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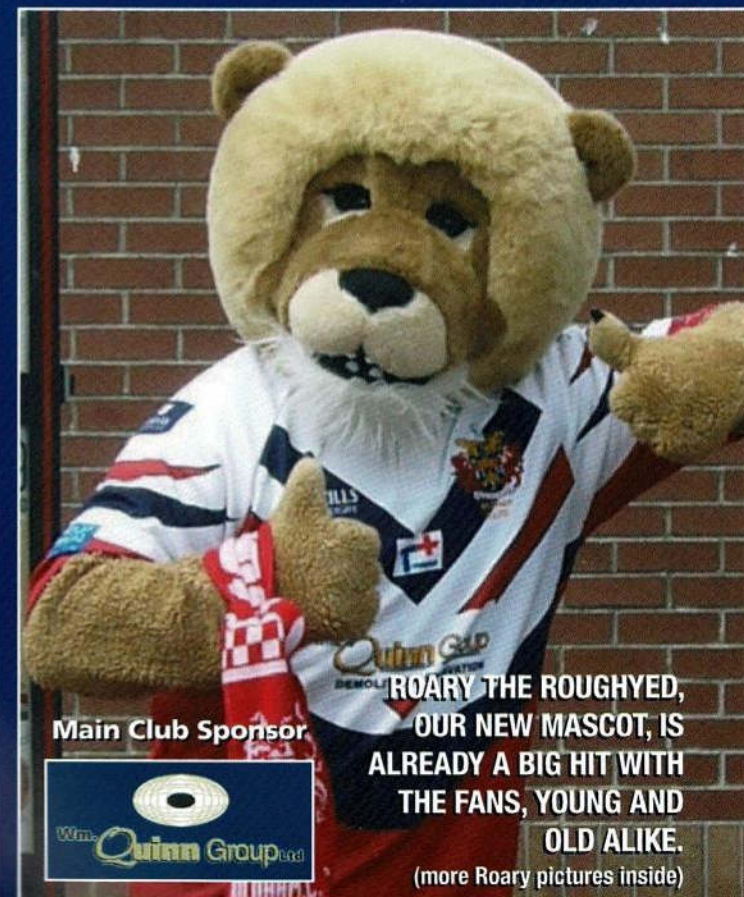
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**ROARY THE ROUGHYED,
OUR NEW MASCOT, IS
ALREADY A BIG HIT WITH
THE FANS, YOUNG AND
OLD ALIKE.**
(more Roary pictures inside)

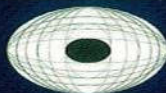
v Gateshead Thunder

Co-operative National League 2

Sunday 29th June 2008

Kick-Off 3.00pm





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Since he joined the club last month Roary the Roughyed, our new mascot, is getting out and about around the town in a bid to settle in, feel at home and get to know the locals

If you see him give him a shout. He's a real 'mixer' and he'll make friends with anybody, especially if they like rugby league. He will be at the Oldham Carnival and you might also see him elsewhere ... just like the people who dropped into McDonalds on Huddersfield Road for their Fun Day on the Saturday we played London Skolars at Sedgley Park.

Roary was a big hit with the kids at McDonalds and he also met up with the Birch family from Moorside. But he got more than he bargained for when he asked staff for a clubsandwich -- and got sandwiched literally between the McDonald staff, all dressed up for Fun Day as cavemen and cavewomen. Luckily for Roary they didn't have their clubs with them!

All too soon it was time for Roary to leave McDonalds to get over to Sedgley Park for the Skolars game, but not before he had made a lot of new friends. You see, he only roars when the Roughyeds need a bit of vocal support. The rest of the time he's a real softie!



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From the Boardroom

With Chris Hamilton...



Welcome back to Sedgley Park for the second of our "On the Road" games this season.

After a heavy week of games and travelling last week I must thank everybody who went to some or all of the matches

to support us.

In each of the three games we had more fans there than the home team and there is no doubt that this helped the players to turn in three great performances and results.

When you look at some of the crowds last week in National League Two some clubs must despair that they cannot get more people to come and watch what we all know is a great product.

Our opponents today, Gateshead, must be bitterly upset that, even after their fantastic run of late, they only attracted 331 for last week's game at home to Swinton and Doncaster, having just become the first second division team to reach the final of the Northern Rail Cup (and the club's first ever final) could only attract 580 against Rochdale.

Both of these clubs could be forgiven for thinking what do we need to do?

With that in mind and our relatively poor attendance for our last home match against London, here at Sedgley, we have put on free transport for fans today to ensure as many people as possible come along to see a top against third clash which should be a great game.

We are out to avenge the defeat up at Gateshead but know for sure that they will be keen to make sure that they keep up their excellent form to date - whatever happens I am sure it will be another value for money game for the fans.

Looking back to the three games last week one of the most pleasing aspects of them was the big difference we made to our points for and against with 150 for and only 26 against. I made this point after the Blackpool game last Sunday and it was certainly rewarding for the lads to see some very determined defensive efforts rewarded like that when we have been guilty of some poor defending at times in previous games.

If we can keep that kind of effort going we will not be far off come the end of the season and today is as good a day as any to prove it was no fluke.

