

NEW HOME BASE - AN 'EXCITING OPPORTUNITY' WAITING TO HAPPEN

by ROGER HALSTEAD

THE directors of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd have confirmed they are in talks to obtain a licence for the use of the ground and facilities at Andrew Street, off Broadway, home of Chadderton Football Club.

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Club officials fully understand that supporters are thirsting for more information about this "exciting

opportunity". The directors of the club are itching to reveal more, but they know they must hold back further announcements until the deal is concluded to avoid jumping the gun on the final outcome or jeopardising ongoing talks.

That's why chairman Bill Quinn and chief executive Chris Hamilton issued the following statement when news of the club's interest in Andrew Street was made public by other sources a few days ago.

The statement read as follows:

"Following intense speculation recently the club can confirm that it is currently in negotiation with various parties to obtain a licence for the use of Andrew Street, Chadderton, home of Chadderton Football Club.

This situation has been ongoing for a significant period of time throughout which, in accordance with club policy, all discussion and negotiation has been done on a strictly confidential basis.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond the club's control, we have now been informed that this situation has been made public before negotiations are concluded.

This is potentially a very exciting opportunity for the club and for everyone connected with it.

However, while acknowledging that our interest in Andrew Street is now in the public domain, the club will be making no further comment until the negotiations are concluded.

We would like to stress to local residents, supporters of Chadderton FC and fans of Oldham RLFC that our use of this facility will not be for first-team matches.

Furthermore, we had previously discussed with officials of the football club, local councillors and officers of OMBC our intentions to involve local residents in discussions about the site to allay any fears they may have had as a result of incorrect rumours and assumptions that have been doing the rounds over the past few months.

This situation will not change and we hope to be in a position to invite our fans, local residents, councillors and anyone else with an interest in the development of the site to a series of meetings once contracts have been signed by the relevant parties."

A similar statement appears on the website of Chadderton Football Club, who play in the Vodkat North-West Counties League.

Roughyeds acknowledge that their supporters will have a big part to play in the success of the new venture and they assure fans that they will be delighted to provide "all the information fans want" when the time is right.

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Northern Rail Cup

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PRESS PACK APPLAUD OUR BIG NIGHT AT WIDNES

Roberts leads Oldham to shock win at Vikings
(League Weekly)



End of a perfect day... Lee Greenwood, Phil Joseph, Paul Highton and Chris Baines return the applause of jubilant Oldham fans at the Stobart Stadium.

Ballard the Boot plunders the Vikings - and 'Two Bobs' lands man-of-the-round award!

SKIPPER Robert Roberts and winger Andy Ballard had special reasons to celebrate after our terrific 22-20 win at Widnes in a thrilling start to our Northern Rail Cup campaign.

Captain Courageous 'Two Bobs' went through the pain barrier to return to the field in the closing stages and lead Oldham to a memorable triumph against the

red-hot trophy favourites - a demonstration of heroism that was recognised by the RFL's player-of-the-round selection panel.

"It's great to receive an award like this," said Robert, "and I give a big thank-you to all concerned, but the secret of our success was teamwork. Every man played his part.

"We reacted positively when they came back at us and went in front 20-18. We showed great spirit to regain the lead in the 78th minute and that proved that our fitness levels were a match for those of the full-time professionals."

Winger Ballard continued his impressive early-season form with seven goals from seven shots and a try in the corner for good measure - 18 points in total.

For Oldham it was the perfect start to a new season. For Widnes, though, defeat had its repercussions. On Monday the Vikings announced they had parted

Roughyeds bring Vikings crashing down

(League Express)

company with coach Steve McCormack in the aftermath of their shock home defeat and, presumably, after a weekend of inquests. Here is the press gang's verdict on the night Benson's boys took the Stobart Stadium by storm:

WHAT THEY SAID

"Oldham turned the tables on the Northern Rail Cup favourites with a solid display that upset the odds at Stobart Stadium. Tony Benson and his players fancied their chances before the game and their optimism paid off as they outshone Widnes for periods of the game, and deserved to win.

"Benson had done his homework. Oldham dominated the floor and the ruck, which was pivotal to their victory". - **Martin Lace, League Express.**

"The writing was on the wall very early on for the Vikings when Roberts, ably supported by the Coyle boys, took the game to the home side.

"James Coyle put up several bombs, one of which was spilled by Loz Wildbore, which allowed Jason Boults the opportunity to score by the posts and Ballard kicked the first of his seven goals. It took Widnes until the 26th minute to hit back." - **Graham Lovett, League Weekly.**

"The first match of the Northern Rail Cup provided a shock with Oldham taking a thoroughly deserved win at the home of the cup favourites. The first half saw the Roughyeds well on top with two excellent tries, a good kicking game and terrific defence restricting the Vikings to a single try by ex-Oldham man Gavin Dodd." - **Keith Potter, Oldham Advertiser.**

"Ice-cool Andy Ballard got Oldham's 2009 season off to a magnificent start with a faultless goalkicking display at Widnes. Two conversions, five penalties and a first-half try gave the former Salford winger 18 points as Tony Benson's boys stunned the Northern Rail Cup favourites with one of the club's best all-round performances in years.

"Committed in defence and creative in attack, Roughyeds led 18-4 as the clock ticked up to the hour mark and it took a disallowed try by Lee Greenwood to provide the shell-shocked Vikings with the heart and the will to mount a spirited fightback." - **Roger Halstead, Roughyeds website.**

"The game's pivotal moment came on 34 minutes. Wildbore was involved in what looked a minor fracas with Halliwell, but referee Mr Child saw enough to dismiss him. Two penalty goals for interference at play-the-ball early in the second half put Widnes in a deep hole at 18-4 down." - **John Lawless, Liverpool Echo.**

View from the inside...



Although these notes had to be written prior to the re arranged fixture against Hornets RL last Wednesday. It is safe to say that Oldham Rugby League Club

has made its mark on the season already!

The victory at Widnes on Friday the 13th was certainly bad luck for them as it provided the shock result of the round (in some peoples eyes) and has hopefully set the tone for the season ahead.

Going to a full time team away from home in the first competitive game of the season was a big ask of the team but they came through with flying colours and it is hard to think of anybody who didn't perform well on the night.

Just to cap matters off for us Robert Roberts was named Northern Rail player of the round for his all action effort on the night and deservedly so. Once again when coming off the bench Robert has demonstrated his commitment to the cause by playing through the pain barrier.

What we must now do is make sure we do not waste that result and today will be another difficult game against a Sheffield team that has established itself in the Championship over the last couple of years.

They have made some good signings to boost an already decent squad and they will be looking to finish high in the table - both Northern rail and Cooperative Championship this season.

The new format for this seasons Northern Rail competition has freshened things up and certainly from an Oldham perspective it is good to be playing different teams to the ones we have played over the last few years.

I think the new 2 divisions format is interesting and will have fans

checking not only their teams results but those of others as they calculate if their team could be going through to the knock out stages.

The introduction of the nines competition in July for the teams not in the final is another bold move by the game and one which deserves to prosper. Nines will bring a new type of game for many fans although the older ones will remember similar pre season cup competitions held at Wigan years ago. Certainly it is a game for the fast elusive players and already our props are undertaking extensive sprint training in readiness for the event. We have reminded them, however, that we hope to be in the actual final rather than the nines!

On a serious note there has been an incredible amount of hard work put in by a lot of people since the end of last season to prepare ourselves for the tasks ahead and on behalf of the club I would like to thank them.

Can we also say a massive thank you to all our fans who were able to purchase a season ticket in these difficult times as this provides a big boost to the club during the close season.

Finally and I know I say this every week please, please get behind the team, make some noise and the players will provide you with plenty to cheer about!

Enjoy the game

Chris Hamilton

Chief Executive

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BILL AND SUZANNE IN MATCH OF THE DAY

Congratulations and the best wishes of everyone at Oldham RLFC go to chairman Bill Quinn and his fiancée Suzanne Kettleton, who were married last Saturday - Valentine's Day - at a glittering ceremony in Yorkshire.



They were married at the Chapel in the grounds of the exclusive and award-winning Rudding Park Hotel, near Harrogate where guests later enjoyed a reception, dinner and dancing in the converted Regency House set in idyllic parkland.

More than a hundred guests included members of the Roughyeds' administrative and coaching staff and their partners, headed by chief executive and the club's only other director and shareholder, Chris Hamilton.

During his humorous wedding speech, in which he spoke movingly and at length about his new wife, his sons, his father and his late mother, Bill referred to the latest project in his life -- Oldham Rugby --- and to the great win at Widnes the previous night.

He and Suzanne were not at the game because they were already in Yorkshire preparing for their own match of the day on Saturday.

Said Bill: "It was Friday the 13th and coming so soon before my wedding I was a bit concerned. I

needn't have been. A few things went perfectly for me on Friday and it was all topped off when I got a call from Chris to say we had won at Widnes.

"We had beaten the team that was full time and that was tipped to win both the Northern Rail Cup and the Co-operative Championship. What a fantastic result the night before my wedding. It was a great wedding present from the boys.

"It would be remiss of me not to thank the people over there (looking across to the Roughyeds table) who look after the club so expertly."

Bill and Suzanne were at Boundary Park for the Rochdale game on Wednesday before they flew off on honeymoon, to a secret destination in the West Indies, the following day.

As soon as he gets back, Bill will go into a strict training routine in order to box in a charity event labelled 'The Battle at Batley Frontier' on April 1. Organised to benefit the Steve Prescott Foundation, the show will be staged at the Batley Frontier, Bradford Road, Batley and Bill's fight with RL legend Garry Schofield will top the bill.

In his last visit to the ring at a Steve Prescott Foundation promotion, the Roughyeds chief won on points against Kiwi tough guy Brad Hepi - a verdict that saw him soar up the rankings of rugby league's charity boxers.

By the time he climbs into the ring at Batley, Bill will be 43. He is three months younger than Schofield, who will also be heavier.

Said Bill: "Garry is a big lad, so I will have to be on my toes. I am hoping to be a little bit lighter than last time. He won't take things lightly. It will be a real battle."

The bill also features two Roughyeds players - Paul Reilly, who is set to fight Dave Downs of Featherstone Rovers, and Phil Joseph who will take on Dewsbury's Andy Burland.

A gold package costs £100 and a silver package £35, and bookings can be made via the Frontier Club on 01924 442122, Martin Blondel on 07971 792859 or online at www.steveprescottfund.co.uk

WHERE AND WHEN WE PLAY

Date	Comp	Opponents	V	Time	Res	Score	Att
Fri, Feb 13	NRC	Widnes Vikings	A	7.30pm	W	22-20	2,783
Wed, Feb 18	NRC	Rochdale Hornets	H	7.30pm			
Sun, Feb 22	NRC	Sheffield Eagles	H	3.00pm			
Sun, Mar 1	NRC	Hunslet Hawks	A	2.00pm			
Sun, Mar 8	CCC3	Sharlston Rovers	H	3.00pm			
Sun, Mar 15	CC1	Blackpool Panthers	H	3.00pm			
Sun, Mar 22	CC1	Keighley Cougars	A	3.00pm			
Sun, Mar 29	CC1	Workington Town	H	3.00pm			
Sun, April 5		Carnegie CC (4)					
Fri, April 10	CC1	Rochdale Hornets	A	3.00pm			
Mon, April 13	CC1	Dewsbury Rams	H	8.00pm			
Sun, April 26	CC1	Swinton Lions	H	3.00pm			
Mon, May 4	CC1	London Skolars	A	3.00pm			
Sun, May 10		Carnegie CC (5)					
Sun, May 17	CC1	Hunslet Hawks	H	3.00pm			
Sun, May 24	CC1	Swinton Lions	A	3.00pm			
Sun, May 31		Carnegie CC (Quarter-Final)					
Sun, June 7	NRC	(Quarter-Final)					
Sun, June 21		NRC (Semi-Final)					
Thurs, June 25	CC1	York City Knights	A	7.30pm			
Sun, July 5	CC1	Workington Town	A	3.00pm			
Sun, July 12	NRC	Final (Bloomfield Road)					
Sun, July 19	CC1	Keighley Cougars	H	3.00pm			
Sun, July 26	CC1	Dewsbury Rams	A	3.00pm			
Sun, Aug 2	CC1	Rochdale Hornets	H	3.00pm			
Thurs, Aug 6	CC1	London Skolars	H	7.30pm			
Sun, Aug 16	CC1	Blackpool Panthers	A	3.00pm			
Sun, Aug 23	CC1	York City Knights	H	3.00pm			
Sun, Sep 6	CC1	Hunslet Hawks	A	3.00pm			
Play-offs start Friday, Sept 11							
Grand Finals Day Sunday, October 4							

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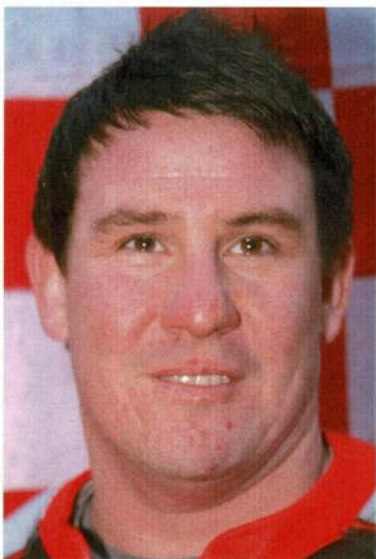
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PLAYER PROFILE

No 2 PAUL HIGHTON



Roger Halstead talks to the Oldham prop who never lost his 'soft spot' for the club he cheered as a boy

LOCAL BOY MADE GOOD DELIGHTED TO RETURN TO HIS OWN BACKYARD

WHEN a hugely experienced player like Paul Highton has something to say anybody with a modicum of nous has to sit up and take note.

You don't serve Salford City Reds for 11 seasons; play in nearly 300 games; appear in more than 200 Super League clashes; and play a dozen times for Wales without acquiring the knowledge

to become somewhat of an authority on rugby league and its idiosyncrasies. No doubt that weighed heavily in favour of the 31-year-old Oldham-born prop when Roughyeds boss Tony Benson was balancing the credentials of the candidates for the twin roles of vice-captain and skipper Robert Roberts's right-hand man and confidant.

Side by side they should do a great job as wise old sages in the height of battle -- as we witnessed in the thrilling win at Widnes nine days ago --- and as leaders of the group off the field and around the dressing room.

Highton, for one, is excited by the prospect of ending his playing career with the club he supported avidly as a boy and is even more enthusiastic about the season that lies ahead since Benson entrusted him with the responsibilities that go with his appointment as vice-captain of the club.

He was made-up by the win at Widnes but, as you would expect from a player who has been around long enough to have seen it all before, he was at great pains to keep the season's opening-day triumph in perspective.

As a player who was in the Salford side beaten by Oldham at Boundary Park in the same competition around this time last year, Paul is better qualified than most to warn of the dangers of a side perhaps falling in love with itself after one terrific performance and a win that was unexpected by most people outside those who actually made it happen.

"We are very aware that we made a similar start last year," he said, "and looking back to that win against Salford has brought it home to us that all we did at Widnes was to win one match and get the season off to a good start.

"We've now got to build on that over a long season. Sheffield will be tough opponents today. They are a proud club who are traditionally tough opponents. Mark Aston knows the game inside out. It remains to be seen whether they are as good on their travels as they are at the Don Valley.

"But I know we will not have an easy game all season. Every side will want to gain our scalp because we are tipped to do well in Co-operative Championship One as well as in the Northern Rail Cup. Every team

that plays us, certainly in the league, will regard it as their Grand Final."

Paul, who lives in Rochdale and has two children, Harrison (7) and Ella (2), would have come to Oldham a year earlier had it not been for his testimonial at The Willows.

"When I was a lad my dad used to take me to watch Oldham home and away," he said, "and I've always had a soft spot for the club. I've always wanted to play for them at some point in my career. Just to play for the Roughyeds is great, but to be given the added responsibility of vice-captain makes it even better.

"I'm really excited about the season ahead, and I suppose a lot of fans will be too after the win at Widnes, but as I have said already, we have to keep that win in perspective.

"It was my first game for more than five months, after an operation on a wrist, and I was a little bit off the pace. I felt strong and confident, but there is no substitute for match fitness. On the plus side, the wrist held up and I brushed off the cobwebs. Now I'm looking forward to the games that are coming up."

Highton's operation, a few months ago, was to mend a wrist which has taken a hammering over his many years in the front-row. He damaged it two years ago, but he kept putting off surgery until he knew he was leaving Salford to join Oldham.

"I didn't want to come to Oldham and bring a medical bill with me," he explained, "so I got the job done first. By returning to action at Widnes I'm three months ahead of the medical schedule, but I was happy at how it went."

And so to the beginning. Larry Dawson, up at Waterhead, was the biggest early influence on the young Highton, who was only 16 when he signed for Halifax after choosing to join Steve Simms at Thrum Hall ahead of the club that the cream of the Oldham crop were all signing for around that time --- Warrington.

Paul had joined the trek to Wilderspool with the likes of Iestyn Harris, Paul Sculthorpe, John Hough and Ian Knott and he was on the verge of signing when he got a call from Malcolm Reilly at Halifax.

When it came to the nitty-gritty he opted for Halifax. He explained: "As a kid I was always a little bit in the shadow of Iestyn and Scully, so I thought I would do my own thing and go in the opposite direction. I was ready to sign for Warrington and there was a wrangle when I told them I was going to Halifax instead. I had decided I wanted to take my own route, the Yorkshire route, so off I went."

A centre in those days, the young Highton made his Fax debut at the age of 17 and quickly worked his way through the system. By 18 he was a regular

first-team man, still in the centre, after earning his stripes in the academy and 'A' teams.

All was going sweetly until his first contract expired. He agreed terms on a new deal and signed a bridging agreement until his new contract was drawn up. The club later withdrew the offer, however, and put before him a new one, slashed by half and with the addendum that it was 'take it or leave it' because the club held his registration. Said Paul: "I refused to sign and the club then transfer-listed me at £100,000. I was only 18 and nobody was going to buy me at that price so I sought advice and went to a tribunal. It was in the early days of the tribunal and the case hit the headlines.

"I won it on 'restriction of trade' grounds and I became a free agent. I had a brief spell at Featherstone on loan while awaiting the decision of the tribunal. Once it came through I spoke to a few clubs, but chose Salford because it was a developing club and I thought I might make an earlier breakthrough there than if I had gone to a Leeds or a Bradford."

It was April, 1998 when he signed for Salford and it was to be the start of an 11-season association with the City Reds where he spent a "fantastic" time at a club that was run as a tight ship by its popular and highly-respected chairman John Wilkinson.

Nine of those 11 seasons were in Super League and Paul played under five coaches --- Andy Gregory, Steve McCormack, John Harvey, Karl Harrison and Shaun McRae.

He named Harrison as the pick. "I felt he was very unlucky to lose his job," said Paul. "He was a top coach, he knew the game inside out and he surrounded himself with first-class assistants in people like James Lowes and Scott Naylor."

All that is behind Highton now, though. He has finally achieved his wish to wear the colours of his home-town club and he is relishing the prospect of helping the Roughyeds to realise their own ambitions in the next year or so.

LUCK OF THE IRISH?

STEVIE Gibbons, our latest recruit from the Emerald Isle, must have had mixed emotions after his debut in the 22-20 win at Widnes nine days ago.



On the one hand the Irishman (pictured) emerged from the bench midway through the first half to produce an excellent display from dummy half in his first appearance in the Oldham jersey.

On the other hand he picked up damage to ligaments in the joint of his shoulder and ended up, after the game, in hospital waiting for x-rays. The former London Skolars man was unable to return to the field for the second half after reporting in the dressing room at half time that he couldn't lift his arm.

What was that you said about the luck of the Irish?

