

game line-up

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OLDHAM SQUAD	Played	GATESHEAD THUNDER
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CHRIS BAINES		ROBIN PEERS
MATTY BROOKS		GRAHAM STEPHENSON
JASON BOULTS		MARK MCKINLEY
GENO COSTIN		ODELL HARRIS
ANDY CRABTREE		MARK CHRISTENSEN
ANDY GOREY		TIM MARTIN
IAN HODSON		TONY DOHERTY
JOHN HOUGH		NICK HYDE
DREW HOUSTON		TABUA CAKACAKA
SIMEON HOYLE		SHANE WOODEN
GARETH LANGLEY		DYLAN NASH
CRAIG LITTLER		PAT WILLIAMSON
RICHARD MERVILL		RYAN CLARKE
STUART OLDHAM		CLINT FRAZER
LUCAS ONYANGO		CHRIS PARKER
NEIL RODEN		STEVEN BRADLEY
WES ROGERS		MATTY WALTON
LEE SANDERSON		DARREN TOWART
IAN SINFIELD		KEVIN TILL
KRIS SMITH		JONATHAN SCOTT
MICHAEL STOUT		STEPHEN RUTHERFORD
SAID TAMGHART		JONO ROLFE
TONY TONKS		RITCHIE METCALF
ALEX WILKINSON		DAMIAN MARTINEZ
LEE WINGFIELD		STEVE ELMS
ADAM HUGHES		MATTY BARRON
ADAM ROBINSON		

GATESHEAD THUNDER

match officials

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4TH OFFICIAL: R Cowling

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SUNDAY 1 JULY 2007 • K.O. 3.00pm

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v GATESHEAD THUNDER

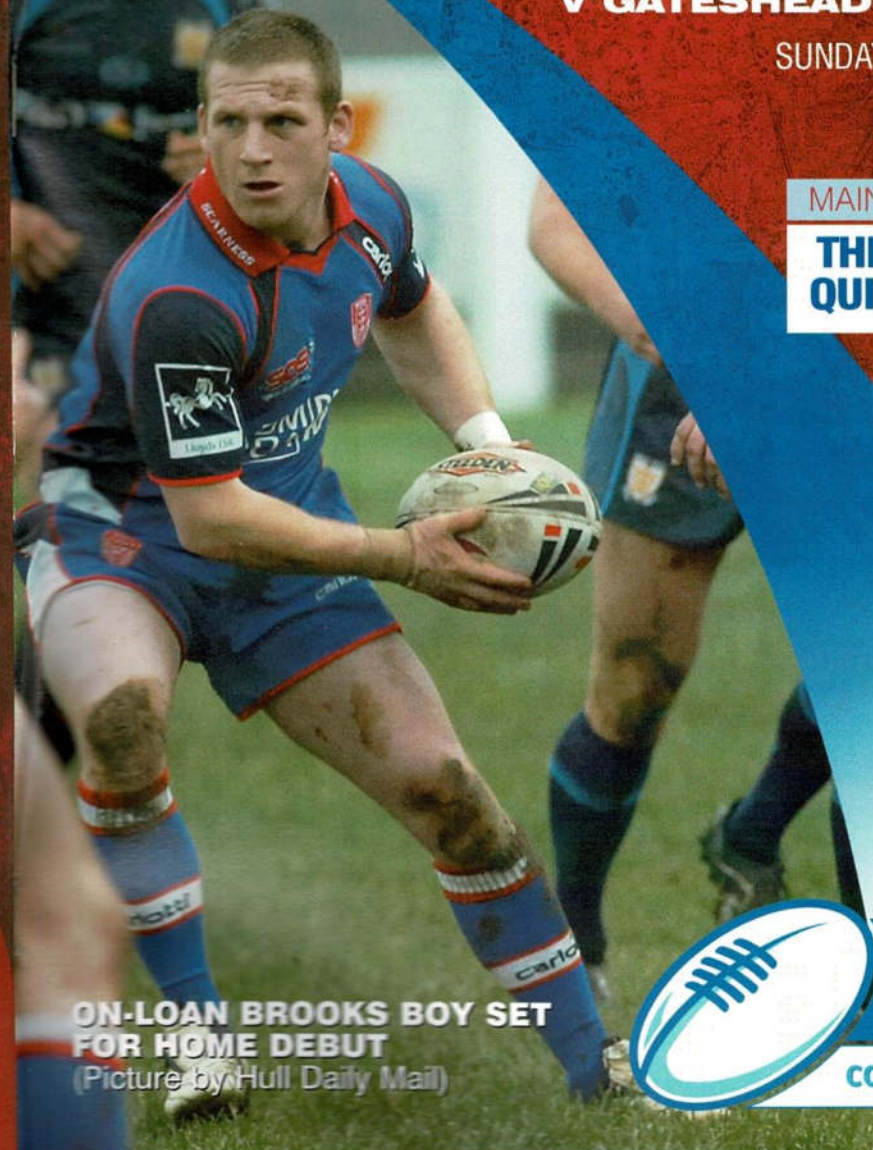
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MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, 228 - Jan 1998 - Sep 2006

CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farrel, 67 - *April 2nd 2000 - March 15th 2002
*John Hough was on the team for every match February 1st 1999 - April 16th 2001 (82)

TRIES IN A SEASON: Nick Johnson, 25 - 2004

GOALS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 146 - 2000-2001

POINTS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 320 - 2000-2001

DROP GOALS IN A SEASON: Neil Roden, 7 - 2001-2002

TRIES IN A CAREER: Mark Sibson, 60 - 1999-2002

GOALS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 254 - 1999-2001

POINTS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 576 - 1999-2001

DROP GOALS IN A CAREER: Neil Roden, 18 - 2000-2003

TRIES IN MATCH: Mark Sibson v Wigan St. Judes, 4 - Feb 8th 2000 at Boundary Park
Mark Sibson v Queensbury, 4 - Jan 28th 2001 at Boundary Park
David Gibbons v Chorley Lynx, 4 - Jan 30th 2001 at Boundary Park
James Bunyan v Featherstone Rovers, 4 - Apr 12th 2004 at Boundary Park

GOALS IN A MATCH: Simon Svabic v Swinton Lions, 10 - Apr 6th 2003 at Boundary Park
POINTS IN A MATCH: Gareth Barber v Dewsbury Rams, 26 - Apr 2nd 2002 at Hurst Cross (7 goals, 3 tries)

DROP GOALS IN A MATCH: Neil Roden v Workington Town, 2 - Dec 17th 2000 at Derwent Park
John Braddish v Hull KR, 2 - Dec 16th 2001 at New Craven Park

HIGHEST SCORE/WINNING MARGIN v Yorks Wasps, 70-6 - Apr 1st 2001 at Huntingdon Stadium
v Queensbury (amt), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001 RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park

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

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Derek Turner 1955-59

Kevin Taylor 1962-77

Mike Elliott 1962-79

Bob Irving 1964-74

Martin Murphy 1966-82

Terry Flanagan 1979-89

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

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

www.roughyeds.co.uk

boardroom **view**

with Chris Hamilton



Today sees us play the second of this season's on the road games here at Sedgley Park against Gateshead Thunder.

After beating York City Knights here last time we will be hoping for more of the same especially after what was a particularly disappointing performance and result

against Keighley last week.

We were fortunate to even pick up a bonus point as we didn't perform anywhere near to our potential and hopefully that will have acted as a very important reminder that, as I have said for a long time in both National League One and Two, if you don't turn up switched on for any game you lose it.

That has been borne out once again by results of recent weeks with several more "upsets" including our result at Keighley and Hunslet beating Celtic Crusaders.

Hopefully we will learn from last week and learn quickly as the lads have put a lot of hard work into getting themselves into a position where they can achieve something this season and it would be a disaster if that opportunity was wasted.

I for one don't think it will be and there was a collective recognition during this past week that last Sunday was a wake up call and all of the aims for this season have been re-confirmed this week with renewed vigour.

Our opponents today, however, will have something to say about that, having shown with their win over Hunslet that they are on the right track and with several new signings on board they will be looking for some consistency.

I also spent a very pleasant evening over at Red Hall on Tuesday with Tony Tonks for his disciplinary hearing!

The video of the incident didn't help our case as Tony will confirm but I have to say that we were happy with the outcome and a one match ban. There is no truth in the rumour that the panel offered us a deal when they got half way through my four hour notes!

A lot of people have been asking me for my reaction to the deduction of six points from Swinton and Doncaster in relation to their going into administration. Not surprisingly my own thoughts on the matter are that the punishment does not fit the crime and given the hardship, both personal and club wise, that myself and Sean had to go through for nearly eighteen months to ensure that there was a club at the end of it, we feel hard done by.