The Reserves also got their first win last week at home to Featherstone and it was well deserved having perhaps been in situations in previous matches where they should have won but lacking a bit of experience in certain situations.

There is no doubt, however, that we have some good lads in that side who with a bit of time and some hard work in the off season will be ready for the step up to the professional game.

On a final note our next home league game is the TV game against Doncaster on Thursday 17 July and keep your eyes on the local press for some very exciting announcements in the next few days about this match. As ever we are always trying to come up with something different and we have certainly done it again for that game!

Today is an important game for us and you can play your part by getting behind the lads right from the start - let's make the atmosphere one that almost creates an extra man by really being vocal in support of the team as we try to get three vital points.

Enjoy the game

Chris Hamilton

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CoachesComments

With Steve Deakin...



Welcome to today's visitors Gateshead, a team that has passed most peoples expectations in going top of the league at the half way

stage of the season, but in my opinion a position that they hold on merit after some outstanding performances.

They included a win against us three weeks ago when we were second best on the night to a slicker team that took their chances well and then defended with a great deal of enthusiasm when needed..

Their coach, Dave Woods deserves a lot of credit for the way that he has put together a very good side in such a short space of time and the levels of confidence and enthusiasm they display will make them a tough team to beat. We come into today's game on the back of three away games that saw us score 150 points and only concede 26, an achievement that will have done wonders for our point's difference and certainly one that has lifted confidence and given us a bit of momentum at this crucial stage of the season. To play 7 games in a 28 day period, including two _ finals, two midweek games at Gateshead and then London has been a big ask but the players have responded superbly and we now look

forward to a regular one game a week period. That means we can prepare effectively and come up with the performances needed as we push to get as high as possible in the league.

On another note congratulation to John Hough, Leo Casey and the reserve team players on their recent win against Featherstone. The win confirmed the direction that not only the reserve team is going in but also the club that has a team almost exclusively of local, Oldham born talent, an occurrence that is a massive indication of the work that is taking place at the club. Long may it continue.

My last words are for you, the fans. It was great to see so many of you making the effort to get to the away games and in talking the players all expressed how positive you were and vocal in your support for them, so much so that it seemed to be that we were the home team and not the away team. Carry that support today and help us get a result.

Enjoy the game

Deaks

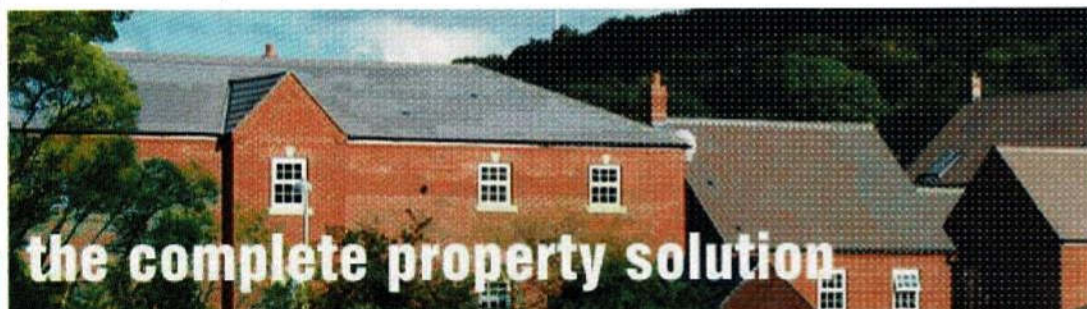
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Danny Wilson - Wing
Former England

Students

Representative in both 2006 & 2007, Danny is big, confident and can eat up the ground in front of him. Former Skirlaugh Bulls ARLFC, Danny also enjoyed a season at Wollongong Bulls in Australia before returning home to finish his studies. A firm favourite in the squad, Danny was unlucky throughout 2007 with injuries - however he has worked hard to correct that for 2008.

Michael Watton - Halfback
Debut season in the UK, Michael is an exciting half back with the points tally to prove it. The former Player/Coach of Coonabarabran Unicorns, 'Watto' scored over 250 points in their 2007 campaign. Has the ability to unlock defences with a good kicking game, Michael will look to establish himself in National League 2 throughout 2008.

Dave Vernon - Hooker
In his debut season in Professional Rugby League, Dave is another product of Gateshead Storm and brings with him a wealth of experience in amateur Rugby League. Former Northumbria University Student, Dave was part of the 2006 & 2007 Scotland & Celtic Nations Student Squads, but his highlight has been representing Scotland at the 2005 Student World Cup. A livewire Hooker, he'll look to take advantage of weak defences throughout 2008.

Neil Thorman - Halfback, Fullback
In a career that has amassed over 200 points for his home club, Neil continues to excite fans and cause problems for the opposition. Another member of the "100 Club", Neil has the ability to change the game in an instant, and will look to continue to do so throughout 2008.

Graham Stephenson - Wing, Centre
Enjoying his fourth season with Gateshead, Graham shows determination and focus in everything he does. Has worked tirelessly throughout pre-season and it shows. Made his debut in February 2004 and has scored almost 50 points since then - when things get tough, you can rely on 'Stiv'.

Dan Smith - Hooker
Former Australian Students International, Dan is as tough as it gets in the middle. Enjoying his second season on Tyneside. Good vision around the ruck, twinned with the ability to play for long periods of the game, makes Dan a valuable member of the 2008 squad.

