

TODAY'S SQUADS



**NEWCASTLE
THUNDER**

1 NIELD, Steven	Oldham Self Storage 0161 665 2723
2 CLAY, Adam	Fireplace Superstore 0161 488 4991
4 HOLMES Jack	Oasis Academy Oldham
5 WARD, Jarrod	Beauchamp Properties
6 PALFREY, Lewis	Fireplace Superstore 0161 488 4991
7 ROPER, Steve	Les and Eileen Davison
8 JOY, Phil	Pam Taylor and TTX
9 GEE, Sam	John and Lynda McAndrew
10 NEAL, Adam	ORSA
11 CROWLEY, Josh	John and Lynda McAndrew
12 LANGTREE, Danny	Charlotte Gothard and Daniel Haigh
13 THOMPSON, Liam	ORSA
14 FILES, Adam	Rita Walton
15 OWEN, Gareth	Bev, Kelly and Paul Hulbert
16 HUGHES, Kenny	Rita Walton
17 TYSON, George	Mick Harrop
18 JOY, Richard	Frankie and Benny's, Oldham 0161 624 7745
19 WARD, Michael	Sylvia, David and Margaret
20 DEMPSEY, Tom	WILSCAFF 07855 265071
22 MASON, Nathan	ORLFC Past Players' Association
23 FORD, Jonathan	Oasis Academy Oldham
25 ASHTON, Tom	Oasis Academy Oldham

Louis Sherriff
Stu Kain
Ali Blair
Joe Brown
Tom Capper
Matty Beharrell
Matty Marsh
Matty Barron
Evan Simons
Josh Stoker
Jason Payne
Dayne Craig
Rhys Clarke
Craig Boot
Sonny Esslemont
Steve Holker
Fran Welsh
Mark Mexico
Jason Tali
Charlie Wabo
Sebastien Martins
Benn Hardcastle
Connor Clayton
Jordan Meads
Ryan Macdonald

Officials: Referee, Dave Merrick;
Res. J Pulein; TJ, S Daniel; TJ, G Dolan;
Match Commissioner: P Crashley.
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OLDHAM V **NEWCASTLE
THUNDER**

SUNDAY 17th
MAY 2015
KICK-OFF 3pm

ISSUE #7 / £2.00
OFFICIAL
MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

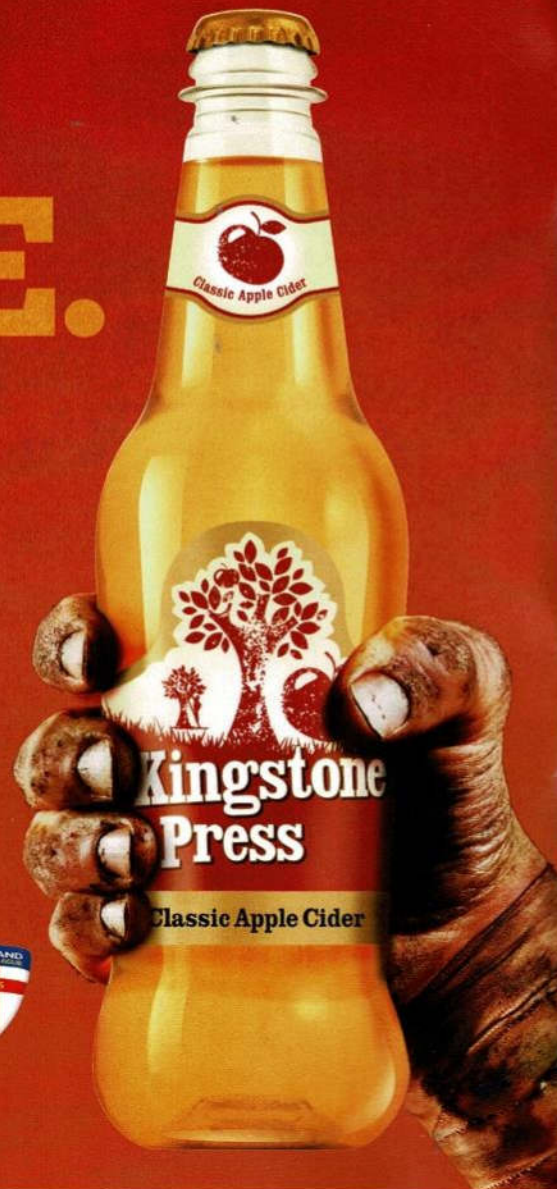
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X --- O X O
NATTER WITH NOBBY
O X --- O X

HELLO everyone and welcome to today's huge encounter against Newcastle Thunder at the Whitebank Stadium. The team and the club we play today are a fantastic example of what can happen to a club when investment and quality coaching join forces.

Formerly known as Gateshead, today's opponents used to languish around the bottom of the table, but it's a totally different scenario this season with the addition of some experienced, quality players, allied to the coaching of Stanley Gene.

Stanley is an excellent coach and a good, honest, straight-forward type of person, which is how and why he gets the best out of his lads on game day. I'm absolutely sure that come the end of the season Newcastle will be in the running for promotion or a place in the play-offs, which is why today's game will be extremely difficult and a huge challenge for your Oldham players. It is, nevertheless, one I'm sure

they're looking forward to.