As ever with rugby league there are always a number of different arguments as to why certain decisions have been made and how the rules are different etc but I do know that what we did at Oldham enables us to hold our heads up high and will do so for ever more. It is also reassuring that other clubs feel the same way as we do. However what's done is done and the one thing we have learned over the last ten years is that there will always be things going on that you don't like but that there is very little you can do about them.

As ever please enjoy the game and get behind the lads.

Chris

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deek's coach approach

with Steve Deakin



WELCOME to Sedgley Park everyone for what will be our final 'home' game here before we return to Boundary Park.

I know the club was extremely encouraged by the turn-out of supporters when we were here for the York City Knights game on June 10 --- the attendance was 1,024 --- and it would be nice to think we could top that today for the visit of Gateshead Thunder.

We will actually be playing here again next Sunday as well, but we will be in a different dressing room because it will be Swinton's home fixture so we will be on the opposite side of the corridor to the facility we occupy today.

We then have Barrow away on July 15 before we go back to Boundary Park on July 22 for the visit of Hunslet --- and that will be the first of six home games out of our last nine fixtures in the regular Co-Operative NL2 season.

It is all building up to a highly-competitive second half of the season. Some people seem to think Featherstone could be crowned champions now, but with games in hand we have not even reached the half-way stage of our league campaign until the hooter brings an end to our clash with Thunder today.

Our last two results, of course, have been bitterly disappointing. To go behind at Featherstone for the first time in the game with only three minutes left on the clock, and then to let slip an 18-8 lead at Keighley seven days later, were body blows that were not exactly in our script.

Every team suffers dips, lapses in form, a poor run --- describe them as you wish --- but the key to success is to get these games out of the system as quickly as possible. Learn from them, most certainly. But don't dwell on them. Put them

behind you and get back on track again.

We have been working hard all week to do just that: to put our promotion aspirations back in the frame.

Despite the disappointment of our last two results I don't think for one minute that the goal of finishing top is outside our reach or, indeed, is outside the reach of two or three other clubs who are up there battling it out to finish as high as possible.

There will be a few more twists and turns yet involving other clubs in this very competitive division --- a few more results that don't go according to pre-match league placings.

I am certain also that it is far too early to identify who will finish top. Which brings me to another talking point: the 'for' and 'against' columns in the league table. They are important, of course they are. But promoted teams rarely ever win promotion on the strength of their points difference. They win promotion on the back of good performances.

Get your performances right and other things will take care of themselves --- and what we will be striving for today is to get our performance right.

It is far too easy to get excited about, or to start thinking about, big victories. First of all, you have to WIN because there are potential banana skins all over the place and they are there for all to see. Didn't we slide on one at Keighley last week?

And what about Hunslet? After beating Celtic Crusaders (third in the table) at home they went to Gateshead last week and got thumped 18-6. It wasn't in Crusaders' scheme of things to lose at Hunslet any more than it was in our way of thinking to go down at Keighley. And Hunslet wouldn't be expecting to lose in the North-East after knocking over the side from South Wales only the week before.

Last week's was a great win for Thunder and you can rest assured they will be coming here today with only one intention --- to throw in a bit of Lightning as well and to inflict our third defeat in a row.

Our challenge is to put recent disappointments behind us. As a group we are confident in our ability to do that and to turn things round --- and it has to start today.

Enjoy the game,
DEAKS.

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FOCUS ON THE OLDHAM SERVICE AREA

(all you need to know about local rugby league at grass-roots level)

In the first of a series of match-day magazine articles covering the Oldham Service Area we put you in touch with the officials who run it; tell you who recently received RFL Volunteer awards; and give you the run-down on last Saturday's Junior Festival.

A full page will be allocated to Service Area matters in each of our remaining match-day magazines this season, concentrating on results and match reports for the town-team under-12s, 13s, 14s and 15s.

The Service Area, which is responsible for junior and youth rugby league in Oldham, embraces club and schools' rugby and also has an input from referees. Leading officials are as follows: Glynn Knight (chair and coaches rep); Garry Hepworth (co-ordinator, treasurer and schools' rep); Garry Highton (vice-chair); Mike Tootill (head coach); Joe Warburton (coach educator); Keith Egan (referees' rep); Jackie Clowes (NW Counties rep).

Each of the local amateur clubs with junior/youth sections --- Waterhead, St Anne's, Saddleworth, Shaw Rhinos, Higginsshaw, Fitton Hill/Hathershaw --- also has a rep on the Service Area, while Oldham Roughyeds, the Oldham League and Oldham MBC are also invited to be represented.

Coaches and volunteer helpers are always required and for further information you can contact Garry Hepworth on 0161 633 7807 or on 07749625517 or by email: gyhepworth@yahoo.com; Glynn Knight on 0161 652 4712; Garry Highton on 0161 620 7854; or Mike Tootill on 01457 871933 or by email: mike4800@aol.com

RFL volunteer-of-the-year winners were: Young volunteer, Chris Hepworth (Waterhead); Club volunteer, Alan Bolton (Saddleworth); Service Area volunteer, Jackie Clowes (Waterhead); Volunteer co-ordinator, Jan Greer (Saddleworth); Outstanding achiever, Jeff Sneyd

(Waterhead), who coaches the town-team under-15s.

The full-day junior festival was for under-8s to under-11s at Counthill. Waterhead, Saddleworth, St Anne's and Mayfield competed in the 8s, 9s and 10s for club teams, involving more than 120 boys and girls.

The under-11s was a primary schools' event comprising the Tag Cup and the Rugby League Cup, the latter full tackle and a total of about 150 children from 12 schools taking part.

Knowsley won the full-tackle cup, results as follows: Knowsley 12, St Joseph's 4; Knowsley 12, Bare Trees 4; St Joseph's 20, Bare Trees 4.

The Tag championship attracted the following teams: Lyndhurst, St Margaret's, Alt, Bare Trees, SS Aidan and Oswald, Alexandra, Knowsley, St Joseph's, Diggle, Rushcroft, St Anne's (Greenacres).

Results: Alt 0, St Margaret's 16; Knowsley 24, Alexandra 8; SS Aidan and Oswald 16, Lyndhurst 12; Diggle 16, St Anne's (Greenacres) 20; Rushcroft 20, Bare Trees 16; Final: St Joseph's 8, Lyndhurst 4.

More than 500 spectators attended finals day of the Oldham Chronicle Junior and Youth Cups, held at Saddleworth Rangers, and the winning teams were as follows:

Under-12s, Saddleworth; under-13s, St Anne's; under-14s, St Anne's; under-15s, Waterhead; under-16s, St Anne's.

More details of these finals and semi-finals, including scorers and man-of-the-match winners, will be given in a subsequent Roughyeds match-day magazine.

Come to the game, get a magazine and keep abreast of all that's happening in the Oldham Service Area covering the town that fires top rugby league players off its production line at an amazing rate. ROGER HALSTEAD.



Stars of the future? The town team under-12s beat Kirklees 28-6

PICTURE BY OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

with Geoff Cooke

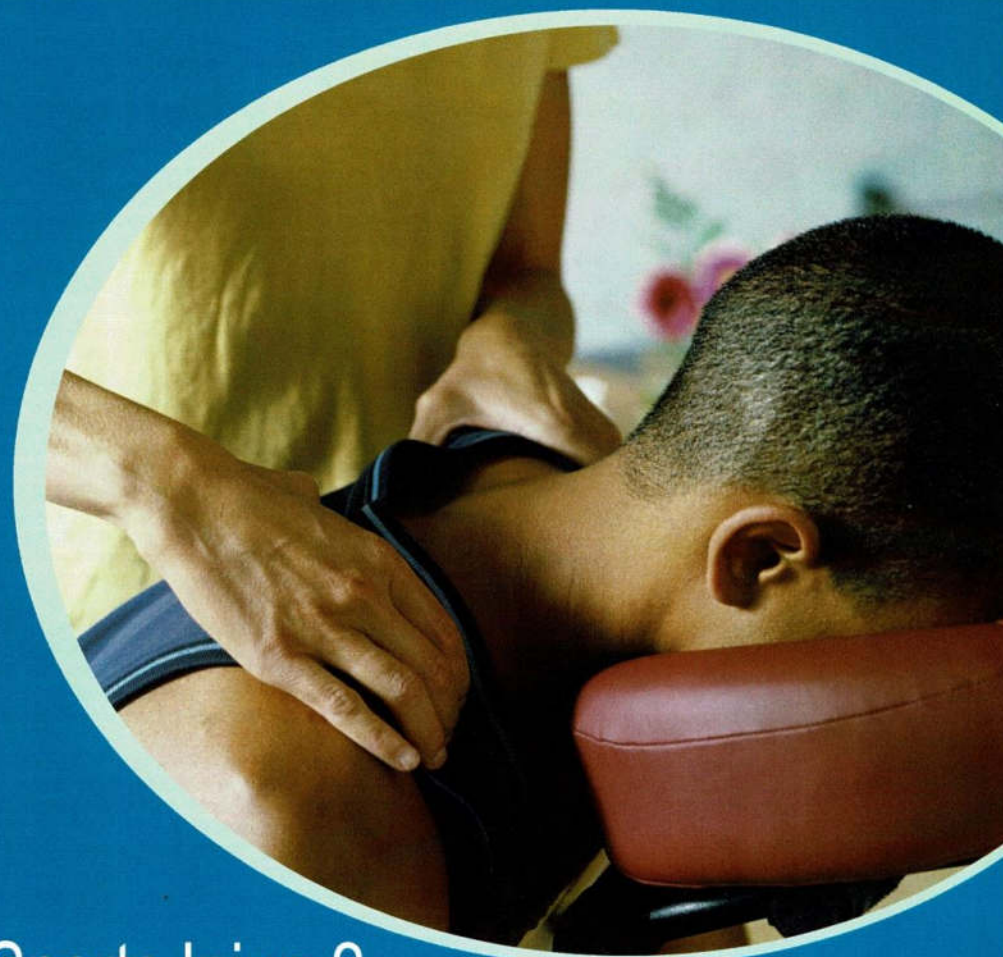
cooke-ability!