Jonny Scott - Prop
Big hitter who has come through the ranks at Thunder, Jonny will look for more luck this year as injury ravaged his 2007 season. Former Gateshead Panthers ARLFC junior, Jonny hits big and this matches his commitment. Made his debut in February 2007 and enjoyed 10 appearances, he has always gave 100% to the

Thunder cause.

Stewart Sanderson - Wing, Fullback
Former Wath Brow Hornets and Great Britain Students International, Sandy has the ability to create anything from nothing when in possession. Solid in defence and possessing wonderful footwork close to the line, his 5 appearances towards the end of last season were the catalyst for an instant return to the Thunder ranks for 2008. A joker in the Thunder squad, he has the ability to do great things in the game.

Daniel Russell - Halfback, Centre
Halfback Russell will look to continue his good form with Thunder in his debut season in the UK. Daniel possesses a great kicking game and the ability to lead any team around the park. The former Parramatta Eels, North Sydney Bears and West Tigers player also made 4 appearances for Penrith Panthers in the 2004 NRL competition. A tough player, Daniel will look to forge a place in the 2008 Thunder line up.

Andrew Pybus - Second Row, Centre
Another Gateshead Storm product, Andrew made the step up to Thunder last season, and has continued to improve and impress since his debut back in April 2007. Shows a desire to constantly improve and has justified his inclusion in the Thunder 2008 squad. With a great turn of pace, his ability to run good lines will always cause the opposition problems.

Robin Peers - Wing
Part of the "100 Club" at Thunder, Robin made his debut for his home club back in February 2002. With over 40 tries and 180 points for Thunder, Peers will look to improve on his tally of 3 tries from last season. Very quick and agile on his feet, Robin can find a space from nothing.

Jason Payne - Prop, Second Row
Having impressed during his loan spell with Thunder in 2007, Jason has signed full terms with the club, and will look to continue where he left off last season. The former Castleford Tigers player made 3 Super League appearances for the club in 2006. With a wealth of experience that goes well beyond his young age, Jason's power and speed will create opportunities and he will be a constant source of problems for the opposition.

Stuart Kain - Fullback
Debut Season for Gateshead Thunder, after spending last year in Australia with West Magpies. Former Castleford Tigers player, Stuart is quick and his ability to read the game will bring him many tries in 2008. Solid defender that has a great reputation in the game.

Kevin Neighbour - Centre, Wing
Returning to his home club after spending the 2007 season with Shellharbour Marlins in Australia, Kevin scored more than 40 tries and over 200 points for Thunder in previous

seasons. Thunder's second most capped player, having made his debut in June 2001, Kevin always gives 100% and his performances are one full of determination and grit. Has developed both his fitness and skills during his time in the Jim Beam Cup.

Dylan Nash - Second Row, Centre
Enjoying his second season with Gateshead, the Thunder Army favourite Dylan is aggressive and committed in everything he does. Continually wanting to improve, the former Tugan Seahawks & Gold Coast Breakers player will look to improve on his 7 tries in 23 appearances in 2007. His performances got better throughout the season, and he will be a constant threat to any opposition.

Lewis McPhail - Hooker, Second Row
Enjoying his debut season in the UK, Lewis comes with a tough reputation and is reliable in both attack and defence. Having performed all season for Shellharbour Marlins in the Jim Beam Cup, McPhail will look to cement a place in the team and add to the many Man of the Match awards he earned for the Marlins in 2007.

Matt Barron - Prop, Second Row
Local Gateshead junior, Matt is having his second season with Thunder after joining from Keighley Cougars in the 2006 off-season. Former Wales Students, Wales U19's and GB Colleges International. Strong & Quick, Matt has always gives his everything to Thunder and will look to build on his 2007 appearances and his impressive form throughout pre-season this year.

Benjamin McAlpine - Fullback, Wing, Centre
Signed for the 2008 Season from Bathurst Panthers in Australia, watch out for Benjamin's turn of pace and ability to eat up the yards in both attack and defence. Prolific points scorer with 21 tries & 68 goals last season, amassing 220 points over the course of the season. His 2007 season highlight being his 5 try haul and 9 goals against Cowra in August 2007.

Michael Knowles - Second Row, Loose Forward, Centre
Former Castleford Tigers player, joined Thunder on loan during the 2007 season. Has put pen to paper and has signed full terms with Gateshead for 2008. Tough defender who can play Back Row, Loose Forward or Centre, Michael can also kick goals, scoring 44 points from the boot for Thunder in 2007. Watch out for his explosive runs throughout 2008.

Dean Jamieson - Halfback
Talented half back who has experience with several NRL clubs. Played 20 games for Cronulla Sharks in the 2007 VB Premier League. Accomplished player who scored 5 tries, always looks to create opportunities for those around him. Has the ability to set National League 2 alight in 2008, watch for his creative skills and great kicking game.