Last week's game against Barrow was a disappointment, to be honest. We never really gave ourselves a chance in the match because of the way we played and our lack of control on the game at important moments.

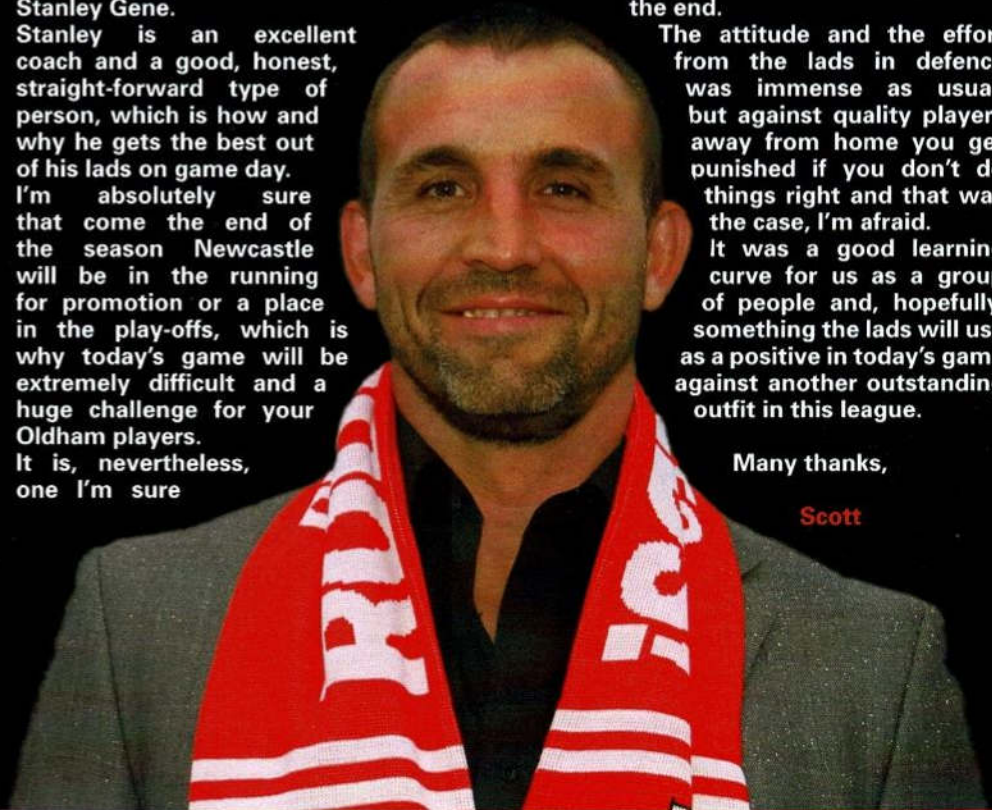
Sometimes, at places like Barrow, it's okay to be boring and to grind out a win, but we just didn't get into a set-for-set routine and, unfortunately, the lack of possession, combined with a huge penalty deficit, eventually cost us in the end.

The attitude and the effort from the lads in defence was immense as usual, but against quality players away from home you get punished if you don't do things right and that was the case, I'm afraid.

It was a good learning curve for us as a group of people and, hopefully, something the lads will use as a positive in today's game against another outstanding outfit in this league.

Many thanks,

Scott



Behind Closed Doors with... RICHARD JOY

Who are your heroes or people you look up to?

Mum and Dad, always there to support me, and in rugby terms my brother Phillip, who supports and helps me to become a better player.

Do you play other sports and if so do you excel in them?

I played cricket for a while but I wasn't that great at it.

What is the highlight of your career so far?

Making my professional debut for Oldham

If you could invite two people for dinner, dead or alive, who would they be?

Adrian Morley and Albert Einstein

If your house was hit by an earthquake what, or who, would you save first?

Probably my laptop, it's got all my uni work on it.

Who's the funniest of your team mates and why?

Can't really say, most of the team make me laugh in different ways.

Which TV programme would you never miss?

Love watching 'Family Guy'.

What was the last book you read?

I sometimes read 'The Economist'.

What's your favourite type of music?

I listen to anything, but I most like Eminem

How do you relax after a match?

Phillip and I sometimes have a couple of cans.

Finally... tell me a secret.

I have a hamster.



A CHAT WITH CHRIS



WELCOME to Whitebank for today's big clash against Newcastle Thunder.

Before talking about the game, I would like to share my thoughts on the tragic events down at London Skolars two weeks ago when, sadly, Danny Jones passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest.

For that to happen to anyone while playing sport is devastating in itself, but for it to happen to a 29-year-old with a young wife and five-month-old twin daughters, merely adds to the enormous sense of loss and tragedy.

We cannot begin to imagine what his wife, family and friends are going through and it goes without saying that everybody connected with the Oldham club sends sincere condolences to them all.

Those pitch-side events of two weeks ago will have intensified the utter devastation of Danny's playing friends and of all the coaching staff and support staff of Keighley Cougars.

We know from our own experiences here at Oldham how close everybody is in an occupation that, in many ways, is hugely demanding and to witness such a tragedy involving a member of the closely-knit group must have been totally heart-wrenching.

