. A year younger than 'Gaz', at 21, Craig was offered the chance to have another year at Knowsley Road, but he opted to sign for Roughyeds instead --- and one of the reasons was that he could continue his partnership with Langley.

RICHARD MERVILL (PROP FORWARD)

Formerly with Halifax and then Keighley, Richard comes to the Roughyeds for 2007 from Australia ---- a similar route to that taken by his former Cougars team mate, Simeon Hoyle.

Mervill played in the 2003 Keighley side that won promotion to NL1, alongside hooker Hoyle and stand-off Paul Ashton, and later jetted off Down Under, where he has been playing for Dapto in the Illawarra competition.

PAUL O'CONNOR (FULL BACK)

Had three games for Roughyeds while on loan from Widnes Vikings last season and made such an impression on coach Steve Deakin that the boss didn't hesitate to go for him again when he learned he might be available. His signing takes into account that he will be miss June, July and August due to a pre-arranged trip to Australia and New Zealand.

MARK OGDEN (STAND OFF)

A 23-year-old from Queensland, Mark also occupies a spot on the Roughyeds overseas quota. An accomplished play-maker, he is said to have the ability to guide the side around the park from outside-half.

He was in the Brisbane Broncos development squad as a teenager and in 2000, aged 17, he represented Queensland Schoolboys. Like his mate, Geno Costin, he represented Wynnum-Manly at various levels, building a reputation as a reliable goalkicker and a clever half-back in the modern mould.

STUART OLDHAM (WINGER)

Formerly with St Helens and Swinton, Stuart has good pace and also has experience of the full-back position. While at Saints, he impressed the then academy coach Dave Rotherham, who spoke highly of him to Oldham boss Steve Deakin. He lives at Eccles and played his first serious rugby with Sedgley Park RU club before moving up the ladder in union with Liverpool St Helens.

NEIL RODEN (HALFBACK)

Neil has rejoined Roughyeds from Leigh after leaving the club initially to go to Batley in 2004. In his first stint with Oldham, after joining from Wigan Academy, he amassed 290 points (68 tries and 18 drop goals) in 142 appearances over four and a half seasons.

No other player in the nine-year history of the 'new' Roughyeds club has totalled more tries than Roden, whose 68 pushed Mark Sibson (61) into second place.

WES ROGERS (PROP FORWARD)

At the age of 29, Wes brings experience, a cool head and stability to Oldham's front-row in 2007. Oldham-born, he first played for the Roughyeds in the club's early days, but he returns, from Swinton, as a much more experienced and matured front-row forward, who is delighted to be coming back for a second chance with his hometown club.

IAN SINFIELD (SECOND ROW)

Another vastly experienced forward who is returning to his hometown club. The brother of Leeds Rhinos captain, Kevin Sinfield, Ian played in the first ever Roughyeds game at Rochdale on New Year's Day, 1998. He had come initially on loan from Salford, but soon afterwards he was signed on a permanent basis, with Roughyeds paying out an undisclosed fee for his services.

KRIS SMITH (SECOND ROW/CENTRE)

Another vastly-experienced player, this 28-year-old has been on the books of four Super League clubs, namely Leeds, Salford, London and Halifax. He has also played in France with Pia and Carpentras and it was while he was briefly at Carpentras that he was a club mate of the Roughyeds' new French signing, Said Tamghart.

He is a big man of 6ft 4in and 15 and a half stones and he has had brief experience of Super League with both London and Halifax. A product of the Eccles amateur club, he was snapped up by Leeds Rhinos while still a teenager.

MICHAEL STOUT (SECOND ROW/CENTRE)

Another Roughyeds signing from Swinton, Michael has a good turn of speed for a forward and likes to use it while breaking wide out --- a quality that also enables him to do a stint in the centre.

This Warrington-born school teacher played in the academy squads of both Warrington Wolves and Widnes Vikings before joining Swinton Lions a year ago. In his one season with the Lions he made 19 appearances and scored seven tries. He played four times at centre, once on the wing, four times in the second row, once at loose-forward and nine times as a substitute.

SAID TAMGHART (UTILITY)

The description 'utility' perhaps fails to do justice to this French international, who has represented his country at every level, including fully-fledged Test matches against Australia and New Zealand. He played prop against the Aussies and second-row against the Kiwis, but both he and coach Steve Deakin have confirmed that he can operate equally well at loose-forward and also in the backs at centre or wing.