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January

Sun 13th	LEEDS RHINOS	A	3:00pm	4-50	6,340
Sun 20th	HULL KR	H	3:00pm	Postponed	
Sun 27th	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	20-26	1,108

February

NRC Fri 1st	SWINTON	H	8:00pm	22-20	848
NRC Fri 8th	SALFORD	A	8:00pm	12-40	4,224
NRC Sun 17th	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	Postponed	
NRC Fri 22nd	SALFORD	H	8:00pm	18-14	1,350
NRC Fri 29th	ROCHDALE	H	8:00pm	38-8	1,350

March

CCC3 Sun 9th	BRITISH ARMY	A	1.30pm	56-10	500
NRC Sun 16th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm	52-10	549
NL Fri 21st	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	46-32	1,003
NL Mon 24th	HUNSLET	H	3:00pm	40-12	1,168
NL Sun 30th	YORK	H	3:00pm	36-26	1,049

April

NRC Sun 6th	WHITEHAVEN	H	3:00pm	16-6	966
NL Sun 13th	KEIGHLEY	A	3:00pm	26-12	1,276
CCC4 Sun 20th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm	20-8	591
NL Sun 27th	ROCHDALE	H	3:00pm	24-14	1,107

May

NL Mon 5th	BLACKPOOL	H	3:00pm	38-26	1,115
CCC4 Sun 11th	DEWSBURY	A	3:00pm	58-12	1,103

NL Sun 18th	SWINTON	H	3:00pm	30-20	1,191
NRC Sun 25th	BATLEY	A	3:00pm	16-24	885

June

CCC6 Sun 1st	WAKEFIELD	A	3.30pm	4-46	2,966
NL Wed 4th	GATESHEAD	A	7.30pm	18-32	434
NL Sat 7th	LONDON	H	6:00pm	42-20	644
NL Sun 15th	HUNSLET	A	3:00pm	66-10	887
NL Wed 18th	LONDON	A	7:30pm	40-6	334
NL Sun 22nd	BLACKPOOL	A	3:00pm	44-10	640
NL Sun 29th	GATESHEAD	H	3:00pm		

July

NL Sun 6th	WORKINGTON	A	3:00pm		
NL Fri 11th	BARROW	A	7:30pm		
NL Thur 17th	DONCASTER	H	7:30pm		
NL Sun 27th	KEIGHLEY	H	3:00pm		

August

NL Sun 3rd	YORK	A	3:00pm		
NL Wed 6th	DONCASTER	A	8:00pm		
NL Sun 10th	BARROW	H	3:00pm		
NL Sun 17th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm		
NL Sun 24th	WORKINGTON	H	3:00pm		
Sat 30th	CHALLENGE CUP FINAL				

September

Sun 7th	ELIMINATION PLAY OFFS				
Sun 14th	QUALIFYING/ ELIMINATION SEMI-FINALS				
Sun 21st	FINAL ELIMINATOR				
Sun 28th	N L GRAND FINAL				

October

Sat 4th	S L GRAND FINAL				
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OLDHAM EVENING

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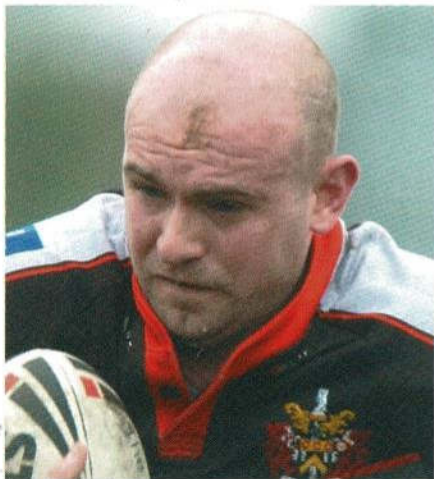
IT'S 200 NOT OUT FOR OUR LOYAL CLUB MAN

Player Profile: **NEIL RODEN**

by **ROGER HALSTEAD**

STAND-OFF NEIL HAS HIS SIGHTS ON MORE TRIES

THE player-profile feature takes on a rather different slant in this issue given that Neil Roden, a player whose profile we have covered previously, today reaches the huge milestone of 200 appearances with the Roughyeds.



PICTURE BY OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

Only John Hough, now retired from playing and concentrating on his new role as head coach of the Reserves, has recorded more games than that since Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd was launched for the start of the 1998 season - and in these days of one and two-year contracts it is indeed exceptional for a player to drag the jersey of one club over his head on 200 occasions.

Unlike Houghie, who is now in the middle of a well-

deserved ten-year testimonial, Neil had two seasons away from the club in 2005 and 2006, but he jumped at the chance to come back and the evidence suggests that, given the opportunity, he would like to end his playing career at the club he first joined from Wigan's academy set-up more than eight years ago.

As the Oldham Evening Chronicle's rugby league reporter in those days I vividly recall turning up at Castleton Gabriels for an academy match to find two fresh-faced new recruits watching the game from the sidelines. One was Phil Farrell, the other was Neil Roden, not yet 20. "They are good lads -- you'll see," said coach Mike Ford. He wasn't wrong, was he?

Not many days later Roden and Farrell were to make their Roughyeds debuts on the bench at Featherstone. It wasn't a baptism they will particularly want to remember: It was on March 26, 2000 and Featherstone blew the visitors apart to win 61-26. For the record, Oldham lined up like this: Sibson; Hayes, A Gibbons, Rich, Barrow; D Gibbons, Ford; Casey, Hough, Clegg, Holland, McMenemy, Campbell. Subs: Guest, Doran, Roden, Farrell.