To see it happen at "work" and to a fit, young man like Danny in an environment of elite athletes will be incredibly hard for everyone to come to terms with.

As ever in times of tragedy or distress, the rugby

league community has rallied around Danny's family and around the Keighley club.

The money raised so far will, hopefully, provide some kind of stability for his wife and children in the years ahead. We are having our own bucket collection today and to echo the words of Gary Fawcett, the Keighley chairman, please put in as much as you can as every pound will help to create a lasting memory.

The demands on players to perform as they do week in and week out are perhaps only truly appreciated when something like this happens. Their dedication should never be underestimated.

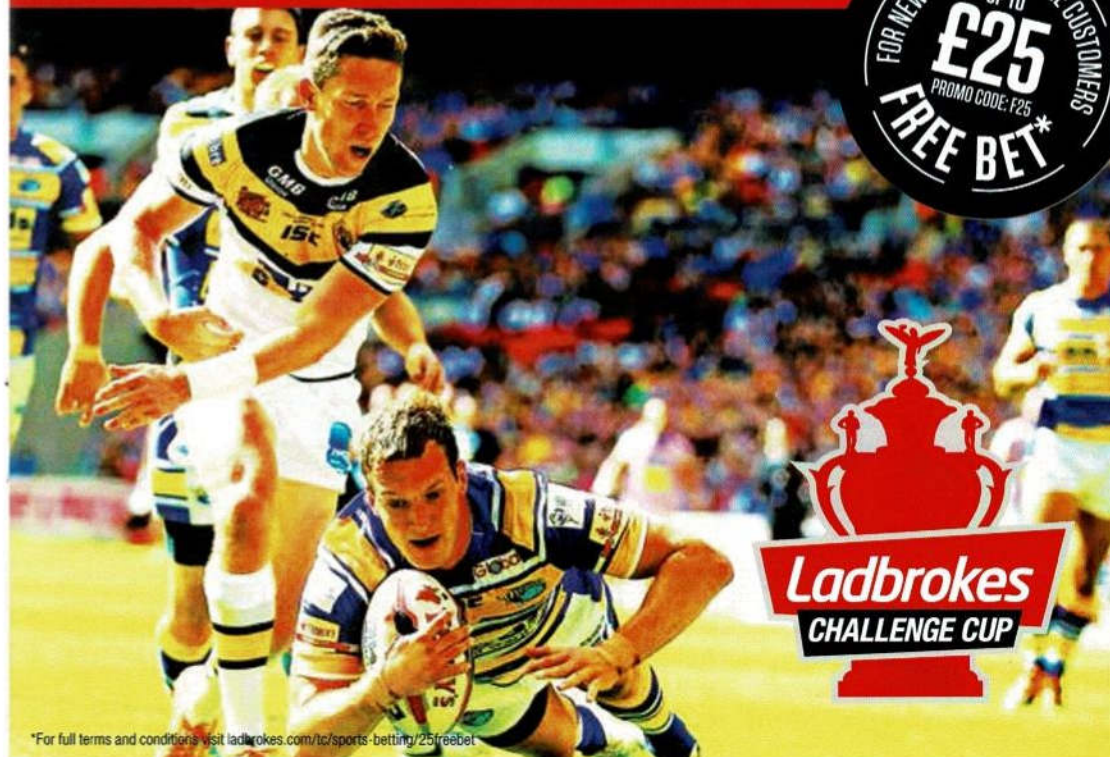
Today's game is the second of a group of four that will really test us. Last week at Barrow was a disappointment because we didn't help ourselves. At half time I was convinced that if we would cut out the penalties against us we would win.

It wasn't to be but, if nothing else, it was a stark reminder that in the big games it's small margins that make all the difference.

Today gives us another of those games. Thanks to new investment in their club, Thunder will be arriving with hopes of another victory. We have to make sure they don't get it. Enjoy the game and be vocal in your support of the lads.

Chris

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Club and fans' group issue statements as next meeting is fixed for June 1

MANY of you will know that club chairman Chris Hamilton met with a five-strong group of supporters recently to listen to their "concerns" about the club and its future. Another meeting has been arranged for June 1, to which representatives of Rugby Oldham will be invited.

The first meeting was a positive one which covered lots of ground, after which both club and supporters issued the following statements:

Statement from club:

IN a statement from the club, chairman Chris Hamilton said he made a commitment a few weeks ago to meet a group of supporters with concerns in relation to several club matters and this meeting was the positive outcome.

The list of concerns was discussed at length. The meeting was a productive one in which views on both sides were openly expressed, even to the point where some of those present were honest enough to state that, in more recent times, they had not attended matches regularly at Whitebank.

The future of the club and its prosperity on and off the field was the main focus and, while acknowledging that the club does have areas of its operation in which it can make improvements, there was also an acceptance of the role supporters can play in various ways to move the club forward.

The club was happy to approach Rugby Oldham to invite them to be represented at the next meeting on 1st of June and to seek assistance from the RFL's digital development team in order to upgrade and improve its social media and digital communication with the fan base. By the next meeting we aim to be in a position to move things further forward.

