



HEAD-TO-HEAD TODAY'S SQUADS



Coach Scott Naylor sponsored by Muse Developments Ltd

Head Coach Richard Marshall

ORLFC Player Name:

1: Richard Lepori	Sponsored by:
2: Adam Clay	Rita Walton
3: Jon Ford	fireplacesuperstore.com
4: Jack Holmes	June Hibbert
5: Jamel Chisholm	The Society Rooms, Stalybridge
6: Lewis Palfrey	Nathan Gibbison
7: Steve Roper	fireplacesuperstore.com
8: Phil Joy	Les and Eileen Davison
9: Sam Gee	Oldham Past Players' Assn
10: Jack Spencer	John and Lynda McAndrew
11: Josh Crowley	fireplacesuperstore.com
12: Danny Langtree	John and Lynda McAndrew
13: Liam Thompson	Charlotte Gothard and Daniel Haigh
19: Adam Files	ORSA
20: Gareth Owen	Frankie and Bennys 0161 624 7745
21: Kenny Hughes	Bev, Kelly and Paul Hulbert
22: Danny Grimshaw	Rita Walton
23: Craig Briscoe	Pam Taylor/TTX
24: Will Hope	BuySportsKit.com
25: Tom Ashton	Mick Harrop
26: Michael Ward	Hanlon and Wright 0161 330 7631
Gary Middlehurst	Sylvia and David Patterson
Joe Burke	Patsy Batterton
	John and Lynda McAndrew

Halifax Player Name:

1 Ben Johnston
2 Will Sharp
3 Steve Tyrer
4 Ben Heaton
5 James Saltonstall
6 Scott Murrell
7 Gareth Moore
8 Mitch Cahalane
9 Ben Kaye
10 Luke Ambler
11 Dane Manning
12 Simon Grix
13 Jacob Fairbank
14 Adam Tangata
15 Ryan Maneely
16 Richard Moore
17 Gavin Bennion
18 Miles Greenwood
19 Tommy Saxton
20 Sam Smeaton
21 Adam Robinson
22 Connor Robinson
23 Gareth Potts
24 Andy Bracek
25 Jake Eccleston
26 Ed Barber
27 Ross Divorty
28 Joe Martin
29 Chester Butler
30 Brandon Moore

Ref, T Grant; TJs, N Bennett, N Woodward; Res ref, S Houghton;
Match Commissioner, P Taberner; timekeeper, N Robinson

Assistant Coach Lee Spencer sponsored by Muse Developments

OLDHAM vs HALIFAX



Two games
in four days
on the
Easter Parade



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Oldham Rugby League Football Club Limited



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Press

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How Scott sees it...

View from the Roughyeds' dug-out

HELLO everyone and welcome to today's game
against Halifax.

Our opponents come to us after a convincing win in
the Challenge Cup against Pilkington Recs so, like us,
they are into the next round and looking for a good
cup run.

Fax have played Leigh, London and Sheffield in their
first five games and have run them all close so, as
always, they are performing at a high level and will
be around the top four spots again come the end of
the season.

It's pretty obvious they
are very well coached
with Richard Marshall at
the helm. Richard won
the Championship
coach of the year award
last season because of the
fantastic job he did

and with the experience he has in his squad you can
only see them improving each year.

Maybe we might just see 'Fax in the big-time again ---
and that's where people of a certain age certainly
remember them.

Our win last week against Kells was important not only
for obvious reasons and also to be in the next round of
the cup, but to build on for today's game and also for
Monday's clash with Swinton Lions.

We gave game time to some lads who hadn't had
much. That was important so that we go into the Easter
period with a fresh squad and also with the confidence
to perform well in both games.

The Easter programme of two games in four days is
incredibly tough and something some of our players
haven't previously experienced.