Neil stayed on the bench for the next two games against Sheffield and Hunslet before Ford removed his own No 7 shirt and handed it to the young pretender at Batley. Roden marked his promotion with a try -- his first for the club -- in a 28-16 win, the third of seven wins in a row following that horrific day at Post Office Road.

It was to be the first of 89 tries Roden has scored in the service of the Roughyeds and no other player, not even a stalwart like Houghie, comes anywhere near that record of consistency in getting over the line in an Oldham jersey. Even now, at the ripe old age of 28, nifty Neil can still find his way to the line when he's in the mood, as he showed once more at Blackpool last Sunday when he recorded what I reckon was the third hat-trick of his Roughyeds career.

He was to have a chuckle later that evening when he switched on his television, clicked on to Teletext and read that 'Oldham's Neil Roden chipped in with FIVE tries in a 44-10 win at Blackpool'.

"I thought I must have forgotten a couple," was his tongue-in-cheek comment later. "They can put me down for five if they wish, I'm not complaining. Seriously though, I was real chuffed to get three because it took my total for the club to 89 and now I have my sights set on 100 Oldham tries.

"Four would have been nice because that would have

equalled the feats of Mark Sibson (twice), David Gibbons and James Bunyan, but it's always good to get a hat-trick.

"I suppose it isn't beyond the realms of possibility that I could score another 11 this season to hit the ton, but in any case I hope to still be with Oldham next season (his current two-year contract ends in November) and if that is the case it goes without saying that we hope to be playing in NLI."

Neil's season-by-season record with Oldham looks like this:

2000: 20 appearances out of 21 possible, 6 tries, two drop goals, 26 points.

2001: 34 appearances out of 34 possible, 16 tries, six drop goals, 70 points.

2002: 36 appearances out of 39 possible, 20 tries, seven drop goals, 87 points.

2003: 28 appearances out of 32 possible, 8 tries, three drop goals, 35 points.

2004: 24 appearances out of 33 possible, 18 tries, 72 points.

2005:

2006: 2007: 34 appearances out of 36 possible, 10 tries, two drop goals, 42 points.

2008 (to date): 23 appearances out of 24 possible, 11 tries, 44 points.

OVERALL: 199 appearances out of 219 possible, 89 tries, 20 drop goals, 376 points.

He was the club's leading try scorer in the 2002 season with 20 and his seven drop goals that season also constitutes a club record for drop goals in a season.

No other player in the new club's 10-year history has scored more tries than Roden or, indeed, more drop goals... and it would be superbly fitting for such an honest, reliable and durable performer to achieve his ambition of scoring 11 more tries for a club career best of 100.

Added Neil: "That's just a personal thing - a side issue, if you like. The main thing is that the club and team does well and 'doing well' this season means winning promotion. We have had a lot of rugby in recent weeks and while getting to the quarter-finals of two cup competitions was good in many ways it has definitely made life tougher for us in terms of our challenge for the NLI2 championship.

"All we can do is to go out in each match and give it our best shot, but if we still have ambitions of going

up automatically we can't afford to drop many more points, if any.

"I don't think we'll know for a week or two yet how many teams will go up automatically, but as I say we have to put that to the back of our minds and concentrate on one match at a time. We definitely have the quality in the side to go all the way. Perhaps we have not been as consistent yet as we were in the second half of last season, but having said that I think our best performances this year have been better than anything we produced in 2007.

"It was about this time last year that we started to string together a run of wins which ultimately led us to the Grand Final, and the fact that we have won the last four in a row perhaps suggests that we might be hitting the straps again at the right time just as we did last year.

"On a personal note I am real pleased to hit the 200-game mark for Oldham (I still have a bit to go to catch up to Houghie) and, as I say, I would really love to get to 100 tries. That wouldn't be a bad thing to have on my record, eh?"

Indeed, it wouldn't Neil. And when you look at his phenomenal record of consistency in the Oldham jersey and take into account also that he is rarely spelled and that, in any one game, he probably handles the ball more and makes more tactical decisions than anyone else other than his half-back partner, James Coyle, you begin to appreciate his real value to club and team.

Consider also that, like his team mates here at Oldham, he is merely part time with a full-time job to do as well. At the end of our little chat this week he said: "I'll have to dash now, I'm late for training."

Have you been at work today?, I asked. A driver for the Prison Service, he replied: "Yes. I had to drive to London to the Courts of Appeal, and then back again. It was a bit of a grueller because the traffic was bad both going and coming back. That's why I'm pushed now. Got to go, or Deaks will be having a word with me!"

Don't let anybody ever suggest again that these lads are less than totally committed.

Well done on the 200 appearances Neil... and very best wishes for the 100 tries. Nobody deserves such a reward more richly than Neil Roden.

Roger Halstead



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GuestWriter...

Ian Wilson

Roughyeds match reporter for League Express and lifelong Oldham fan.

With just 10 fixtures still to play in the NL2 league campaign, it is perhaps a good time to assess progress so far, and to look ahead to what the future might bring.