One of the things that has impressed me about Oldham this season, and something we have not seen consistently from a Roughyeds side since 2001, is that the team refuses to be bullied.

The players to a man stand up to the physical challenge of their opponents and refuse to take a backward step. Good on 'yer lads!

However, for whatever reason, the team's discipline is poor and the side is having to play sometimes lengthy parts of matches with 12 or even 11 players on the field because of sin-binnings or sendings off. Sometimes this is a consequence of poor refereeing but the side also needs to address its discipline. Penalties and sin-bins can cost dear. The team has to realise that, especially since its outstanding televised defeat of Celtic Crusaders, other sides in the league have cottoned on to the threat the Roughyeds pose. They will inevitably become a target for niggling tactics and efforts to slow the game down. For most sides in the division a game against Oldham this season has become a cup final, a scalp to be taken and boasted about. David Hobbs was saying this about his Featherstone Rovers team after last Sunday's game and he's right. So, don't fall for it lads: just play them off the park with the good football we all know you are capable of.

When Chris Hamilton said the six point penalty imposed on Doncaster and Swinton for going into administration was inadequate he spoke from the heart. And as someone who confronted debt head on and paid every penny he had every right to complain. Just stop and consider for a minute. In N.L.1 and N.L.2 six points represents two victories. Hopefully that will be enough to see Doncaster relegated but what are Rochdale, Batley and Sheffield to think if a new Doncaster team start to pick up points and finish above them, especially since the new club has been allowed to keep three points won by a club no longer in existence. Will that be justice? Similarly, if Swinton were to grab enough points to gain a play-off place that will disadvantage a side in N.L.2 that has done the right thing. This CVA thing is getting out of hand. And it's even worse in soccer, although there at least the penalty is ten points which represents five victories rather than two. Football's precedent suggests that the R.L. equivalent should be at least 15 points and possibly more if we consider there are bonus points available in our game. And, given the financial problems faced by N.L.1 and 2 clubs it's about time the R.F.L. had a development plan for these divisions and, given the new salary cap regulations announced this week for Super League, closer control of affairs at the lower level is also necessary before clubs start to fold altogether.



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by ROGER HALSTEAD

'MR CONSISTENCY' IS PROPPING UP OLDHAM'S PROMOTION CHALLENGE

And that flare-up at Celtics? It was just 'handbags' says front-row man Jason

IF there was one defining moment that kick-started Oldham's Co-Operative NL2 season it was the bust-up at Celtic Crusaders where the Roughyeds pulled off a marvellous 34-26 win to lay down the marker for their promotion ambitions.

Watched by thousands of League fans on nationwide television, Steve Deakin's men stormed back from a 26-6 deficit to score an inspirational 28 unanswered points --- and the turn-around was sparked by a midfield free-for-all early in the second half.

The man at the centre of the flare-up, Rougheds prop Jason Boults, dismisses it as "just one of those things" but he recognises that it had some influence on an Oldham performance that made the whole of NL2 sit up and take note.

"It was nothing more than 'handbags' really," he recalled this week, "but it seemed to fire us up and the win down there definitely kick-started our NL2 campaign. It showed we meant business. It meant a lot to the players and to the club and it really set us up for a winning NL2 run that ended five matches later in controversial circumstances at Featherstone.

"To be honest, we were very unlucky. We should have beaten them at home on day one and we certainly should have beaten them at their place.

"But we'll be there or thereabouts come the end of the season. To win at Crusaders, to win at Workington and to come within a few minutes of winning at Featherstone when things didn't go our way says a lot about us as a squad.

"Promotion is the ultimate goal, but ideally we want to finish top, go up as champions and then we can say: 'Job done', while the other contenders are battling it out in the play-offs. It's going to be a close-run thing, but there is a lot of rugby to be played yet and anything can happen.

"The table would look a lot different if we had played the same number of games as the rest, but I think the title race will go right down to the wire and I like to think we'll be in it right to the finishing line.

"If we miss out we'll have to do it the hard way via the play-offs, but one way or the other we are setting out our stall to go up."

The 23-year-old Bradford-born prop --- Mr Consistency of the front row --- is his own biggest critic. And while he heaps praise on the work of his team mates and the collective performances of the squad he describes his own form over past weeks as "a bit up and down".

"I thought I played better at Featherstone," he said, "but the week before, when we played York, I was a bit down on myself after the match. I think I'm doing okay, but I'm one of those people who believes I could be doing better. At least that's what I'm always striving for."

The former Bradford Bulls and Halifax front-rower is enjoying life at the Roughyeds. It has surpassed his expectations. After all, he had gone from full-time status at one of the leading clubs in the British game to NL1 with Halifax and then another step down to NL2 with Oldham. He thanks Alan Hadcroft and Jamie Bloem for convincing him he was making the right move --- Alan as a former team mate of his at Halifax and Jamie as his full-time employer outside rugby league and a close friend who acts as his adviser on all matters related to his rugby league career.

For the past two years, since quitting full-time rugby at Bradford, Jason has worked for Jamie in his Halifax-based landscaping business --- and he readily takes on board all the advice he can get from a boss who has been around the block two or three times in rugby league circles.

Talking of the days and weeks when he felt it was time to move on from The Shay, Jason recalled: "I had played in the same team as Haddy at Fax and he spoke highly of what was happening at Oldham.

"Jamie advises me in a friend-to-friend capacity. He knows Deaks (coach Steve Deakin) very well and he said he was a good coach, one of the best. We all talked it over, Haddy, Jamie and me and decided it was the best thing for me.

"Chris Hamilton made me a good offer and in view of what both Haddy and Jamie said about the club and about Deaks I made the decision to sign.

"Was it the right decision? You bet it was. It's been miles better than I expected and I am enjoying it here thoroughly.

"THEY ARE THE BEST GROUP OF LADS I'VE EVER BEEN WITH AND DEAKS IS A TOP COACH WHO REALLY KNOWS HIS STUFF.

"He is very approachable; he is great when it comes to one-on-one player management; and he always has time to talk individually to players or to listen and discuss things if a player wants to see him."

Jason never played in the first team at Bradford --- but he was never out of it at Halifax. He got an early chance soon after his arrival at The Shay and in two seasons there he enjoyed an absolutely phenomenal run (especially for a prop) of consistency, missing only one game in the whole of seasons 2005 and 2006.

In 2005, under the coaching of Anthony Farrell, he played in every game bar one, and 80 per cent of those appearances were from the starting line-up. In 2006, the first half of the season under Farrell, the second half under Martin Hall, he didn't miss a match.

A record like that was bound to attract attention from

elsewhere when the second of his one-year deals ran out at Fax --- and Oldham didn't waste time when they got the tip that Boults might be available.

Two years earlier Fax football manager Paul Dixon had similarly moved swiftly when it became apparent that Jason wasn't going to break into the Bulls first team when faced with competition at prop from the likes of Stuart Fielden, Jamie Peacock, Rob Parker and Richard Moore.

His move up the road to The Shay ended a four-and-a-half year stay with the Bulls, for whom he had signed on a full-time basis at the age of 16. To sign for Bradford was a dream come true for young Jason, who had started playing League at Bailiff Bridge primary school in Brighouse at the age of eight.