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LOTTERY INCOME HELPS TO PROVIDE A LIFELINE

MEMBERSHIP of the club's Five Alive lottery currently stands at 87 and club officials would love it to top the 100 mark before what promises to be a great season is much older.

It costs £5 a week, but benefits for regular supporters are numerous and in addition there is a monthly draw with a first prize of £500, a second prize of two places in the match-day Boundary Park hospitality suite with pre-match meal etc and a third prize of a £25 voucher for the club shop.

Dave Whitehead, a recent winner of the £500, was in Barcelona when a friend rang him to tell him he was in the money courtesy of the Roughyeds and Five Alive. "I'm stunned," he replied, "but it's great to know there will be a cheque waiting for me when I get home."

The current membership list of Five Alive is as follows: John McAndrew; Saddleworth Sports; F R Elswood; Eddie Luckraft; David Webster; John Davies; Ian's Car sales (Ian Croxon); Chris Broadbent; Dorothy M Johnston; Alan Stacey; Lansdowne Trading Services; Suzanne Kettleton; Clifford Bardsley; Dave Whitehead; Mills Wood Ltd; Janet Yewdale; Nigel Marland; Christopher Hamilton; Jeffrey Bates; Iain Ashworth; Roger Halstead; Steve Deakin; Nick Henry; Interior Door

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Five Alive's sister lottery, Club Cash, costs a minimum £1 a week to join, but you can have as many entries as you wish. The main prize in this scheme is £300 weekly, with a second prize of £100 and five runners-up prizes of £10 each, plus jackpot prizes at the end of each month.

To join either lottery, or merely to seek more information, please ring the Roughyeds office on 0161 628 3677, open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. ligaments in a knee.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS - AND TERRIFIC VALUE FOR MONEY

By Nigel Marland
(Editor of the Oldham
match-day magazine)

**OLDHAM Rugby League
Club supporters will get the
best of both worlds in
match-day reading material
at all Boundary Park home
games this season.**

On sale at every Northern Rail Cup game and every match in the Co-operative Championships (two divisions) will be a centrally-produced 48-page 'Game On' magazine covering each club and each match and priced at £2 across the board.

Roughyeds, however, will give fans their usual and traditional mix of club news, views and pictures by adding to 'Game On' at every home match an eight-page full-colour A4 size glossy wrap-around full of material which will be exclusive to the Oldham club.

The complete package - 'Game On' PLUS the Oldham eight-pager - will be sold by Roughyeds at the bargain price of £2.50.

Like all clubs we are required to sell 'Game On' and that's fine because we know it will be a good read and it will give fans coverage of clubs and matches right across the Co-operative Championships board.

However, we didn't want to take the easy option and scrap our own programme which we believe has been a quality product over the last few years.

Trying to sell two separate programmes

at the same game was a non-starter so we have gone for an eight-page Oldham special which will be sold with 'Game On' inside it. Collectively, they will provide the reader with 56 pages, and all for £2.50 which we believe will be fantastic value for money.

If it proves popular we will look to expand our eight pages of Oldham wrap-around, but if it fails as an all-embracing package we will have to take the easy option and just sell 'Game On' at £2.

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OUR NEW STRIP

CHAIRMAN Bill Quinn says the club is listening to its fans and that was one of the reasons why the new home shirt (pictured) is red and white hoops.

There has been a clamour for a return to the club's traditional colours and design for some time and the new strip for 2009 has already been well received by supporters.

"The new kit shows we have listened and we will continue to do so," said Bill. "We know people were asking for hoops and that is what we have provided. Hopefully, plenty of people will enjoy it."



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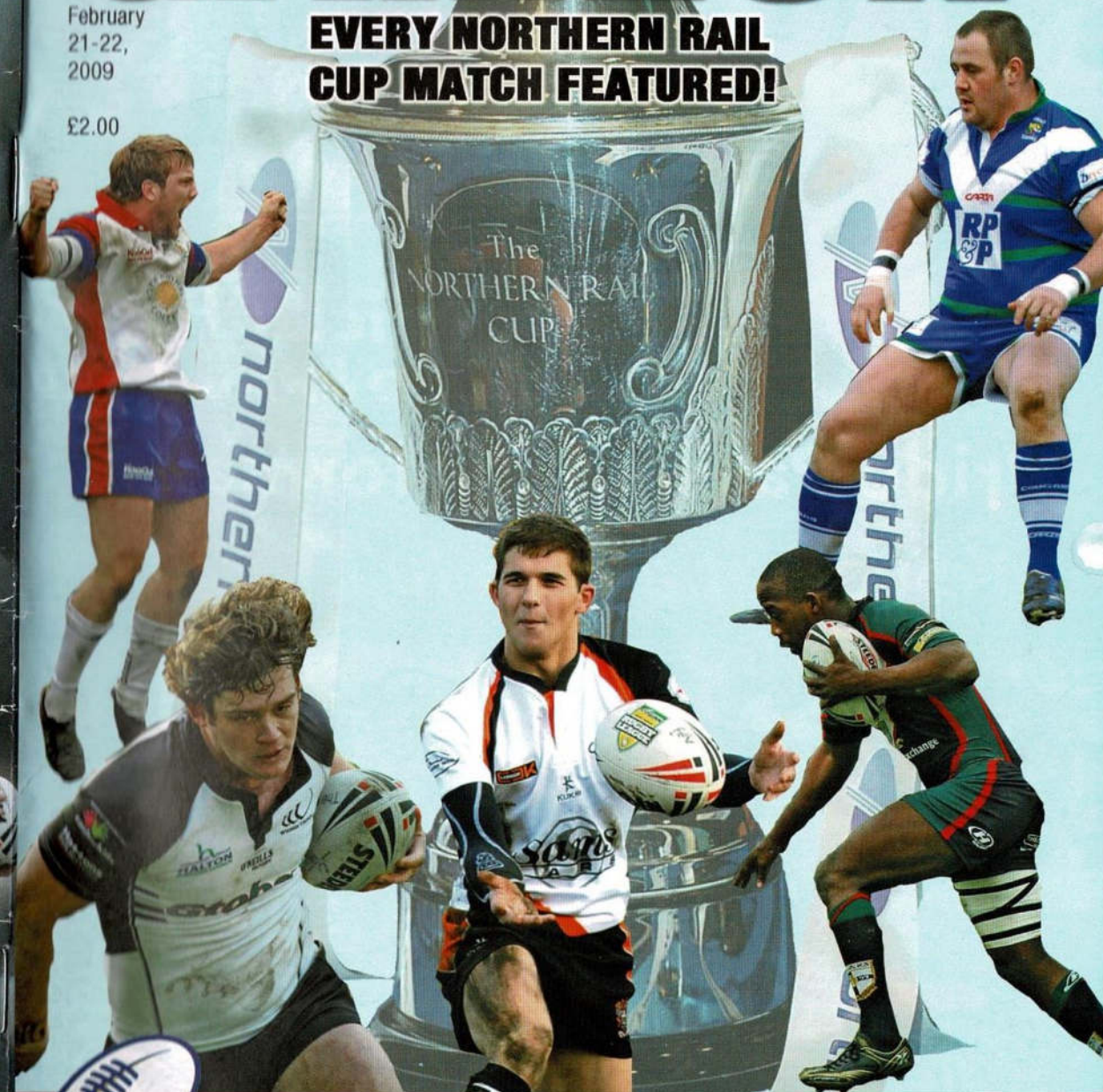
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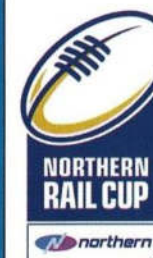
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The Sheffield Community
 Team In Action



**Ex-Castleford and
 Gateshead boss Dave
 Woods goes Off
 Message and talks
 about the mess with the
 visa situation.. .p9**

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 Keighley – coach Baz
 helps a good friend
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 p40/41**



**The snow didn't stop Workington travelling down to
 Fartown for this game nearly 50 years ago ... p11**



Garry Green in action for Batley against Dewsbury last season. The Aussie is wanted by York but does not meet the new criteria set down



NO ENTRY

The trouble surrounding visa applications is the issue that dominated the early season. **GAME ON** asked some of the coaches for their views

WHATEVER your view on overseas players in British rugby league, this winter has proved it's far from a black and white issue.

News that Aussies and Kiwis were no longer to be allowed to play in the UK on working holiday visas will have been met positively by many fans still upset by England's shoddy performance at the World Cup and bemused by a general feeling that our game is being overrun by imports.

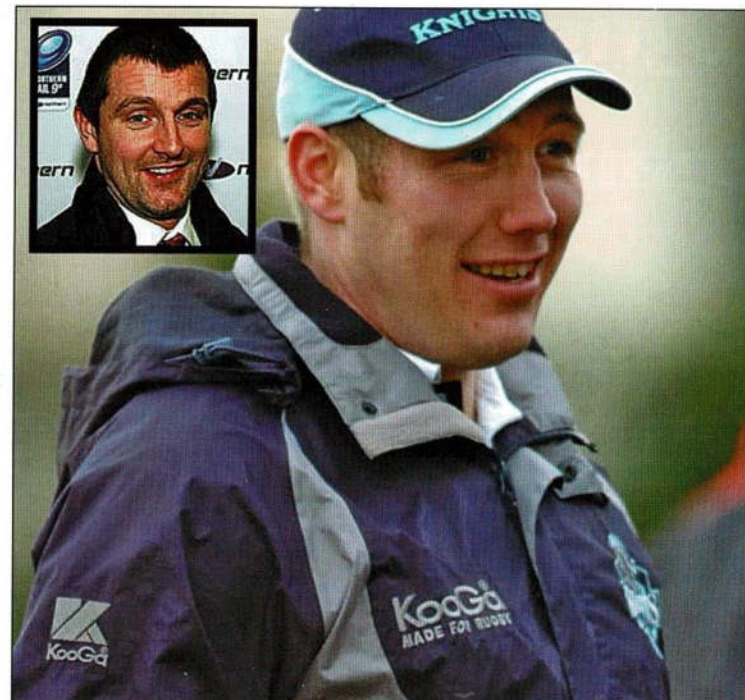
But, for coaches and chief execs at clubs across the co-operative Championships, the sudden tightening of visa regulations – following a Home Office ruling late last year – has caused sheer chaos.

For the record, players can now only play professional RL in the UK if they obtain a work permit. That means meeting certain entry criteria such as having played enough games in the NRL or having taken part in the World Cup (or alternatively having a British or EU passport).

But the matter is complicated by the fact that the RFL can grant special dispensation on an individual basis to players who don't meet that criteria, and that's where this issue really gets thorny – because what qualifies an individual to be 'worthy' of this special dispensation?

One man who believes the RFL has the balance wrong is York City Knights player-coach Paul March, who is currently battling to save his new signing Garry Green's professional career.

Australian-born Green, signed from Batley in the off-season, does not meet the criteria to be allowed to play professional sport in the UK. He is, however, a resident in the



Knights coach Paul March and (inset) his Skolars counterpart Callum Irving

UK, a business owner and therefore a British tax payer.

"He has no intention of moving back to Australia, so all we are doing is preventing someone from playing the game we all love," said March, who believes such emotional factors should have a greater bearing on the RFL's decision-making process – a view he hopes will be shared by an independent appeal panel in the coming weeks.

"The decision has really had an effect on Garry," he said. "He's been ill over the last couple of weeks with stress because he's been worrying about what's happening. This is a massive issue for the club and for him."

"I think it's right that people who are looking to come over and don't meet the criteria are turned away, but I don't think it's right to deny people who have been over here already and have been a part of our competition over the past few years."

"Dan Russell, for example, made a massive impact for Gateshead last year. One minute he's playing a big part in the game and the next he's being sent home. Things like that make a mockery of the situation."

"I think we need to take into account emotional factors like this a lot more. I'll use Brendan Rawlins at Keighley as an example. Keighley knew Brendan didn't meet the criteria to get a visa, but he has been over here for a few years now and doing a lot of good work in the community as well as on the field. That's why he's been given special dispensation, and hopefully that will go for us on appeal in Garry's case too."

And March is far from alone in rueing the impact the ruling has had on certain individuals within 'the Greatest Game'.

"From an individual point of view, it's

disappointing for Dan Russell that he's prevented from playing," said Whitehaven boss Ged Stokes, who had moved to sign the Aussie pivot from Gateshead Thunder but has now had to replace him with EU passport holder Jamie Theroharous.

"Rugby league is a people's game and every decision you make has an impact on someone's life," he adds. "And whether or not overseas players harm the English game anyway, I don't know. I think there are benefits there from playing alongside better quality players."

Stokes also insists coaches aren't going about recruiting foreigners just for the sake of it. "You have to understand that coaches have to look overseas because there simply aren't the numbers in England in certain positions. We've got plenty of forwards, but ask any coach and they'll tell you there's a lack of numbers in the half backs and the centres."

"The problem is that Super League clubs tend to stockpile the best young players for themselves. What we need to do to make sure we have enough numbers is get towards Gary Hetherington's idea of forging close links between Super League and Championship clubs, so that top youngsters could gain more first team experience by playing in the Championship. That would be the perfect system."

"But until then, we just don't have enough players."

However, that's not the view of one coach – from perhaps a surprising club – who believes the tightening of the visa rules are very much in the interests of the sport.

"It's easier to recruit an Australian than it is to bring in a local player, because you can go about recruiting him by email, by looking him up online or getting footage

'He (Garry Green) has no intention of moving back to Australia, so all we are doing is preventing someone from playing the game we all love'

YORK COACH PAUL MARCH

from YouTube. But how many talented British players are we missing out on under our noses?" asks Callum Irving, coach of the London Skolars – often perceived to be one of the clubs to benefit greatly from such imports.

Whilst Irving lost two players – Rubert Jonker and Mario Du Toit – to the changes, he is proud to have fielded 15 British players against Leigh last week, albeit in a 74-6 defeat.

"How many Martin Offiahs are hiding away at clubs like Rosslyn Park?" he added.

"What I fear may happen is that coaches just look to bring in players who do meet the criteria for dispensation because they played in the World Cup, or else bring in Australians with European passports. I don't think that's the idea behind having these rulings in place."

"The problem is that it isn't clear what the Championships are fundamentally about. At the moment, we're stuck between it being a pathway to Super League and a competition that you want to win in its own right. You want to develop players, but you're also concerned about getting to a final in the next three years so you can apply for a place in Super League."

"I think if all clubs worked together then that wouldn't be a problem. We should model ourselves on the (American Football's) NFL, where they compete for three hours each Sunday but where they co-operate for the good of the whole sport the rest of the time. That's why a team like Green Bay can compete with a team like New York over there, because they work together for the good of the game."

"We've lost two good club men in Rubert and Mario because of these rules, but I think that for all the short term hits there could be some real long-term benefits for the game."

"We need to invest time and resources into looking for young local players, and clubs need to agree to give their coaches time to do that."

"The licensing system should mean less pressure on coaches and more time to bring young players through at all levels, but that isn't happening. I'm very lucky that I have a very patient and understanding chairman at the Skolars and more clubs need to be like that as well."

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the world according to **WILKO**

In the second instalment of 'The World According to Wilko' Jon gives his thoughts about his first game of the season and the opening round of fixtures in the Co-operative Championships. He also gives a 'bonjour' to Toulouse.

I played my first game of the season last weekend and it was great to get on the pitch for 80 minutes and see what my levels of fitness and concentration were like in a game situation.

You are always nervous ahead of the first game of the season and this was no different for me. It's important to anticipate for the season ahead and the first game always sends a signal out to the rest of the teams in the league.

It certainly wasn't easy for us, but there's a long season ahead and we were pleased to get the win.

I'm excited about the opening round of fixtures in the Co-operative Championships though.

This year the competition is as fierce as ever as some of the clubs feel they missed out on an engage Super League franchise and all the teams are levelling up and making for a very even and fair competition.

The first game of the season live on Sky features Widnes against new boys from across the Channel, Toulouse Olympique.

Widnes will be desperately disappointed they didn't get a franchise but I know the club and they will be seeing this as a chance to build for three years and apply the next time the franchises come up for renewal.

In my eyes they will be one of the top teams in the country, they've got a competitive team and I expect them to be front runners in the next few years and it's important they put in a good season this year from which to spring-board an assault on Super League in the next couple of years following.

This is true for all the teams as everyone now has a great opportunity to build a strong culture at their club as well as a strong team. Everyone is in the same boat and it's a case of grabbing the initiative.

It's great to welcome Toulouse into the English leagues, the second French team to join us with Catalan Dragons making a successful transition into the English game.

It will certainly be interesting to see how they get on in the first full season. It's great to see the game growing like this and we need to keep this development going. To have this first match of the season live on Sky is great and this season sees even more Championship games being broadcast live on Sky.

The first round of matches in the Championship sees some great clashes first up with Batley and Featherstone going head to head the highlight for me.

The following week live on Sky sees a match up that I will be watching with anticipation as two teams that I tip for success this season go head to head at the Shay. Thursday March 19 sees Halifax take on Widnes meaning that the Vikings' first two games of the season are live on Sky! That will be a mouth watering clash!

And so as Super League has already started and The Championships are beginning to build up a head of steam, I hope everyone is getting ready to cheer as loud as they possibly can for their team and for the greatness of the game we love.



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OFFMESSAGE

David Woods is the former coach of Gateshead and Castleford, leading them both to promotion. Here he gives his views on the great visa debate

THE recent change in regulations by the UK Borders Agency is having a significant impact on Rugby League clubs in this country, and especially those at Co-operative Championship level. It has affected a lot of clubs and some more so than others.

I feel that it was a decision that had to come for the good of the game of rugby league in the UK, but it came at a very bad time. Most clubs had already agreed contracts with players and some of the players had actually been training.

By bringing in this decision at the last minute, in November, meant clubs then had to release players and look for others, something that is very difficult to do and it can also be more costly to the club. It also leaves the player with a sour taste in his mouth because most would have had all their plans based around what they were doing with their lives.

My old club Gateshead had a few players rejected with two of them having played huge parts in our promotion from National League 2 to the Championship.

Dean Jamieson is a player with a lot of ability. He's played representative footy at Cronulla and also Premier League at the same club. He played in every game for us in the 2008 campaign, has an English girlfriend and worked to keep himself going. Lewis McPhail was another, he only missed one game for us and came through the strong St George junior system, yet both after being signed for the 2009 season have been told they are no longer eligible to play.

Other players have relocated and then told they aren't able to play which has meant many have gone back home or gone on to do some travelling.

Some players that haven't even arrived in the country have spent thousands of dollars to gain visas, they have quit jobs in Australia and New Zealand, given up their rental properties and have then been told, sorry, you can't come.

Who determines who is eligible, the Home Office that made the decision, but don't know rugby league, or the RFL who can overturn decisions on appeal?

The fairest and best thing that the RFL could have done was to allow the players that were already here, stay and play out this season, not allow any others to come in and be new registrations and then I'm sure all the clubs would have been happier.

As I've said this would have been the correct decision for the RFL to make and it would have given the clubs time to organise their recruitment policies for the future, plus the clubs, I'm sure would have appreciated the help of the governing body.

On another note, the Championship and Championship 1 leagues are going to be very toughly contested.

With no promotion or relegation into Super League clubs in the Championship will have to wait their turn and make sure they are competing to the highest level they can and win the Northern Rail Cup or the league.

There is still relegation to Championship One and with Toulouse given a lifeline by the RFL it makes it even tougher and more pressure on the coaches to ensure they are competitive and are winning games.

I'm sure that Widnes, Halifax, Whitehaven, Featherstone, Gateshead, Barrow and Leigh will be at the higher end of the table in the top division, with York who have recruited very well and playing some good footy.

Blackpool, under Martin Crompton with another season under his belt, Oldham, Dewsbury and Keighley will fight it out for the top places in Championship One.



Stankevitch takes over as McCormack leaves Widnes

Widnes Vikings parted company with Head Coach Steve McCormack on Monday morning.