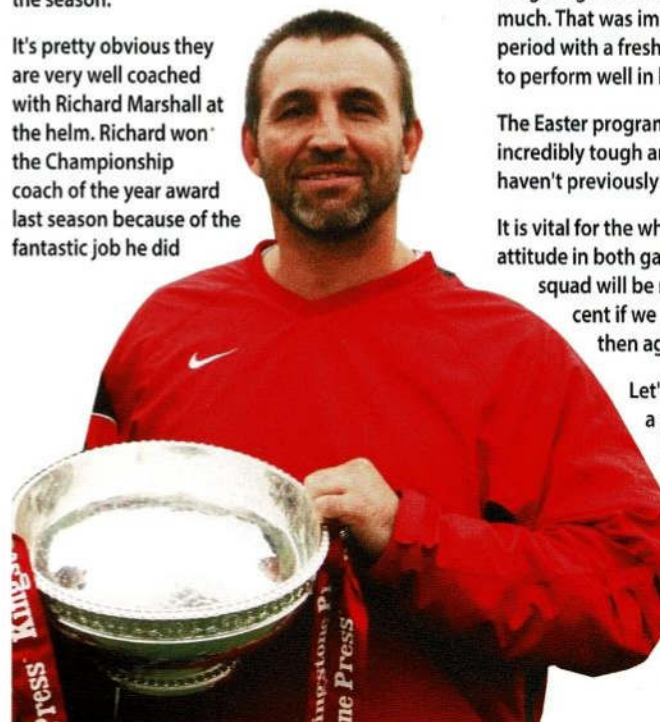
It is vital for the whole squad to have the right mental
attitude in both games because all members of that
squad will be needed to play and to give 100 per
cent if we are to pick up victories today and
then again on Monday.

Let's hope we start off the holidays with
a good win and then kick on to
Monday for a huge game against
the Lions.

Many thanks for your support as
always

Many thanks,

Scott



Muse Developments Ltd are
sponsors of head coach
Scott Naylor AND of his
assistant of the past
three seasons
at Oldham RLFC,
Lee Spencer

Big games coming up here at Bower Fold

ROGER HALSTEAD looks ahead to Batley and Sheffield

AS soon as the Easter programme is over -- and that's tough enough as it is --- Roughyeds will entertain Batley Bulldogs and Sheffield Eagles here at Bower Fold on successive Sundays in early April.

Make a couple of diary notes ---- the Bulldogs are here on April 3 (Sunday week) and the Eagles follow them on April 10, both kicking off at 3pm.

John Kear's Bulldogs have raised eyebrows all around the Championship so far this season, having won four and drawn one of their six games to be tucked in snugly behind early pacesetters London Broncos with nine points to London's ten.

Next up come Sheffield with the added tit-bit of probable appearances against us by George Tyson and Adam Neal.

These are games which should attract two of our best attendances of the year, especially if we give Halifax a run for their money today and follow up with a win against Swinton Lions at Sale Rugby Union Club on Monday.



Please note that this game kicks off at 2pm and that, according to the Lions' website, car parking is limited at Heywood Road.

The game will revive memories of last season when we were both chasing League One honours with promotion as the ultimate prize.

On our way to a top-place finish we won 32-26 at Sedgley Park with tries by Danny Langtree, Tyson (2), Josh Crowley and Adam Clay and six Lewis Palfrey goals.

In the return at Whitebank we triumphed 28-16 thanks to tries by Richard Lepori, Steve Roper, Langtree (2) and Clay, plus four goals by Palfrey.

While we were lifting the League Leaders' Shield and the Championship Rose Bowl, Swinton beat York 18-17 after extra time in the play-off semi-final and then pipped Keighley Cougars 29-28 in a thrilling Grand Final to book their place in the Championship.

They parted company with heaps of players in the close season, including favourites like Andy Ackers and the Hawkyard brothers, but recruited extensively to strengthen, among others, with centre Macauley Hallett from Hull KR,

half-back Matty Beharrell from Newcastle Thunder, hooker Anthony Nicholson from Batley, prop Jordan Hand from Whitehaven and Carl Forster, another prop, on loan from Salford Red Devils.

Arguably their highest-profile capture was that of former Leeds, Hunslet and Salford hooker Liam Hood, who has since activated a contract clause that he could move to a full-time club and has joined Leigh Centurions.

Lions boss John Duffy moved quickly to fill the vacancy by snapping up Bradford's Vila Halafihi on season-long loan.

Still chasing their first win in the Championship, they were in action at Leigh last night, thus giving them a turn-round of three days before the Oldham match compared with our two days.