And it was at that tender age that his grandad, a lifelong 'Northern' fan, first took him to Odsal to watch the likes of Paul Dixon and the Fairbank brothers in a formidable Bradford pack.

In those early days Jason played just about everywhere expect prop. He turned out regularly for Brighouse junior teams at full-back, centre or second-row and it wasn't until he moved to Siddal, aged 13, that he became to be recognised as an out-and-out forward, but even then more of a second-rower than a prop.

Siddal under-16s were to become a crack outfit almost overnight. At the start of his last season with the club they didn't even have enough players to be admitted into the National Youth League, but they quickly pulled in recruits once the season got underway --- and what a season it turned out to be.

With Boults in the second row; a certain Luke Robinson at scrum-half; and others in the side who went on to turn pro, like Liam Finn (Dewsbury), Byron Smith (Rochdale) and Scott Grix (Widnes), the Siddal kids won nearly everything there was to win.

They won the Halifax Cup, the Halifax League and the Yorkshire Cup --- and they were pipped by one point when losing 9-8 to West Hull in the final of the National Cup at Dewsbury.

Famous scout Eric Hawley, the man credited with unearthing Jason Robinson and Ellery Hanley, was never away from the touchline, and come the end of that remarkably successful season for the Siddal whiz-kids no fewer than eight of them turned pro.

Hawley took Boults to Bradford and in more than four years there at an impressionable age, the young Jason rubbed shoulders with stars of the sport, was reared in a fully professional rugby league environment and had good habits drilled into him.

Steve McNamara, now Bradford boss and regarded generally as one of the top young coaches on this side of the world, was Jason's coach for much of his time in the Bulls' under-18 and under-21 teams.

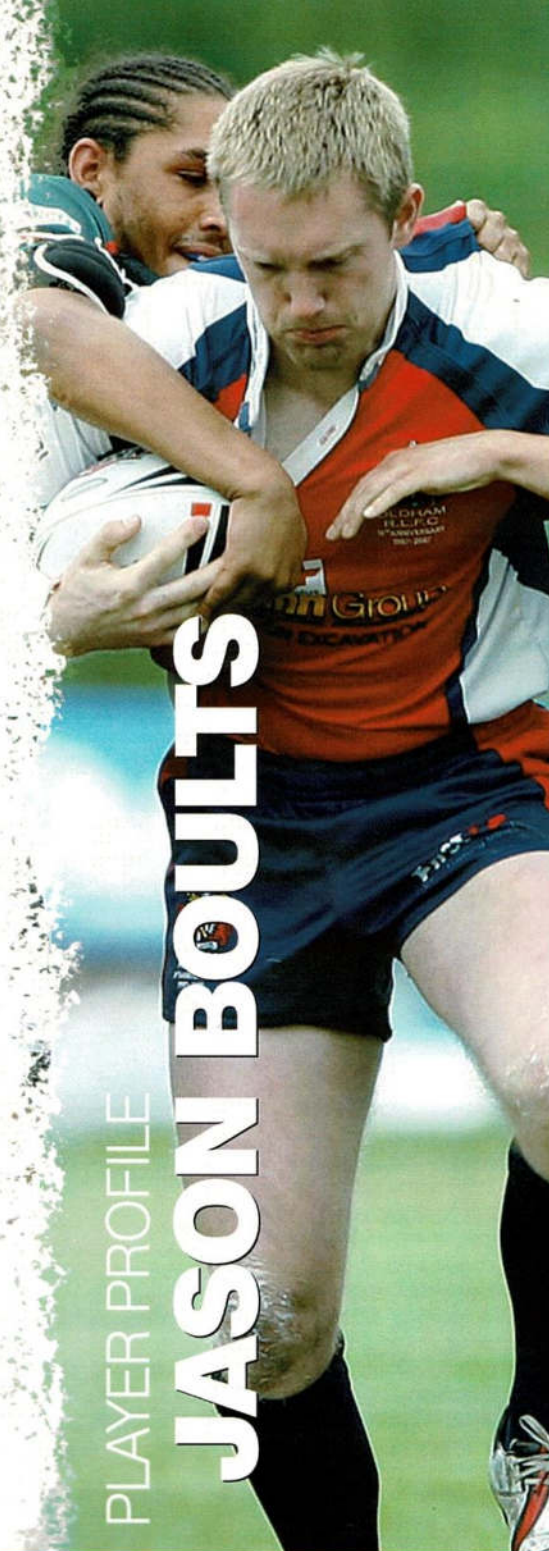
They were happy and successful years, too. At under-21 level, Jason played in three back-to-back Grand Finals for the Bulls, who lost to Leeds at Headingley in 2002; lost to Wigan at Odsal in 2003; and beat Leeds at Headingley 22-20 in 2004.

It was only in the third of these finals that he was pushed up from second-row to prop --- and even that was more by accident than design.

"I filled in for a prop who pulled out of a game at the last minute," recalled Jason. "I didn't volunteer for the job: I was pushed into it. I didn't think it would suit me at all, but to my surprise I enjoyed it --- and I must have done something right because I was picked at prop every time after that."

Jason has never strayed far from his Yorkshire roots --- he lives in Halifax with his girl friend Rachel --- but he is delighted he took the decision to cross the Pennines to play for Oldham.

And he is still as consistent as ever, having played in nearly every game for Roughyeds in a season that is turning out to be just a little bit special.



PLAYER PROFILE
JASON BOULTS

AROUND & ABOUT

with The Heritage Trust

It's brilliant that the club are in the process of organising a players' association for the first time since the 1980's. Good luck to everyone involved and as I write these notes it's encouraging that in such a short time over 40 ex players have already signed up.

The club have been involved in several one-off functions surrounding Roughyed reunions, perhaps non more rewarding than back in 1999 when a veritable crowd of stalwarts turned out at Boundary Park for the Borough of Oldham's 150th anniversary celebrations followed by the local derby with Hornets.

Whilst I'm the first to recognise that running any rugby league club very much revolves around what happens today and tomorrow it's helpful to recognised that as we each grow older the temptation to look back becomes increasingly difficult to resist. And there's nothing wrong with that. A well organised players' association will throw together a group of people with a wealth of experience which will benefit not just the

association but both the club and its current players.

I noticed that amongst those signed up is former Great Britain international favourite Dave Parker who starred for the club in the 60's. Dave, who arrived at



**DAVE PARKER IS STOPPED CLOSE TO THE LINE.
OLDHAM V AUSTRALIA 1963**



**23,000 PACK WATERSHEDDINGS V WIGAN 1963
CHALLENGE CUP. OLDHAM PLAYING IN WHITE
SHIRTS. PETER SMETHURST KICKS THROUGH.
TREVOR SIMMS (SCRUM CAP) IS ANOTHER MEMBER
OF THE NEW PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION.**

Watersheddings from Manchester Rugby Union Club, was at the time captain of the Lancashire county rugby union side. He was a brainy football playing loose-forward who had the a mystic ability to spot the gap before it appeared, had the skill to either put a colleague through it or use his speed to go through himself. One of the finest 13's the Oldham club has ever had on its books.

He's lived down in Hertfordshire for a number of years now but has promised to travel up to a game so hopefully the association will be the lever that gets him involved and to do just that and more!

I held on to some notes that Dave wrote for the club's programme back in 1998 and thought it well worth repeating extracts from them here:

"It's almost 40 years ago that I made the decision to turn pro and my greatest concern in doing so was what would happen if I didn't make the grade. Happily, the decision I made resulted in seven years of top class rugby league which I thoroughly enjoyed and left me with a number of very vivid memories..."

In the changing room before the very first time I that I played against St Helens I was told very pointedly by one of our team "You make.....sure that their loose-forward Vince Karalius doesn't touch me!" Early in the game it was necessary for me to exercise that instruction and I quickly moved into the gap between the two people concerned when all of a sudden I was hit by a brick wall and everything turned upside down. As I picked myself up the relevance of the changing room comment became apparent! However, over subsequent seasons I like to think a certain amount of mutual respect developed between Vince and me, but he was one of the hardest players I ever came across.

Some years later when he had moved from Saints to Widnes I felt I'd broken even when I managed to collect one of our kick-offs by Geoff Sims and score beating Vince on the way.

Another of my favourites was Peter Smethurst. What a great team man who always gave 110% and was responsible for setting up a good number of tries for me. When he gave me the signal and went to acting half-back I could almost tell you where I would score usually, with most of the opposition still following Peter. In those days there was no six tackle rule, so if you could retain possession for seven or eight minutes the opposition usually became frustrated and ended up losing concentration and making mistakes. And Peter was a past master at adding to the frustration and confusion.

