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THE OFFICIAL GATESHEAD THUNDER MATCH DAY PROGRAMME

£2.00



Sunday 31st August - 3.00pm

2014 Main Sponsor



GATESHEAD COLLEGE

CLUB CONTACTS



**Gateshead International Stadium,
Neilson Road, Gateshead NE10 0EF**

Chairman - Bill Midgley OBE
Managing Director - Keith Christie

Head Coach - Stanley Gene

Team Administrator - Ceryn Rowntree
Marketing Officer - Andrew Robson
Media Officer - Adam Gray
Photographer - Paul Clayton
Videographer - Jim Neighbour



BOOM BOOM!

Hello, and welcome to Gateshead International Stadium for this afternoon's Kingstone Press Championship 1 match against Oldham Roughyeds.

I hope you will join me in extending a warm Tyneside welcome to the Directors, Players and fans who have made the trip to the North East to support Oldham for the second time this year.

Last time out against the Roughyeds, we played very well in the opening 40 minutes to lead at the break 14 - 12 but let ourselves down by allowing Oldham to score 20 unanswered points in a flat second half.

We will need to show a much more complete performance today, against a side who will be going all out to finish second and secure home advantage in the first leg of the playoffs and I am confident Stan will have prepared the team following along these lines.

Whatever happens during the next phase of the competition, I am sure you will agree that this has been a watershed year from the club and our standing in the game.

We have went from being a club that would win a handful of game a season at best to one that has, up to today, won 10 games and earned 3 losing bonus points in games which have seen us run the teams at the top of the division close. We have begun to establish a strong team on the field and with the club now under the control of Newcastle Rugby Ltd, I am doing the same with the off field staff that will be crucial in taking Thunder forward next season.

There is an exciting announcement due to be made by the RFL in the coming days which will provide us with a big opportunity in 2015 when I hope you will all be back for more and with a few friends in tow too.

BOOM BOOM, Thunder Army!
Kind Regards
Keith Christie

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COACH'S COMMENTS

Good afternoon and welcome to the International Stadium for the final time in the regular season but hopefully for only the latest match in our 2014 campaign. We come into today's game sitting comfortably in 4th in the league, a position we can secure with a good performance today.

We are in a very good run of form at the moment with three wins in four and in the game we lost, we only did so by four points which earned us what could be a crucial bonus point.

This season has been on that will be seen as a new start for the club and I am particularly pleased with how the boys have developed over the year. Several players at the start of the season were fresh out of the amateur game, several have played in this league for a long time and stuck with the club through thick and thin. We are now turning heads, proving the world of rugby league that we are capable of playing and that we are not the whipping boys of old.

Today is a huge game for us. We are still not completely sure of a place in the play offs or a home tie so the boys need to go and show what they can do not only to make sure we are part of the play off push, but that we set down a marker to those teams we will meet in that stage of the competition.

Let's hope we can secure this position for the play offs and treat you all to a home fixture.

Stan



www.thunderrugby.com

THUNDER NEWS

INTERNATIONAL STADIUM ANNOUNCED AS WORLD CUP TRAINING VENUE

Gateshead International Stadium and Gateshead College will play host to two national sides during next year's Rugby Union World Cup.

England 2015 yesterday announced the training bases for all four national sides due to play games within North East England during next year's Rugby World Cup.

After a lengthy bidding process which saw venues throughout the North East compete to host sides playing in Newcastle, Thunder's home ground Gateshead International Stadium and main sponsors Gateshead College were announced as the training base for two-time champions South Africa and ninth ranked Samoa during their time in the region.

As main sponsors of Gateshead Thunder the college has already established strong links with the North East rugby league community, but will now cross codes to offer facilities to the world's second ranked national side along with Thunder's home ground, Gateshead International Stadium.



SCORPIONS DAVIES IN NINE MATCH SUSPENSION

South Wales Scorpions player Barrie Phillips has been suspended for nine matches after admitting two Grade D offences in the match against Thunder on August 17th. Phillips was put on report following a high tackle on Thunder's Jordan Meads in the 48th minute and a dangerous tackle on new signing Ryan MacDonald in the 72nd minute of the Kingstone Press Championship One fixture.

Thunder were particularly incensed by the tackle on MacDonald, which caused a dislocation of the props shoulder which has put an end to his season.

Thunder Managing Director Keith Christie said "We applaud the RFL for applying the highest available sanction for these offences, particularly in light of the consequences for Ryan. He had an outstanding game up to that point and it was very disappointing that his first game in a Thunder shirt came to an end in such a manner, following the reckless actions of the Scorpions player."