Up to last night's game they had lost to Dewsbury, Bradford and Featherstone at home (that's the A J Bell Stadium, the Select Security Stadium and Heywood Road, Sale) and to London Broncos, Sheffield Eagles and Whitehaven away.

They were also beaten at Sheffield in the fourth round of the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup, but only narrowly (32-28) and by all accounts rather unluckily against their full-time opponents.

How unlucky can you get?

Spare a thought for Craig, out for the season

EVERYONE at the club, not least the fans, will be feeling desperately sorry for Craig Briscoe, who suffered a serious knee injury in a pre-season game at Barrow and has since been told that he won't play again this season.

It was the knee injury all sportsmen dread (just ask Steven Nield about that) ---- a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament as well as severe bruising of the bone.

Craig is now waiting for an operation, to be followed by a week or two on crutches and then months of rehab.

One of our four close-season signings, this former Leigh and Barrow back-rower trained hard all through the rigorous pre-season programme and made his Roughyeds debut in our first warm-up game at Keighley.

He wasn't long into his second game, against his former Barrow team mates up at Craven Park, when he was tackled just short of the line and felt his knee 'go'.

"We are upset as a club, but nowhere near as upset as Craig, who was so looking forward to making an impression at Oldham," said chairman Chris Hamilton.

"Hopefully, he will get his operation out of the way as quickly as he can and then he can start on rehab and the long haul back.

"The first thing he told me after the prognosis was that he wanted to remain involved with us. That's a measure of the man. We will do all we can to help him and to speed his return to playing rugby."

That was endorsed by head coach Scott Naylor, who said he felt "desperately sorry" for Briscoe, who hadn't missed a single training session since the annual pre-season slog began last autumn.

He went on: "He's a great lad and we were looking forward to seeing how he would play for us in the Championship.

"Injuries are part of the game, but he has been very unlucky with this one. I know he will do all he can to get back playing for Oldham as soon as he can. He deserves to be playing because he's a great lad who will only ever give of his best."



A joiner, 23-year-old Briscoe has accepted that he won't play again this season even though he's walking normally and had only two days off work after his ill-fated return to Craven Park, this time in the 'away' dressing room.

He said: "I was stunned when they gave me the scan results because my knee seemed to be improving day by day.

"There's obviously something wrong with it inside, but it certainly wasn't the news I was expecting.

"I was going for the line when it happened. I was held up just short in a two or three-man tackle. My right foot didn't move, but when one of the Barrow boys came in, my knee twisted and that was it; the damage was done."

"I've some tough times ahead -- like when I'm on crutches after the op ----but I'll be working hard on my rehab and staying involved with the club and the boys in the hope that I can get back into it as quickly as possible.

"That will probably be next season. Anything else would be a bonus."

The best wishes of everyone at the club are extended to Craig for a successful operation and a stress-free period of rehab. Get back as soon as is physically possible.

ORSA

NEEDS YOU!



ORSA wishes The Roughyeds Good Luck for the 2016 Season

ORSA - Is the Oldham Roughyeds Supporters Association, the official, but independently run supporters club of Oldham RLFC. ORSA has a dedicated bank account and is fully accountable to all members.

ORSA - Supports the Players and Coaching Staff, by supporting them with various forms of sponsorship or by the provision of equipment/items that are generally outside the club's remit.

ORSA IN 2015 - Apart from more general sponsorship, ORSA committed to be directly responsible for the players' match day nutritional requirements and did so in direct conjunction with the club's backroom staff. At the end of season, Scott Naylor acknowledged ORSA's support as an important asset in maintaining the squad's fitness levels.

ORSA IN 2016 - The challenges ahead are massive. ORSA hopes to extend their membership and increase their support of the coaching and playing staff as they face up to those challenges.

ORSA'S FUNDS - Are achieved by annual memberships; donations; match day fund raising; various events. Every penny is used to benefit the Roughyeds squad.



How You Can Help

- JOIN ORSA FOR AN ANNUAL FEE OF £10 (age 60+ £7.50, age 16 and under £5).
- DONATIONS OR RAFFLE PRIZES ARE WELCOME
- SUPPORT FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

For further details please speak to any ORSA representative on match day or contact the Secretary, Grant Somerville on 01706 844810.