It is important to stress that this entire process is still in its infancy. We need to ensure that the exceedingly promising start to the 2015 season, made by coaching staff and players, gets the full backing of supporters old and new while club and fans together work in concert to achieve similar success off the field.

In the period between now and the next meeting it

would be extremely encouraging to all concerned, and hugely beneficial to the club which is at the centre of all our affections, to see at least some of those supporters who consider themselves to be "lapsed" back at Whitebank cheering on the great bunch of lads who are proud to wear the Oldham jersey.

Statement from the fans' group

The supporters who met with Roughyeds chairman Chris Hamilton have released details of the background to the meeting and the discussions which took place.

We don't claim to be the most regular attendees at matches or to have a particular business insight. Nor are we formally appointed representatives of all supporters. We just got fed up of moaning about some of the issues that had been heightened by low recent attendance figures and decided to try and do something about it.

We speak to other fans on a daily basis: socially, in person; at games; and on social media. We wrote to Chris Hamilton, highlighting some issues and requesting a meeting with him to discuss them. We raised an agenda to focus on what we know are fans' main concerns:

- the location of Whitebank Stadium and the condition or absence of supporter facilities
- a lack of regular structured two way communication between club and fans
- lack of effective club website with dynamic content and feedback opportunities
- poor use of social media
- lack of clarity on the club's overall financial position
- an opportunity for fans to own some or all of the club through a Supporters' Trust, as at Rochdale and other clubs

Mr Hamilton was happy to meet with us and proposed the date and time.

The meeting was very positive. Chris was happy to admit that there are areas the club needs to take action to address. Equally we were happy to hear his point of view as he outlined some of the issues the club faces and the areas he would like supporters to help.

Chris acknowledged that facilities at Whitebank are below a minimum standard supporters should expect. He is personally disappointed by this but various issues have so far limited any development.

However, he stated that he is hopeful that an imminent announcement will contribute to massive improvement possibilities at Whitebank. He is adamant that the site can be made to meet Championship level stadium criteria and arrangements will be in place to allow the club to take its place in the Championship should we secure promotion.

Mr Hamilton was also keen to scotch rumours that Whitebank has a restriction or covenant on the land that would prevent further development. There is no such restriction. Lease arrangements will also not limit building and he believes development plans will create a fit for purpose facility for players and fans alike.

Chris committed to hold a meeting focusing on the stadium development schedule, as part of this series of meetings.

On the subject of the club's overall financial position Chris confirmed that the club has historical debt, and that the huge majority of this debt is in the form of director loans, owed to him.

However, he takes great pride in the fact that the club always meets its responsibilities to its employees and statutory creditors. This cannot be said of many clubs. Annual operating losses are relatively low, despite current revenue levels, and this could be redressed with small revenue increases. Larger revenue increases are needed to generate profit for development.

The club's communication, marketing and digital media plans were discussed in detail. Supporters offered ideas and examples to impress upon the club's management the importance of effective



engagement with fans, partners and the wider world.

Mr Hamilton committed to seek advice and support from the RFL's digital development team and others to develop a communication plan for the club. Supporters offered personal expertise to help in this area.

Supporters asked if the club would develop stronger links with Rugby Oldham, the existing Rugby League Community Trust for Oldham.

Supporters believe the Trust may have expertise and funding which could benefit the development of the club. Supporters suggested that representatives of Rugby Oldham could attend future meetings. Chris committed to pursue closer ties with the Trust and said he was more than happy to invite Rugby Oldham to future meetings.

Finally supporters questioned if Mr Hamilton would be open to any level of supporter ownership of the club through a properly constituted Supporters Trust such as Rugby Oldham. Chris stated that he is open to discussing ANY level of supporter ownership of the club, through any supporter group including Rugby Oldham.

Rugby Oldham has since stated they welcome the opportunity to develop closer links with the club, and will be happy to attend future meetings.

The next meeting has been set for the 1st of June. The detailed agenda for this meeting has not yet been set although Mr Hamilton will report back on progress with stadium development and the communications and social media plan. Closer working with the Supporter's Trust and the possibility of supporter ownership will also be explored in more detail.



APPEARANCES AND SCORERS

(Cup and league, 11 possible)

	App	DG	Gls	Tries	Pts
ASHTON, Tom	2	—	—	1	4
BROUGHTON, Jodie	1	—	—	2	8
CLAY, Adam	8	—	—	9	36
CROWLEY, Josh	11	—	—	4	16
DEMPSEY, Tom	3	1	2	1	9
FILES, Adam	8	—	—	—	—
FORD, Jn	5	—	—	7	28
GEE, Sam	9	—	—	3	12
HOLMES, Jack	10	—	—	7	28
HUGHES, Kenny	9	—	—	—	—
JOHNSON, Josh	4	—	—	2	8
JOY, Phil	10	—	—	—	—
JOY, Richard	3	—	—	2	8
LANGTREE, Danny	8	—	—	3	12
LEARMONTH, Micky	2	—	—	2	8
MASON, Nathan	9	—	—	2	8
NEAL, Adam	10	—	—	1	4
NIELD, Steven	6	—	—	3	12
OWEN, Gareth	10	—	—	1	4
PALFREY, Lewis	10	—	40	1	84
ROBERTS, Oliver	1	—	—	—	—
ROPER, Steve	9	1	6	—	13
THOMPSON, Liam	10	—	—	3	12
TYSON, George	10	—	—	6	24
WARD, Jarrod	10	—	—	4	16
WARD, Michael	9	—	—	3	12



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A 'Magic Moment' to set the ball rolling...