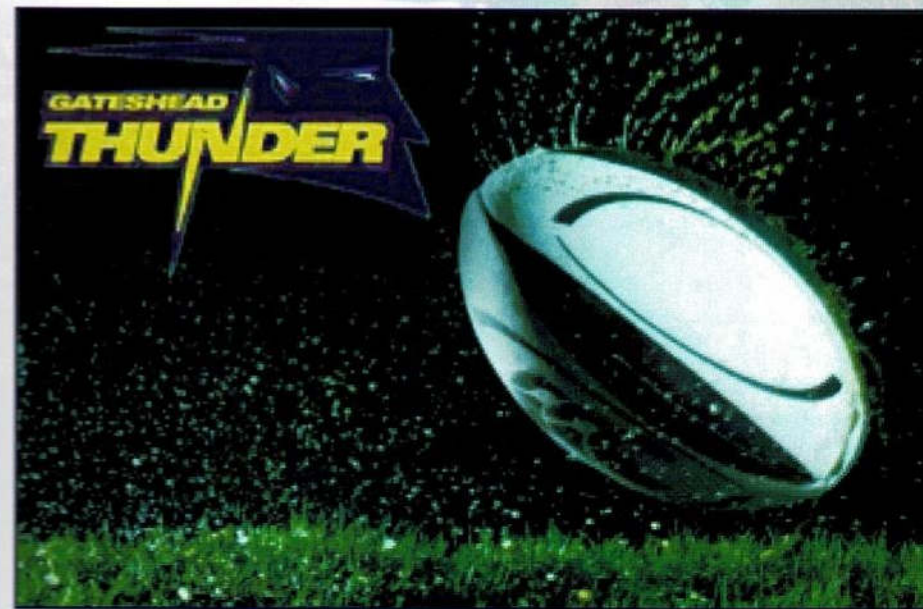
2015 SEASON TICKETS

With the season just about to enter its most exciting phase, the promotion play offs, Thunder supporters can now register their interest for 2015 season tickets.

Whilst full details of the new season packages will only be finalised at the culmination of Thunder's 2014 season the club is keen to ensure all supporters are kept up to date about costs, games covered and other benefits.

With the prospect of big games against big clubs in the offing regardless of the results in the play off phase of the season, as well as a number of exciting announcements due in the coming weeks with regards to the 2015 Thunder squad, next season is sure to be another exciting adventure.

To register your interest in 2015 season cards, call the Thunder ticketline on 0191 214 5588 Monday – Friday 9 – 5 or Saturday 10 – 4



Today's Visitors

Oldham Roughyeds provide today's opposition at the International Stadium, looking to secure second place in the Kingstone Press Championship 1 table ahead of the start of the end of season play offs.



In the two matches between the sides this season, Oldham have taken the spoils on both occasions however, the Roughyeds will wish to restrict Thunder after the home side lead the game at the International Stadium after one half

Averaging five tries a game, the Roughyeds will travel to Tyneside in determined mood, knowing a win will give them crucial home advantage over Hunslet in the first round of the promotion games.

Formed in 1998, Oldham Roughyeds are the continuation of the original Oldham FC, one of the founding members of the Northern Rugby Football Union and which was also one of the founding members of Super League in their guise as Oldham Bears.

A club with a proud history, including three Challenge Cup titles the current squad are looking to build on last year's fine second place in the league and earn the club's first trophy for nearly a quarter of a century.

Oldham began the season a 4 - 18 away win at South Wales Scorpions, in a match that had to be abandoned after 72 minutes when appalling weather conditions and players showing hypothermia like symptoms, left referee Adam Gill with no choice but to call a halt to the game.

In their first home match, the Roughyeds were disappointed to be held to a 20 - 20 draw by a spirited Hemel Stags, after leading 16 - 0 at half time. A 68th minute score for Kenny Hughes had looked to settle the match in favour of the home side however two late tries for the Stags ensured the points were shared.

Following a narrow 16 - 18 away win at London Skolars, Oldham established themselves in second place in the early season running following their comprehensive 52 - 16 win over Thunder at Whitebank Stadium.

Scott Naylor's sides first defeat of the campaign followed as the lost out 28 - 12 away to league leaders Hunslet, before three consecutive wins minimised the damage caused to their title credentials.

This run of victories included a crucial away win at York City Knights when captain Lewis Palfrey scored the winning try three minutes from time.

SUNDAY 31ST AUGUST 2014, 15:00

Round: 23 Official: D Merrick Venue: Gateshead International Stadium

Gateshead Thunder



Oldham RLFC

Stats over last 8 encounters

GATESHEAD THUNDER		OLDHAM RLFC
112	TOTAL POINTS	396
0	TOTAL WINS	8
8	TOTAL LOSSES	0
0	TOTAL DRAWS	0
22	TOTAL TRIES	72
14	TOTAL GOALS	54
0	TOTAL DROP GOALS	0

Head to Head

LAST 8 MEETINGS

- 22nd June 2014: Oldham RLFC win 32-14 at Gateshead International Stadium
- 13th April 2014: Oldham RLFC win 52-16 at Whitebank Stadium
- 30th June 2013: Oldham RLFC win 44-12 at Eilatmoa Park, South Shields
- 26th May 2013: Oldham RLFC win 54-16 at Whitebank Stadium
- 2nd September 2012: Oldham RLFC win 56-12 at Gateshead International Stadium
- 18th March 2012: Oldham RLFC win 40-14 at Whitebank Stadium
- 26th June 2011: Oldham RLFC win 52-16 at Gateshead International Stadium
- 13th March 2011: Oldham RLFC win 66-12 at Whitebank Stadium