In the interim, assistant coach John Stankevitch will take over in a caretaker capacity and he lead the side for Friday night's clash with Gateshead Thunder.

Vikings' Chief Executive Alex Bonney said: "Since joining the Club twelve months ago I cannot fail to be impressed with the work undertaken by Steve who almost single handedly built a team from scratch to reach the play offs.

"Prior to this he led the club to two Grand Finals and a Northern Rail Cup victory and this morning's decision was reached amicably."

Steve McCormack (pictured right) added: "It's a disappointing day but I have really enjoyed my time at Widnes.

"The club has suffered many ups and downs both on and off the field and I hope that eventually it achieves its goal of a return to the top flight competition."

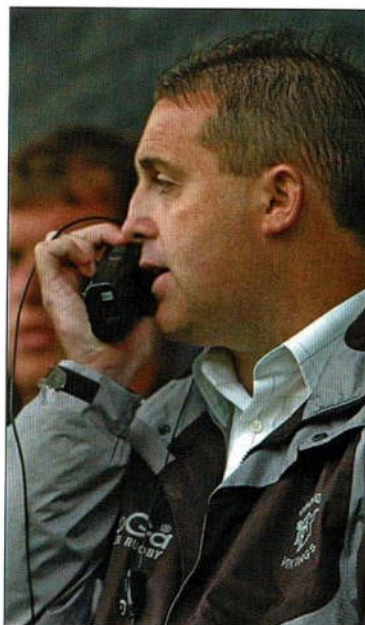
Benson confident

Oldham boss Tony Benson has confidence in his squad, and their brand of rugby, to win over the town's Boundary Park stay-aways.

"All I ask is that they come once, just once, to have a look at us," he told a rugby league forum in the town last Monday.

"If they don't like what they see, don't come again. I think they might be pleasantly surprised, though. When the boys go on the field they are representing the town of Oldham.

"That will be drilled into them. In



return I think they deserve the support of the people of Oldham."

The event was organised by the Oldham RLFC Players Association, which is 16 months old now and rapidly going from strength to strength with more new members and a constantly rising profile.

Mentoring Rams

Dewsbury Rams and Shaw Cross Sharks have launched a brand new initiative to develop local junior rugby league.

The Mentoring And Development (MAD) scheme is based on professional players becoming personally involved with junior player development at their local clubs. The aim is to expand the thinking and stimulus of our young players in an environment that hopefully will heighten their awareness through the involvement

of professional players.

The MAD scheme will incorporate individual positional coaching by professionals who play in a particular position the majority of the time whose knowledge of that position can be passed on to the junior players.

For example Kane Epati may coach a session specifically on playing as a winger; Pat Walker may take a session focussing on kicking etc.

Dewsbury Rams coach Warren Jowitt said: "It's a really good idea for professional clubs to link up with amateur clubs outside of the professional environment as that's where the future of the sport lies.

"Having our players at Dewsbury mentoring the Shaw Cross youngsters gives us the chance to watch the kids grow and develop into mature rugby league players.

"It's also very good for the juniors to have the players they aspire to be like, helping them develop their skills and giving them advice on how they play. For the game to go forward it is really important that all clubs have strong links with their local junior teams for the professional game to continue to grow."

Hook and at 'em

Ask Oldham's Kiwi boss Tony Benson how many hookers he would like in his squad and he is sure to reply: how many can I have? Bring 'em all on!

He began with Simeon Hoyle, Gary Sykes, Phil Joseph and Aussie Dave McKay. Sykes damaged a knee in a friendly at Leigh and has been out of action for a week or two. Hoyle is currently on leave with permission and McKay had to suddenly uproot and fly home for personal and family reasons.

To fill the void, in came former London Skolars man Stevie Gibbons, who made his debut off the bench in the superb 22-20 win at Widnes, but promptly damaged ligaments in a shoulder.

Then there was one!

PLAYER OF THE ROUND

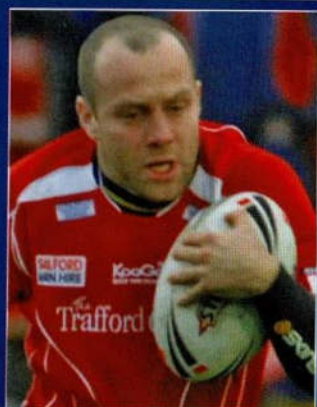
WEEK 2 –
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Andy Ballard – Oldham Roughyeds

SIGNED from Salford for this season, the goalkicking winger made a huge impact in his first competitive game for the Roughyeds, scoring all-bar four points as the Championship One side beat competition

favourites Widnes 22-20 on Sunday at the Stobart Stadium Halton.

Ballard kicked seven goals and crossed for one try as Tony Benson's side recorded a famous victory.



ALLOUR YESTERDAYS

CALLING ALL FANS!! Have you got a special RL picture from yesteryear? You can feature them on this page by emailing them to us at gameon@newspost.co.uk or sending them to Game On, 1 Oates Street, Dewsbury, WF13 1BB.



Snow problem!

WHEN Workington Town visited Huddersfield in 1960 the old Fartown pitch was ankle deep in snow. Pictured here is stand-off Don Lockwood in possession for Huddersfield. He also played for Batley and Dewsbury. The picture was sent in by Don's son Mark, long serving secretary of Birstall Victoria.

VOICEBOX

email your letters to:
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come on – tell it like it is!

Dear Sir,

As a staunch Widnes Vikings supporter, I am absolutely appalled and flabbergasted at the treatment of coach Steve McCormack.

The board, in my view, acted far too hastily in showing Steve the door after just one game of the new campaign.

I appreciate there is a lack of patience in modern sport but to part company with Steve so early begs the question; why allow him to assemble and oversee the squad in the off-season? It just doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

Everybody knows that stability is a prerequisite for clubs who want to compete in the top echelons of the league. After axing Steve, I'm not convinced my club is capable of challenging for honours.

As a fan of the club, I feel the board of Widnes owe our die-hard supporters a proper explanation as to why Steve was given the sack. Surely our fans deserve to know why they didn't believe in him?

How are the club supposed to build and plan for the future when we part company with Steve after one Northern Rail Cup match? There was only two points in the Oldham loss so it wasn't as if we got thrashed.

It shows a total lack of direction in chopping and changing the coach at this stage of the season. It is absolutely unacceptable and I won't be the only disillusioned Widnes supporter out there.

I just hope that our great sport isn't going to make a habit of getting rid of a coach at the first sign of trouble. Panic

dismissals are what happen in football and are the last thing rugby league needs.

Yours
Andy Clift, via email

Dear Sir,
We are writing to tell you how good your new programme is.

It is good to read about the other teams as well. We got our first programme at the Blackpool-Keighley game.

It is good to keep tabs on our old teams as we have moved to Blackpool so do not get to see the teams we used to watch much. We have no transport so cannot travel far. Keep up the good work.

Yours
Panthers fans John and Linda Cooper
Editor's note: Thank you very much.

Want to make sure you get every copy of Game On?

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ACTIONREPLAY

Leigh's Tony Stewart scores one of his side's 14 tries against Skolars



NORTHERN RAIL CUP
POOL TWO

Points feast at Whitehaven

Points were the order of the day as Pool Two finally kicked off Sunday. Most of the games were one-sided affairs but probably the best tie came at WHITEHAVEN where BATLEY played their part despite going down 52-30.

The Cumbrians stormed into a 40-12 lead before the Bulldogs threatened the comeback of all comebacks with 18 unanswered points.

But the re-introduction of hat-trick hero Andy Gorski steadied the ship and two late Haven tries sealed the victory.

LEIGH'S first game at their palatial Sports Village home became a rout as the hosts ran in 14 tries against SKOLARS on their way to a 74-6 success.

The plucky Londoners were hit by a whirlwind as the Centurions overcame the second-minute loss of prop Mike Morrison to bring up their biggest points total against professional opposition since the 74-0 success over the Skolars at the New River Stadium in 2006.

"I'm pleased we were on the right end of a 74-6 scoreline," said Leigh boss Neil Kelly. "All credit to my players, they certainly did the job in defence as well as with the ball."

There was a hat-trick of tries for Jamie Durbin while Steve Maden and Jamie Smith ran in two apiece.



Dewsbury's star man Liam Finn is stopped in his tracks by Swinton

DEWSBURY'S victory over SWINTON was nearly as emphatic, the Rams bulldozing the Lions 50-0.

A brilliant kicking display from Pat Walker - he notched 11 from 11 -

rounded off an excellent display with Liam Finn leading from the front for Warren Jowitt's side.

A powerful first-half display from FEATHERSTONE was just the job as they beat DONCASTER 32-6 at the Keepmoat.

Rovers were 22-0 up at half-time but the Dons came out fighting in the second half and had the better of things despite only scoring one try.

Featherstone coach Daryl Powell said: "It was tough but I was particularly pleased with the first-half performance when we controlled the game."

"But Doncaster were excellent in the second half and controlled much of it and made it hard for us."

YORK have not had much success up in WORKINGTON recently but ended that hoodoo with a 34-10 win.

Tom Haberecht touched down twice for the Knights, who had the game's outstanding player in Adam Mitchell.

Workington coach Dave Rotherham said: "We attacked well at the start of the game but we gifted the Knights too many points."

"I'm disappointed with the result but it's only game one and the new players will take time to gel."

Roberts inspired as Widnes stunned

NORTHERN RAIL CUP
POOL ONE

Dewsbury referee James Child came under fire from both sides as Championship One OLDHAM pulled off the first major shock of the Northern Rail Cup by winning at WIDNES 22-20 on Friday.

Match commissioner David Campbell was a busy man after a game in which the mercurial Bob Roberts rose to the occasion for the Roughyeds.

"There were some baffling decisions," said Vikings boss Steve McCormack. "And I could blame everyone and anyone, but I blame ourselves."

"We were not good enough in the first half and I wasn't happy with the second, but we didn't underestimate Oldham."

"We have worked hard for three months for that win," said Oldham coach Tony Benson. "We have a good mix and a great leader in Roberts, although we lost our way at times."

"I don't think there is much between full and part time as far as time spent training is concerned although we do have to go to work in the daytime."

Oldham fought back from 18-4 down to record a stunning win, Andy Ballard securing the victory with his fifth penalty. He also kicked two further goals and scored a try.

KEIGHLEY COUGARS stayed top on Sunday despite losing to BLACKPOOL, who claimed their first ever victory in the competition - 16-14.

A late try from Keiran Tucker and conversion from Johnny Leather gave the seashiders the win.

Blackpool coach Martin Crompton said: "Everybody's happy at the club right now. There's a good buzz about the place."

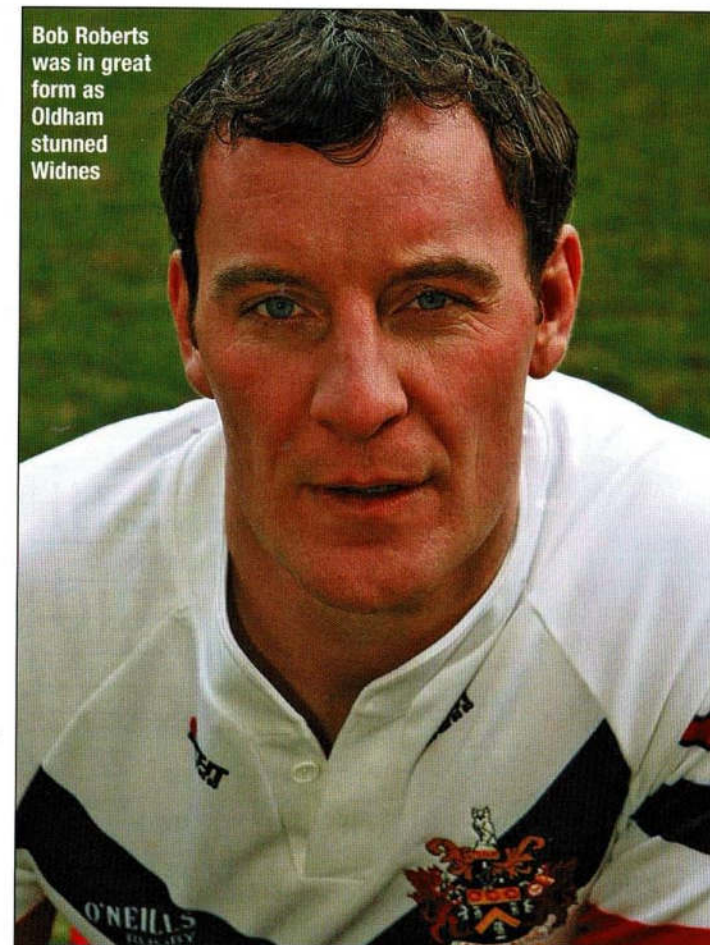
Keighley's narrow defeat gave them a bonus point to add to the three they gained from their 40-20 success over GATESHEAD, rearranged from the opening weekend.

A hat-trick by Jon Presley helped Keighley get their season off to the perfect start.

Gateshead responded well though and demolished SHEFFIELD in the second half on their way to a 44-18 victory on Sunday.

Thunder head coach Chris Hood was understandably delighted after the game: "It shows you what can happen when you stick to the game plan and show desire," he said. "After the loss at Keighley I asked for a response and after a couple of good training sessions felt we were going to get it."

Bob Roberts was in great form as Oldham stunned Widnes



Gateshead were only 16-12 ahead at half-time but, helped by a hat-trick of tries from Dylan Nash, dominated the clash in the second half.

Four days earlier Sheffield opened their season with a win, 38-16 over HUNSLET at a freezing Don Valley Stadium.

The Eagles produced an avalanche of second-half tries to claim the points and both coaches paid tribute to the way their players battled on in increasingly difficult conditions.

Eagles coach Mark Aston said: "The players deserve the credit - they were battered, they've got masses of scratches and are cut on their knees from the ground. But they didn't moan they just got on with it."

Hunslet are bottom of the pool as

they followed up that defeat with a 38-10 reverse at home to HALIFAX.

The hosts played gallantly and opened the scoring on a boggy surface before shipping seven tries to Halifax, including a Sean Penkywicz double.

Halifax coach Matt Calland said: "I thought we were rusty, our passing was wayward and timing terrible at times, but there was a big difference when Said (Tamghart) and Frank (Watene) came on."

BARROW are much fancied and they did their chances no harm with 54-12 thrashing of HORNETS RL.

The newly-formed Rochdale club fell apart in the second half, conceding 38 unanswered points. Liam Finch and Mike Backhouse both crossed twice for the Cumbrians.



Batley v York

Sunday February 22nd, 2009. Kick off 2pm. MOUNT PLEASANT



BATLEY BULLDOGS

YORK CITY KNIGHTS

SPONSOR

Mavis, Mac and Jack

Fletcher family

Laurie and Andrew Grailey

Batley Rock and Roll

Batley Nash

The Benson family

Leyland Paints

Brian Hooley

George & Mary Gomersal

Study Centre

Gary Tingle & Lorraine

Norman Thewliss

Stanningley U-14s & U-17s

Mary Hughes

No. PLAYER

1 Ian Preece

2 Ben Feehan

3 Dale Cardoza

4 Danny Maun

5 Johnny Campbell

6 Mark Barlow

7 Paul Mennell

8 Byron Smith

9 Kris Lythe

10 Luke Stenchion

11 Kevin Crouthers

12 Mark Toohey

13 Ash Lindsay

14 John Gallagher

15 Anthony Henderson

16 Johnny Simpson

17 Craig Potter

18 Jermain McGilvary

19 George Flanagan

20 Dave Tootill

21 Nathan Armitage

22 Nat Browne

23 Chris Buttery

24 James Archibald

25 Damien Reid

26 Jamie Aitcheson

27 Darryl Cardiss

28 Danny Samuels

29 Jack Watson

No. TODAY'S TEAM No.

Full back

Right Wing

Right Centre

Left Centre

Left Wing

Stand off

Scrum half

Prop

Hooker

Prop

2nd row

2nd row

Loose forward

Interchange

SCORERS

Tries

Conv

Pens

DGs

No. PLAYER

1 Danny Ratcliffe

2 Steve Lewis

3 John Oakes

4 Dave Clayton

5 Johnny Waldron

6 Adam Mitchell

7 Paul March

8 Danny Ekis

9 Paul Hughes

10 Adam Sullivan

11 Rob Kelly

12 Tom Haberecht

13 Richard Knight

14 Tom Hodgson

15 Chris Clough

16 Jordan Ross

17 Scott Woodcock

18 Steve Grundy

19 Kris Peacock

20 Adam Jones

21 Dave March

22 Tom Stancliffe

23 Adam Endersby

24 David Leeke

25 Garry Green

26 Danny Grimshaw

27 Luke Watling

28 Wayne McHugh

29 Mark Applegarth

30 Mike Mitchell

SPONSOR

The Raylor Centre

Jinnah Group

Rodney Gee

Team Electric Services

James Dixon

Smith Wilson

Delta Training & Consulting

Stabler International

Ken Walker & Co Accounting

Pam & Martin Calvert

Cue Ball Snooker Club

Sheard Packaging

Chris Hearld

British Thornton

Evolution Tattoo Studio

Yorkshire Building Society

Claire & Steve Harbron

D & M Building & Paving

Julie's Bakery

Balfour Beatty

Acupuncture For Health

Brian Watson

HC Engineering

Monk Bar Model Shop

Laura Dixon

Mrs Watson

COACH: PAUL MARCH

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWLWL-W

LAST SIX AWAY: LLWWL-W

TRIES (2008): Lee Mapals 18

GOALS: Adam Mitchell 51

DGs: None

MAN TO WATCH: Tom Haberecht

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: M.Dawber

Touch: C.Hancock, L.Todd

Fourth Official: M.Hague

BENNETT'S BET

'Bulldogs need to bounce back at home - Batley by 4'



KERRINTERIORS

from Concept to Completion



CLUBCALL

Batley v York

Defence needs work but we can turn it around

As we speak I do not know our Doncaster result but to score 30 points away at Whitehaven and lose is disappointing. Clearly defence is the issue but a couple of things didn't go our way, with tries from forward passes and a try when we had two men injured meaning we did not always get the rub of the green.

I am still confident we can improve and qualify for the quarter-finals as a win at Whitehaven was not a result we were banking on and I fancy our chances of beating them in the league.

The weather has caused problems so far with calls to put the season back a month to try to avoid the worst of the weather. If we do our Boxing Day game will be farcical, as we may have only just started training. Let's monitor the climate for a couple of years at least before making that decision.

I read Danny Lockwood in League Weekly regarding overseas players and I

By Kevin Nicholas Batley chairman

agree totally that the government seem to be reducing our overseas players for us with new visa rules, as despite promises to reduce quotas clubs are then trying to bend the rules. So we as a club support the position to reduce overseas players to help home grown players and our international strength. The government therefore in our view seem to be doing something right.

Off the field and our bid for funding to build a function suite has progressed and we have been told by the RFL they support our project 'in principle' but we now need to supply more information as they think we have under priced the job. Yes that is under priced not over priced. We think in some ways they are right, but I can personally guarantee the function suite will be completed for our price

quoted of £400,000 or I will personally make up the shortfall, so you can be sure there will be no shortfall! We will gather the documentation they want over the next few weeks and hopefully we can get on with it.

This week is the last call for the Toulouse trip so if you are interested please let us know now or it will be too late. Also there are a few players left to sponsor at £200 each, so let's see if we can achieve full squad sponsorship in the next week.

Today we welcome York who got off to a good start against Workington so they look like being a strong team in their division, so watch out Dewsbury. I hope Roger, their chairman who stood down at the end of last season, is here as his heart was in the club and he was one of the gentlemen of the rugby league, a bit like myself did I hear you say? No, well never mind. Enjoy the game anyway.