THE popular 'Touch Rugby League' programme, which we ran last summer at Oasis Academy Oldham, opened up again last Wednesday under the leadership of our community coach, Danny Newall. Sessions will be held every Wednesday, from 7pm to 9pm, at Oasis on Hollins Road and admission is £3 per person per week. Just turn up any Wednesday to enrol and play. As a one-off at Wednesday's first session there was a Magic Moment prize, comprising of a rugby ball and a bag of 'Touch Rugby League' goodies.

Community coach Danny, aged 21, comes from Widnes and has been involved with rugby of both codes since he was a small boy. He said: "Touch' is

the RFL's fastest-growing project and this year they are supporting it more than ever. There are rewards for clubs and individuals who achieve targets and it promises to be another exciting season.

"It's all about having fun. Last summer, we developed a good team spirit, a lot of new friendships were forged and each Wednesday we always had lots of laughs while keeping fit and throwing a rugby ball around. While 'touch' is fantastic for fitness and losing weight it's also about having fun and enjoying playing a non-contact brand of rugby. I hope to see loads of participants down at Oasis on Wednesday evenings — it's a great way to keep fit and to have fun with a rugby ball."

Book review

From Watersheddings to Whitebank

An Oldham Rugby League Memoir
by Craig Halstead

Foreword by Chris Hamilton

Rugby league has been played professionally in Oldham since 1895 when the great split from rugby union took place. In the ensuing 120 years, teams representing Oldham have graced rugby league grounds in England, Wales, France and Australia. Over that time, there have been many ups-and-downs for Oldham. The highlights include a Championship Final win in 1957, Lancashire Cup Final wins, Second Division Championship and Premiership titles and several promotions. However, there have also been numerous Challenge Cup semi-final defeats, losing finals and relegations.

In 1997, the original club went into liquidation, but in the immediate aftermath of this distressing event, a new club rose like a phoenix from the ashes of the old club. It continues to provide the town of Oldham with a professional rugby league club of which it can be proud.

This book is one supporter's memories, stories, heartbreaking and joyous moments and anecdotes. It provides an insight into how supporting a club – or in this case two clubs – from childhood can provide a lifetime of emotions and experiences, both good and bad.

Craig Halstead first saw an Oldham match, aged 5, in 1971 and has supported Oldham's rugby league team ever since. He attended many matches at Watersheddings, the original club's home, regularly took in away matches and now, despite living in North Wales, watches the new club at Whitebank Stadium whenever he can.



CRAIG HALSTEAD, the author

Information about the book:

ISBN: 9781909885080;

Price: £11.95 (paperback);

208 pages, illustrated with photographs.

Published on 11 May 2015.

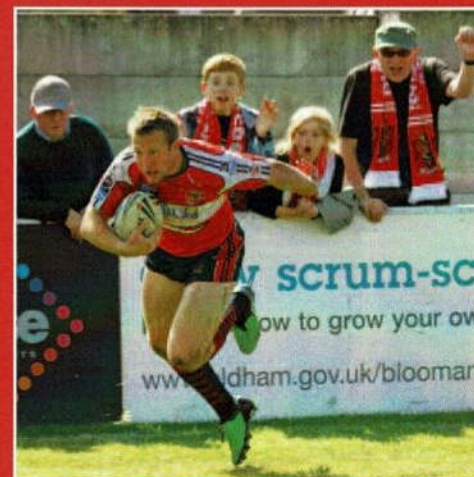
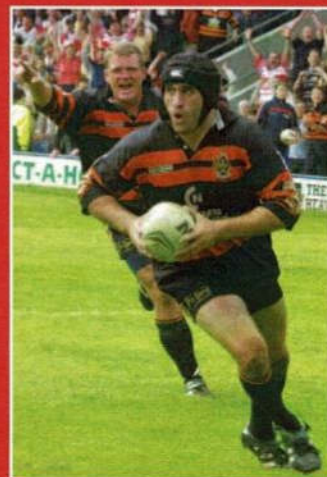
The book is available at a special offer price of £10.95 post free in the UK from London League Publications Ltd, PO Box 65784, London NW2 9NS (credit card orders via www.llpshop.co.uk), or can be ordered from any bookshop at £11.95 and will be available after 11 May 2015 on Amazon.co.uk and Abebooks.co.uk.

An E-Book for Kindle readers is available on Amazon.



from Watersheddings to Whitebank

An Oldham Rugby League Memoir



Craig Halstead

Foreword by Chris Hamilton

Danger men... three to watch in Thunder ranks

Dayne Craig

Highly rated Australian hooker Dayne Craig arrived at Kingston Park over the winter with a burgeoning reputation within the game having attracted the attention of a number of English clubs.

Thunder beat off strong competition from, among others, Barrow Raiders to land the 25 year old, who enjoyed his best season to date in 2014.