ORSA GIVES FANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP STRENGTHEN
OLDHAM RLFC IN AN ACHIEVABLE WAY.

NO BIG MONEY FOR GIANT-KILLERS ANY MORE, BUT . . .

Challenge Cup still has magical appeal

CHRIS Hamilton believes the Rugby League Challenge Cup still has a magic all of its own for everyone connected with the sport ---- fans, players, coaches, sponsors and club directors.

It's appeal, he said, was encapsulated by last Sunday's tie between Oldham and Kells at Bower Fold, which we won 40-6, and by the interest that surrounded the fifth-round draw that was made last Tuesday night, unfortunately after this programme had gone to press.

Making up that draw were the 12 fourth-round survivors, including Roughyeds, plus the four teams that finished lowest in Super League last year, namely Salford Red Devils, Widnes Vikings, Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and Hull KR, who were the 2015 beaten Wembley finalists.

In view of Widnes's stunning form so far this season it seems strange they should be in this round ahead of last year's top eight, but that's how it goes.

By now, we'll know who we play in the fifth round. Whoever it is, and wherever it is, it will keep our interest very much alive in the sport's biggest and most prestigious knock-out competition.

There was a time when lower-league clubs could make a financial killing out of a cup run, but those days have gone, says Oldham's chairman.

"The way the competition is now structured and seeded, with the top eight Super League clubs not entering until the sixth round, removes the realistic opportunity for clubs like Oldham, and many others, to make serious money on a cup run," he said.

"But there's a lot more to the Challenge Cup than money. It has an appeal all of its own. We saw that in the third round when five amateur

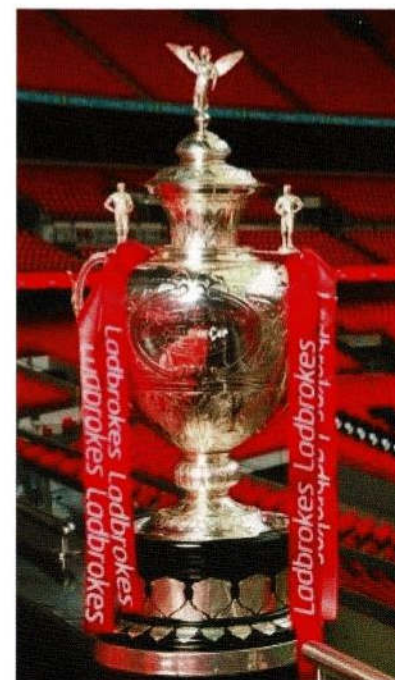
clubs caused upsets against semi-pro opponents.

"All 16 clubs in this week's draw will be dreaming of Wembley, regardless of how unattainable those dreams might be. That's the magic of the Challenge Cup.

"Players look forward to being tested against teams they wouldn't normally meet in the leagues and they can get their time in the limelight on the back of a major upset.

"Despite their defeat, the Kells lads will never forget their appearance in round four of the Challenge Cup here at Bower Fold.

"It's different, it's exciting and it appeals to all who take an interest in rugby league, regardless of their level of involvement."



Top-table topics...

Chris Hamilton... from the boardroom

WELCOME again to Bower Fold for the first of two Easter matches. Having been in League One for the last few years, we have been used to only playing once over Easter so this will be a test of a different kind for us in our first season back in the Championship.

We have made a few little tweaks to our schedule to reflect this scenario and to give the players the best opportunity to cope with what is a demanding programme.

Both teams were in cup action last weekend with comfortable wins over amateur opposition but we know today will be an entirely different proposition. Halifax were the surprise package of the 8s Qualifiers last year and as a result of how well they performed they will this season receive in the region of £700k in central distributions.

They have decided to stay as a part-time club at the moment as they continue to build the club ready for another attempt to get into Super League.

This season they haven't started as well as they would have liked but in a way that makes them even more dangerous today as they will be looking to gain two points and to climb the table.

We have to be looking to get some consistency into our performances. We have played enough matches at this level now to understand what is needed and we have to make sure we put that into action on the field.