We're small in number but big in character

We will be looking to get our NRC campaign on track this week following our tough trip up to Whitehaven.

There were no surprises from them - it is always a hard place to go and come away with anything.

In my opinion they will be there or thereabouts at the end of the competition, as they have been for the past few seasons.

However, I was pleased with the players' commitment in the second half, and the way they got themselves back into the game at 40-30, showing some character.

We could even have nicked the game at that stage but too many penalties and too many defensive frailties in the first half ended up costing us the game. I don't have the biggest of squads in the division and our numbers were stretched a bit last week.

However, things are improving and I am looking forward to getting our injured players back pretty soon.

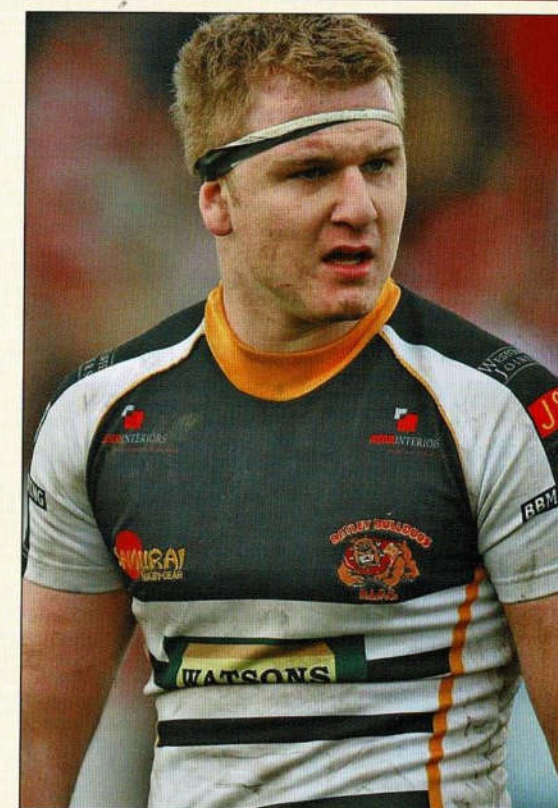
Mennell, Lythe and Cardoza are not too far away and will make a big difference to us, and Byron Smith should be back from honeymoon in time for the Dewsbury game.

Nathan Armitage is free to play after his suspension, and I'm sure once we get back to a full compliment of players we will start to see a further improvement.

This week we take on York who have signed pretty well in the off season, and had a great win up at Workington last week.

Paul March is a young, up and coming coach with a great track record as a player, and together with James Ratcliffe will have their side well prepared for today's game.

We must ensure we are fully prepared ourselves if we are to



Nathan Armitage is back in contention for a place

progress in the competition.

With only four qualifying from our group it will be really tight at the end of the qualifying period.

A big thanks to those sup-

porters who braved the trip to Whitehaven last week - get behind the boys today and help us get the win we need.

Gary Thornton

Match sponsor: Impress Sports



Halifax v Barrow



Sunday February 22, 2009. Kick off 3pm. THE SHAY STADIUM

HALIFAX RLFC

BARROW RAIDERS

SPONSOR

Vision Express Halifax Ltd
Chadwick Lawrence
Chadwick Lawrence

Roger & Sue Harvey

Riley & Co Accountants
Matthew Walker
Windsor Yarns

Complete Building Materials

Complete Building Materials

Chadwick Lawrence

Howard Posner

No. PLAYER

- 1 Miles Greenwood
- 2 Lee Paterson
- 3 Jon Goddard
- 4 Shad Royston
- 5 James Haley
- 6 Dwayne Barker
- 7 Ben Black
- 8 Matt James
- 9 Sean Penkywicz
- 10 Dana Wilson
- 11 Dave Larder
- 12 Paul Smith
- 13 Bob Beswick
- 14 Mark Gleeson
- 15 Mark Roberts
- 16 Said Tamghart
- 17 Frank Watene
- 18 Andy Bowman
- 19 Mick Govin
- 20 Graham Charlesworth
- 21 Neil Cherryholme
- 22 David Wrench
- 23 Rob Worrincy
- 24 Gareth Moore

No. TODAY'S TEAM No.

Full back	
Right Wing	
Right Centre	
Left Centre	
Left Wing	
Stand off	
Scrum half	
Prop	
Hooker	
Prop	
2nd row	
2nd row	
Loose forward	
Interchange	

SCORERS

Tries
Conv
Pens
DGs

COACH: MATT CALLAND

LAST SIX RESULTS: WLWW-W

LAST SIX HOME: WDLWL (2008)

TRIES (2008): Shad Royston 23

GOALS: Graham Holroyd 156

DGs: None

MAN TO WATCH: Sean Penkywicz

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: J.Child
Touch: S.Moss, A.Sweet
Fourth Official: J.Downham

BENNETT'S BET

'Fax look imposing at The Shay -
Halifax by 16'

COACH: DAVE CLARK

LAST SIX RESULTS: LLWW-L

LAST SIX AWAY: LLLWL-W

TRIES (2008): James Nixon 35

GOALS: Darren Holt 99

DGs: Darren Holt 6

MAN TO WATCH: Mike Backhouse

EVENING Courier
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building materials Ltd

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Windsor Yarns
KooGa
MADE FOR RUGBY

HALIFAX
HALIFAX HOME INSURANCE

CLUBCALL

Halifax v Barrow

It will be tough... we are playing catch up



GOOD afternoon everyone.

I'd like to start by welcoming the players and coaching staff of Barrow to the Shay for this afternoon's Northern Rail Cup game.

They had a great season in National League Two last year and I am sure they will want to prove themselves a force to be reckoned with in the Championship this year.

They're well coached, they've bought well over the winter and we're anticipating a very tough game.

For us, last week's win at Hunslet finally ended a couple of frustrating weeks which saw the game against Blackpool called off on a couple of occasions because of the weather. The snow also made it very difficult for us to train properly, which I am sure contributed to the performance we produced against Hunslet.

We looked really rusty and some of the passing was pretty wayward. We struggled to get any cohesion and set up play and that's something we need to fix up pretty quickly. As I said in the Press, I think we are probably two or three weeks behind schedule now and it will take us a couple

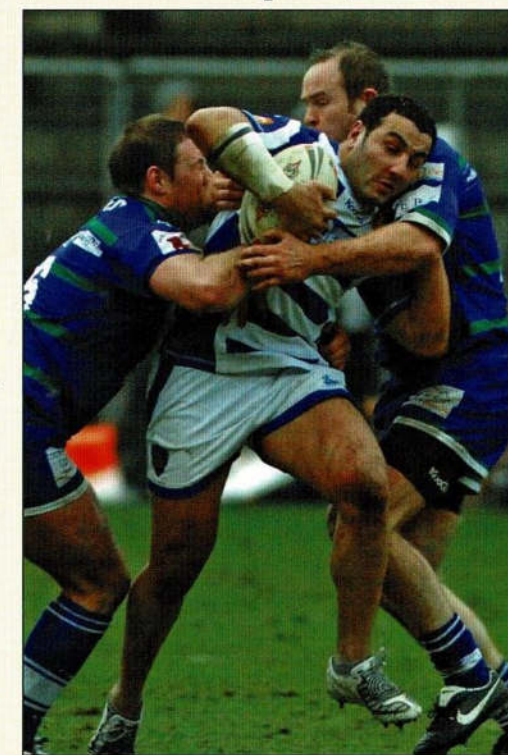
of weeks to get back on track.

Having said that, I am expecting to see a significant improvement now after a great week training in Spain. We've worked really hard with the ball in hand and I am sure people will see the benefits from that, both today and over the course of the season.

One aspect of the game I was particularly pleased with at Hunslet was our front row. Said Tamghart and Frank Watene made a big difference when they went on to the field.

Frank is looking fitter than ever. He's certainly in much better physical condition than he was last year. He went well against Harlequins in our last warm up game and he carried that on last weekend. Said lifts the line speed, lifts the aggression and they complement each other pretty well.

With Dana Wilson playing again, Matt James to hopefully come in today after illness and Neil Cherryholme and David Wrench in the mix too, there is plenty of competition for those places.



Matt Calland Prop Said Tamghart made a big difference against Hunslet

Two clubs expecting big things this year

There seems to be much in common between Halifax RLFC and Barrow Raiders at this early stage of the season.

Both clubs 'lost' their season opening games to the weather and both clubs then secured big away wins against Championship One opposition in the second round of the Northern Rail Cup group phase.

But, perhaps, the biggest common feature is the optimism with which the clubs start the season.

Barrow have recruited well to what was an outstanding team promoted automatically from last year's Co-operative National Two.

They must expect to be 'in the mix' when it comes to end of season honours. Being 'in the mix' is the least we, at Halifax, expect from the present squad.

We believe they are well capable of

Halifax chairman
Michael Steele

securing a 'Super League Point' and with good fortune on the injury front we hope for silverware.

So at this early stage of the season, today's match has particular importance. The loser may struggle to reach the knock-out stages of the Northern Rail Cup, the winner will still have every prospect of doing so.

Because of the postponement this is a belated opportunity for the Halifax fans to welcome those of our new recruits who get the nod from Matt Calland. They have all settled in, well, and the team spirit in the camp is second to none. I am sure you will enjoy seeing them play.

Many of the Halifax fans reading this piece will have attended the season

launch function a couple of weeks ago. If you didn't, you missed an outstanding 'do'.

As well as being an outstanding social evening enjoyed by fans, players and their families, this event raised more than £3,000 for the club.

My thanks to Ian Croad, who conceived and organised the event, and to our sponsors, particularly ATM Events, who 'dressed' The Venue at Bowers Mill to give the Las Vegas Theme. Thanks are also due to Complete Cuisine, now our regular match-day caterers for a superb meal.

If you haven't tried the new Match-day Hospitality experience in the Shay Suite, you've missed a treat.

Book soon, or you won't get the opportunity because demand is sure to rise as the story of a very special day at 'the rugby' gets round.



Keighley v Hunslet



Sunday February 22, 2009. Kick off 3pm. COUGAR PARK

KEIGHLEY COUGARS

HUNSLET HAWKS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Frank Atkins	1 George Raynor
Dolphin Stairlifts	2 Sam Gardner
The Clarksons	3 Dan Potter
Mr & Mrs Glover	4 Oliver Pursglove
J&M Fisher	5 Gavin Duffy
Joyce Barret Hairdressers	6 Jon Presley
Phoenix Trophies	7 Danny Jones
Mr & Mrs Phillips	8 Andy Shickell
D & M Procter	9 James Feather
Swaggs Hair Studio	10 Simon Bissell
Mr & Mrs Rothera	11 Will Cartledge
Phil Lund Motor Engineers	12 Neil Lowe
Mr & Mrs Rothera	13 Carl Hughes
Oddities Giftware	14 Jermaine Wray
Mr & Mrs Bardgett	15 Craig Brown
Cougar Pride Centre	16 Brendon Rawlins
J&M Fisher	17 Scott Law
M Croft & T Pycroft	18 Greg Nicholson
R Weir Property	19 Craig Fawcett
Maintenance	
Rex Procter & Partners	20 Daley Williams
Frank Atkins	21 Ryan Smith
Emily & Flynn Walker	22 Lee Mapals
	23 James Hutchinson
	24 Luke Sutcliffe
	25 Wayne Sutcliffe
Non-numbered: Dan Belcher,	
James Haythornthwaite, Tim Bibby,	
Fresh Radio	Tom Hall
Cougar Cubs	Ben Saga
	Jack Copperwaite

COACH: BARRY EATON

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWL-WL
LAST SIX HOME: WWWWW-W
TRIES (2008): Jon Presley 17
GOALS: Danny Jones 91
DGs: Craig Fawcett 1
MAN TO WATCH: Simon Bissell

No. TODAY'S TEAM No.
Full back
Right Wing
Right Centre
Left Centre
Left Wing
Stand off
Scrum half
Prop
Hooker
Prop
2nd row
2nd row
Loose forward
Interchange

SCORERS

Tries
Conv
Pens
DGs

No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
1 Nathan Larvin	
2 Scott Childs	
3 Tom Sheldrake	
4 Michael Brown	Eric Simon
5 John Richardson	
6 Darren Robinson	Gary Martin-Selby Rd Tyres
7 Stuart Young	Adie & Ron Jinks
8 Joe Helme	Paul Gray
9 Richard Chapman	Kenny Sykes
10 Ben Lawton	Phil Ogg
11 Joe Howey	
12 Jason Hart	Eric Simon
13 Mark McKinley	Dennis/Hannah Butterfield
14 Chris Redfearn	
15 Andy Robinson	
16 Mark Moxon	
17 Steve Brook	
18 Ayden Faal	
19 Ben Walkin	
20 Antony Thewliss	
21 Dan Cook	
22 Scott Watson	
23 Jonny Wainhouse	
24 Charlie Wabo	Margaret Gibbon
25 Michael Mark	Phil Ogg
26 Nico Slain	Paul Gray
27 Gareth Firm	

COACH: GRAEME HALLAS

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: G.Hewer
Touch: T.Crashley, D.Tindall
Fourth Official: S.Williams

BENNETT'S BET

'Eaton's men to return to winning ways -
Keighley by 12'

LAST SIX RESULTS: LLLL-LL

LAST SIX AWAY: WWLLL-L

TRIES (2008): Richard Chapman 10

GOALS: Darren Robinson 38

DGs: Phil Hasty 3

MAN TO WATCH: John Richardson



We're with the Cougars!



CLUBCALL

Keighley v Hunslet



Touch of unknown from tough-looking Hawks

Welcome to our local neighbours from south Leeds for today's game in the Northern Rail Cup.

After some bad weather for a number of weeks it will be nice to get some better conditions as we approach March and hopefully no more postponements.

We had a great start to the cup with a good, solid victory at home against Gateshead but we let ourselves down last week at Blackpool with our performance and we are going to have to find a good level of consistency if we are to do as well as we expect this year.

I expect all the teams we will come up will be of similar quality. There is not a lot between us and it is the sides that can perform week in week out under pressure that will have success.

Which brings me on to today's opponents Hunslet.

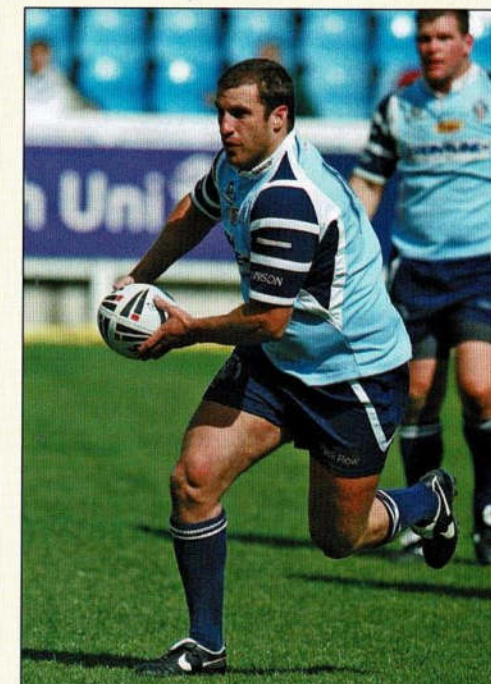
They have probably been the most active team outside Super League in the transfer market this year, bringing in virtually a new squad as well as keeping a nucleus of players from last year.

They have brought in three Papua New Guinea players from the World Cup team and also strengthened with some quality championship league players and on paper look a formidable outfit so today's game will be another very tough battle which we are all looking forward to.

Daley Williams will have had a full week's training under his belt and though today's game may have come a little too soon I'm sure he will be in contention for a shirt away to Barrow next week.

Carl Hughes is also making good progress and should resume full training in the next week or so and Brendon Rawlins is currently back in Australia awaiting his visa before returning hopefully within the next 2-3 weeks. Hopefully we will not pick up any serious injuries over the next few games and we should have some good competition for places with everybody having to find a good level of consistency to keep their place in the team.

Enjoy the game.



Baz Carl Hughes is not quite ready to return from injury

We have taken great strides off the pitch

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Northern Rail Cup qualifying game against Hunslet Hawks.

I would like to welcome Hunslet's Directors, players and fans to Cougar Park today and I hope you enjoy your day with us.

As the chairman mentioned in the last edition it has been an incredibly busy close season at the club and you can catch up with all the latest news on the Development Team further on in the magazine (p40/41) as they are featured this week on the community page.

Both our Development Manager and Foundation Manager joined the club in the close season and both Tom and Dean have done a fantastic job.

In the current economic climate it is hard for anyone to generate funds but we have been successful in achieving some great funding grants that will see the Cougar brand not just at Cougar Park but all around the district with the street academies introducing both the

HELEN CARTER General manager

club and the game to a far wider audience.

From a commercial point of view we have had a fantastic close season with The KC Club attracting more new members as people strive to find value for money initiatives. The members club held its first beer festival a few weeks ago which was a great success with the members enjoying our very own Cougar beer, The Cougar Challenger plus meeting the players and having a great time.

We are constantly attracting new member's benefits ensuring our KC Club really is the way to save money, help the club and also making vital donations to charity. Today we will be presenting our first donation to Sue Ryder Care - Manorlands Hospice.

On another commercial front we have been incredibly busy with our loyal

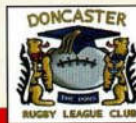
sponsors staying with us and supporting us again and I thank you all for all your help and support and we have been very successful attracting new sponsors to the club with today's match sponsors HB Clark coming on board.

I am also delighted to have Incommunities joining us for this season. They have not only sponsored our street academies but they have sponsored Freddie Cougar too. The close season saw Park Lane College Keighley become the clubs Foundation's primary partner and I am really looking forward to working with them this season. I would like to thank all our sponsors old and new for their support as they are a vital part of this thriving sport and business called rugby league.

Finally I would like to thank all of you, the fans, for staying loyal and true to us, season ticket sales have been fantastic as have sales of the replica shirts and I look forward to seeing you all in the at the game today.



Skolars v Dons



Sunday February 22, 2009. Kick off 3pm. NEW RIVER STADIUM

LONDON SKOLARS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
	1 Frank Reid
Lanes Coaches	2 Corey Simms
	3 Olly Fountain
Alan Greenwood	4 Jaymes Chapman
	5 Austen Aggrey
	6 Jermaine Coleman
	7 Paul Thorman
	8 Dave Ellison
	9 Gareth Honor
	10 Glenn Osborn
	11 Matt Thomas
	12 Dene Miller
Craig Ackroyd	13 Jaymes Chapman
	14 Graeme Spencer
	15 Bobby Wallace
	16 Tony Williams
	17 Chad Isles
	18 Orrioso Agbareh
	19 Leigh Tyler-Nissan
	20 Paul Hyder
	21 Ben Joyce
	22 Danny Burke
	23 Andre Vine
	24 Smokie Junior
	25 Jaroslaw Obuchowski
	26 Olu Iwenofu
	27 Keir Bell

COACH: CALLUM IRVING

LAST SIX RESULTS: LLLLL-L
 LAST SIX HOME: WWLLL (2008)
 TRIES (2008): Austen Aggrey, Corey Simms, Wayne Kerr 10
 GOALS: Paul Thorman 79
 DGs: Jamie Nowland 1
 MAN TO WATCH: Austen Aggrey

DONCASTER

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange	

SCORERS

Tries
 Conv
 Pens
 DGs

No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
1 -	
2 Dean Colton	Green Energy Solutions
3 Andreas Bauer	Geffery Broadhead
4 Shaun Leaf	Pipers Car Sales
5 Wayne Reittie	DISC (Dons Supporters)
6 Kyle Briggs	Active Workwear
7 Paul Handforth	Needhams Bikes
8 Michael Haley	APS Toolhire
9 Craig Cook	
10 Alex Benson	Jane Speakman
11 Peter Green	Everlast Waterproofing
12 Craig Lawton	Everlast Waterproofing
13 Josh Weeden	Andy Booker
14 Scott Jones	Martins Famous Fish Market
15 Mark Castle	
16 Nathan Freer	
17 Ross Divorty	DISC Dons Supporters
18 Craig Holt	RTN Motor Spares
19 Ryan Steen	
20 Michael Coady	
21 Garry Ellery	
22 Andy Speak	
23 Scott Smith	
24 Jake Bassinder	
28 Jamie Bovill	

TRIALISTS
 Albert Rounding
 Phil Crosby

COACH: TONY MILLER

Sponsored by Custom Property Developments

LAST SIX RESULTS: LWWWW-L
 LAST SIX AWAY: LLLWLW (2008)
 TRIES (2008): Luke Gale 30
 GOALS: Kyle Briggs 79
 DGs: Luke Gale 5
 MAN TO WATCH: Kyle Briggs

BENNETT'S BET
 'Tricky trip for young Dons line up -
 Doncaster by 4'

Our Community Sponsors



CLUBCALL

Skolars v Dons

Capital gains in spreading the word

By Andrew Jackson
 Media manager

WITH the scheduled Super League launch having to be moved to Huddersfield from London and both professional sides having to postpone home games because of heavy snow, some might consider the start of February to have been bad for league in the capital.