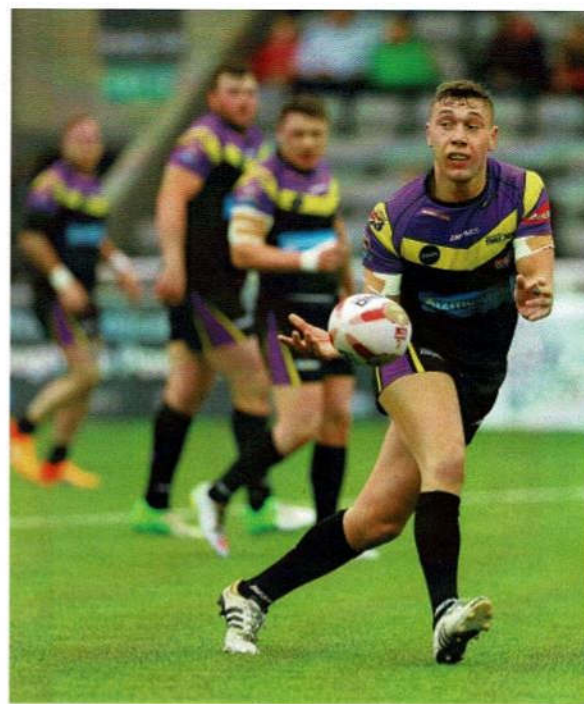
Craig arrives in the North East from Sydney-based Western Suburb Magpies, where he won the Player of the Year accolade in the 2014 Ron Massey Cup.

Able to play in a multitude of positions and with a decent goal kicking boot on him too, Craig scored four tries and 77 goals on his way to that award, playing in all 22 of the Magpies' regular season games and using the cup competition's bye weekends to gain NSW cup experience with West Tigers.

As a player who came to the game relatively late, spending much of his youth in soccer, Craig's performances are even more noteworthy. Many are tipping him to make a name for himself in the English game this season with Thunder.



Dayne Craig



Evan Simons

Evan Simons

Simons (22) arrived at Thunder with a growing reputation within the game after an impressive four years.

The hooker played both Rugby Union and Rugby League, beginning his career in the 13-man code at the Widnes Viking Academy.

He represented England in the student four nations competition in 2011, when he was named as England's player of the tournament and in 2012, when he finished as the competition's top try scorer.

Off the back of these exploits, Simons agreed terms with London Skolars, before moving to Hemel Stags for 2014.

Making a big impact in 21 appearances, in which he scored six tries, Simons was selected as the Hemel coaches' Player of the Season at the end of the year.

A player known for his aggressive defence, he has worked his way from interchange bench to regular starting 13 and captained Thunder against his old Hemel team last weekend, a match the Thunder won 12 - 58.

Matty Beharrell

Having spent the 2014 season on loan with the club, scrum half Beharrell has made a permanent switch to the North East as he looks to build on an impressive season in a Thunder shirt.

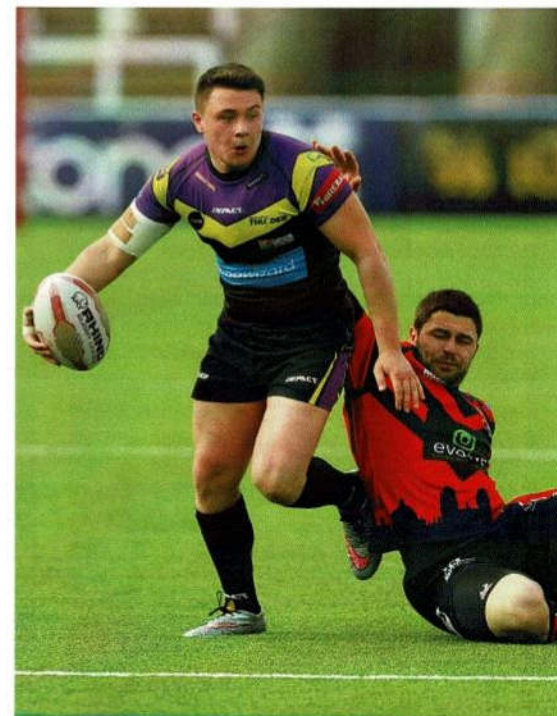
It is a massive feather in the club's cap to attract a player of Beharrell's calibre and to win his signature over Hull Kingston Rovers, where the player had been since the age of 12.

The 22 year old was a near ever present for Stanley Gene's side in Kingstone Press Championship 1 and made some telling contributions in games throughout the campaign.

These included a coolly taken extra time, golden point drop goal against Hemel Stags in the Elimination play off game last September, which he describes as his best moment in the sport to date.

Often standing out, even when sharing a pitch with players on loan from Super League clubs, Beharrell shows great game awareness as he takes the team around the field.

One of the smallest players in the team, he is still tenacious around the tackle area and always proves himself a tough opponent.



Matty Beharrell

Thunder is a rumbling in the North-East

Focus on today's visitors

By ANDREW ROBSON (Thunder media manager)

NEWCASTLE Thunder arrive at Whitebank today for a top-of-the-table clash in Kingstone Press League 1, looking to continue an impressive start to the season by the North-East club.

With more than a quarter of the regular season played, Thunder are equal on points with the Roughyeds and know they will need to be at their best in order to take the points back to Kingston Park at the end of today's proceedings.