With three of the next four games at home we need to get some points against our name and that will certainly be the aim. I think that anybody who has seen us in our matches so far this season will agree that we are "not far off" in terms of being a reasonable side at this level, but it is important that, as I said earlier, we reach and then maintain the standards that Scott and the club expect.

There is no point getting to the end of the season and then saying 'if only'. At the same time there is certainly no cause for panic.

As you have seen over the last few weeks we are always on the look out for players who can improve the squad and we will continue to do so. In that respect Gary Middlehurst has shown in the two matches he has played so far why we wanted to sign him and he will only get better as he gets more game time.

Joe Burke had to miss last week because he was cup tied but we know when he gets his chance he will also improve us.

By the time you are reading this we will know our next cup opponents so fingers crossed for a good draw.

Halifax will be bringing decent support with them today so its over to you to ensure the lads hear you as ever as you hopefully cheer them on to an important victory.

Enjoy the game

Christopher Hamilton
Chairman
Oldham Rugby League Football Club



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Good luck lads!



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0161 660 5992

Blackpool ... here we come

Sam Gee is ready ... are YOU ?

WE hope to have an army of Oldham fans roaring us on at Bloomfield Road, Blackpool when we play Swinton Lions on Sunday, May 29 (3pm) --- the second day of the RFL's Summer Bash weekend at the famous holiday resort.

a long way to determining our final places in the league table.

If there was ever a special occasion for our borough, our town and Oldham RL fans



Sam Gee - Ready to Bash ...

PLEASE GET YOUR TICKETS FROM WHITEBANK BECAUSE THAT WAY YOU ARE ACTIVELY SUPPORTING ROUGHYEDS AND IF YOU BUY RESERVED SEATING YOU WILL BE IN THE OLDHAM BLOCK, SURROUNDED BY YOUR FRIENDS AND FELLOW OLDHAMERS.

**Please get your tickets from the club
Call: 07904 898 177**

All 12 Kingstone Press Championship clubs will play over the Saturday and the Sunday in a festival of rugby league that is the Championship's equivalent to Super League's Magic Weekend.

Our big game against Swinton will be one of three Roughyeds v Lions clashes in the Championship this season and, for both clubs, those three games will go

past and present to turn out in great numbers and to back the boys in Blackpool, then this is it.

Moreover, the Summer Bash weekend will be packed with entertainment on and off the field, including live performances, constant fan engagement and great prizes.

You can also use your Summer Bash ticket to get exclusive deals at Walkabout Blackpool (including 25 per cent discount on food); a 20 per cent discount at the Adrenalin Zone on South Pier; discounts on Blackpool's transport services; and more.

Whether you want to watch one match or SEVEN (The Saturday programme kicks off with the iProSport Cup Final as an 'extra') ticket prices represent fantastic value and they are available now from the Oldham RLFC office inside the ground at Whitebank Stadium each weekday, Monday to Friday between 9am and 1.30pm. The office telephone number is 07904898177.

Club season-ticket holders get Summer Bash tickets for HALF PRICE which means, for example, if you have an Oldham season ticket and you qualify as a concession you could, if you wished, watch all seven games over two days for £7.50 (unreserved seat). How good is that ?

PLEASE GET YOUR TICKETS FROM WHITEBANK BECAUSE THAT WAY YOU ARE ACTIVELY SUPPORTING ROUGHYEDS AND IF YOU BUY RESERVED SEATING YOU WILL BE IN THE OLDHAM BLOCK, SURROUNDED BY YOUR FRIENDS AND FELLOW OLDHAMERS.

It perhaps isn't widely known that all Championship clubs have to contribute towards the costs of staging Summer Bash but, like the other 11, the more tickets we sell from Whitebank the more of our initial outlay we will recoup.

Please note that all rules and regulations, including ticket prices and concessionary qualification, are governed and laid down by the RFL.

Tickets are available in two categories ---- CAT. 1, reserved seats in West Stand (same side as the tunnel); CAT. 2, unreserved seats in North Stand and in South Stand (behind the posts at each end).

Concessionary tickets are available to 65s and over; students with valid ID, to be shown on the day; 16s and under; serving Military with valid ID, shown on the day.