But there was an incredibly positive piece of news, which shows the strides the game has made in the last few years.

BBC London announced that they would be broadcasting a weekly, hour-long London rugby League programme throughout the whole of the engage Super League XIV and Co-operative Championship 1 seasons.

Now that might not seem significant to those of you

reading this in the areas where rugby league coverage on the radio has been excellent for many years. Growing up in the north west 20 years ago, I took that coverage for granted. In the south of England it was very different. Less than a decade ago, coverage was pretty minimal.

The advent of internet radio helped increase the level of coverage, with Quins' games being broadcast that way for about five years now.

That must have proved popular as the station started to gradually increase its coverage in its midweek sports shows. Even then, the mid-week coverage was limited to

the summer once the football season had begun to wind down.

The fact that BBC London are prepared to put a rugby league show on for a hour for seven months of the year must show that there is a demand for the programme that goes well beyond the fortnightly home support at New River and the Twickenham Stoop.

We compete for airtime and column inches with 14 footballs in the Premiership or the Football League, two county cricket sides and four rugby union sides that are either in the capital or have historic links to it. Getting such profile can only help increase awareness of the game across the capital.

Hopefully that awareness

will help produce interest to play and watch the game.

Awareness has been helped over the last decade with the growth of the junior game in the capital. That's helped bring the game to the attention to a far bigger potential audience. That junior participation has also led to a growth in the amateur game and that grassroots element is something that the BBC are keen to publicise.

"We want to show our commitment to what is a growing sport in London," said BBC London 94.9's Sport Editor Pete Stevens when announcing the launch. "It's not just about Harlequins Rugby League and London Skolars, the amateur game is equally - if not more - important."

Local lads will come good

Last weekend was one of massive disappointment for us as a group. We were up against a formidable outfit in a wonderful venue and were dominated throughout the game. Our boys worked as hard as they have all season but we lacked a cohesiveness which game time brings.

We will look to put all those things right this Sunday in our delayed first home game in the Northern Rail Cup.

For a few months we have been talking about giving opportunities to the locally based players and this is something we will absolutely stick to. Last weekend saw 15 British players take the field for the Skolars the other two being on long term visas due to them having settled in the country.

This is a great statement to make and shows where we are going as a club. However as a group of players and



Skolars in action at Leigh, who ran out 74-6 winners

coaches we now have to back up that commitment with our performances, we need to show ourselves and the wider community that a team made up of our local players cannot only compete but can succeed in this tough environment.

We look forward to the visit of Doncaster whom we had four games

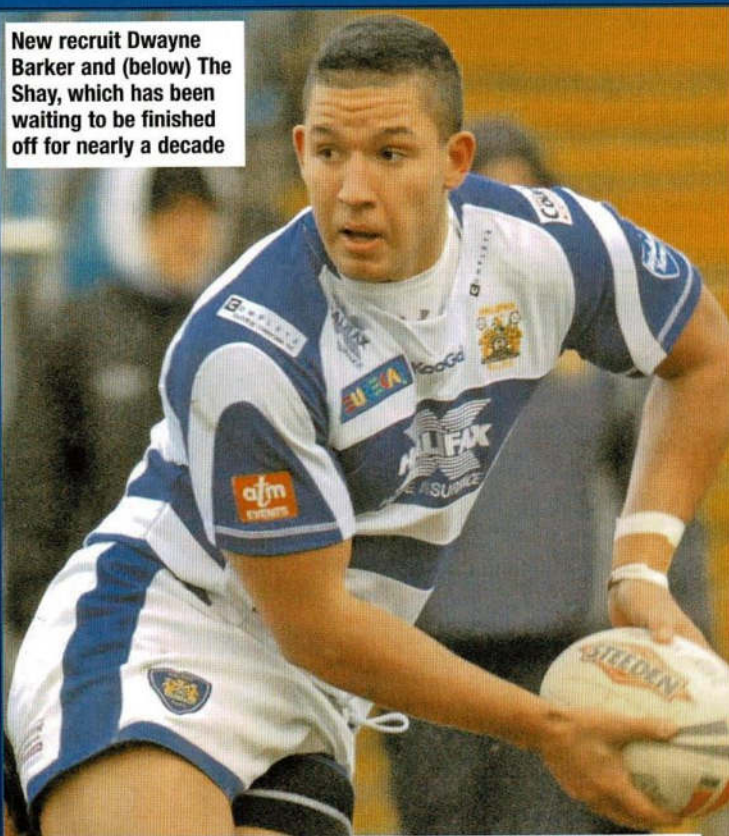
against last year. I know they have recruited well and will be a formidable test for our team this afternoon, but as a group we are confident we will compete with the Dons in every facet of the game.

Enjoy the game.

Callum Irving

Final pieces falling into place for Fax

New recruit Dwayne Barker and (below) The Shay, which has been waiting to be finished off for nearly a decade



Halifax are many people's favourites to win the Championship this season but off the pitch the club's push for Super League is finally taking shape as **GAME ON** discovered

CLUB FOCUS – Halifax RLFC

FANS visiting The Shay for Halifax's first home game of the season today might just notice a few differences.

That's because work has at last begun on redeveloping the stadium's run down East Stand, which was left half-finished back in 2001 due to a lack of funding.

Over the winter, developers moved in again after Calderdale Council chiefs gave the green light for a £4.5m redevelopment plan and, over the course of the season, the stand will be transformed from a terrible eyesore into a facility which the club hopes will be deemed fit for Super League.

"One of the main reasons we failed with our Super League licence application was the state of our ground," admits the club's chief executive Graham Clay.

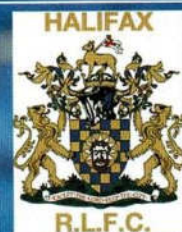
"We were really disappointed with the decision last summer, but we understand what we need to do in order to put forward a stronger case in 2011. It's still our ambition to get back into Super League, absolutely."

When finished, the East Stand will be able to accommodate 3,500 seats, taking the capacity of the stadium up to around 15,000 – a figure that comfortably surpasses the minimum Super League entry criteria of 12,000.

However, those criteria don't solely revolve around the size of a club's stadium, rather the facilities and match day experience it offers supporters. That's why reigning Challenge Cup holders St Helens are so desperate to move into their new stadium and why three-time Grand Final winners Bradford Bulls are so keen to push through with the renovations to the Grattan Stadium as part of the Odsal Sporting Village development.

But the new look Shay will offer a whole lot more to the club, the fans and their partners Leeds Met Carnegie, whose pledge to utilise the development as a college campus convinced councillors to press ahead with their plans.

The stand isn't expected to be fully refurbished until September, with only an outside chance that date could be brought forward (that being largely dependent on West Yorkshire enjoying a rare "good summer"). The likelihood is that the first competitive game of rugby league that it sees will be the first game of next season's Northern Rail Cup.



It's full steam ahead for Rob Worrincy, who joined Halifax from Sheffield

But, even if the real noticeable changes will only begin to appear around the summer time, as Clay remarks: "Fans here today should notice a bit of a difference already."

"The first few months of the redevelopment have been concentrated on getting the groundwork in place, and also on repairing some of the effects of being exposed to the elements over the past eight years."

"But people will see that the old Weavers club has been demolished, and there is also a hole appearing where a fantastic new glass-fronted restaurant will be situated."

"At the moment, we're able to accommodate 120 match day diners, but once the East Stand is completed that will be up to 400. The restaurant and balcony will offer a pretty unique view of the pitch, and it will be the biggest banqueting facility in the Calderdale area."

"On top of that there will be hospitality boxes, bars for the fans, and new dressing rooms and a gym for the players and coaching staff as well as a college campus and office space for the club."

That office space will come in pretty handy for Fax, who are currently stepping up their operations off the field ahead of

a second Super League licence application in 2011. So too will those top corporate facilities, in view of businesses hit hard by the credit crunch now being a little pickier about their investments.

"It'll just make us more attractive to businesses," says Clay, who reports that business is very much on the up for the club.

"In terms of sponsorship, our shirt is now worth the most it's ever been. The latest deal was worth more than any other in the club's history."

"We're also doing a lot of good work in the community; we have six players full time that get involved with that sort of thing across Calderdale. We've just started a new dance and fitness club, and we've linked up with the local children's museum Eureka! to launch a new 'Mission Nutrition' programme."

"At the moment, all our operations are dotted around the stadium in temporary offices and such, so it will be great to have the East Stand completed. It can be sort of a new hub for the club, a bit like the Carnegie Stand over at Headingley."

But even with a stadium fit for Super League, higher attendances, increased revenue streams and further community activity, Fax – last in the top flight in 2003

– still need to get one vital box ticked.

Performance on the field still counts, and those hoping for promotion to Super League from 2012 know they must have either won the Northern Rail Cup, or reached the co-operative Championship Grand Final over the next few years.

Under the guidance of coach Matt Calland and with the addition of a number of exciting new signings over the off-season – including Bob Beswick from Widnes, Dwayne Barker from Harlequins and Rob Worrincy from Sheffield – Clay is confident Fax are on the right track on that score too.

"We had a good season last year when we finished third, although we were disappointed to lose in the play-offs when we did," said Clay. "This year we want to do even better."

"In the likes of Sean Penkwyicz, Paul Smith and Bob Beswick, I think we have some Super League standard players and we're all excited about the potential the side has."

"We certainly want to be up there winning silverware this year."

"With the Northern Rail Cup and the co-operative Championship there are two trophies up for grabs, and we'd like to win them both."



27



Hornets v Blackpool



Sunday February 22nd, 2009. Kick off 3pm. SPOTLAND

HORNETS RUGBY LEAGUE

BLACKPOOL PANTHERS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Aztek Safety	1 Chris Giles
	2 John Gillam
Ray Walton	3 Mick Fogerty
Lion Springs	4 Casey Mayberry
	5 Andy Smith
Pauline Ainscough	6 Martin Ainscough
	7 -
Teresa Dunn	8 David Best
Sue Dave Butterworth	9 Janan Billings
Ian Coop	10 Paul Raftery
Ray & Maureen Manecki	11 David Cunliffe
Hartley Thomas Wright	12 Ian Sinfield
The Loyalists	13 Wayne Corcoran
Victor Mills	14 Sam Butterworth
The Loyalists	15 Martin McLoughlin
	16 Mark Brocklehurst
	17 Andy Isherwood
	18 -
	19 Craig Johnson
	20 Liam Bretherton
Ian Nield	21 Tommy Gallagher
	22 Martin Gambles
	23 Liam Grundy
	33 Dale Cunliffe

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange	

SCORERS

Tries
Conv
Pens
DGs

COACH: DARREN SHAW

LAST SIX RESULTS: WLWWL-L
LAST SIX HOME: WLWWL-L
TRIES (2008): Martin Ainscough 28
GOALS: Carl Sneyd 110
DGs: Jimmy Elston & Chris Hough 1
MAN TO WATCH: Wayne Corcoran

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: C. Leatherbarrow
Touch: K. Povah, C. Waywell
Fourth Official: T. Mahar

BENNETT'S BET

'Crompton's boys look a handy side this season - Blackpool by 6'

COACH: MARTIN CROMPTON

LAST SIX RESULTS: LLLWW-W
LAST SIX AWAY: LLLLLW (2008)
TRIES (2008): Johnny Leather 12
GOALS: Chris Forster 25
DGs: None
MAN TO WATCH: Mark McCully



**HORNETS
RL -
WE'RE
BACK AND
BUZZIN'!**

CLUBCALL

Hornets RL v Blackpool

Despite the scoreline I saw plenty of positives

WE could definitely take plenty of positives out of Sunday's defeat to Barrow, despite the final scoreline.

That was Barrow's fifth game including friendlies, and our first, and that was always going to cause problems for us.

But I was very happy with our first half, especially considering the fact that we had a 9-2 penalty count against us, and we only had the ball 14 times.

When we did put things together we managed to hurt them a bit and score back-to-back tries which was pleasing.

We did make some mistakes, and if we're still making those in three or four weeks' time then I won't be pleased.

But the effort and commitment was certainly there, and it's given us something to build on.

We were busted a fair bit in the second half, but there were no towels thrown in from our guys.

Our execution was off a bit, but that fine-tuning will come with game time over the next few weeks.

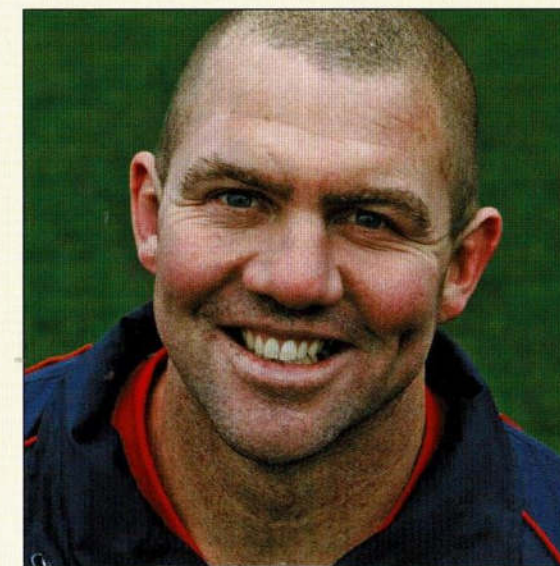
Today we take on Blackpool, and with seven or eight of our former players, and a couple of ours from their end, there will be plenty of connections out on the pitch.

They are a team that's going very well at the moment, and they had a great win against Keighley last weekend.

They will be fresh because they haven't played in midweek, and to be honest we could have done with that full week's preparation rather than having to play Oldham on Wednesday. But we'll take it as it comes.

Blackpool could emerge as dark horses in Championship One, along with Hunslet, who have signed some good players.

The bookies' favourites will be Oldham and Dewsbury, but you can't take your eyes off anyone.



Hornets RL coach Darren Shaw

Blackpool have had a really good start to the season, with that comes confidence and momentum, and I'm sure we're in for a tough game today.

Darren Shaw

Victory was ours despite the result

WHAT a week it's been

After a dramatic few weeks, we finally achieved step one on our journey by getting a team on the field for last week's home debut against Barrow Raiders.

It took a phenomenal effort from everyone involved to get to the start line and it's only fair to recognise those who got us there.

Firstly, to Darren, Ando and the players - their loyalty, hard work and commitment to the Hornets cause has been immense.

For 40 minutes last week we matched a Barrow side that has had three good warm-up games and built a very handy looking outfit. While we tired in the second half, the effort and passion was there for all to see.

And despite the scoreline, there were clear indications we've got a capable, hardworking, well organised unit that will do us proud in the Co-operative Championship One this year.

Jim Stringer, Rochdale Hornets RL Society trustee

Secondly, thanks go to our crew of volunteers, who paid their £12 for the privilege of getting our first match-day off the ground. From our lean, mean, programme-selling machine to our box-runners, everyone covered themselves in glory to ensure the day went off hitch-free.

We'd like to thank our Sponsor GDT Solutions (a free plug, there) who were willing guinea-pigs for the new package - they enjoyed themselves so much they're coming back for more later in the season (it's £650 + VAT per game so come and see one of us if you're interested).

Also in-line for commendations are RFL representative Steve Ferres whose independent, unbiased guidance/whip cracking has kept us on the rails over the last few weeks; our match-day back-office team, who keep a close eye on the nuts

and bolts of the numbers; Mark Reynolds who covers virtually every off-field job and keeps our on-field activities ticking over like a highly tuned machine; everyone who's sponsored a player (there are a few left - only £200 for the season); and the steering committee who have abandoned their social/family lives to embark on this incredible journey (we've found skills we didn't know we had).

And, finally, thanks to you. Thanks for coming back to give the lads your support, thanks for buying this programme (we sold out last week!), thanks for bearing with us and thanks in advance for buying a post-match raffle ticket.

Finally, we welcome Blackpool Panthers to Spotland today. They come with a side packed with very familiar names - their line-up last week featuring eight ex-Hornets!

Enjoy the game.



Swinton v Leigh



Sunday February 22nd, 2009. Kick off 3pm. SEDGLEY PARK

SWINTON LIONS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Elizabeth Taylor	1 Wayne English
Daniel Croston	2 Barry Hamilton
Premier Building	3 Dave Hull
Dave Roberts	4 Dean Gorton
Mike & Kath Tyldesley	5 Marlon Billy
Muscle & Fitness	6 Graham Holroyd
Junior Lions	7 Richard Hawkyard
Heartland M27 - Rob Dunford	8 Paul Southern
Junior Lions	9 Phil Wood
Egan Contractors Ltd	10 Bruce Johnson
Bill Sheppard, Warren Mottram	11 Mike Wainwright
Chris & Viv Tyldesley	12 Danny Heaton
Geoff Hewitt	13 Marty Moana
In Memory of Peter Walker	14 Craig Ashall
Lethbridge & Co	15 Gary Hulse
John Spellman	16 Alex McLurg
MS Lottery Services	17 Tommy Grundy
Ray Bowdler	18 Gareth Hayes
Burrow & Humphries	19 Neil Rigby
PhysiO2	20 Adam Bibey
Pauline Pearson	21 Rob Line
Moorside Autos	22 Darren Bamford
Lethbridge & Co.	23 Ben Williamson
Peter Kidd	24 Paul Crook
Mike & Sarah Dagnan	25 Matt Ashe
KM Leasing	26 Chris Frodsham
Barbara & Emma Cathcart,	27 Chris Tyrer
Sue Buckley & Joyce Shannon	
In memory of Frank Stanton	28 Dave Newton
Redsentinel	29 Carl Sneyd
Northline Business Consultants	30 Andy Saywell

COACH: PAUL KIDD

LAST SIX RESULTS: LWLLL-L
 LAST SIX HOME: LLLWL
 TRIES (2008): Marlon Billy 18
 GOALS: Richiw Hawkyard 47
 DGs: Liam McGovern 2
 MAN TO WATCH: Phil Wood

LEIGH CENTURIONS

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.	No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
	Full back		1 Stuart Donlan	LISA
	Right Wing		2 Dave Alstead	Professor & Mrs Dale
	Right Centre		3 Steve Maden	
	Left Centre		4 Tony Stewar	Hattons Solicitors
	Left Wing		5 Nick Stanton	
	Stand off		6 -	CS Tyres
	Scrum half		7 Ian Watson	
	Prop		8 Andy Hobson	O'Neils
	Hooker		9 Dave McConnell	Ask Platt
	Prop		10 Mike Morrison	Brick Design
	2nd row		11 Dave Armitstead	
	2nd row		12 James Taylor	Professor & Mrs Dale
	Loose forward		13 Aaron Smith	Leythers Messageboard
	Interchange		14 Ian Mort	Civil Solution
			15 Adam Higson	
			16 Chris Hill	
			17 -	
			18 Sam Reay	
			19 Adam Rudd	
			20 John Cookson	
			21 Dale Cuniffe	
			22 Jamie Smith	
			23 Martyn Ridyard	JR Taxis
			24 Dean Hatton	
			25 Adam Thomas	

SCORERS

Tries
 Conv
 Pens
 DGs

Not allocated a number: Andy Ainscough
 Danny Jackson, Danny Meekin James
 Richies, Lee Marsh, Macgraff Leulalai, Ryan
 Powell. Trialists: Brett Longstaffe, Jamie
 Durbin, Lee Wingfield

COACH: NEIL KELLY

LAST SIX RESULTS: WLWWL-W
 LAST SIX AWAY: WWLLLW (2008)
 TRIES (2008): Dave Alstead 16
 GOALS: Ian Watson 62
 DGs: Ian Watson 2
 MAN TO WATCH: Aaron Smith

BENNETT'S BET
 'Expect another difficult day for the Lions
 - Leigh by 30'

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: M.Thomson
 Touch: B.Armstrong, G.Wallace
 Fourth Official: G.Phillips

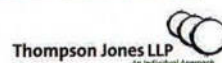
Salford City Council



Muscle & Fitness Gym

DMW PROPERTIES

NORTHLINE
 BUSINESS CONSULTANTS LTD



We're backing the Lions!