Kingstone Press Championship 1

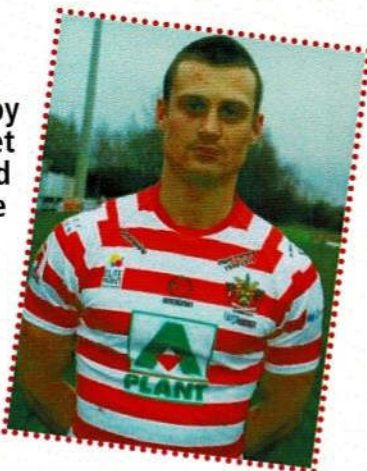
	Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Bonus Pts	Points
1	York	18	15	0	3	680	321	3	48
2	Hunslet	17	13	0	4	612	213	3	42
3	Oldham	17	13	1	3	555	383	1	42
4	Gateshead	18	9	0	9	517	538	3	30
5	Gloucestershire All Golds	17	8	0	9	386	468	5	29
6	Hemel Stags	17	7	1	9	406	437	5	28
7	London Skolars	17	4	0	13	397	561	8	20
8	Oxford	18	6	0	12	442	635	1	19
9	South Wales	17	2	0	15	252	691	3	9

Lewis Palfrey

Club captain Lewis Palfrey began his Rugby League career forming part of the Under 15 set up at Eccles and came through the Salford academy system, and spent two years at the club as a full time professional.

The 23 year old joined Oldham at the start of the 2013 season after abandoning plans to play in Australia for Wollongong and was immediately appointed captain by head coach Naylor, who worked with Palfrey at Salford.

A utility back who is primarily used by the Roughyeds at Scrum Half, Palfrey has been in exceptional form with the boot, scoring 22 goals and one try in the team's nine matches to date. He is a committed player who provides Oldham with many backline options and will direct play with intelligence and maturity.



Dale Bloomfield

One of Oldham's most potent attacking threats, Dale Bloomfield has been in free scoring form this season with eight tries in nine games and is hot on the heels of Thunder's Jason Payne as the league's top try scorer.

Primarily operating as a winger, but equally comfortable at Fullback, Bloomfield has been one of Oldham's most consistent performers since joining from Rochdale in 2013.

He began playing the sport as a junior for amateur club St Maries before becoming a Widnes Vikings scholar.

After a two year spell at St Helens, Bloomfield joined Rochdale Hornets in 2010 where he began to establish his credentials as a lethal scoring threat.

After settling into the club, the 26 year old played in every game in 2011 and 2012, scoring 32 tries in total.

Missing only one game for the Roughyeds last season, Bloomfield went on to score 11 tries from his 23 appearances and has continued his impressive scoring rate this term.



Autographs

- LEE MAPALS
- JACOB BLADES
- JOE BROWN
- TOM CAPPER
- PAUL STAMP
- JAMIE ROONEY
- RICKY HOUGH
- LEE FEWLASS
- RHYS CLARKE
- JASON PAYNE (CAPTAIN)
- SAM BOWERING
- MATTHEW BARRON

- JORDAN MEADS
- JAMES POCKLINGTON
- ALEX RUFF
- JOSH STOKER
- CONOR CONDRON
- IAIN MURRAY
- JOE HODGSON
- CHRIS HEIL
- MATTY BEHARELL
- SONNY ESLEMONT

**GATESHEAD
THUNDER**



VERSUS

**OLDHAM
ROUGHYEDS**



Sunday 31st August - 3pm

COACH



STANLEY GENE

COACH



SCOTT NAYLOR

- TOM WHITEHEAD
- BEN WOOD
- STEVEN NIELD
- DALE BLOOWFIELD
- LEWIS PALFREY
- BRETT ROBINSON
- PHIL JOY
- SAM GEE
- JASON BOULTS
- JOSH CROWLEY
- DANNY LANGTREE
- MARK HOBSON
- ADAM FILES
- PADDY MOONEY
- KENNY HUGHES

- DANNY WHITMORE
- ALEX DAVIDSON
- MICHAEL WARD
- GEORGE TYSON
- DAVID COOKSMITH
- LIAM THOMPSON
- JAKE SHOEL
- EDWIN OKANGA-AIWANG

The Big Interview

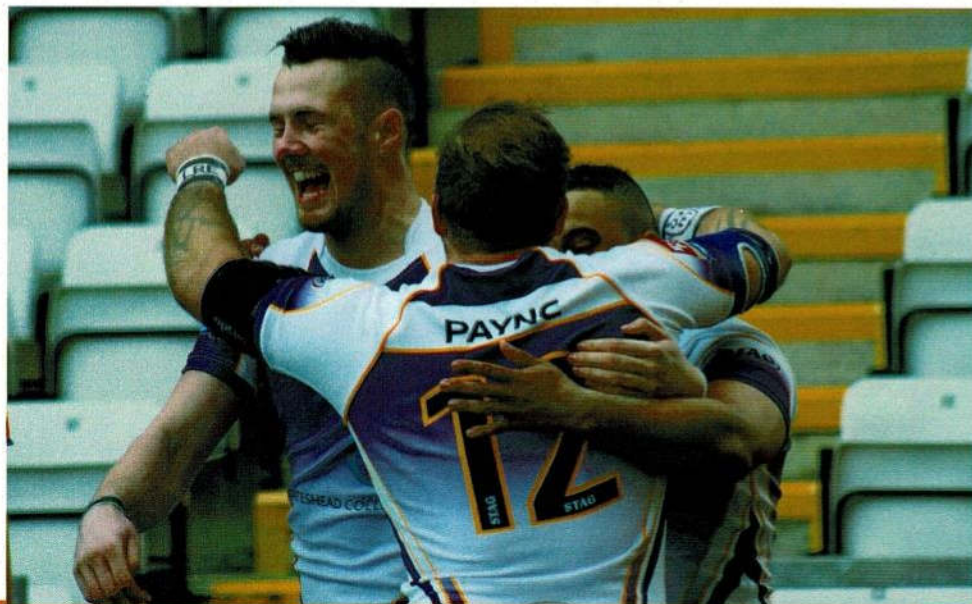
Gateshead Thunder winger Tom Capper has found himself in a fine vein of form of late and playing a big part in the club's continued quest for promotion to the Kingstone Press Championship.