ALEX WILKINSON (CENTRE/WING)

Oldham-born Alex played his early rugby with Royton Tigers and toured with GB schoolboys to Australia in 1999 and with England academy to New Zealand and Australia in 2001. Super League giants Bradford Bulls snapped him up and, while at Odsal, he had a loan spell with London Broncos, where he played six times in Super League. He then moved on loan to Huddersfield, where he added another 13 Super League games to his tally.

LEE WINGFIELD (SECOND ROW)

This 24-year-old second-row forward, signed last year from amateurs Leigh East, can also operate equally well at centre. He won many honours in the amateur game and played on numerous occasions for Great Britain. He played against France and Russia in Russia in 2003 and kept his place for international appearances against France at Carcassonne and then for the return game at Whitehaven.

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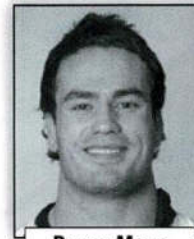


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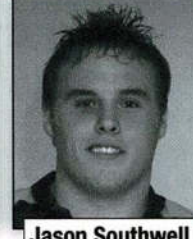


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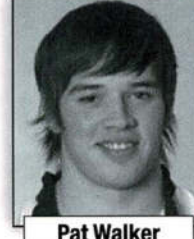
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Rugby Talk

Danny Lockwood
Publisher, League Weekly

YOU know it must be hard being a referee ... they certainly don't make it look easy, do they?!? Just a cheap pop at the men in, well, purple, there. That's the last one, I promise.

Actually, I've tremendous respect for our officials. For one, they seem quite down to earth – far less arrogant than football refs.

Only last week, Steve Ganson came up with a shocking call against Jamie Peacock and Ganson was, on reflection, quick to apologise to the player. Imagine that from 'top' soccer's 'Little Hitlers'.

Referees are the subject of jokes about their vision and chants questioning their parentage or favourite pastime. Boy, you must need a sense of humour.

I ran into Ashley Klein on the way back from Perpignan after the first game of 2006 – you know, just when Wigan fans were wishing they could run OVER him.

Ashley had a shocker that night; and my he knew it. If he didn't when he left the field to a chorus of boos, or even when he heard Ian Millward's post-match tirade, then he certainly knew the following day.

That's because his 'supportive' colleagues from the RFL wouldn't let it drop. When a few questions were raised at passport control about Ashley's Aussie passport, one 'pal' suggested it may be better if he WASN'T allowed back in the country. I have to admit even I had a little cheap shot.

All in jest, of course, and all taken in good humour. But officials do get a lot of genuine criticism and abuse. I suppose what I'm saying is their jobs are difficult enough – that's why they don't need crazy rulings from the RFL.

It's been a long-standing convention that refs can't officiate in matches involving their home town team. That didn't apply on the opening day of this season, though, when St Helens-born Ganson was video ref as the Saints beat Huddersfield.

The game was begging for a controversial call – and it came when Eorl Crabtree had a try ruled out (wrongly, in my view).

Stuart Cummings says it's simply not an issue, and I know I'd never question the integrity of one of our officials – but I know some people who would. And who's to say a referee, under pressure to prove impartiality, wouldn't deal more HARSHLY upon his home town team? They're only human, after all.

In a nutshell, it's a stupid complication ... now let's remove it before we get radio phone-ins flooded with enraged fans giving our refs even more stick. I just think they've got enough to deal with, that's all.



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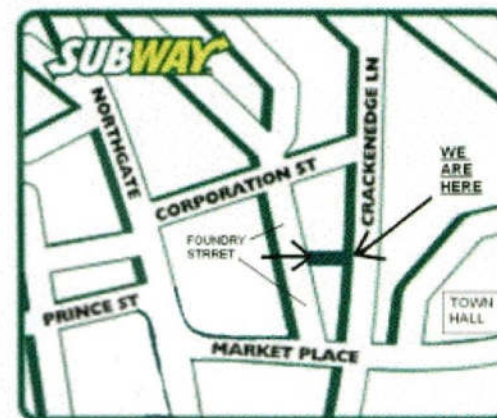
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