CLUBCALL

Swinton v Leigh

We've got no excuses and will put things right

GOOD afternoon and a warm welcome to Sedgley Park to Neil Kelly and his Leigh Centurions, for what we are expecting to be a very tough and testing Northern Rail Cup encounter from a quality, in form team.

With the disastrous start to our Northern Rail Cup campaign last week, the players are in determined mood not to let themselves or indeed the club down again.

There can be no excuses for the performances on the day and that said, the harsh lessons learned from last week's defeat have been taken to task on the training field and in preparation for the coming league campaign.

We have drawn a line under last week's display and are positively working towards playing the exciting style of rugby that this talented squad is entirely capable of.

We have a healthy competition for all positions all over the park and this can only work for us in a positive way. With no one guaranteed a run



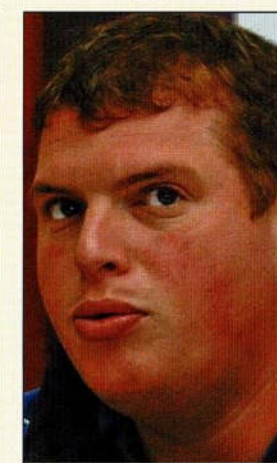
It was tough going for Swinton against Dewsbury on Sunday

out, any slip ups will open the door for the next man to stake his claim and cement his place on the teamsheet.

Leigh ran out easy winners - 74-6 against Championship 1 opposition, London Skolars - last week so I think will no doubt be feeling confident they will be able to replicate that kind of performance

against us. This makes it vitally important we turn up and compete in every area of the field. Anything short of this and it will be a long hard afternoon for everybody concerned.

That said, we are well aware of Leigh's capabilities and have worked hard to ensure we are able to compete in all areas of the playing



Lions coach Paul Kidd

field and also that of the need for Leigh to be aware of the dangers we have in attack too.

Hopefully the result will go in our favour, but a good solid performance from the 17 players that take to the field is vitally important to enable us to move on.

Enjoy what I hope should be a truly classic encounter.

Great to test ourselves against the best

Good afternoon and welcome to our visitors and friends from the Leigh Centurions.

The Northern Rail Cup format, not only lets us test ourselves against opposition from our own league but against opponents from a higher division too, so we may gauge exactly how far we have progressed and where we need to improve on to attain that standard of play.

Rugby League is a fantastic spectacle to watch, no matter what level it is played at.

Everybody strives to be the best they can and to compete at the highest levels possible. We as a club can only benefit from the learning curve from these run outs against more illustrious opposition.

As we look forward past these opening NRC fixtures to what we hope will be a successful league campaign, a few

dates for your diaries to keep in mind, full details of which will be announced closer to each event through this publication and of course our website:

- Sunday June 28: versus Hunslet - Charity Day
- Sunday July 19: versus Blackpool - Past Players Day
- Sunday August 2: versus York - Ladies Day
- Sunday August 23: versus London - Family Fun Day
- Friday October 9 - End of Season Dinner

Our thanks as always go to our spon-

sors for today's fixture and for their valuable support:

- Executive Match Sponsor - Salford City Council
- Associate Match Sponsor - Thompson & Jones Accountants Ltd
- Champagne Moment Sponsors - Premier Building Ltd.

We are determined to move forward, both on and off the field, and hope our successes, no matter how small, will encourage our supporters old and new to get behind the team whenever they can.

Enjoy the game.

John Kidd
 Chairman





Whitehaven v Workington



Sunday February 22nd, 2009. Kick off 3pm. RECREATION GROUND

WHITEHAVEN

No.	PLAYER
1	Craig Benson
2	Craig Calvert
3	Rob Jackson
4	Derry Ellbeck
5	Ade Adebisi
6	Carl Rudd
7	Leroy Joe
8	Marc Jackson
9	Graeme Mattinson
10	Karl Edmondson
11	Howard Hill
12	Spencer Miller
13	Scott McAvoy
14	Danny Barker
15	Ryan McDonald
16	Andy Gorski
17	John Walker
18	John Patrick
19	Kyle Amor
20	Marc Bainbridge
21	Taani Lavulavu
22	Matt Tunstall
23	Marc Shackley
24	Gregg McNally
25	Jamie Theoharous

COACH: GED STOKES

LAST SIX RESULTS: LWWWL-W

LAST SIX HOME: WWWWW-W

TRIES (2008): Ade Adebisi 22

GOALS: Carl Rudd 67

DGs: Marc Jackson, Tane Manihera 1

MAN TO WATCH: Andy Gorski

WORKINGTON TOWN

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange	

SCORERS

Tries

Conv

Pens

DGs

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: P. Brooke

Touch: P. Meadows, S. Johnson

Fourth Official: J. Callaghan

BENNETT'S BET

'Haven to have too much fire power in this derby - Whitehaven by 18

COACH: DAVE ROTHERAM

LAST SIX RESULTS: WLLLL-L

LAST SIX AWAY: LLWLLL (2008)

TRIES (2008): Shaun Lunt 17

GOALS: Carl Forber 100

DGs: Jay Duffy, Carl Forber 1

MAN TO WATCH: Carl Forber

CLUBCALL

Whitehaven v Workington



Dick Raaz
Chairman

Day when legends are born

WELCOME to the Whitehaven Recreation Grounds and this most important match – the annual derby with Workington.

The pride of West Cumbria is at stake and every player knows it. When I first started coming up to Cumbria I was shown the Whitehaven ground.

"This is where we cheer" my guide informed me. Little did I know how much that

simple statement reflects the spirit of the match, the league, the community and the county.

Win, lose or draw – reputations will rise and fall on today's match, legends will be born and told for years to come. The effort will be the most important component to a successful day and will be carried in the memories of

the players and the fans.

It is not the final score which will merely be recorded and left to the record keepers. So let us all do our bit to make it a successful day for our team.

A long season lies before us but there would be no sweeter start than a win over Workington.

Enjoy the day.

Bragging rights are so important

Derby games are made for the old clichés. Form goes out of the window, there are no favourites etc. The trouble is, they are all true.

Old timers tell me that one of the greatest derby games was the 0-0 draw under the lights at the Recreation Ground. A chap called Stuart Cummings was refereeing and turned down a last minute Whitehaven try – and he was from Kells! I wonder what became of him?

Certainly in my time as a player at Town these games were eagerly contested. Win the derby game and you could strut around Workington at least until the next one. One of the great things about the players in these local games is that there is no animosity after the game. That is in the nature of Rugby League players. They play hard but are the best of mates afterwards. Long may that continue.

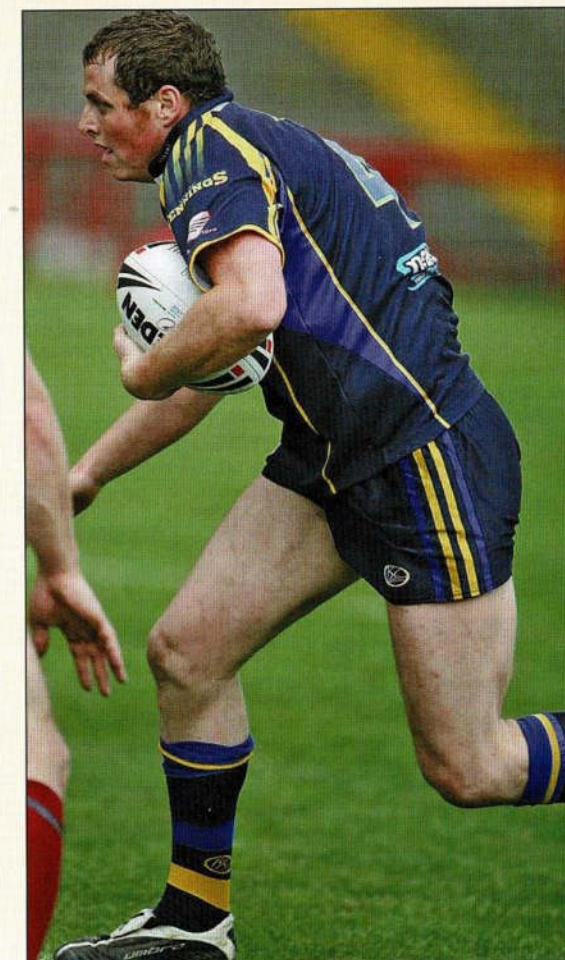
This Northern Rail Cup game comes as Whitehaven's third game in eight days. Not the sort of thing that I want to repeat. People have to realise just how much a game of Rugby League takes out of a young man. Recovery time is vital but there is little of it around at the moment. Let's hope for good weather and no postponements.

We are hoping to see Scott McAvoy back in the fold fairly soon and our strength in depth is sorely tested at times like this.

The future of the club lies primarily with locally produced youngsters and to that end it is good to see the likes of Kyle Amor coming along.

The making of a club like ours is our scholarship and academy system. I believe we have one of the best systems around and we must provide an environment where youngsters want to stay at Whitehaven and succeed.

As far as the Northern Rail Cup is concerned this is a very important competition for Whitehaven. Winning this Cup is one of the criteria for entry to Super League. There are a lot of other things to be done but winning this competition would be a huge boost. We should also remember that sponsors are the lifeblood



Scott McAvoy, who is expected back from injury soon

of our game. Without the support of organisations like Northern Rail there would be considerably less money around.

Finally, I have one or two personal reasons to want to win this game with Workington. I hope the crowd is a good one and they are royally entertained.

I also hope that the scoreboard operators are working overtime on the home score!

Ged Stokes



LLW Repository Ltd

We're supporting
Whitehaven
RLFC





Widnes v Thunder



Saturday February 21, 2009. Kick off 6pm. STOBART STADIUM

WIDNES VIKINGS

GATESHEAD THUNDER

SPONSOR

John Mather & his many sons!
Barbara Spence
Widnes Supporters Club
Widnes Supporters Club
Kath Filkin
VIQI
VIQI
Museum Visitors
R J Lewis
Widnes World
Swavesey Newsagents, Cambridge
Widnes Supporters Club
Robert Johnson
James Owen
Marcus Booth
The Dennett Family
Uncle Jack
Fraser Family
Halton Borough Council
Leam Fox

Lesley & Reg Warner
West Bank Bears ARLFC
Riverside College Sports Dep
Mullally's Barbers
North West Contracts

No. PLAYER

1 Loz Wildbore
2 Dean Gaskell
3 Richard Varkulis
4 Toa Kohe Love
5 Danny Mills
6 Anthony Thackeray
7 James Webster
8 Iain Morrison
9 Mark Smith
10 Jim Gannon
11 Lee Doran
12 Richard Fletcher
13 Lee Paterson
14 John Duffy
15 Tim Hartley
16 Gavin Dodd
17 Ben Kavanagh
18 Matt Strong
19 Michael Ostick
20 Sam Thompson
21 Scott Yates
22 Paddy Flynn
23 Shane Grady
24 Josh Simm
25 Anthony Mullally
26 Steve Bannister
27 Brett Robinson

No. TODAY'S TEAM No.

Full back	
Right Wing	
Right Centre	
Left Centre	
Left Wing	
Stand off	
Scrum half	
Prop	
Hooker	
Prop	
2nd row	
2nd row	
Loose forward	
Interchange	

SCORERS

Tries
Conv
Pens
DGs

No. PLAYER

1 Ben McAlpine
2 Danny Wilson
3 Kevin Neighbour
4 Dylan Nash
5 Stewart Sanderson
6 Neil Thorman
7 Luke Branighan
8 Jason Payne
9 Andrew Henderson
10 Tabua Cakacaka
11 -
12 Michael Knowles
13 -
14 Ryan Clarke
15 Matt Barron
16 Puna Rasaubale
17 Chris Parker
18 Robin Peers
19 -
20 Dave Vernon
21 Ryan McBride
22 Jamie Russo
23 Jonny Scott
24 -
25 -
26 Crawford Matthews
27 Scott Woods
28 Mark Dack
29 Rhys Clarke
30 Stephen Welton

SPONSOR

Accent Magazine
& North East Times

Lady Cross Quarries

James & Matthew Wells

Rob & Jackie Gardner

The Schooner Inn

COACH: CHRIS HOOD

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: C.Halloran
Touch: G.Stokes, S.Barrie
Fourth Official: T.Selby

BENNETT'S BET

'Expect a reaction from wounded Vikings
- Widnes by 8'

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWW-LW

LAST SIX AWAY: WWWW-L

TRIES (2008): Stewart Sanderson &

Kevin Neighbour 20

GOALS: Dan Russell 128

DGs: Dan Russell 1

MAN TO WATCH: Andrew Henderson



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE VIKINGS



Hattons
SOLICITORS



Stobart



CLUBCALL

Widnes v Gateshead

Monday's events were huge shock

Monday's decision by Steve O'Connor to replace Steve McCormack came as a shock to us all and to me in particular. I've worked with Steve for over three years and he was always encouraging me, advising me about my move to Doncaster and willing to welcome me back when the travelling became too much.

Steve O'Connor has asked me to take over the reins of the club in a caretaker capacity and whilst sad to see Steve Mac go it is a great opportunity for me and one I am looking forward to.

To be asked to coach my home town team is a great honour and I didn't need asking twice. Whether it be for one game or until we get into Super League then I can promise all fans that I will work hard to ensure that the team performs to the best of its ability.

All the players know that they have contributed to Steve's departure and from discussions we had on Monday they are determined to make amends. It may be too late for Steve but they know they owe it to our fans who pay good money to watch.

The hard work began on Monday afternoon and I am pleased with the players' initial response. Obviously training and matches are totally different scenarios and we will see tonight against Gateshead how they respond in a match situation. The Northern Rail Cup is an important tournament in its own right and with the added bonus of meeting one of the criteria for a 2012 Super League Licence then we need to respond in the right way tonight to ensure we give ourselves a chance of qualifying for the



John Stankevitch, who is looking after the team on a temporary basis

knockout stages especially as our next to qualifying games are away to Blackpool and Barrow.

Gateshead have had mixed fortunes in this competition with a midweek defeat at Keighley being followed up with a home victory over Sheffield last Sunday. Gateshead are to be applauded for their development work in the North East and with the recruitment of hooker Andrew Henderson they have certainly made their intentions known for 2009.

With the departure of Dave Woods in the close season the opportunity has arisen for Chris Hood to take over and as an assistant moving up to first team level myself I would like to wish him good luck for the rest of the season - apart from when we meet of course.

John Stankevitch

It's been quite a week but we must improve

Alex Bonney Chief Executive Officer

If A week is a long time in politics the past seven days at the Stobart Stadium Halton have been equally challenging.

Friday dawned with excitement in the air, a new season, a new team and high expectations from everyone involved with the Vikings. By 9pm that evening the atmosphere at the Stadium was thoroughly miserable.

Not only had we lost 22- 20 to Championship 1 side Oldham in a game we had expected to win, as a Championship side, but we lost Iain Morrison within two minutes of coming on and Loz Wildbore after just 30 minutes to compound matters.

Monday morning saw the decision taken to replace Steve McCormack as Head Coach, one not taken lightly but felt to be necessary for the club to move forward.

In his place, in a caretaker capacity, is

John Stankevitch who served Widnes well as a player and twice in an assistant coaching capacity either side of a brief spell in charge at Doncaster.

At Tuesday's weekly press conference a whole host of journalists were given the opportunity to ask questions of Steve O'Connor, John Stankevitch, Terry O'Connor and myself and it was made quite clear we will take our time with the recruitment process as it is an important decision and one which we have to get right.

John Stankevitch is part of our long term plans at the Stobart Stadium Halton and whether that be as the new Head Coach in his own right or as an assistant to a newcomer only time will tell.

Within an hour of the story breaking we had received two CVs and interest remained high throughout the week with Andy Wilson in the Guardian commenting that the Head Coach role at Widnes was 'probably the most attractive job in the game below Super League.'

Whether the appointment comes from within or not only time will tell.

But one issue regarding overseas coaches will be the new work permit regulations which have already had an impact on overseas players coming into the UK.

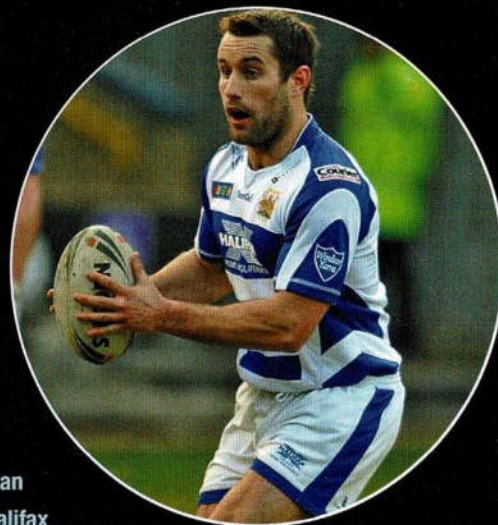
Tonight we welcome the Gateshead players and staff to the Stobart Stadium Halton and know we have a tough task.

The Northern Rail Cup is an important competition and hopefully tonight we will put the trials and tribulations of the last week behind us and pick up our first win of our campaign.

BOB BESWICK HALIFAX RLFC Squad Number: 13

BACKGROUND

FULL NAME: Robert Beswick
AGE: 24 (8/12/84)
POSITION: Hooker/Lock
HEIGHT: 5'11". WEIGHT: 14st
MARITAL STATUS: Girlfriend Lauren
BORN: Wigan
AMATEUR CLUB: Wigan St Patricks
SIGNED PRO: When I was 19 for Wigan
PREVIOUS CLUBS: Wigan, Widnes, Halifax



FAVOURITES

CLUB SUPPORTED AS A KID: I always supported Wigan. They were the top team to support.

SOCCER TEAM: I don't support a team. Just anyone who beats whoever my mates support!

OTHER SPORT: Anything really. I'm interested in golf, tennis and football.

HOBBIES: Playing guitar.

FOOD: Nando's chicken.

DRINK: Cup of coffee or Kopparberg if I'm out.

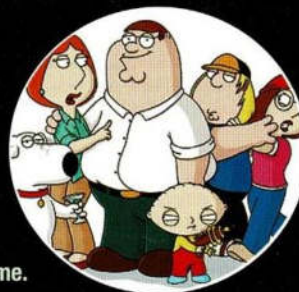
HOLIDAY: Florida.

MUSIC: I'd have to say the best of the Beatles.

FILM: Spinal Tap.

TV: Family Guy (pictured) or I'm Alan Partridge.