As we currently stand, our overall record is : P 24 W 18 L 6, Pts. For 770, Pts. Against 464. Just 12 of these games, of course, have been in the league, with 30 points amassed from our 10 wins, defeats at both Keighley and Gateshead being not only disappointing in themselves, but also both being by margins of 14 points, thereby preventing us from gaining any bonus points. Only time will tell how vital this may prove.

Of course, the league campaign has been interrupted - I nearly wrote 'complemented', but maybe this would have been a particularly inappropriate word in the circumstances - by cup games. There were early losses at both Salford and Rochdale in the initial stage of the Northern Rail Cup, though qualification for the first ever time for the competition's knock-out stage brought a superb win over Whitehaven before defeat at Batley, and finally 3 Challenge Cup wins before the honourable quarter-final defeat at Wakefield.

The clear pre-season objective, of course, as last year, was promotion to NLI - preferably in the automatic position, but if not, through the play-offs. Our competitors for automatic promotion are Barrow, Doncaster and, surprisingly, Gateshead, who have, in effect, dropped 0, 8 and 2 league points respectively so far compared with our 6.

Crucially, though, we have some vital games still to play, as do these other three teams. Thus, we have both Barrow and Doncaster still to play home and away, as well as Gateshead today here at Sedgley Park. In

addition, Barrow have to visit Doncaster, Doncaster Gateshead and Gateshead Barrow. The bonus point system slightly complicates interpretation of exactly what this means, but although top spot is not in our own hands entirely, it is also clear that, IF we were to win all ten remaining fixtures, either Barrow or Gateshead would have to win some very tricky games if either of them is to finish above us. In particular Barrow would have to win at Doncaster or Gateshead at Barrow. And that, of course, is assuming none of the four contending sides manages to lose at somewhere like Keighley or York - which is by no means certain, and which demonstrates how genuinely competitive the division is.

What this is saying, then, is that the coming two months promises some nail-biting afternoons. Have we the players and the playing strategies to put together a run of 10 more wins? This is where perhaps the cup experiences become relevant. Our wins at Boundary Park against both Salford and Whitehaven, and the cup performances at Dewsbury and Wakefield, surely all demonstrate what we are capable of doing when we play to our potential - and when the players we have are all fully switched on and motivated. In addition, the performances since our defeat at Gateshead have strongly suggested that Steve Deakin and the players have the target well in sight. This is not so much in the points we have been scoring, but more significantly in our much-improved defensive efforts.

We shall see! I for one can't wait.

Ian Wilson

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



Roughyeds Fight Night

by ROGER HALSTEAD

BILL 'The Mighty' Quinn lived up to his billing at the Legends of League boxing extravaganza in Bolton on Saturday night, June 14, when three ringside judges gave him a points win over former New Zealand rugby league Test ace Brad Hepi.

A huge roar went up from the full-house, £70-a-head 800-strong audience at the Reebok Stadium's indoor boxing arena and banqueting rooms when referee Steve Collins raised Quinn's arm in triumph at the end of three rough-house two-minute rounds which provided the best fight of the night.

The 42-year-old Roughyeds chairman, an accomplished amateur boxer on the Manchester fight scene in his youth, turned back the clock 20 years or more to take part in this Martin Blondel inspired Steve Prescott Foundation promotion designed to raise funds for the Christie Hospital, Manchester and the Rugby League Benevolent Fund for seriously injured players. Prescott, the former St Helens and Hull full-back, is battling a rare form of stomach cancer and has pledged to help Christie's with major fund raising. Collins, the former WBO champion who, with Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn boxed in a golden age of European super middleweight competition, refereed all seven fights.

Herol 'bomber' Graham, another legend of the ring, gave an exhibition of how to use footwork, agility and supreme fitness to avoid punishment at close quarters. But the bouts featuring big names from rugby league's recent past, like Steve

Hampson, Anthony Sullivan, Esene Faimalo, Maea David, Garry Schofield, Alan Hunte, Tim Street and Warren Jowitt, topped the bill and there was none more exciting or compelling than the clash of tough-guy Hepi and the Roughyeds chairman.

Each boxer entered the ring under the spotlight, to motivational music and escorted by a bevy of beauties from the Wakefield Trinity Wildcats dance and cheer leader group.

But there was a surprise in store for Bill Quinn when Hepi was joined in the ring by his fellow Kiwis, Faimalo, Maea David and Simo Fitaia who promptly formed a quartet to give a rendition of the Haka, the Maori war chant designed to frighten and intimidate opponents.

"It didn't bother me, it just made me more even more determined to give it my best shot," said Bill, who stood up well to the initial flurry of punches from his younger opponent before outboxing him and scoring countless points with a left hook and a left jab on the counter attack.

Attired in pink in order to promote the breast-cancer research specialists, Genesis, Quinn's boxing technique and ability to keep the more aggressive Hepi at bay with punches on target edged the Roughyeds chief to victory.

Said Bill: "Hepi was a mighty tough opponent, but he never caught me with one that really hurt me. I'm just glad that neither of us got knocked about too much. It was really satisfying to get the verdict because the one thing I didn't want was to let anyone down, most of all Oldham RL Club."

First people to congratulate their hero ringside were Bill's fiancée Suzanne, his two sons Michael and Harrison and his father Michael snr, a former all-Ireland Gaelic football champion. "We're all proud of him," said Michael snr. "Mighty proud."