The 21 year old who is now in his third year at the International Stadium bagged a brace of tries against Hemel Stags in the last home game as well as putting himself around the park in recent matches in both attack and defence.

Growing in stature with each match, he is a long way from his first introductions to the game as a nine year old in Warrington.

"Basically it's a big town sport back in home and I overheard a couple of lads back in year five talking about it to their Mum and I thought I want to do that, I was ear-wiggling, so I said I wanted to do it and took it from there."

Having played throughout his formative years, his big opportunity came his way whilst studying at Northumbria University when his performances in the Uni's rugby league side drew the attentions of Thunder captain Jason Payne and videographer Jim Neighbour:



"When I came up to Northumbria University, Kev Neighbour was overlooking the Rugby League trial, and he kind of had an eye on me. Then we got to a BUCS final and I ended up scoring a hat trick, then I pretty much got a phone call from Kev the next day saying do you want to come down and start training with us."

"So it was Kev Neighbour really who gave me the opportunity, along with Jason Payne who was looking at me as well."

With the club currently enjoying its best season in five years, with nine wins from 18 matches and are fully in the hunt for a place in the end of season promotion play offs, Capper thinks their new found form can be

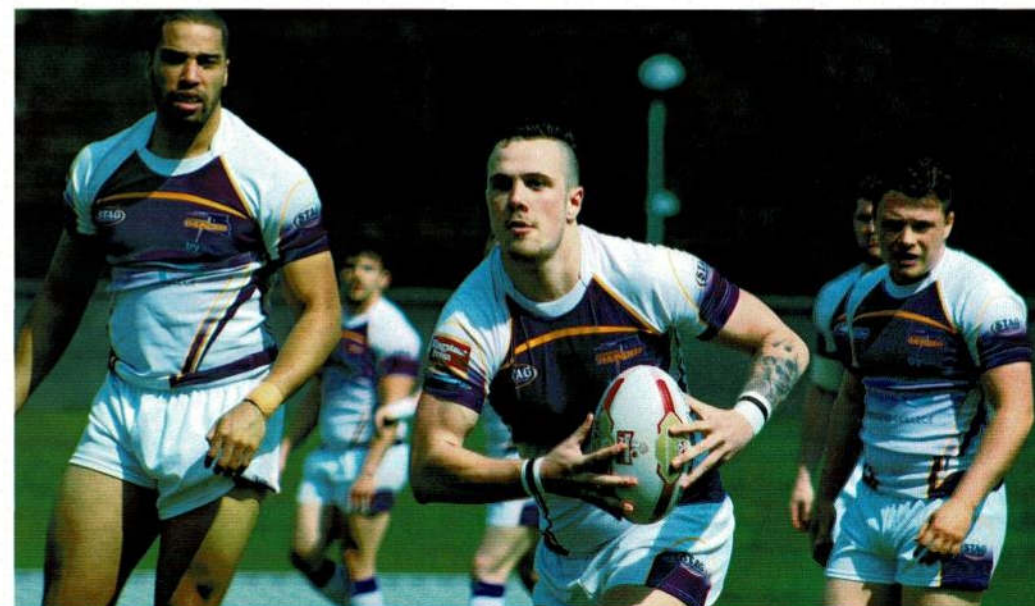
attributed to head coach Stanley Gene.

"I think Stan and the whole set up, the facilities that the coaches give us, has allowed everyone to develop a lot this year. It's just the professionalism that he's brought to the club; I think it's made us a lot more confident with our rugby and not having that losing mentality that we've seen over recent years."

While everyone around the club can be satisfied with the 2014 season already, the players are still very aware of the job still to be done, both terms of making sure of qualifying for the end of season play-offs and of being a competitive force during them.