What about the Challenge Cup semi-final against Hull KR at Headingley in 1964? What a game! One we should have won. Unfortunately, Rovers' forward Harry Poole's elbow closed my eye early in the game. So, in the second half, I didn't see our wingman in support on my left, with only one man to beat, because my left eye was closed. That would surely have been the winning score. Being clever after the event is easy, but in any case Len McIntyre's drop goal eventually saved the day for us.

Naturally, being selected for Great Britain was a proud moment and I was pleased when I scored a try in my second game. But, getting into the

national side must have been helped by being able to play with confidence in a good team at Oldham where we endeavoured to play good quality rugby in an entertaining way. Time has however, marched on and all I can do now is re-live those happy sporting memories!"

(Author's note: Dave Parker fails to say that after he fielded Geoff Sims' kick-off against Widnes he not only avoided Vince Karalius' tackle but those of most of the Widnes team as he weaved his way to the try line. One of the best tries scored from a loose forward that I've seen Also, in 1964 when he mentions that Oldham played Hull KR in the Challenge Cup semi-final there were no substitutes so he was forced to play out the game with what turned out to be a serious injury. Oldham drew that match 5-5, were winning the ensuing replay 17-14 when the match was called off whilst playing extra time due to bad light but lost the second replay 12-2).

Dave gives special mention to Peter Smethurst a barrel of a man who had three spells with Oldham (two as coach). The £4,000 that Oldham paid Swinton for his signature in 1961 must rank as one of the best transfer transactions that the Roughyeds have ever negotiated.

The fans loved to see him torpedoing the opposing defence and either raising himself from the tackle, however fierce, with his trademark grin that so irritated the defender, or coming out the other side by taking advantage of a burst of speed particularly associated with a back-turned-forward.

Smethurst was a superb captain. A fact well illustrated during the 1966 Lancashire Cup final against odds-on -couldn't lose - Wigan. The bookies had the pie-eaters to win by a record margin but at the end only inches separated the two sides when Oldham centre and former Wigan player Stan McLeod was tackled in the dying seconds inches from the opposing line. Wigan scraped home 16-13 but Smethurst had led his troops like a latter-day Wellington!

When Oldham played Australia in 1963, Smethurst (playing at centre) had a running battle with the Aussies' crack three-quarter Graeme Langlands that lasted throughout the match. Years later when Langlands featured on the Australian version of the TV show "This is your Life" Smethurst was flown all the way to Sydney as a surprise guest...

Brian Walker

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COMMUNITY CHALLENGE



Sean Mellor, our Community Development Manager, keeps you up to date

ROUGHYEDS AND HARRY POTTER TOP THE BILL AT SPINDLES

Yes, that's right, if you're a Roughyeds supporter or an avid Harry Potter fan a trip to the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre on Saturday, July 21 is a must. Mark it in your diary now.

Roughyeds players will be there from 11.30am to 2pm to meet shoppers, sign autographs and chat with the fans.

But that's not all. The latest Harry Potter book is out that day and anyone who buys it from the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre branches of Waterstones or W H Smith can claim a pass for one adult and one child to the Oldham v Hunslet game at

Boundary Park the next day, Sunday, July 22 (3pm kick off).

Once you've acquired the new Harry Potter book all you have to do is seek out the Roughyeds stand in Spindles and provide proof of purchase that day from one of the two retail outlets named above in order to claim your ticket for one adult and one child to see the promotion-chasing Roughyeds in action at Boundary Park the next day.

But don't forget . . . Roughyeds are only there from 11.30am to 2pm. Make a date --- and let Harry Potter open up a whole new world for you supporting rugby league and the Roughyeds. (see advert, page 23)

MATCH-DAY ACTIVITY

AT the last home game against York City Knights, the Roughyeds were not the only local team to display an attractive, committed display of rugby league.

As plenty of people present that day will testify, Waterhead and Oldham St Anne's under-8s played an exciting curtain-raiser and then their younger squad members returned at half-time to provide more excellent entertainment.

These potential stars of the future certainly seemed to enjoy performing in a stadium as part of a Roughyeds' game-day experience, so further invitations have been extended to several other groups of youngsters.

Today, pre-match junior rugby league will be provided by the under-9s from Shaw Rhinos, coached by the Roughyeds stalwart John Hough, and also from Saddleworth Rangers. Also in action will be under-7s from Fitton Hill and Hathershaw and Latchford Albion

Unicorns, who will perform before the game and again at half-time. The Oldham Service Area representative teams have recently completed a five-game series of fixtures against other Service Area teams. These teams, ranging from school years 7 to 10, have enjoyed a tremendous season and their achievements will be commemorated today when some of the players will be presented to the crowd.

Oldham has an outstanding record of producing top-quality rugby league players so don't be surprised if you see a lot more of some of these youngsters.

To find out more about the Oldham Service Area, or to seek information on how you can get involved in the sport, check out the community pages on the Roughyeds' official website at www.roughyeds.co.uk



The young ones and their heroes: Roughyeds run out to face York.

the bootroom

THE MEN WHO CARRY ROUGHYEDS' HOPES AND AMBITIONS INTO 2007.

ASHTON, Paul (half-back): Aged 27, Paul learned his trade at Saddleworth before playing for Halifax, Rochdale, Keighley and Swinton. Got his big chance at Oldham in 2006, initially on a week-to-week basis, and did enough to earn a full contract for 2007. Can play at scrum-half or stand-off.

BAINES, Chris (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 the latter part of 2006 and then for 2007. Toured New Zealand with Great Britain Young Lions in 2003. Product of Chorley Panthers and Wigan St Pat's.

BOULTS, Jason (prop): 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. Spent four years as a young pro with Bradford and then had two seasons at The Shay, missing only a handful of games.

COSTIN, Geno (prop or back-row): A 22-year-old Aussie, Geno first established himself in the Queensland Cup with Wynnum-Manly, but last year played in the same comp for Logan Souths. A rugby workaholic, he puts in overtime on defence and, in possession, always runs strong and straight.

CRABTREE, Andy (hooker): Won Great Britain academy honours in his Wigan Warriors days. Came from Swinton this year. A tidy footballer with good hands and game awareness, he can also play loose-forward. Alert and alive at dummy half.

GOREY, Andy (winger): A scrum-half in his Royton Tigers days, Andy became a good full-back in the former Roughyeds academy side. It was as a winger, however, that he finished 2006 as the club's top try scorer with ten --- no mean feat in a losing side.

HADCROFT, Alan (centre): A robust middle back, 29-year-old Alan signed from Halifax for the 2006 season, but his campaign was marred by a series of shoulder injuries, notably at Barrow and Whitehaven. Future as a player in some doubt, but highly regarded as coach Steve Deakin's acting No 2.

HODSON, Ian (back-row): Initially rejected new offer for 2007 due to work commitments, but the Roughyeds door remained open and he re-signed in March after playing the odd game or two for Tyldesley RU Club. One of the club's better performers in 2006, he always gave maximum input, even when asked to play at stand-off.

HOUGH, John (hooker): First player to sign for the 'new' Roughyeds club. Still here nearly ten years later --- that's loyalty with a capital L. Joined Warrington from Waterhead as a boy, but carved himself a niche in the annals of the new Oldham club when he signed as a free agent on December 2, 1997. Has played more than 230 games.

HOUSTON, Drew (second-row or centre): Once a youngster linked with Melbourne Storm, Drew had two seasons in the Queensland Cup with Storm feeder club Brisbane Norths before heading south to join Dapto whom he helped to

become champions of the Illawarra competition last year.

HOYLE, Simeon (hooker): Formerly with Keighley and Halifax, Simeon is a hooker of the old school --- tough in defence yet able to make things happen from dummy half. Helped Keighley to win promotion in 2003 in the same team as Paul Ashton, Richard Merrill and Ian Sinfield.

LANGLEY, Gareth (winger): Pacy, and a good finisher, 'Gaz' joined Roughyeds this year after five years at St Helens. He was Saints academy player of the year in 2005 and runner-up in 2006. Played at Salford as a teenager before joining his hometown club at Knowsley Road.

LITTLE, Craig (centre): Another Saints old boy, Craig was Langleigh's centre for four years at Knowsley Road. A year younger, he had the chance of another year with St Helens academy, but opted to sign for Roughyeds and continue his centre-winger partnership with Langleigh.

MERVILL, Richard (prop): Formerly with Halifax and Keighley, Richard joined Roughyeds for 2007 after playing Down Under in the same Dapto side as Drew Houston. Suffered a broken hand in one of his early games for Roughyeds, but goes into Co-Operative NL2 action in a good seam of form.