Friends before they become foes - Bill (left) and Brad Hepi on arrival at the Reebok.



Bill in pink in recognition of Genesis, the breast cancer research specialists adopted by Roughyeds as a club charity.



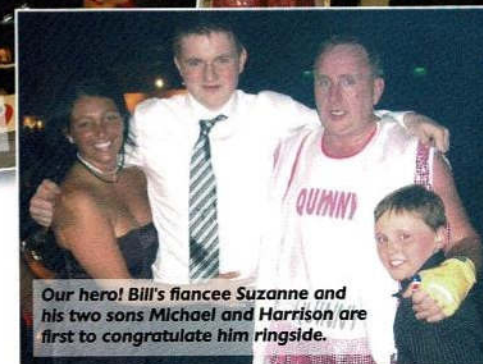
Ready for battle... Brad Hepi



Action stations -- and no hiding place in the ring.



Hail the victor: Referee Steve Collins raises Bill's arm in triumph when the judges' verdict is announced.



Our hero! Bill's fiancée Suzanne and his two sons Michael and Harrison are first to congratulate him ringside.

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April					
NLR	Wed 2nd	LEIGH CENT.	A	7:30pm	L 6-48
NLR	Thurs 10th	ROCHDALE	H	7:30pm	L 6-18
NL	Fri 18th	SALFORD CITY REDS	A	7:30pm	L 8-46
NLR	Thurs 24th	ROCHDALE	A	7:30pm	L 28-38
May					
NLR	Thurs 1st	LEIGH CENT.	H	7:30pm	L 6-56
NLR	Thurs 8th	SALFORD CITY REDS	H	7:30pm	L 4-56
NLR	Thurs 29th	WIDNES VIKINGS	A	7:30pm	L 30-36
June					
NLR	Sat 7th	WORKINGTON	A	2:30pm	L 14-38
NLR	Thurs 12th	HUNSLET HAWKS	H	7:30pm	L 20-22
NLR	Thurs 19th	FEATHERSTONE ROV	H	7:30pm	W 28-16
NLR	Fri 27th	HUNSLET HAWKS	A	7:30pm	
July					
NLR	Sat 5th	WORKINGTON	H	2:30pm	
NLR	Sat 12th	BARROW RAIDERS	H	2:30pm	
NLR	Thurs 17th	FEATHERSTONE ROV	A	7:30pm	
NLR	Thurs 24th	WIDNES VIKINGS	H	7:30pm	
August					
NLR	Sat 9th	BARROW RAIDERS	A	2:30pm	
	Sat 23rd	PLAY-OFF WEEK 1			
	Sat 30th	CARNEGIE CHALLENGE CUP FINAL			
September					
	Sat 6th	PLAY-OFF WEEK 2			
	Sat 13th	PLAY-OFF WEEK 3			
	Sat 20th	FIRST DIVISION RESERVE GRAND FINAL			

VICTORY AT LAST FOR OUR BRAVE YOUNG RESERVES

**AT the tenth time of asking, the Roughyeds
Reserves finally broke their duck at Sedgley Park
when they beat Featherstone Rovers 28-16.**

The head coaches of the two clubs, Oldham's Steve Deakin and Featherstone's David Hobbs, were in attendance to run the rule over their young players as Roughyeds stormed into a 22-4 interval lead only to be pegged back to 22-16 before clinching their win with a late try by Craig Littler, improved by stand-off Mark Smith.

His right knee heavily protected, Smith returned to the side after several weeks out to play a key pivotal role at outside-half and to land four conversions after failing with an early penalty attempt and then the attempt to convert the first of Oldham's tries by left winger Steven Fisher.

A delighted Reserves coach John Hough said: "At last we've got the monkey off our back and now we can start to climb the table. We were unlucky to lose last week, but we kicked on from that game and I thought Chris Clarke

and Luke Sutton looked especially good in the pack.

"It goes without saying that it was a huge lift to have Phil Joseph and Craig Littler in the side. The rest of the side followed them. Leo (assistant coach Leo Casey) and I were chuffed to bits I can tell you. We go to Hunslet next Friday looking for another two points and if we can get them we can start to climb the table."

Rovers went into an early 4-0 lead with a try in the corner by prop Craig Cawthray, but Oldham were soon on level terms when winger Steven Fisher went in for the first Roughyeds try after great handling left by Joseph, Dale Lowe, Smith, Ben Heaton and Littler.

There had been a chance a few minutes earlier when props Alex Eyres and Sutton went up the middle before Lowe and Ben Heaton sent in Michael Ward at the corner only for the referee to rule forward pass.

The Fisher try followed and then Smith saved a certain Rovers try with a great cover tackle on the Rovers right winger Davi Garahan with the corner flag only feet away.

Scrum-half Lowe's kick into the in-goal on the last tackle set up a second try for Sutton and only a couple of minutes later Smith came up with a 40-20 which led to the Joseph try from dummy half.

A flat pass from Joseph sent Sutton crashing over on the burst for the fourth Oldham try to take the Roughyeds in at half time with a commanding 22-4 lead.

The first 20 minutes of the second half belonged to Rovers, who got within sight with tries by second-row pair Luke Varley and Steve Dooler, both improved by Arran Dobek.