TICKET PRICES

One-day tickets (available ONLY for the day your team plays, Sunday in our case): reserved seats (Cat 1), £30 adults, £15 concessions; season-ticket holders, £15 adults, £7.50 concessions; unreserved seats (Cat 2), £20 adults, £10 concessions; season-ticket holders, £10 adults, £5 concessions.

Two-day (weekend) tickets: reserved seats (Cat 1), £50 adults, £25 concessions; season-ticket holders, £25 adults, £12.50 concessions; unreserved seats (Cat 2), £30 adults, £15 concessions; season-ticket holders, £15 adults, £7.50 concessions.

POINTS TO NOTE

- 1: Alternating between North and South Stands (both unreserved) is NOT permitted.
- 2: Weekend (two day) fans get only ONE ticket, which must be retained for the Sunday.
- 3: Children under 2 go FREE, but MUST have a ticket
- 4: Wheelchair users MUST make pre-arrangements with the RFL.
- 5: Ambulant disabled can get tickets from the Oldham club.
- 6: One-day tickets only available in our case for the Sunday.
- 7: Pass-outs available both days (hand stamped and original ticket needed to get back in).
- 8: Club transport to Blackpool is available on the Sunday (the day we play Swinton) . We leave Whitebank at 10am and return at 7pm, which allows people to watch all three games that day. Cost is £10 per person.

HEAD TO HEAD

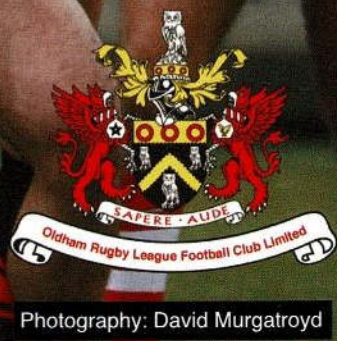
Saturday, May 28: noon, iProSport Cup final; 2.30, Sheffield Eagles v London Broncos; 4.45, Workington Town v Whitehaven; 7.00, Bradford Bulls v Leigh Centurions.

Sunday, May 29: 12.45, Dewsbury Rams v Batley Bulldogs; 3.00, OLDHAM v Swinton Lions; 5.15, Halifax v Featherstone Rovers.



Ladbrokes Challenge Cup, fourth round)

Oldham 40, Kells 6 - 20/3/2016



Oldham Rugby League Football Club Limited

Photography: David Murgatroyd

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

Submitted By Oldham RL Heritage Trust



FIXTURES involving Oldham versus Halifax go as far back as 1879 with the first meeting being on December 6 of that year in Halifax. The return was held on New Year's Day, 1880 in Oldham at the old Clarksfield ground with both matches ending in victory for the Yorkshire men.

The most important match between the sides was the 1907 Championship Final held at Fartown, Huddersfield with 'Fax' again winning, this time 18-3 before an attendance of 14,200.

There was a degree of revenge two years later when Halifax finished in second place in the league and Oldham third. However, in the 'Top 4' championship play-off, the Roughyeds triumphed at Watersheddings when, after a 3-3

draw at Thrum Hall, Oldham won the replay 8-2 with tries from George Tyson and G.W. Smith and a goal from Alf Wood. The championship, however, would go to Wigan, who defeated Oldham in the final at Salford.

The most epic encounter was in the third round of the Challenge Cup in 1931 when, after a 2-2 draw at Thrum Hall on Saturday, March 7, the replay at Watersheddings two days later produced the same result. So it was on to a second replay held at Fartown, Huddersfield on Monday, March 16 when Halifax prevailed 5-2.

The three matches produced a combined attendance of over 50,000. Halifax went on to lift the trophy, defeating York in the final at Wembley.

The new Oldham club, Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd, first encountered Halifax in the 2004 season when Oldham won 25-6 at The Shay on April 18. The return was one of two 'home' games played that

season at Victory Park, Chorley while Boundary Park was undergoing remedial work.

Although the match was played on July 10, the conditions were very poor due to persistent rain. Consequently, open play was at a premium as the forwards slugged it out in the Chorley mud.

Pat Weisner cut through the Oldham defence to open the scoring after six minutes but there was a swift Oldham reply four minutes later when Iain Marsh crashed over through a crowded defence with Pat Rich adding the extras.