In their first full season under the Newcastle Rugby Ltd umbrella, Thunder currently sit with five wins from six matches, having beaten Barrow Raiders and Oxford at Kingston Park and North Wales Crusaders, Rochdale Hornets and Hemel Stags on the road.

Having bowed out of the 2014 promotion play-offs at the semi-final stage, (to ultimate champions Hunslet Hawks), Thunder's management immediately set about strengthening their squad to ensure they could remain competitive in a league that would welcome five teams from the division above in 2015.

Adding 20 new faces to the roster, through new signings and the promotion of juniors from the North-East academy, the headline-grabbing part of that process came in November, 2014, when the club announced the signing of Papua New Guinea stars Mark Mexico, Jason Tali and Charlie Wabo.

They were joined by another quality overseas signing in Dayne Craig from Western Suburb Magpies, but most of the new recruits brought in to bolster Stanley Gene's squad were talented UK players.

They included scrum half Matty Beharrell, who made a permanent switch to Tyneside after spending the 2014 season on loan from Hull KR; Fran Welsh, who returned from Australian outfit Youngs Cherry-pickers; and Benn Hardcastle, who headed back to Thunder after a season at York City Knights.

Stuart Kain returned to his native North-East from Hunslet Hawks; Evan Simons moved North after enjoying a good season with Hemel Stags; Louis Sheriff made a complete switch from Dewsbury Rams following a loan spell; and Connor Clayton arrived from Newcastle University and Halifax.

The club also made use of connections in the amateur ranks to unearth untapped talent, including Craig Boot, who joined from Bramley Buffalos and North-East centre Ali Blair, who arrived from rugby union side Percy Park.

Thunder also retained the core of their impressive 2014 squad, including captain Jason Payne, Matty Barron, Joe Brown, Rhys Clarke, Kiwi playmaker Jordan Meads and Scotland prop Ryan Macdonald.

Following a successful pre season campaign and a run to the semi-finals of the new iPro Sport Cup, Thunder were ready for the League One campaign.

Having suffered only one league defeat to date, against Keighley at home, and still striving to find the level of performance that enabled them to beat Oldham 40-14 at Gateshead when the teams last met in August, 2014, Thunder arrive at Whitebank expecting an entertaining encounter.



Stanley Gene... doing a great job on Tyneside

Danny Jones RIP 1986-2015 A tragic loss

AS you will surely all be aware, our sport suffered a tragic loss two weeks ago with the death of Danny Jones.

Danny fell ill playing for Keighley Cougars at London Skolars in a League 1 fixture and sadly passed away from a suspected cardiac arrest on that same Sunday afternoon. He was just 29.

During his career, Danny played for Ovenden, Halifax, Keighley and Wales and was a hugely popular character, who will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

A Just Giving fund set up to help Danny's wife Liz and their five-month-old twins Bobby and Phoebe has already raised an incredible amount of money and we would ask all Rugby League fans to give what they can to help reach the fund's initial target of £100,000 and beyond.

We will be holding a bucket collection at today's game against Newcastle Thunder and we would ask that you donate as generously as possible.

On the day of Danny's tragic passing and

on behalf of everyone at Oldham RLFC, coaches, staff, players and supporters, our chairman Chris Hamilton sent messages of condolence to Danny's family and all at the Keighley club via Cougars chairman Gary Fawcett and coach Paul March.

Since then, the Rugby League Family has rallied round as it always does in times like this and the Cougars chairman now wants the fund-raising to pass £1,000,000 before the end of the season when Keighley are scheduled to play Wales in a friendly.

Last Sunday more than 4,000 people crammed into Cougar Park to support the Jones family and to pay their respects to the former Welsh international, who left an indelible impression of friendship, sportsmanship and companionship on all his team mates at every level of our sport from amateur to international.

Keighley have retired Danny's No 6 jersey with immediate effect and they are to re-name the main stand at Cougar Park 'The Danny Jones Stand'.

OLDHAM v LONDON SKOLARS

Liam Thompson scores against the Skolars



Sammy Gee takes on Anthony Cox



BARROW v OLDHAM



Gareth Owen scores a great try





FIXTURES & RESULTS

2015 March

L1Cup	Sunday 1st	COVENTRY	H	W 42 - 6
LCC(3)	Sunday 8th	COVENTRY	H	W 46 - 6
L1Cup	Sunday 15th	Barrow	A	W 32 - 10
LCC(4)	Sunday 22nd	Sheffield	A	L 20 - 44

2015 April

KPL1	Friday 3rd	ROCHDALE	A	W 23 - 16
L1Cup	Wednesday 8th	NW Crusaders	H	L 18 - 16
KPL1	Sunday 12th	COVENTRY	H	W 38 - 10
KPL1	Sunday 19th	SOUTH WALES	A	W 50 - 12
KPL1	Sunday 26th	LONDON SKOLARS	H	W 48 - 6

2015 May

KPL1	Sunday 3rd	GLOUCESTER	H	W 33 - 30
KPL1	Saturday 9th	BARROW	A	L 18 - 30
KPL1	Sunday 17th	NEWCASTLE	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 31st	KEIGHLEY	A	3:00pm