SUPERSTITIONS: I clean my boots the night before a game.



CAREER

BEST TEAMMATE: Probably Andy Farrell or Dave Peachey for talent.

BEST OPPONENT: Paul Sculthorpe when he was at his best a few years ago. When we played Saints, he always played tough but fair.

BEST PLAYER IN THE WORLD: I think Billy Slater seems to do something good every game so I'd have to say him.

BEST COACH I'VE PLAYED FOR: Mike Gregory. You always wanted to do your best under him because you were scared of what he might do if you didn't!

COACH I'D LIKE TO PLAY FOR: Matt Calland, obviously, or Wayne Bennett.

MY STRENGTHS: My work-rate.

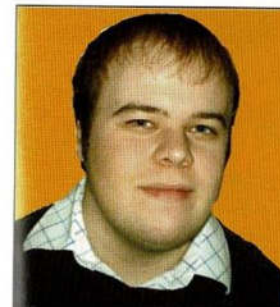
MY WEAKNESSES: Too many to put down!

HIGHLIGHT: The World Cup with Ireland. I came back with lots of belief to achieve things in rugby.

LOWLIGHT: The grand final losses with Widnes and losing to Fiji in the World Cup – we should have done better and it still does my head in!

ULTIMATE WISH: To have a family and have a good life.

AFTER FINISHED PLAYING: Will probably carry on working or maybe go travelling with the family.



AHEAD OF THE GAME

PAUL BENNETT gives his slant on life in 'the greatest game'

Visa changes are over the top

WELL, bang go my holiday plans.

Moved by that mushy film with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman – and still a bit gutted at having missed out on the chance to go to the World Cup – I'd decided to disappear Down Under for a few months, escaping this rotten, sinking isle for the sun, sea, sand and XXXXing of Australia.

Then I remembered that £30 ticket I got for improper parking a couple of years back and suddenly all my dreams were up in smoke.

At least I presume they are, given how picky the immigration officials at our own Home Office and in Canberra are being right now. 'Driving conviction, Mr Eastwood? No thanks. Drink-driving you say, Mr Carney? Next. What's that Mr Crocker? Affray?! Forget about it, sunshine. What do you mean it was back in 2005? I don't give a damn, Mr Crocker. Now be on your way.'

What happened to people having a second chance? I guess that only applies to good, honest British robbers and murderers, not trouble-making Johnny Foreigners who can't take their ale.

Then there's Greg Bird – a perplexing one, that. Bradford were obviously supremely confident he'd be granted a visa despite facing trial for allegedly glassing his own girlfriend and then lying to the police about it. If he's guilty of such a horrendous offence then I'll be glad to see him barred from joining Super League, but what happened to the whole idea of 'innocent until proven guilty'?

Presumably, they reckoned there was a chance Bird might 'fly'. One can only assume the good people at the UK Borders Agency get all their sports coverage from the Telegraph.

Mustn't have Sky, otherwise they'd realise you can't really disappear when you're on TV a couple of Friday nights a month.



Dan Russell, who was denied a move to Whitehaven from Gateshead

And then there's the whole minefield of confusion that exists in the co-operative Championships since the tightening of the rules on working holiday and student visas.

I'll be honest, my initial thoughts about the whole business were positive ones. I mean, we've been wishing for years that our clubs would cut down on overseas imports and rely on promising local talent instead.

But then you look at what's really happening and it's a little disappointing.

Who exactly have been denied visas? Well, in Super League we're talking Bird, Eastwood, Carney and Crocker. And if we were drawing up a list of the top 10 overseas players in Super League then all four of those might well have made it in.

Lower down the leagues, Whitehaven

have missed out on scrum half Dan Russell who, let's not forget, was one of three nominees for the NL2 Player of the Year award when at Gateshead last year. In his place, they've simply brought in a player with the relevant passport – but odds are such players, reasonably rare as they are, aren't as good as the 'full-blown foreigners' they replace.

Meanwhile, the RFL are granting dispensation to anyone who was a member of any of the squads in the World Cup – but is that really any genuine stamp of quality?

So before we start celebrating the fact our borders have been rammed shut, maybe we should reflect on those still coming by the back door – not to mention regretting the top stars now lost to our competitions.

MARCUS ST HILAIRE OLDHAM ROUGHYEDS Squad Number: 24

BACKGROUND

FULL NAME: Marcus St Hilaire

AGE: 32 (26/1/77)

POSITION: Centre

HEIGHT: 5'10" WEIGHT: 13st 9lb

MARITAL STATUS: Long term girlfriend

BORN: Huddersfield

AMATEUR CLUB: Moldgreen ARLFC

SIGNED PRO: I signed professional for Huddersfield in 1994

PREVIOUS CLUBS: Huddersfield (x2), Leeds, Halifax, Bradford, Oldham

FAVOURITES

CLUB SUPPORTED AS A KID: I supported Wigan as a kid because at the time it was either them or Widnes. They were the top teams to support.

SOCCER TEAM: Manchester United.

OTHER SPORT: I like watching athletics and football.

HOBBIES: I spend most of my time with my two children, Christiana, 11, and Micah, one. They take up a lot of my time so I haven't really got time for hobbies.

FOOD: My partner makes the best lasagne

DRINK: Robinsons apple and blackcurrant.

HOLIDAY: Lanzarote.

MUSIC: Anything at the moment. I'm musically eclectic!

FILM: The Dark Knight.

TV: The Simpsons.

SUPERSTITIONS: I've always tied my left shoe lace before my right. I don't know why I started doing that.

CAREER

BEST TEAMMATE: Lesley Vainikolo when I was at Bradford. He really took me under his wing while I was there and he is probably one of my best mates.

BEST OPPONENT: Jason Robinson for Wigan before he moved to rugby union. It was awful having to play against him!

BEST PLAYER IN THE WORLD: I think Bradford's Sam Burgess is going to be up there sooner or later.

BEST COACH I'VE PLAYED FOR: Graham Murray at Leeds. I learned a lot off him.

COACH I'D LIKE TO PLAY FOR: Brian Smith. I worked with him for about six weeks when I was Bradford and I think I would have loved playing under him for a couple of years.

MY STRENGTHS: Probably my experience having played the game for such a long time. I'm also pretty nippy for an older guy!

MY WEAKNESSES: I'm not feeling as strong as I used to which is why I'm doing extra weights at the moment.

HIGHLIGHT: Playing in the Challenge Cup Final at Wembley with Leeds in 1999. I also played for England a couple of times but Wembley is the one that really sticks out.

LOWLIGHT: Leaving Bradford. It was one of the lows of my career because at the time I wanted to stay but because of the salary cap it was not feasible.

ULTIMATE WISH: To win the lottery when the jackpot has rolled over to £80m!

AFTER FINISHED PLAYING: I would like to join the fire service and I am going to reapply for it in July. Hopefully I will get a chance to do that but if not I will probably carry on plastering.



ON THE MONEY!

Improving Panthers can pile on misery for Hornets



Blackpool Panthers coach Martin Crompton

AFTER the first proper round of games I hope some of you had a couple of quid on the three selections of mine on the handicaps.

If you missed last week's picks, well I have a few more up my sleeve for this weekend.

If some of you are reading this article as you have entered the ground and it is around 2.30pm, you might be one of the people that bookmakers always keep an eye on.

These people seem to live in pockets around the Cumbria and Yorkshire areas. At around 2.45pm, or 15 minutes before the scheduled kick of time of a league or cup game, the phones go mad in the call centre or bets fly through on the internet monitor.

We call them the team news punters, as the name suggests these are the type of punters who watch the likes of Dewsbury, Whitehaven and Oldham week in, week out, and when they get the team news – four regulars might be missing – they are on the phone backing the right side of the handicap. That will make you realise how hard it is as a bookmaker to stay on top of all the prices and handicaps in the lower leagues.

On writing this article, Widnes have just parted company with head coach Steve McCormack.

This usually leads to an improved display for the next match. Widnes have another home tie against Gateshead, who to be fair are not the best of travellers. I would suggest a small investment, Widnes conceding 20 points or less on the handicap.

For the next investment, we travel up to Cumbria to a derby match that has the tradition of throwing all form out of the window. But I just see this so one sided and for the first

Totesport's expert rugby league odds compiler MIKE OXLEY gives fans of clubs in the Championship and Championship One a few tips on where the value lies this weekend



few weeks I would generally try and lay Workington, who are a team low on confidence, poor on form and with a host of new players that look like they will need a few weeks to gel.

Whitehaven, on the other hand, are prolific at home and on the back of a decent victory last week against Batley, I can see them covering the handicap against Workington of 24 points or less.

And finally for my nap and this will look a most unusual selection for the team that I am tipping up.

I am not sure if they have ever won two games on the bounce but with Martin Crompton bringing in some shrewd signings and with them starting of this year's campaign with a win against Keighley, Blackpool are a team the bookmakers might under estimate to their cost on handicaps.

Rochdale, weather permitting, would have played a local derby against Oldham on the Wednesday and then will have to back up against Blackpool on Sunday. I make Blackpool at best scratch on their visit to Rochdale, so if any bookmaker offers them a start I would be tempted to empty my ISA account.



bet online

totesport.com



bet by phone

0800 221 221

SPREADING THE WORD



Cougars shape up the schools and Freddie!

Keighley's development scheme sees them work with 2,000 children while the club has taken an innovative approach to helping kids learn about the benefits of eating healthily and keeping active. **GAME ON** explains all



WHO ATE ALL THE PIES? Keighley mascot Freddie is put through his paces by Cougars coach Barry Eaton

Keighley Cougars have gone back to school and they've gained top marks for their efforts.

The Championship One side has pulled together an impressive development of Rugby League skills in not only their Aire Valley hinterland but in both neighbouring districts of North Yorkshire and Wharfedale.

Currently the Cougars development team, which is headed up by Foundation Manager Dean Muir and Development Officer Tom Hall, is delivering coaching into 34 Primary Schools in two partnerships throughout the region.

The club's participation in the Aireville Sports Partnership and the Oakbank Sports Partnership sees the coaches working with 2,000 children and that's an impressive workload for a small club like the Cougars.

Muir said: "We're delivering the coaching programmes to Year Four and Year Six in the Primary Schools. Each of the schools receives six sessions in their package which are based around Tag Rugby.

"Each course covers a basic introduction to Rugby League and all the core skills the players need to take part in a game.

"Those schools that opt to take part in the tackle tournaments receive an extra two coaching sessions so that their players can cope with the extras demands placed upon them."

Each school has the opportunity to play in six festivals: Boys Year Six, Girls Year Six, Boys Year Four, Girls Year Four, Boys Tackle Year Six and Girls Year Six.

Muir added: "The aim is to provide the children with a great introduction to Rugby League and the Keighley Cougars. The club has been developing the programme during the last four or five years and it is now ready to ramp up to the next level."

When Keighley Cougars Head Coach Barry Eaton returned from watching the World Cup and working with Brisbane-based club Wynnum Manly he was staggered.

The club's mascot Freddie Cougar had gone to seed and piled on the weight. Having escaped the all-seeing eye of Eaton the furry super cougar had feasted on burgers, chips and pies. And they had all landed round his waist line.

He was that unfit that he struggled to keep pace with the queue in the chip shop in Riddlesden just round the corner from Cougar Park!

Eaton laid down the law: "Get fit Freddie or Get out!" That was the hard word and Freddie knew he was facing the sack so he started a six-week 'Freddie gets Fit' campaign.

And Keighley Cougars took full advantage because they linked his campaign to the anti-obesity and healthy eating programmes being run by the Government and area's



FIT AND ACTIVE: Keighley are engaging with 34 primary schools in North and West Yorkshire

Primary Care Trust.

They struck up an exclusive partnership with media partners, the 'Keighley News' and developed a week-by-week 'Freddie gets Fit' progress chart on the newspaper's website.

The club also supported that by developing a 'Freddie Gets Fit' website and a group on the social networking site Facebook.

Freddie's campaign has brought the furry mascot loads of profile throughout the region. He's pulled cars, trucks and trains in the full glare of publicity as well as undergoing a highly public weigh in at a local doctors' surgery.

Helen Carter, the Cougars General Manager, said: "The 'Freddie Gets Fit' campaign has been very successful. Not only has it driven home via the Keighley media that the club is active but it has keyed into vital health messages being made available to children.

"Having a high profile mascot allows you to reach so many more people than just Rugby League fans as we discovered when he made personal appearances in the

'Having a high profile mascot allows you to reach so many more people than just Rugby League fans as we discovered when he made personal appearances in the town's main shopping mall'

HELEN CARTER, GENERAL MANAGER

town's main shopping mall, the Airedale Centre.

"We made two three-hour appearances in the centre on two separate Saturdays and he was virtually mobbed by kids on both occasions.

"We handed out leaflets in support of the healthy eating campaign and Freddie had his picture taken with loads of people from babes in arms through to senior citizens.

"We have established new partnerships with companies and organisations in our area as we worked through the campaign which will be on long-term benefit to the club.

"Add into that the co-operation we received from partners like Northern Rail and Sunwin Nissan and it's added up to a significant campaign for the

Cougars. And as a bonus the kilos have dropped off Freddie and it looks like he might keep his job as mascot."

Keighley Cougars are becoming re-connected to their community. In the build up to the 2009 season the club has signed two major partnerships which will see them deliver significant Rugby League development programmes.

Both will be running under the generic titles of 'Street Academies'. The programmes are aimed two separate issues within the community.

The first, which is being backed by Incommunities, the biggest providers of social housing in the area, will see Rugby League awareness being taken into nine sites through-

out Keighley. The programme is designed at preventing anti-social behaviour and tackling gang cultures in both Keighley and Bingley.

The second element is aimed at the substantial Asian community in the area and is being supported by Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Together the club and Council are hoping to engage with the Asian community and, besides aiding integration, the aim is to deflect the effects of extremism on the community.

The Community Cougars Foundation is looking for new partners to join in the development of Rugby League in their part of North and West Yorkshire.

For more details please contact Foundation Manager Dean Muir, Keighley Cougars RLFC, Cougar Park, Royd Ings Avenue, Keighley West Yorks BD21 3RE Tel: 01535 606044. Fax: 01535 609088.

You can also get more information on the club's website: www.keighleycougars.info

KNOW YOUR STUFF?

AROUND THE CLUBS

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT EACH OF THIS WEEKEND'S HOME CHAMPIONSHIP CLUBS?

- 1, BATLEY – In what year did Batley become the first winners of the Challenge Cup, beating St Helens 10-3?
- 2, FEATHERSTONE – How many times have Rovers won the Challenge Cup?
- 3, HALIFAX – What nickname did Halifax briefly adopt for the Super League era before ditching it for the name 'Blue Sox'?
- 4, HORNETS – Which economist and author is the driving force behind the new Hornets Rugby League fans' co-operative?
- 5, KEIGHLEY – By what name was Keighley's Cougar Park originally known?
- 6, LONDON – Which beer brand almost sponsored the club in the mid-nineties?
- 7, OLDHAM – From which club did the Roughyeds sign Jamie l'Anson?
- 8, SWINTON – Chairman John Kidd and coach Paul Kidd are also directors at which football club, which plays hosts to the Lions' reserve side?
- 9, WHITEHAVEN – Of which international team is Whitehaven boss Ged Stokes also head coach?
- 10, WIDNES – At which ground did Widnes beat Canberra Raiders in the World Club Challenge in 1989?

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

DO YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR RL?
HERE ARE SEVEN TOUGHIES TO TEST
ALL RUGBY LEAGUE FANS

- 1, Which Frenchman scored the first ever Super League try in 1996?
- 2, Who finished off the famous 'Wide to West' try in St Helens' dramatic 16-11 play-off victory over Bradford in September 2000?
- 3, Whose drop goal handed Wigan a 23-22 victory at Leeds in the 2003 Grand Final Eliminator?
- 4, Which nation finished the 2008 Rugby League World Cup ranked 10th out of the 10 competing teams?
- 5, Which country does Wakefield star Tevita Leo-Latu represent at international level?
- 6, In which British town were the Scottish internationals the Henderson brothers – Ian, Andrew and Kevin – born?
- 7, 'Rawiri' is the middle name of which current Salford City Reds star?

ANAGRAMS

Can you rearrange the following anagrams to make the names of three co-operative Championship or Championship One half backs?

ERASE BMW JEST

FAN HURT ADOLPH

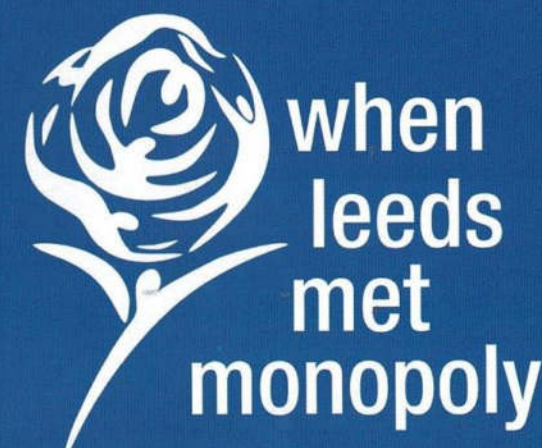
SIT IN A SHERRY

ANSWERS:
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: 1, Freddie Banquet; 2, Chris Joynt; 3, Danny Tickle; 4, France; 5, Tonga; 6, Torquay; 7, Robbie Paul.
ANAGRAMS: 1, James Webster; 2, Paul Handforth; 3, Iestyn Harris.
NORTHERN RAIL CUP KNOWLEDGE: 1, 1897; 2, Three (1967, 1973 and 1983); 3, Bombers; 4, Paul Ormerod; 5, Lawkholme Lane; 6, Skol; 7, Celtic Crusaders; 8, Darren Fc; 9, Serbia; 10, Old Trafford, Manchester.



MONOPOLY

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Play Monopoly with Leeds Met and you could win a fabulous holiday in St Lucia...

Leeds Metropolitan University has launched the Leeds Met Monopoly Challenge, and is attempting to break a world record in support of local and international volunteering initiatives.

Take part in this Monopoly tournament and have a chance to win a £6000 holiday for four at the Coconut Bay Resort & Spa in St Lucia!

Heats begin on 28 February 2009, and we want as many people to register as possible...

Register a team of 5 and you'll receive a limited edition Leeds Monopoly board.

Register as an individual and you'll get a limited edition 'When Leeds Met Monopoly' t-shirt.

There are hundreds of prizes to be won...
so what are you waiting for?

Visit www.leedsmet.ac.uk/monopoly to sign up now!

GET YOUR FIX...