O'CONNOR, Paul (full-back): Signed for hometown Widnes after winning students' international honours for Ireland and for Great Britain. Looked good in three loan games for Roughyeds in 2006 and returned on a more permanent basis in 2007, although he will be away for 14 weeks on a pre-arranged trip Down Under.

OLDHAM, Stuart (winger): Formerly with St Helens and Swinton, Stuart played his first serious rugby with Sedgley Park and Liverpool St Helens RU clubs before switching codes to join Saints. Had two seasons with Swinton and became one of six Lions to sign for Roughyeds for 2007.

ONYANGO, Lucas (winger): A real flier, aged 25, Lucas grew up in rugby union in his native Kenya. Has played for Sale Sharks, Manchester and Leigh in Union, and also Widnes Vikings in League. Did well at Vikings before damaging a knee. Over that now and keen to make the most of his chance at Oldham.

RODEN, Neil (half-back): Neil rejoined Roughyeds from Leigh for 2007 after leaving the club initially to go to Batley in 2004. In his first stint here he scored 290 points (68 tries and 18 drop goals) in 142 games over four and a half seasons. Has overtaken Mark Sibson as the 'new' club's leading all-time try scorer.

ROGERS, Wes (prop): Aged 29, and club captain. Like Neil Roden and Ian Sinfield, has rejoined Roughyeds for a second spell. Signed for Widnes as a 15-year-old, then had three years at Swinton, one here, three at Rochdale and three more at Swinton before coming 'home' for 2007.

SANDERSON, Lee (halfback, hooker): Signed in March after a difficult period with Barrow. Roughyeds paid an undisclosed transfer fee for the Leigh lad, whose uncle, Ian, was an

accomplished Oldham hooker in Watersheddings days. Lee has previously played for Leigh, London Broncos, Rochdale and Barrow.

SINFELD, Ian (back-row): Another experienced forward who has returned to his hometown club for a second stint. Brother of Leeds captain, Kevin Sinfield, Ian played in the first ever Roughyeds game at Rochdale on New Year's Day, 1998. Had four years here, then moved on to Rochdale, Keighley and Swinton.

SMITH, Kris (back-row or centre): Kris, aged 28, has been on the books of four Super League clubs, namely Leeds, Salford, London and Halifax. A product of the Eccles amateur club, he was snapped up by Leeds while still a teenager. Joined Roughyeds after four seasons at Swinton.

STOUT, Michael (second-row or centre): Signed from Swinton, Michael has a good turn of speed for a forward and likes to use it while breaking wide out. Played at academy level for both Warrington and Widnes. Chose to join Oldham after rejecting a Swinton offer for 2007.

TAMGHART, Said (utility): A French international, Said has represented his country at every level, including full Test matches against Australia and New Zealand. Came under Steve Deakin's influence when both were at UTC, better known now as Perpignan-based Catalans Dragons.

TONKS, Tony (prop): Roughyeds have high hopes of the 22-year-old Yorkshireman, signed from Bradford Bulls just prior to the start of the Co-Operative NL2 season. One year at Wakefield academy, then six at Bulls as a full-time pro, including last season on loan at Doncaster.

WILKINSON, Alex (centre, wing): 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. While a young pro at Bradford Bulls, he had loan spells with London Broncos, Huddersfield and Hull before going part-time with Roughyeds to continue his studies.

WINGFIELD, Lee (second-row): Played for GB at amateur level in Russia, France and Australia, but desperately unlucky with injuries since he turned pro for Roughyeds on a two-year deal covering 2006 and 2007. In top form early this year, but then broke a hand before suffering a serious knee injury against Swinton on his first game back.

HUGHES, Adam (centre): The massively experienced 29-year-old boasts over 150 Super League appearances during spells with Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, Widnes and Leigh. A powerful, pacy centre who knows where the try line is, he signed for Oldham in preference to several other clubs.

ROBINSON, Adam (second row): A tough and uncompromising player who relishes his defensive duties, the 20 year-old Yorkshireman turned down Featherstone in order to sign for the Roughyeds from Doncaster. Formerly of the Stanley Rangers amateur club, he started his professional career at Wakefield.

with Ian Wilson

roughyeds'

roar!

All good things come to an end, and that includes our excellent run of unbeaten league games. The fact that it ended as it did, at fellow-challengers for promotion Featherstone, was of course disappointing, but the attitude of Steve Deakin after the game suggested that we will not be much short, if at all, of the automatic promotion slot by the time the season comes to a close, I would suggest. The loss at Keighley, of course, adds another dimension to the situation, though I suspect that it will not be the last time there is a surprise result this season in NL2. This is good news in theory, of course – though it may not have felt like it last Sunday!

The circumstances surrounding the Featherstone defeat, however, are worth considering. First, it was quite like old times at Post Office Rd., I thought, with a very lively crowd of over 1500, even though there might have been more than twice that there when the two old clubs sparred with each other in the pre-Sky era. There have never been any more one-eyed spectators than at what is now laughingly called the Chris Moyles Stadium, but there is also no doubting their commitment to the game of Rugby League, and I must say that I have always rather enjoyed my visits there, even though over the years we have certainly been on the wrong side of the outcomes more often than we have come back home with a win.

What was really annoying, though, was the failure of the RFL to allocate an experienced referee to what was always likely to be a potentially combustible contest. I don't like criticising refs, and fully appreciate that young ones have to learn their trade to some extent through experience. But it was evident from very early on in this game, I thought, that Craig Halloran was going to have

trouble. His authority wasn't helped by the fact that he made a poor decision in disallowing a try to Gareth Langley very early, but more worrying was his failure to take appropriate action against the first instances of foul play. As a result, some time before he began to bring out his coloured cards, the group of supporters around me were saying that he had lost effective control, and that there were going to be problems. They were absolutely right, too. Featherstone had a number of old heads in their side, and they took full advantage of the opportunity available to them – hence Tony Tonks' sending off!

Given how long we had to play with a man short, and against the slope, I suppose one could claim that it was a valiant effort to win – and it certainly was a decent effort by the players, in the circumstances, in the last half-hour. However, I am sure that the coach will not have overlooked too the fact that it could also be argued that we really lost the game during the first half – we were so dominant, and clearly the superior side, at that stage that we should have been at least four scores clear by the time we had to play up-hill, I thought – and if we had been, I am sure we would have gone on to win even without Tonks – whose post-match statements mark him out as a young prop of real potential, I would like to add. As is usually the case, though, there is more to learn from a defeat than from most victories, and I am sure that we will benefit in the long run from the Featherstone experience.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tony Tonks was suspended for one match and fined £75 when he appeared before the RFL disciplinary committee on Tuesday. He was accompanied by the club's chief executive, Chris Hamilton.

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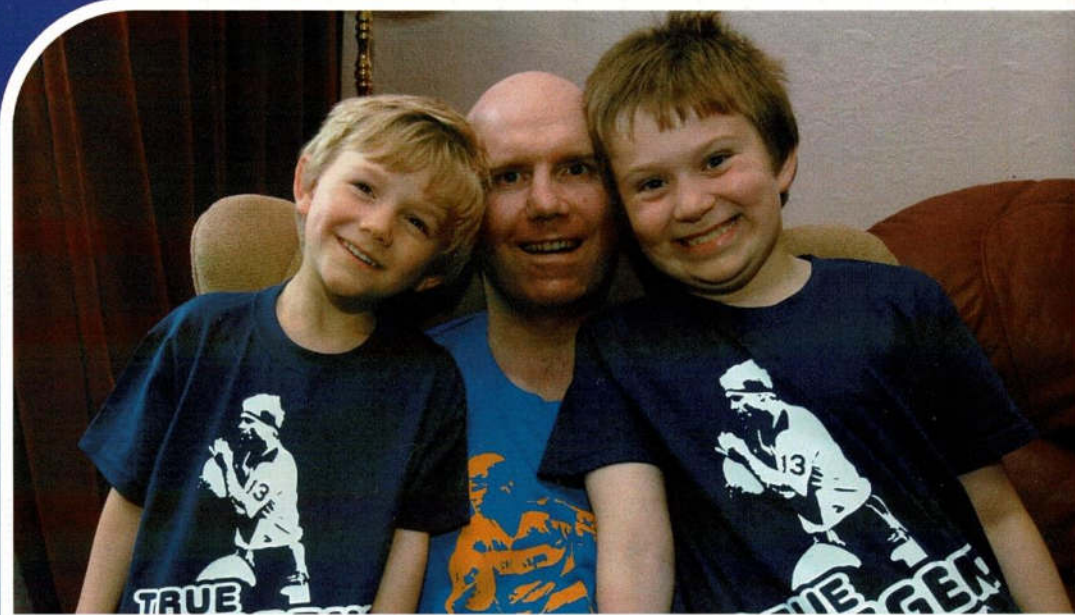
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The Mike Gregory Trust Fund was formed by friends and supporters from the rugby league community who knew