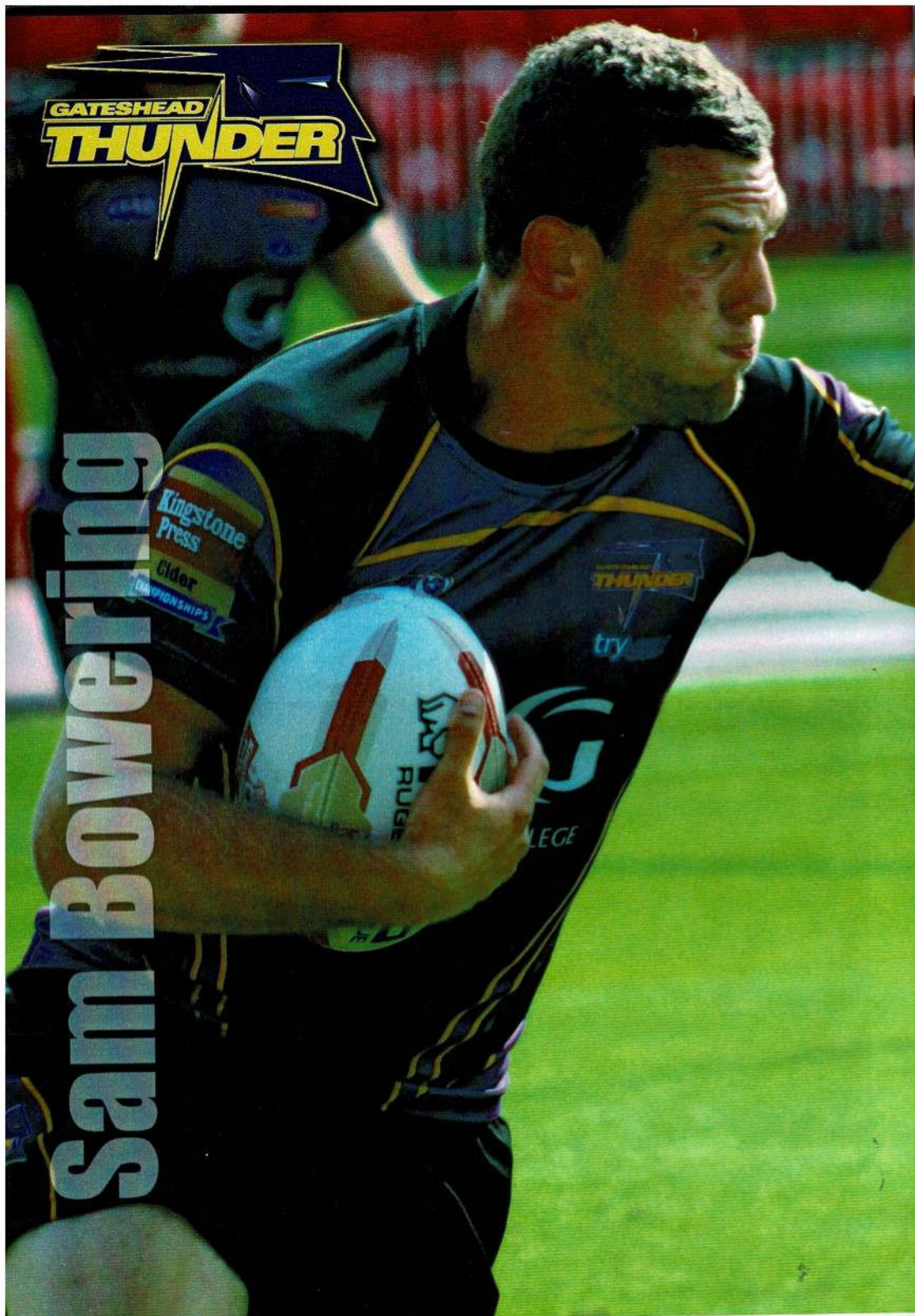
"I think it's just not getting ahead of ourselves, we know what we've got to do and not take anything for granted."

Interview by Stuart Ellis





Sam Bowering



PAUL STAMP INTERVIEW

Thunder Hooker Paul Stamp is enjoying a season on the front foot in 2014 and has been a key component of a Thunder squad that has registered 25 wins from 18 games.

The 25 year old has made 17 appearances, missing only one through injury and has impressed as with aggressive, direct attacks through the middle of opposition defences, earning himself 5 tries across the season. It is the culmination of a journey that Stamp has been on from his formative years.



"The sport is within the family. I'm the youngest of three brothers and all we did as kids was play rugby all the time. I started properly around 7 and I played for the under 10s and I always played an age group above me, which I think was something that was pretty advantageous to me as it meant I learnt quicker."

Started at Norling Sharks, Stamp started his playing career as part of Hull FC scholarship system and remained part of the setup until he was 16 when he was released after being told

he was too little and too skinny to make it. Shrugging off the rejection, Stamp played at West Hull for two years where he was spotted by Hull KR who he represented for two years before re-joining Hull FC for a further two years where he turned out in the reserves.

Turning 21, when no offer was forthcoming to step up to the senior side, Stamp turned his sights north for the continuation of his career. "When I couldn't play 20s anymore, I went to York City Knights where we got promoted and things were looking really good but in the second year there was a change of coaching team and I just didn't feature in their plans and thoughts."

"I joined Gateshead for the final five games of that season on loan and did enough to impress and earn myself a contract and now I am into my third season on Tyneside."

As another player who has been part of the Thunder setup during the dark days from 2010 – 2012, Stamp says that there is a noticeable change in the atmosphere around the club and that it is now a good place to be.