Your guide to Northern Rail Cup and Championships for 2009

NORTHERN RAIL CUP



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Keighley Cougars 40, Gateshead Thunder 20

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Sheffield Eagles 38, Hunslet Hawks 16

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Widnes Vikings 20 Oldham 22

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Doncaster RLFC 6, Featherstone Rovers 32
Gateshead Thunder 44, Sheffield Eagles 18
Leigh Centurions 74, London Skolars 6
Whitehaven 52, Batley Bulldogs 30
Blackpool Panthers 16, Keighley Cougars 14
Dewsbury Rams 50 Swinton Lions 0
Hunslet Hawks 10, Halifax RLFC 38
Rochdale Hornets 12, Barrow Raiders 54
Workington Town 10 York City Knights 34

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Batley Bulldogs v Doncaster RLFC 19:30
Featherstone Rovers v Leigh Centurions 20:00
York City Knights v Whitehaven 19:30
Oldham v Rochdale Hornets 19:45

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Widnes Vikings v Gateshead Thunder 18:00

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Batley Bulldogs v York City Knights 14:00
Featherstone Rovers v Dewsbury Rams 15:00
Halifax RLFC v Barrow Raiders 15:00
Whitehaven v Workington Town 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
London Skolars v Doncaster RLFC 15:00
Oldham v Sheffield Eagles 15:00
Rochdale Hornets v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Swinton Lions v Leigh Centurions 15:00

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Barrow Raiders v Keighley Cougars 14:00
Gateshead Thunder v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
Leigh Centurions v Whitehaven 15:00
Sheffield Eagles v Halifax RLFC 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Widnes Vikings 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Batley Bulldogs 15:00
Workington Town v Featherstone Rovers 15:00
Doncaster RLFC v Swinton Lions 13:00
Hunslet Hawks v Oldham 14:00
York City Knights v London Skolars 14:00

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

Barrow Raiders v Widnes Vikings 19:30
Halifax RLFC v Blackpool Panthers 20:00

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Swinton Lions v Workington Town 19:30

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

London Skolars v Dewsbury Rams TBC

CO-OPERATIVE CHAMPIONSHIP

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Widnes Vikings v Toulouse Olympique 19:30

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

CHAMPIONSHIP
Barrow Raiders v Doncaster RLFC 18:30

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

CHAMPIONSHIP
Batley Bulldogs v Featherstone Rovers 15:00
Sheffield Eagles v Leigh Centurions 15:00
Whitehaven v Gateshead Thunder 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Oldham v Blackpool Panthers 15:00

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Halifax RLFC v Widnes Vikings 19:30

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Sheffield Eagles 19:00

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

CHAMPIONSHIP
Featherstone Rovers v Whitehaven 15:00
Gateshead Thunder v Barrow Raiders 15:00
Leigh Centurions v Batley Bulldogs 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Workington Town v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v York City Knights 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Oldham 15:00
London Skolars v Swinton Lions 15:00

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Batley Bulldogs v Gateshead Thunder 19:30

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

CHAMPIONSHIP
Whitehaven v Toulouse Olympique 18:00
Barrow Raiders v Halifax RLFC 18:30
Widnes Vikings v Sheffield Eagles 18:00

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

CHAMPIONSHIP
Doncaster RLFC v Leigh Centurions 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v Dewsbury Rams 15:00
Swinton Lions v Keighley Cougars 15:00
York City Knights v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v London Skolars 15:00
Oldham v Workington Town 15:00

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Sheffield Eagles v Doncaster RLFC TBC

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

CHAMPIONSHIP
Halifax RLFC v Batley Bulldogs 20:00
Gateshead Thunder v Featherstone Rovers 18:00
Barrow Raiders v Whitehaven 15:00
Sheffield Eagles v Doncaster RLFC 15:00
Widnes Vikings v Leigh Centurions 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v Oldham 15:00
Workington Town v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Swinton Lions 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v London Skolars 15:30
Keighley Cougars v York City Knights 19:30

MONDAY, APRIL 13

CHAMPIONSHIP
Featherstone Rovers v Sheffield Eagles 15:00
Leigh Centurions v Barrow Raiders 13:00
Batley Bulldogs v Toulouse Olympique 15:00
Doncaster RLFC v Widnes Vikings 15:00
Whitehaven v Halifax RLFC 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v Workington Town 15:00
York City Knights v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v Keighley Cougars 15:00
London Skolars v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Oldham v Dewsbury Rams 20:00

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Gateshead Thunder v Sheffield Eagles 19:30

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

CHAMPIONSHIP
Widnes Vikings v Batley Bulldogs 19:30

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Leigh Centurions 19:00

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

CHAMPIONSHIP
Halifax RLFC v Doncaster RLFC 15:00
Whitehaven v Featherstone Rovers 15:00

THURSDAY, APRIL 23

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Leigh Centurions v Featherstone Rovers 19:30

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

CHAMPIONSHIP
Barrow Raiders v Batley Bulldogs 18:30

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

CHAMPIONSHIP
Rochdale Hornets v London Skolars 15:00
Workington Town v York City Knights 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Oldham v Swinton Lions 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v London Skolars 15:00
Workington Town v York City Knights 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Oldham v Swinton Lions 15:00

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Featherstone Rovers v Halifax RLFC 19:30

FRIDAY, MAY 1

CHAMPIONSHIP
Widnes Vikings v Barrow Raiders 20:00
Gateshead Thunder v Doncaster RLFC 19:30

SUNDAY, MAY 3

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Whitehaven 19:00

MONDAY, MAY 4

CHAMPIONSHIP
Batley Bulldogs v Leigh Centurions 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v Dewsbury Rams 15:00
York City Knights v Keighley Cougars 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v Workington Town 15:00
London Skolars v Oldham 15:00

THURSDAY, MAY 7

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Whitehaven v Widnes Vikings 15:00

FRIDAY, MAY 8

CHAMPIONSHIP
Sheffield Eagles v Featherstone Rovers 20:00

SATURDAY, MAY 9

CHAMPIONSHIP
Barrow Raiders v Gateshead Thunder 18:30

SUNDAY, MAY 10

CHAMPIONSHIP
Leigh Centurions v Halifax RLFC 15:00

THURSDAY, MAY 14

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Leigh Centurions v Widnes Vikings 19:30

SATURDAY, MAY 16

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Barrow Raiders 19:00

SUNDAY, MAY 17

CHAMPIONSHIP
Featherstone Rovers v Doncaster RLFC 15:00
Gateshead Thunder v Whitehaven 15:00
Halifax RLFC v Sheffield Eagles 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v York City Knights 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Swinton Lions 15:00
Workington Town v London Skolars 14:00
Oldham v Hunslet Hawks 15:00

THURSDAY, MAY 21

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Doncaster RLFC v Halifax RLFC 19:30

SATURDAY, MAY 23

CHAMPIONSHIP
Sheffield Eagles v Toulouse Olympique 18:00
Barrow Raiders v Featherstone Rovers 18:30
Widnes Vikings v Gateshead Thunder 18:00

SUNDAY, MAY 24

CHAMPIONSHIP
Batley Bulldogs v Whitehaven 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v Oldham 15:00
Workington Town v Dewsbury Rams 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Keighley Cougars 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
London Skolars v York City Knights 15:00

THURSDAY, MAY 28

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Featherstone Rovers v Leigh Centurions 19:30

SATURDAY, MAY 30

CHAMPIONSHIP
Gateshead Thunder v Toulouse Olympique 18:00
Barrow Raiders v Sheffield Eagles 18:30

SUNDAY, MAY 31

CHAMPIONSHIP
Batley Bulldogs v Widnes Vikings 15:00
Whitehaven v Doncaster RLFC 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
York City Knights v Dewsbury Rams 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Workington Town 15:00
London Skolars v Hunslet Hawks 15:00

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

NORTHERN RAIL CUP QUARTER-FINALS

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

NORTHERN RAIL CUP QUARTER-FINALS

THURSDAY, JUNE 11

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE (TV)
Dewsbury Rams v Keighley Cougars 19:30

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

CHAMPIONSHIP
Widnes Vikings v Featherstone Rovers 18:00
Toulouse Olympique v Batley Bulldogs 20:00

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

CHAMPIONSHIP
Halifax RLFC v Barrow Raiders 15:00
Leigh Centurions v Gateshead Thunder 15:00
Sheffield Eagles v Whitehaven 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
Workington Town v Swinton Lions 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v York City Knights 15:00

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

NORTHERN RAIL CUP SEMI-FINAL

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

NORTHERN RAIL CUP SEMI-FINAL

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE (TV)
York City Knights v Oldham 19:30

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Featherstone Rovers 20:00

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

CHAMPIONSHIP
Batley Bulldogs v Barrow Raiders 15:00
Doncaster RLFC v Sheffield Eagles 15:00
Gateshead Thunder v Halifax RLFC 15:00
Whitehaven v Leigh Centurions 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Workington Town 15:00
Keighley Cougars v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
London Skolars v Dewsbury Rams 15:00

THURSDAY, JULY 2

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Barrow Raiders v Toulouse Olympique 19:30

FRIDAY, JULY 3

CHAMPIONSHIP
Sheffield Eagles v Batley Bulldogs 20:00
Halifax RLFC v Leigh Centurions 20:00

SATURDAY, JULY 4

CHAMPIONSHIP
Widnes Vikings v Doncaster RLFC 18:00

SUNDAY, JULY 5

CHAMPIONSHIP
Featherstone Rovers v Gateshead Thunder 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Workington Town v Oldham 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v York City Knights 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Swinton Lions 15:00
Keighley Cougars v London Skolars 15:00

SUNDAY, JULY 12

NORTHERN RAIL CUP FINAL (at Blackpool)

THURSDAY, JULY 16

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Whitehaven v Barrow Raiders 19:30

SATURDAY, JULY 18

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Halifax RLFC 20:00

SUNDAY, JULY 19

CHAMPIONSHIP
Batley Bulldogs v Doncaster RLFC 15:00
Gateshead Thunder v Widnes Vikings 15:00
Leigh Centurions v Sheffield Eagles 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
York City Knights v Workington Town 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v Dewsbury Rams 15:00
London Skolars v Rochdale Hornets 15:00
Oldham v Keighley Cougars 15:00

THURSDAY, JULY 23

CHAMPIONSHIP (TV)
Sheffield Eagles v Gateshead Thunder 19:30

FRIDAY, JULY 24

CHAMPIONSHIP
Halifax RLFC v Featherstone Rovers 20:00

SATURDAY, JULY 25

CHAMPIONSHIP
Barrow Raiders v Leigh Centurions 18:30
Toulouse Olympique v Widnes Vikings 20:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Blackpool Panthers v London Skolars 15:00

SUNDAY, JULY 26

CHAMPIONSHIP
Doncaster RLFC v Whitehaven 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v Swinton Lions 15:00
Workington Town v Keighley Cougars 15:00
York City Knights v Hunslet Hawks 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Oldham 15:00

THURSDAY, JULY 30

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE (TV)
Keighley Cougars v Dewsbury Rams 19:30

FRIDAY, JULY 31

CHAMPIONSHIP
Widnes Vikings v Halifax RLFC 19:30

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

CHAMPIONSHIP
Featherstone Rovers v Toulouse Olympique 18:00
Gateshead Thunder v Batley Bulldogs 19:00

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

CHAMPIONSHIP
Leigh Centurions v Doncaster RLFC 15:00
Whitehaven v Sheffield Eagles 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Swinton Lions v York City Knights 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v Blackpool Panthers 15:00
London Skolars v Workington Town 15:00
Oldham v Rochdale Hornets 15:00

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE (TV)
Oldham v London Skolars 19:30

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

CHAMPIONSHIP
Toulouse Olympique v Gateshead Thunder 20:00

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

CHAMPIONSHIP
Halifax RLFC v Whitehaven 15:00
Batley Bulldogs v Sheffield Eagles 15:00
Doncaster RLFC v Barrow Raiders 15:00
Featherstone Rovers v Widnes Vikings 15:00

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

CHAMPIONSHIP
Sheffield Eagles v Halifax RLFC 20:00

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

CHAMPIONSHIP
Leigh Centurions v Toulouse Olympique 18:00
Barrow Raiders v Widnes Vikings 18:30

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

CHAMPIONSHIP
Doncaster RLFC v Featherstone Rovers 15:00
Whitehaven v Batley Bulldogs 15:00

CHAMPIONSHIP ONE

Rochdale Hornets v Keighley Cougars 15:00
Blackpool Panthers v Oldham 15:00
Dewsbury Rams v Workington Town 15:00
Hunslet Hawks v Swinton Lions 15:00
York City Knights v London Skolars 14:00

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

WHAT A RESULT!



NORTHERN RAIL CUP 2009

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 POOL ONE

Blackpool Panthers 16

Tries: McCully 2, Tucker.
Goals: Leather.

Keighley Cougars 14

Tries: Law, Bissell, Smith.
Goals: Jones.
Half Time: 0-6.
Attendance: 400.

Gateshead Thunder 44

Tries: Nash 3, Arundel, Neighbour, Brannighan, Sanderson, Piers. Goals: Brannighan 6.

Sheffield Eagles 18

Tries: Hepworth 2, Edwards.
Goals: Woodcock 3.
Half Time: 16-12.
Attendance: 1,226.

Hunslet Hawks 10

Tries: Richardson, Brook.
Goal: Young.

Halifax 38

Tries: Tamghart, Black, Penkywicz 2, Greenwood, Moore, Cherryholme. Goals: Black 3, Moore 2.
Half Time: 4-20.
Attendance: 878.

Hornets RL 12

Tries: Fogerty, Giles. Goals: Corcoran 2.

Barrow Raiders 54

Tries: Bell, Bracek, Finch 2, Harrison, Backhouse 3, Ellis. Goals: Noone 9.
Half Time: 12-16.
Attendance: 501.

POOL TWO

Dewsbury Rams 50

Tries: Robinson, Powell,



Leigh's Steve Maden scores one of his two tries against London Skolars during the one-sided affair at the Centurions' new stadium

Spurr, Buchanan, Hurst, Epati 2. Goals: Walker 11.

Swinton Lions 0

Half Time: 24-0
Attendance: 999

Doncaster 6

Tries: Cook. Goals: Briggs.

Featherstone Rovers 32

Tries: S Kain, A Kain, Harris, Steel, Smeaton, Hesketh. Goals: Harris 4.
Half Time: 0-22.
Attendance: 1,126.

Leigh Centurions 74

Tries: Ridyard, Durbin 3, Mort, Smith 2, Donlan, Reay, Maden 2, Watson, Stanton,

Workington Town 10

Tries: Stack, Dawes. Goals: Forber.

York City Knights 34

Tries: Haberecht 2, Oakes, M Mitchell, Clough, Ratcliffe. Goals: A Mitchell 5.
Half Time: 6-22.
Attendance: 513.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

POOL ONE

Widnes Vikings 20

Tries: Duffy, Flynn, Dodd, Thackeray. Goals: Dodd 2.

Oldham 22

Tries: Ballard, Boults. Goals: Ballard 7.
Half Time: 4-14.
Attendance: 2,783.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

POOL ONE

Sheffield Eagles 38

Tries: Brooks 2, Whitaker, Boothroyd, Roby, Szostak, Lindsay. Goals: Woodcock 5.

Hunslet Hawks 16

Tries: Brook, Mark, Larvin. Goals: Chapman, McKinley.
Half Time: 16-6.
Attendance: 556.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

POOL ONE

Keighley Cougars 40

Tries: Duffy, Rayner, Feather, Pursglove, Presley 3.
Goals: Jones 6.

Gateshead Thunder 20

Tries: Neighbour, Sanderson, McAlpine, Carvighan. Goals: Carvighan 2.
Half Time: 12-14
Attendance: 337.

STATS SERVICE



NORTHERN RAIL CUP 2009 TABLES

(Does not include results from Wednesday night)

POOL ONE

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	PD	Pts
Keighley Cougars	2	1	0	1	1	54	36	18	4
Barrow Raiders	1	1	0	0	0	54	12	42	3
Halifax	1	1	0	0	0	38	10	28	3
Gateshead Thunder	2	1	0	1	0	64	58	6	3
Oldham	1	1	0	0	0	22	20	2	3
B'pool Panthers	1	1	0	0	0	16	14	2	3
Sheffield Eagles	2	1	0	1	0	56	60	-4	3
Widnes Vikings	1	0	0	1	1	20	22	-2	1
Hornets RL	1	0	0	1	0	12	54	-42	0
Hunslet Hawks	2	0	0	2	0	26	76	-50	0

POOL TWO

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	PD	Pts
Leigh Centurions	1	1	0	0	0	74	6	68	3
Dewsbury Rams	1	1	0	0	0	50	0	50	3
Feath'stone Rovers	1	1	0	0	0	32	6	26	3
York City Knights	1	1	0	0	0	34	10	24	3
Whitehaven	1	1	0	0	0	52	30	22	3
Swinton Lions	1	0	0	1	0	0	50	-50	0
Batley Bulldogs	1	0	0	1	0	30	52	-22	0
Workington Town	1	0	0	1	0	10	34	-24	0
Doncaster	1	0	0	1	0	6	32	-26	0
London Skolars	1	0	0	1	0	6	74	-68	0

3 pts for win, 2 for draw, 1 for a bonus point for losing by 12pts or less

Leading point scorers

Ian Mort (Leigh) 1t, 9gs	22
Pat Walker (Dewsbury) 11gs	22
Andy Ballard (Oldham) 1t, 7gs	18
Paul Noone (Barrow) 9gs	18
Luke Brannighan (Thunder) 1t, 6gs	16
Jonny Woodcock (Sheffield) 8gs	16
Danny Jones (Keighley) 7gs	14
Andy Gorski (Whitehaven) 4ts	12
Jamie Durbin (Leigh) 4ts	12
Jon Presley (Keighley) 4ts	12
Dylan Nash (Gateshead) 4ts	12
Mike Backhouse (Barrow) 4ts	12
Iestyn Harris (Feath) 1t 4gs	12
Rudd (Whitehaven) 6gs	12

(Does not include points from Wednesday night's games)

Leading try scorers

Andy Gorski (Whitehaven) 3
Jamie Durbin (Leigh) 3
Jon Presley (Keighley) 3
Dylan Nash (Gateshead) 3
Mike Backhouse (Barrow) 3
Sean Penkywicz (Halifax) 2
Mark McCully (Blackpool) 2
Ryan Hepworth (Sheffield) 2
Steve Maden (Leigh) 2
Jamie Smith (Leigh) 2
Liam Finch (Barrow) 2
Kane Epati (Dewsbury) 2
Tom Haberecht (York) 2
Kevin Neighbour (Thunder) 2
Stuart Sanderson (Thunder) 2
Steve Brooks (Sheffield) 2
Steve Brook (Hunslet) 2

(Does not include tries from Wednesday night's games)

NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE 2008

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Dif	Pts
Salford City Reds	18	12	3	3	614	302	312	45
Celtic Crusaders	18	12	0	6	511	391	120	40
Halifax RLFC	18	11	1	6	634	514	120	38
Leigh Centurions	18	10	0	8	448	448	0	34
Whitehaven	18	10	0	8	420	399	21	32
Widnes Vikings*	18	10	2	6	453	410	43	30
Sheffield Eagles	18	8	1	9	425	530	-105	29
Featherstone R	18	6	1	11	452	515	-63	26
Batley Bulldogs	18	5	0	13	387	538	-151	23
Dewsbury Rams (R)	18	2	0	16	315	612	-297	13

*Widnes deducted nine points for going into administration

NATIONAL LEAGUE TWO 2008

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Dif	Pts
Gateshead Thunder (P)	22	19	0	3	767	415	352	59
Barrow Raiders (P)	22	16	0	6	703	375	328	52
Oldham	22	17	0	5	716	456	260	52
Doncaster (P)	22	15	0	7	672	426	246	48
Keighley Cougars	22	15	0	7	611	519	92	48
York City Knights	22	11	1	10	740	540	200	42
Rochdale Hornets	22	10	1	11	715	610	105	36
Workington Town	22	6	0	16	512	628	-116	28
Blackpool Panthers	22	7	1	14	472	828	-356	25
Swinton Lions	22	6	0	16	482	777	-295	22
London Skolars	22	4	1	17	449	823	-374	20
Hunslet Hawks	22	4	0	18	336	778	-442	17

NL TOP SCORERS 2008

TRIES (All matches)

James Nixon (Barrow - pictured)	35
Paul White (Salford)	28
Martin Ainscough (Rochdale)	28
Luke Gale (Doncaster)	27
Richard Myler (Salford)	25
S	

GOALS (All matches)

Graham Holroyd (Halifax - pictured)	156
Mick Nany (Oldham)	139
Dan Russell (Gateshead)	129 (1)
Carl Sneyd (Rochdale)	110

() Drop goals included in total

POINTS (All matches)

Mick Nany (Oldham)	362
Graham Holroyd (Halifax)	340
Dan Russell (Gateshead)	293
Carl Sneyd (Rochdale)	268
John Wilshire (Salford)	252
Carl Forber (Workington)	243