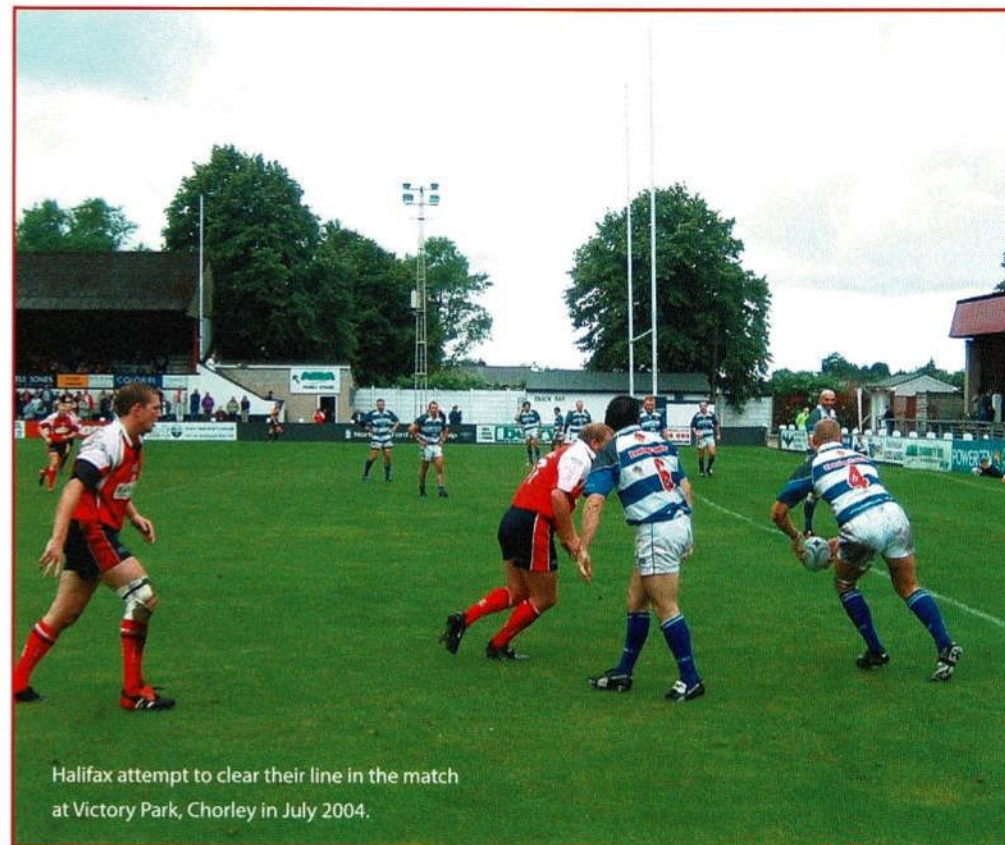
A penalty goal from Jamie Bloem midway through the half, followed by a try from James Haley, were the only further scores in the first period which left the teams going in with the difference 6-10 to the visitors at half-time.

A further try from Gareth Greenwood nudged Halifax further ahead before Nick

Johnson reduced the arrears three minutes later with an unconverted touchdown. However, as the match moved into the last quarter, Oldham finished much the stronger with man-of-the match Ian Watson

being instrumental in setting up tries for Lee Marsh and Gareth Barber, both converted by Rich, before Oldham sealed the victory with two late drop goals. Final score; Oldham 24 Halifax 14.

After the match, the Oldham coach Steve Molloy heaped praise on Watson, who insisted on playing despite being knocked out in the previous match at Doncaster.



Halifax attempt to clear their line in the match at Victory Park, Chorley in July 2004.

OLDHAM:

Goddard; Dodd, I. Marsh, Rich, N. Johnson; Svabic, Watson;
Southern, Brennan, Morgan, Doran, Farrell, L. Marsh.

SUBS: Hough, Barber, G. Johnson, McLoughlin.

HALIFAX:

Grix, Sheriffe, Feehan, Hadcroft, Haley, Weisner, Moxon.
Farrell, Cantillon. Birchall, Davidson, Greenwood, Bloem.