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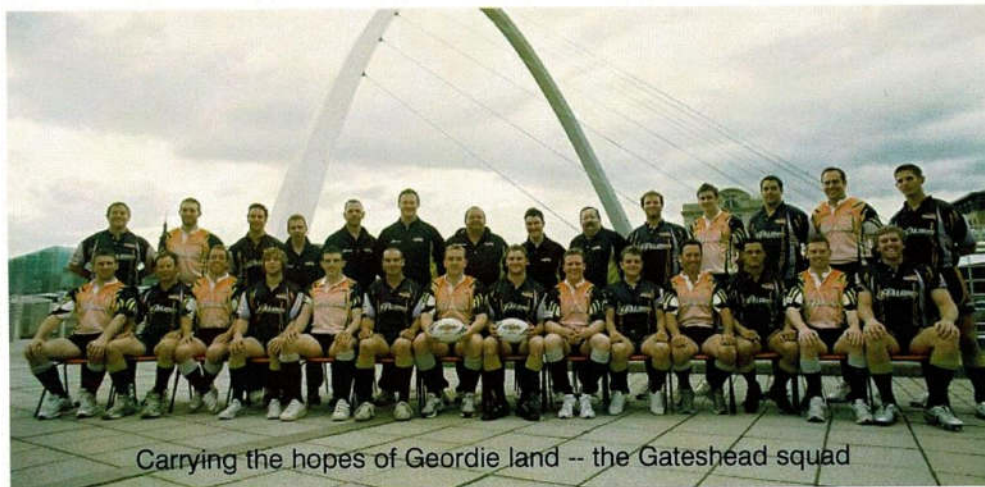
Oldham Roughyeds RLFC are celebrating their return to Boundary Park with an exclusive signing session on **Saturday 21st July 11:30am - 2:00pm**, so come along to meet some of the team!

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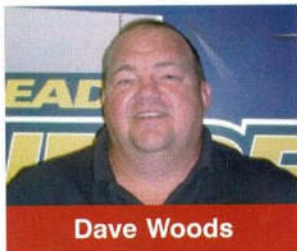
WOODS LOOKS OVERSEAS TO PUT THUNDER ON A ROLL

by NIGEL MARLAND

Spotlight on the lads from Rugby League's North-East frontier



Carrying the hopes of Geordie land -- the Gateshead squad



Dave Woods

Thunder are coached by Aussie Dave Woods, who must be one of the only coaches to be sacked after guiding his team to promotion to Super League. That's just what happened two years ago when Woods, who had arrived from Penrith Panthers after Cas' relegation the previous year, immediately steered Castleford to promotion only to not have his contract renewed as they wanted a coach with more experience to secure their place in Super League. We all know now that Terry Matterson got the job but Cas. were relegated again after just one season in the top division.

It was a big surprise to many when Dave took over at Gateshead but as he said at the time he saw it as a great challenge. Woods appears to be trying to blend experienced Aussie players with young local lads from Amateur Rugby and there is roughly a 50 / 50 split between overseas and local players.

This approach has been strengthened of late with the acquisition in the very near future of two experienced overseas players who Woods coached at Penrith in Mark Meredith, an experienced prop and Hooker Dan Smith who starred in Queensland University rugby. They have also shown their commitment to youth and the future by forming an under 18's side that is growing week by week after forming a link with Gateshead College. Youngsters will be offered a complete training, coaching and education package based at Gateshead International Stadium.

Gateshead arrive here today after a good victory over Hunslet Hawks last week which showed a much better defensive effort after conceding 50 points for the seventh time this season the week before at Barrow. Star of the show was Aussie scrum half Tim Martin who scored two quick tries at the beginning of the second half.



Mark Meredith

Oldham RLFC Appearances and Scorers, 2007

players statistics

[up to and including June 24]

NAME	PLAYED	TRIES	GOALS	POINTS
P Ashton	11	3	27	66
C Baines	14	2		8
J Boults	16			
M Brooks	1			
G Costin	12	2		8
A Crabtree	17	1		4
A Gorey	8	1		4
I Hodson	11	4		16
J Hough	2			
D Houston	17	2		8
S Hoyle	18	1		4
A Hughes	5	6		24
G Langley	18	7	8	44
C Littler	15	2		8
R Mervill	15	1		4
P O'Connor	14	4		16
M Ogden	5	1	10	24
S Oldham	1			
L Onyango	9	6		24
A Robinson	6	3		12
N Roden	18	8	2dg	34
W Rogers	10			
L Sanderson	7	1	20	44
I Sinfield	15	1		4
K Smith	10	5		20
M Stout	4	1		4
S Tamghart	16	2		8
T Tonks	8	2		8
A Wilkinson	16	12		48
L Wingfield	4	1		4

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NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



Triple resurgence

IT wasn't that long ago that this column was hailing the competitive nature of Co-operative NL2 at the top of the table - now the same is happening at the bottom.

The recent resurgence of three teams on the lower half of the ladder has spiced the competition up even further in recent weeks.

London Skolars, Keighley Cougars and Gateshead Thunder have all shown that they can shock teams above them - and all three are now in line for a late-season play-offs push.

Last weekend alone, the trio of clubs all recorded wins against teams that were above them in the table.

Barry Eaton's Cougars stunned high-flying Oldham 26-18, Dave Woods' Gateshead beat Hunslet 18-6, and perhaps most impressively, London Skolars made it three wins on the trot under Latham Tawhai with an eye-catching 34-12 victory over Swinton.

Now all three teams are knocking on the top seven door (the play-offs are made up of six teams, but the club in first is automatically promoted) as we enter the final third of the campaign.

Skolars' winning run has galvanised the National League's only capital club, and they now travel to Featherstone this Sunday in fine spirits.

Tawhai insists that the sequence of wins has been coming for some time, and that much of it has been down to South African prop Richard Louw - named NL2 Player of the Month by Rugby League World magazine on Friday.

Louw has set the platform up front for the likes of Jermaine Coleman, Austin Aggrey and Pete Hodgkinson to thrive in the backs.

Keighley have also been building towards putting a few wins together, and the recent acquisition of experienced Australian Craig Weston has given their squad a definite boost.

But it was two relatively unsung heroes - Simon Bissell and Richard Knight - whose performances were key to their win over the Roughyeds.

Keighley now travel to bottom club Blackpool Panthers this weekend looking to make further progress.

Gateshead make up the trio after a month of improvement under their Australian coach Woods, and they have two games in hand over both Keighley and the Skolars.

A home defeat to Skolars apart, Thunder have been showing signs of improvement for a while, with fullback Neil Thorman catching the eye of reporters regularly.

Their next test comes at Oldham - and though they will start as outsiders, they should not be discounted.

The upturn in fortunes of these three clubs makes an already intriguing competition even more interesting.

At present only Blackpool remain winless - and with Andy Gregory having taken charge as coach, don't rule out them from picking up a few victories between now and the end of the season.

With places six and seven in NL2 still very much up for grabs, the much talked about bonus point system could have a massive part to play.

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David Webster	Mick Harrop	Terry Flanagan
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J Aubrey	John Barrie Gallagher	Noise Killer Acoustics (Steve Bithell)
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Mortgage Solutions (Dave Bassett)	Robert Nixon	Nary Fitzgerald
Lansdowne Trading Services (Chris Stanley)	Derek King	Jack Buckley
Michael Ackroyd	Frank Taylor	Utan McGovern (Oldham Electrical Supplies)
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David Whitehead	Ernest Mayall	Martin Hunter
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Noel Brady	Michael Bradshaw	John Kettleton
Gareth Owen	Shirley Mullaney	Keith Egerton
Roy Wood	Keith Mullaney	
Denise Buckley	John Barrett	

WE are delighted to report that we have a new member of Five Alive . . . all the way from fashionable Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire.

Keith Egerton signed up the other day to become the third addition, behind Hans Bateson and John Kettleton, since the fund-raising scheme was launched with an initial 82 members after an intense recruitment drive.

The aim is, and always has been, to reach 100 so if you are wondering about joining please consider again the benefits on offer (outlined in the advert on the previous page) and let us know if you wish to proceed.

On and off the field the club is making huge forward strides, but to a very large degree in professional sport these days the length and speed of those strides are governed by the size and success of revenue streams and fund-raisers such as Five Alive and its sister lottery, Club Cash.

We strive to give real value for money in the prizes and benefits on offer in both lotteries, as you will see from a glance at the previous page.

The quarterly lunch, with guest speaker, has proved particularly popular with Five Alive members, as has the monthly draw with its first prize of £500, especially for the winners.