"You can tell even at training the atmosphere is a lot better and this is a club that is going places. The lads are buying into what Stan wants to do. We don't have an over-elaborate or complicated game plan and because we can see it working, we're all sticking to it and buying into the culture he's trying to establish."

"It's nice to be enjoying a strong season because we have had a tough couple of years in spite of having a reasonable team. I think it was just a case that the big boys spent a lot more."

When pressed on what he thinks has made the big change seeing Thunder go from recording the occasional win to being a consistently victorious side, Stamp lays the improvement at the feet of a settled pair of halfbacks.

"I think the key thing we have had this season is a good pair of halfbacks which is critical in this league. We've had those guys all season and they have been settled, which we haven't had in recent seasons."

"Their performance of those guys means I've actually been enjoying the season a lot more as it means I haven't had to fill in at halfback and I can concentrate on my role as hooker, which is where I prefer to play."

In a hugely positive season, Stamp sees many positives to take and while he has his favourite

moments so far, he is also keenly focused on maintaining a play-off push.

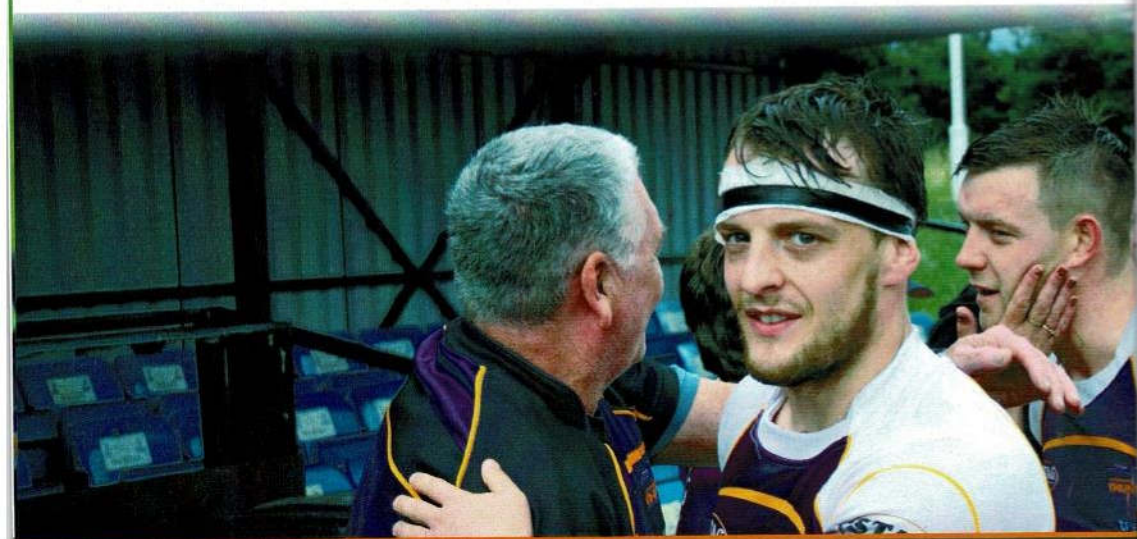
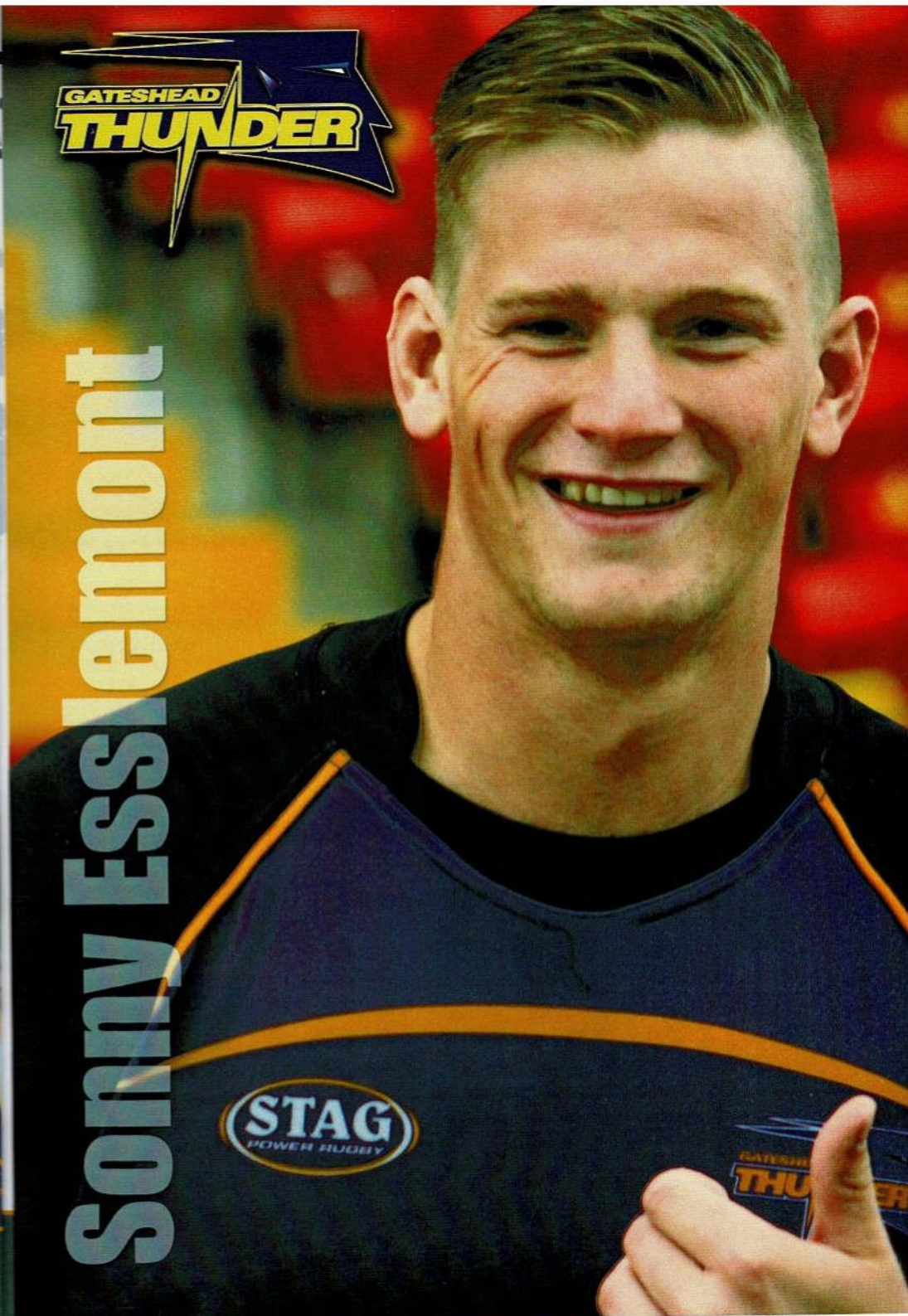
"The wins have obviously been good, as has going up against some of the bigger teams and standing toe to toe with them but from a personal point of view, away to London Skolars was a good game and away at Gloucester, where I got two tries including a length of the field job after intercepting a pass in our own red zone after defending for three straight sets of six."