2015 June

KPL1	Sunday 7th	NORTH WALES	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 14th	OXFORD	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 21st	SWINTON	A	3:00pm
KPL1	Saturday 27th	GLOUCESTER	A	3:00pm

2015 July

KPL1	Sunday 5th	YORK	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 12th	ROCHDALE	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 19th	LONDON	A	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 26th	NORTH WALES	A	2:30pm

2015 August

KPL1	Sunday 2nd	KEIGHLEY	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 9th	HEMEL	A	2:30pm
KPL1	Sunday 16th	NEWCASTLE	A	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 23rd	BARROW	H	3:00pm

2015 September

KPL1	Sunday 6th	SWINTON	H	3:00pm
KPL1	Sunday 13th	OXFORD	A	3:00pm

Chris backs 'exciting' bid from Toronto

CHRIS Hamilton, chairman of Oldham RL Club, has welcomed as "exciting" ambitious plans to enter a Canadian team into Kingstone Press League One next year.

The trans-Atlantic proposal has been a hot topic in the sport for some time – and the RFL is now believed to have had a formal application for League One entry in 2016 from a consortium based in Toronto.

To cut down on flights and other travel expenses, the Canadians want to play four games in a row in their country and then four in a row here, and so on throughout the season.

It is also thought that they are willing to pay the travel expenses of their English opponents, as well as their own.

Despite the apparent enormity of such a project for third-tier clubs employing only part-time players, the RFL is believed to be looking at it favourably.

Said Chris: "The Canadians did a presentation to our clubs last year and got a very positive reaction.

"You immediately think of distance and cost but they will cover all the costs and they tell us its only five hours on a plane, which is not much longer than it takes us to go to South Wales on a bus.

"Some folk were wary because of the logistics of players having to get time off work, but all things considered I think the majority of clubs, players and fans would be very excited by it.

"I was put in touch with the Canadians last year after the visit to Whitebank by the RAF side, who had been on tour to Canada where they were surprised and impressed by the size of the crowds at rugby league games and the enthusiasm of the locals.

"It all came about because the people behind the plan to put a club side in League One had once had business interests over here.

"While they were here they watched Super League on television and were enthralled by its speed, skill and physicality.

"It will certainly be interesting to see how it all works out."

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HOW WE STAND Kingstone Press League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Keighley Cougars	5	5	0	0	193	80	113	10
OLDHAM	6	5	0	1	210	104	106	10
Newcastle Thunder	6	5	0	1	184	123	61	10
Rochdale Hornets	6	4	0	2	180	95	85	8
Barrow Raiders	6	3	0	3	216	136	80	6
York City Knights	5	3	0	2	168	98	70	6
North Wales Crusaders	5	2	1	2	128	95	33	5
Swinton Lions	5	2	1	2	136	134	2	5
Oxford	5	2	0	3	119	164	-45	4
Gloucester All Golds	6	2	0	4	144	193	-49	4
Coventry Bears	6	2	0	4	124	193	-69	4
Hemel Stags	6	2	0	4	128	213	-85	4
London Skolars	5	1	0	4	82	168	-86	2
South Wales Scorpions	6	0	0	6	54	270	-216	0

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

WELL, does every minute matter for you this season? The RFL keep rolling out their 2015 slogan and while it won't work for every fan of every club in the three divisions (Wakefield supporters might certainly pour scorn on it), I can see where the sport's PR chaps are coming from, certainly from the perspective of somebody with affiliations to a club which has a realistic chance of finishing in the top five of Kingstone Press League One.

In this division every minute DOES matter for a club with realistic ambitions of being up there at the business end of the season with promotion to the Championship as the ultimate prize.

At this juncture it might be worthwhile to remind everyone that there is NO automatic promotion from League One this year.

The teams finishing first and second will play each other for the right to go up and the losers will then go into a separate four-club play-off with teams finishing third, fourth and fifth to determine who will fill the second promotion spot.

There are critics of the play-off system, but it is widely accepted these days in football as well as rugby and it is of particular relevance in a competition like League One, in which we don't have every team playing each other home and away. In that context we don't have a "genuine" division, plus a lot more minutes matter for a lot more clubs and fans when there's a tangible

reward for finishing in the top five as opposed to, say, the top two.

So, with a quarter of the 22-match programme gone, how are things shaping up? Perhaps not unexpectedly, we can already see signs of a north-south divide with Oxford, Gloucester, Coventry, Hemel, London and South Wales occupying the bottom six positions in the table before the start of this weekend's games.

If that pattern continues, as it probably will, there's going to be one heck of a scrap among the northern brigade to qualify for the top five.

Eight into five won't go and I would defy anyone at this early stage to confidently predict who will make it from this group — Keighley, Oldham, Newcastle, Rochdale, Barrow, York, North Wales and Swinton.

After five games played, few would have expected Crusaders and Swinton to be below the qualification line so it was easy to understand what Scott meant when he remarked before the Barrow game that, so soon in the season, there was little significance in being top.

There are points in the bag, of course, but the reality is that there are going to a lot more humdingers like our game at Barrow last Saturday night so hang on to your hats, get set for a roller-coaster and stick with Scott and the boys through thick and thin for 80 minutes of every game. They do all matter.

Roger Halstead