The latest draw took place at Friday's luncheon in the social club — too late, unfortunately, for the name of the lucky winners to be published here. They will, of course, be up on the club website and mention of the £500 winner will be made on this page in the next match-day magazine.

Friday's £500 winner was the eighth since Five Alive was launched. Jeffrey Bates was the very first winner and then, at monthly intervals, came Keith Mullaney, Mark Harrington, Roy Wood, Michael Bradshaw, Janet Yewdale and Martin Hunter.

Our new club ties also come with the package of benefits for Five Alive members. You must have seen many fellow fans wearing them on match days. These are not exclusive to Five Alive members, though.

They are on general sale at £15 from the club's headquarters in Lansdowne Road, Chadderton and already a lot of supporters have bought them in order to 'tie' their colours to their chest, as it were!

Turning to Club Cash, we had another big draw on Friday, the results of which will be on the website by now and will also be featured in the next match-day magazine. Our lotteries, we believe, provide something for everyone who is a Roughyeds supporter.

If you are not involved already, give one of them a TRY!

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journalistic license

by Matthew Chambers

IF there's one rule that is true for all professional sport, it is this:
turn up for a game in a sunglasses, sandals and bermuda shorts
mindset and you'll inevitably come unstuck.

Ok, Oldham didn't exactly do that at Keighley last week. For one thing the conditions were as far from beach-like as it is possible to get, on one of those grim northern afternoons we know and love.

But it still stands that a few too many Roughyeds thoughts seemed to be focused on far-away shores and the attitudes weren't those of focused, dedicated sportsmen determined to climb the division.

Had they have been, there is little doubt that Steve Deakin's men would have come out on top. Keighley, for all their endeavour, aren't a comparable side skill-wise to Oldham.

On the day at Cougar Park, though, encouraged by being granted good field position time and again, they made their superior enthusiasm count.

Judging by the relative league positions — plus the fact that Gateshead had a superb win over Hunslet last week — it will be a very similar test at Sedgley Park today.

Will Deakin's side have gotten over last week's result? One thing's for sure, judging from the coach's demeanour after the game, the players will have been told exactly where they went wrong in no uncertain terms.

But despite that blip, the season thus far must be viewed as a success. Losing to the league leaders, Featherstone, twice is certainly no disgrace — even less so given that Oldham

would in all likelihood have won at Post Office Road but for Tony Tonks's sending-off. Even after that, it was only a slow-ticking clock that beat them thanks to two tries in the final five minutes.

The Roughyeds should go into the latter half of the season bearing in mind the fact that but for Barrow away, the other main contenders in the division have all yet to visit Boundary Park. That's an excellent position to be in.

* With (almost) half a season gone, here are my nominations for Oldham's highly unofficial mid-term awards: Best forward: Richard Mervill. Best back: Paul O'Connor. Best try: plenty to choose from, but Adam Hughes' superbly weighted kick to the corner. Best performance: the 50-18 crushing of Barrow at Boundary Park.

Best tackle: Lucas Onyango's amazing effort in hauling down Phil Cantillon at Blackpool.

Finally, of course, there's no contest as far as the prize for best interception goes: stand up physio Phil Hayward, for his superb reading of the play at Celtic Crusaders! Grab that man a red shirt...

Matthew

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Nearly 50 ex-players have enrolled for the newly-formed Players' Association of Oldham RLFC, this to be launched publicly when Oldham play Hunslet at Boundary Park on Sunday, July 22.

The list is growing all the time, but it currently reads as follows:

Martin Murphy, Adrian Alexander, Eddie Barton, John Blair, Joe Collins, Lyn Morgan, Geoff Munro, Tony Wainwright, Bob Mordell, Terry Gorman, Terry Flanagan, Paddy Kirwan, Frank Foster, Jimmy Reynolds, Lou Lavery, Bob Pugsley, Joe Warham, Richard Russell, John Patterson, Mickey Edwards, Jim McCormack, Des McKeown, Keith Ashcroft, Dave Walker, Trevor Simms, Dave Parker, John O'Brien, Alan Jones, John Donovan, Bernard Halford, Chris Joynt, Kevin Flanagan, Gordon Howard, Ray Clark, Mike Ford, Des Foy, Tommy Leyland, Mike Bird, Ken Johnson, Michael Taylor, Colin Hawkyard, Bob Henthorn, Gary Walczak, Brett Clark, Jason Clegg.

Brett Clark, the first overseas player to join, emailed in his contact details from Perth in Western Australia.

Each has been circulated with news of what will be happening on July 22 and an invitation from the Roughyeds to be their guest at the match.

There is also to be a meeting of all ex players who are interested in joining the association — whether they have enrolled so far, or not — in the Roughyeds social club on Tuesday, July 10, starting at 7pm.

If you are a current or a former player of Oldham RLFC and have not yet registered your interest please contact Joe Collins on 01925 813100 or by email to: jc@interiordoorsystems.co.uk

Joe will then add you to the data base and give you all the information you need to know about the association's public launch at Boundary Park on July 22.

To help the club to organise the day properly, the association needs to know in advance a rough idea of the numbers likely to be involved.

Once enrolled, you are asked to contact Joe by the methods above or contact the Roughyeds on 0161 628 3677 if you intend to be present on July 22. Ideally, this information should be with Joe or with the club before July 6, 2007.

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MATTY BROOKS

MATTY BROOKS, who made his Roughyeds debut at Keighley last Sunday, has joined us on loan from Hull KR, initially for one month but with a view to an extension until the end of the season.

Aged 20, the Hull-born half-back or hooker turned pro for Bradford Bulls and was reared in the Bulls' renowned nursery before signing for Hull KR last season. He had a spell on loan at York City Knights earlier this year.

He is keen for first-team rugby and he hopes his early games in the Oldham jersey will lead to a longer stay.

He made his debut off the bench at Cougar Park, first as a replacement for Simeon Hoyle at hooker before switching to scrum-half later in the game. He is expected to make his 'home' debut at Sedgley Park today against Gateshead Thunder. (picture by OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE)

2007 fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
31/01/07	Warrington Wolves	Friendly	Home	7.45pm	42-6	W	789
11/02/07	Rochdale Hornets	NRC	Home	3.00pm	8-24	L	1,145
18/02/07	Swinton Lions	NRC	Home	3.00pm	18-28	L	1,017
25/02/07	Dewsbury Rams	NRC	Away	3.00pm	22-32	L	819
04/03/07	Rochdale Hornets	NRC	Away	3.00pm	6-16	L	816
10/03/07	East Hull	CCC 3	Away	2.00pm	26-10	W	214
18/03/07	Dewsbury Rams	NRC	Home	3.00pm	8-32	L	622
25/03/07	Swinton Lions	NRC	Away	3.00pm	42-18	W	555
01/04/07	Keighley Cougars	CCC4	Away	3.00pm	26-16	W	1039
04/04/07	Featherstone Rovers	NL2	Home	7.45pm	12-23	L	1,162
09/04/07	Hunslet Hawks	NL2	Away	3.30pm	NEW DATE BELOW		
15/04/07	Blackpool Panthers	NL2	Away	3.00pm	40-20	W	501
29/04/07	Keighley Cougars	NL2	Home	3.00pm	32-20	W	847
04/05/07	Celtic Crusaders	NL2	Away	7.35pm	34-26	W	3441
13/05/07	Harlequins	CCC5	Home	12.30pm	6-66	L	559
20/05/07	Barrow Raiders	NL2	Home	3.00pm	50-18	W	848
26/05/07	London Skolars	NL2	Away	3.00pm	34-6	W	636
03/06/07	Workington Town	NL2	Away	3.00pm	27-18	W	1,231
10/06/07	York City Knights	NL2	Home	3.00pm	21-10	W	1,024
17/06/07	Featherstone Rovers	NL2	Away	3.00pm	18-24	L	1,587
24/06/07	Keighley Cougars	NL2	Away	3.00pm	18-26	L	969
01/07/07	Gateshead Thunder	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
08/07/07	Swinton Lions	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
15/07/07	Barrow Raiders	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
22/07/07	Hunslet Hawks	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
29/07/07	York City Knights	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
05/08/07	Blackpool Panthers	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
12/08/07	Workington Town	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
19/08/07	Gateshead Thunder	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
22/08/07	Hunslet Hawks	NL2	Away	7.30pm			
02/09/07	Celtic Crusaders	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
09/09/07	London Skolars	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
TBA	Swinton Lions	NL2	Home	3.00pm	TO BE REARRANGED		

Play offs will take place on Sundays, September 16, 23 and 30 with the Grand Final on Sunday 7th October.
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