"On the whole the team performance is more important than individual glory and we need to keep performing to make sure we get into those playoffs."

"In the last few years, play offs weren't something we could think about so now that they are within our grasp we have to take the chance. As a player, I've been able to say proudly this year that I'm a Gateshead Thunder player and getting into the play-offs will just keep that going."



Sonny Esslemont



MATCH REPORT

Gateshead Thunder fell to a narrow 34 – 30 defeat at York City Knights in rugby league's Kingstone Press Championship 1 on Sunday, earning what could be a crucial losing bonus point in their quest for a place in the end of season playoffs.



In truth, it is a result that the Tyneside club can feel disappointed in as for large periods of the match, they looked to have the measure of their host but a litany of penalties for offside at the tackle area saw the home side ease pressure and build a lead. Following a pre match soaking as a heavy storm system passed through the area, both sides started the match tentatively, with neither completing a full set of six in the opening exchanges as they looked to push for territory and force a mistake from their opponents.

It was a tactic that would enable the visitors to draw first blood following a neat 40:20 for half back Matty Beharrell.

Launching a blistering attack on the York line, Chris Wellan's broke through the York defence only to be held up across the line. The respite would only be temporary however as Wellans made sure through an almost identical play on the fourth tackle.

A missed conversion meant York were level on 11 minutes following a move started from a penalty conceded by Thunder for offside. Working their way up field patiently and methodically, the ball was spun quickly wide from the fifth tackle for Ben Mace to dive in for a try under pressure.

Thunder were looking bright in attack and were quickly pressing for a score to respond but repeated penalties for offside were allowing the Knights the opportunity to make inroads into the Thunder half and on 17 minutes one of these infringements would allow York to take the lead.

With a slice of skill and luck, York stabbed the ball through behind the defensive line and as the ball flirted with the dead ball line, the on rushing Ben Reynolds dotting down.

Further penalties were restricting Thunder's progress however they were able to take a deserved lead on 21 minutes through a superb team try finished off by captain Jason Payne.

A clean break from Joe Brown in his own half saw the winger surge into space and up field and while the York cover defence managed to halt his run, the quick line speed of the Thunder support enable the move to continue and create the space for Payne to slice through with the conversion added by Beharrell.

Kingstone Press Championship 1

Sunday 10th August 2014

Huntington Stadium

Att: 571

York Try Scorers Thunder Try Scorers

Ryan Backhouse (51) Matty Beharrell (5)
Jack Aldous (44) Jason Payne (23)
Josh Tonks (40) Joe Brown (59)
James Saltonstall (17) (66) Jordan Meads (70)
Ben Dent (12) Matty Barron (76)
Lee Mapals (78)

York Goals Scorers

Ben Reynolds (40)(41)(44)(52)(66)

Thunder Goals Scorers

Matty Beharrell (23)(76)(78)

York seized back the initiative on the cusp of half time through a converted try and a penalty in the final two minutes of the half but with only a six point deficit and a lot of York's progress coming through their own mistakes, things were looking strong for Thunder.

Not for the first time this season, the opening exchanges after the restart were to prove costly and only two minutes in a sin-binning for Rhys Lovegrove would allow York to extend their lead to through scores from Jack Aldous and Ryan Backhouse.