There were only 12 minutes left when Joseph's wide ball to the right found centre Craig Littler, who stormed inside to touch down behind the posts, leaving Smith with the easiest of winning conversions.

Scorers: Oldham -- goals, Smith (4); tries, Fisher, Sutton (2), Joseph, Littler;

Featherstone -- goals, Dobek (2); tries, Cawthray, Dooler, Varley.

Oldham: Heaton; Fisher, Littler, Foy, Ward; Smith, Lowe; Eyres, Joseph, Sutton, Clarke, Jagger, Mansfield, Subs: Toft, W Schofield, Orwell, Jackson.

Featherstone: Wilson; Garahan, Smeaton, Wynn, Hutton; Dobek, Anholm; Cawthray, Sinclair, Ellery, Dooler, Varley, Johnson. Subs: Kellet, Jones, Curtis, Burke.

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David Toppliss - A great rugby league player, and a very nice guy.
by ROGER HALSTEAD

Oldham supporters will have been shocked and deeply saddened by the loss of David Toppliss, who died on June 16 after collapsing while playing five-a-side soccer.

The former Great Britain stand-off, a Wakefield Trinity legend who later captained Hull, came to Watersheddings at the end of his career and played a total of 49 Oldham games spread over the 1985-86 and 1986-87 seasons, writes ROGER HALSTEAD.

Oldham were beaten by Castleford at Wigan in the 1986 Challenge Cup semi-final - just one of many games Toppo was forced to miss in the second half of that season after being injured in a car crash.

At the season's end I wrote as follows in the Oldham Evening Chronicle: "Oldham suffered many blows during a season of stark contrasts on and off the field but none to compare with the loss of David Toppliss after a car crash."

"The team's slip after an exciting run of 11 league games without defeat can be traced back to a January morning in Wakefield when Toppliss suffered head and neck injuries in a road accident."

"He was never to play (that season) again - and Oldham were never quite the same without his influence, leadership and tactical expertise."

"Toppliss had justified the faith of manager Frank Myler, particularly in organising Oldham's threequarters into a useful strike force."

Toppo was back the following season to play in 34 of the team's 38 games in all competitions. He played stand-off to Ray Ashton in that memorable match against the Australian tourists, who struggled to beat Oldham 22-16. And he was Paddy Kirwan's stand-off on the night at Watersheddings, in front of 10,000 fans, when Oldham grabbed sporting headlines with a 10-8 first round Challenge Cup win against all-powerful Wigan.

Sadly, Oldham were to be relegated at the end of that season with four going down from a first division of 16. The Toppliss-inspired Oldham won 13 of their 30 games that season to finish with 26 points - exactly the same as Leeds, but with a poorer for-and-against record. They finished above Featherstone (17 pts), Barrow (16) and Wakefield (9) yet still got relegated because 25 per cent of the division was required to take the drop.

They were great years, nevertheless, and many hundreds of Oldham fans past and present will be among the many thousands throughout the North of England who have been mourning the premature passing of a great rugby league player, and a very nice guy.

Lottery Give-Away

by ROGER HALSTEAD



A Sholver newsagent has split three ways his £300 winnings on the Roughyeds' Club Cash lottery and has donated £100 each to St Thomas's Church, Moorside, St Thomas's Primary School, Moorside

and Oldham Rugby League Club.

"I've been in business in Moorside for 16 years," said Rana Mohammed Akram, "and I love to support the community in which I live and work and also Oldham Roughyeds. I am a keen fan of the club. I just love rugby league, and so do loads of people up here on Sholver."

Akram, who owns and runs RMA News on Coleridge Road, Sholver, has previously donated Roughyeds lottery winnings back to the club and he has now pledged to try to get more of his customers to join the club's £1-a-week fund-raising scheme.

He said: "I know there is a lot of interest in Oldham Rugby up here and I like to do my bit to help the club. I watch the team play whenever I can and I am really pleased to see them doing so well."

"St Thomas's, Moorside - both the church and the school - are pillars of the local community and I love to support them as well. I think it is important that local people support local institutions like the church, the school and Oldham Roughyeds."

On behalf of the club and its board of directors, Chris Hamilton, the Roughyeds' chief executive, thanked Akram for his £100 donation and added: "It goes without saying that we really appreciate what Akram is doing on the club's behalf up in his part of town. He has been supporting us for a few years now"

And the Rev. Howard Gray, vicar of St Thomas's, added: "This is a wonderful gesture by Akram, who is tremendous in his support of the church and school. He came to us on Christmas Eve with a very generous gift, and he has previously supported our dance troupe."

"He is extremely supportive of the Moorside community and I know he is delighted at the progress Oldham RL is making as, indeed, we are at St Thomas's. A lot of the congregation here are supporters of the club and several of them in Church last Sunday were delighted to chat about their win against London Skolars the night before."

Anyone in the Sholver area who would like to join Club Cash can ring the club on 0161 628 3677 or go along to RMA News on Coleridge Road, Sholver (tel: 0161 652 4152) and speak to Akram.

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☐	Lee WINGFIELD
☐	

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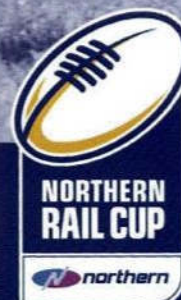
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