While Thunder were still pressing forward, they were making their lives difficult and failing to convert their pressure into points as a series of wild passes that failed to find their intended recipient ended promising attacks.

When they scored next, it was as a result of clean, precise hands as Jordan Meads fed Brown into space for an elegant try under pressure to reduce the gap to 14 points.

After conceding a converted try to James Saltonstall as the ball squeezed free in the tackle after being gathered over the try line, the game looked like it would be another tale of a frustrating second half.

Knowing they are locked in a three way tussle for fourth place however, Gateshead had other ideas and embarked on an incredible and almost successful fight-back.

Jordan Meads was the first to strike with fifteen minutes remaining as he gathered his own delicate kick through to reduce the deficit to 16

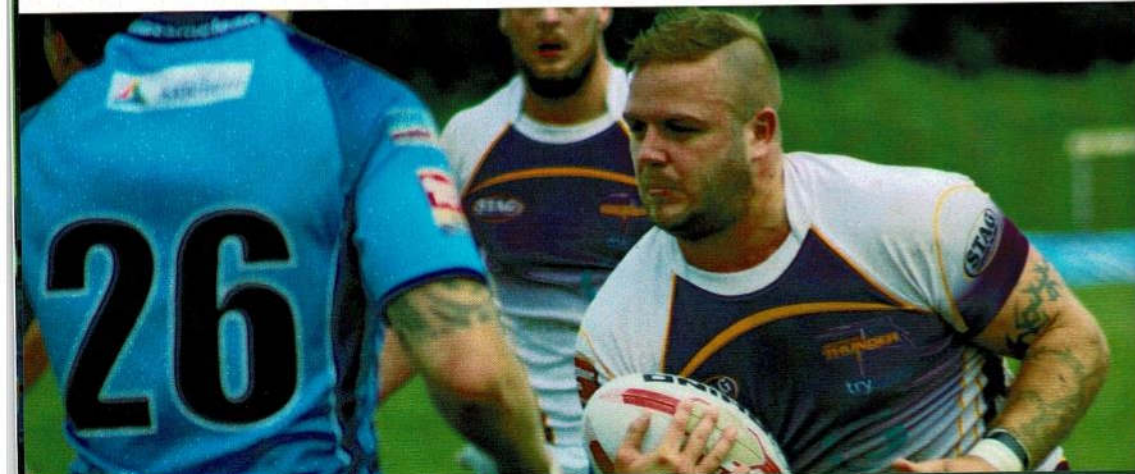
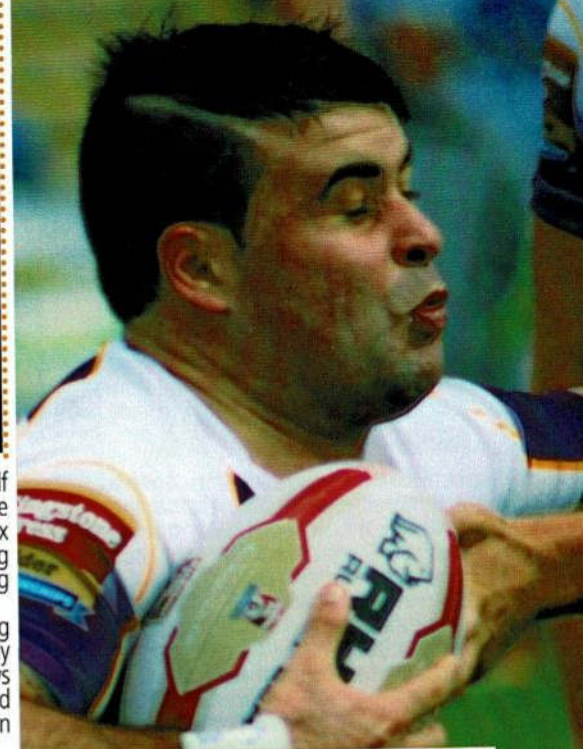
before hard running from Matty Barron earned another try, converted by Beharrell.

With a bonus point now earned, Thunder put themselves into position to press for an unlikely win with a moment of genius.

Earning a scrum on their own 40m line, Beharrell took the pass from the base and seeing an empty field to his left put boot to ball and belted it down field.

It created a footrace between Lee Mapals and the York fullback and with both diving for the ball, it was the closest of calls that went the way of the visitors.

Another successful conversion left the Tyneside club two minutes to find a converted try but in a repeat of the Good Friday game at the International Stadium, they ultimately fell agonisingly short however with three contenders for the last two play-off spots separated by only two points, the losing bonus point could prove crucial.



NEXT HOME MATCH

Gateshead Thunder's next home match is potentially on the weekend of September 13/14 in the first round of the Kingstone Press Championship 1 promotion play offs.

Depending on results this afternoon, the details of the opposition and kick off date and time may be known early next week and should the match be at the International Stadium, tickets will be on sale by September 5th.

Thunder have already recorded victories this season over the two teams likely to form the club's first round opponents but will be hoping to attract a bumper crowd to support the team and drive the lads forward in the play off push.

Tickets, when on sale, will be available by calling 0871 2266060 or by visiting www.thunderrugby.com

Josh Stoker

GATESHEAD
THUNDER