SUBS: Norman, Arnold, Bates, MacDonald.

Visit www.ori-heritagetrust.org.uk

Attendance: 850 Referee: Mr C. Morris - Huddersfield.

Heaton, Greenwood turn back the clock

by Sam Duffy, man in the know at The Shay

HALIFAX have not had the best start to the 2016 season, but Ben Heaton and Miles Greenwood will today have more reason than most for wanting to hit the heights against the club where both were fans' favourites in separate stays with the Roughyeds.

They both played at full-back for Oldham, but 'Fax converted Ben to centre and he responded by playing in every game last season when 'Fax finished sixth in the Qualifiers.

This year, Richard Marshall's men currently lie eighth in the Kingstone Press Championship, having beaten Cumbrian sides Whitehaven and Workington Town, but having gone down to Batley Bulldogs, this season's surprise package, and full-time professional outfits London Broncos and Leigh Centurions.

In fact, 'Fax travel to Stalybridge on the back of three league defeats in a row --- two of them at home.

Greenwood made his long-awaited comeback from a serious leg injury against Leigh last time out in the league.

Players to watch

Adam Tanagta has been the stand-out player for Richard Marshall's side in the opening six games of the season.

The Cook-Island international represented his country at the 2013 World Cup in England, and joined Fax from Australian side Mounties ahead of the last season.

Gareth Moore signed from Featherstone Rovers at the start of the season and has started his second spell with the club very strongly.

Moore had an initial spell at The Shay whilst he was at Leeds Rhinos, but has featured more in a permanent capacity in his second spell.

Offering a left-hoofed kicking game, Moore will be looking to exploit any holes in the home defence this afternoon.



Miles Greenwood (left)
back from injury
Ben Heaton (right)
ever-present

The Championship season so far...

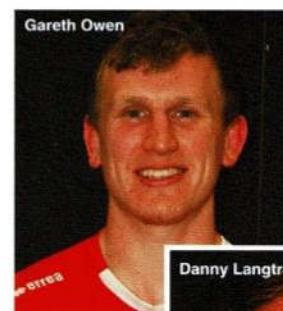
HAVING played the first five of our 30 KP Championship games, made up of 22 home-and-away fixtures, plus the Summer Bash game against Swinton and seven more in the end-of-season 8s, it is an appropriate time to reel off some tell-tale stats.

In this division of two separate and distinct 'pools' we are likely to be playing a third of our games against teams, like ourselves, who will be battling it out at the lower end of the table, namely Workington, Whitehaven and Swinton Lions, who we play on Monday at Sale Rugby Union Club (kick-off 2pm).

Others could also be dragged into the relegation mix, but there is no doubt that any wins we pick up against the aforementioned trio will be regarded as 'four pointers' and they will think the same.

It was disappointing, therefore, that we should produce arguably our most unproductive performance so far up at Workington, where we went down 23-12 after taking an early 6-0 lead with a debut-day try by Gary Middlehurst and a Lewis Palfrey conversion.

Our best overall offering was undoubtedly the 38-16 home victory against Dewsbury Rams, in which we scored seven tries with two apiece for Gareth Owen and Danny Langtree.



In total, our 13 tries in five outings have been scored as follows: Tom Ashton (2), Adam Clay (2), Gareth Owen (2), Danny Langtree (2) and one apiece by Lewis Palfrey, Michael Ward, Richard Lepori, Gary Middlehurst and Phil Joy.

Game-by-game stats as follows:

Oldham 0, London Broncos 22; HT 0-4; Pens 11-4; Lepori; Clay, Ashton, Holmes, Chisholm; Palfrey, Roper; Joy, Gee, Spencer, Langtree, Crowley, Hope. Subs: Thompson, Ward, Hughes, Files.

Leigh 48, Oldham 18; HT 20-6; Pens 7-8; Lepori; Clay, Ashton, Holmes, Chisholm; Palfrey, Roper; Joy, Owen, Spencer, Langtree, Crowley, Hope. Subs: Files, Ward, Thompson, Gee; tries, Ashton, Clay, Palfrey; goals, Palfrey 3/3.

Oldham 38, Dewsbury 16; HT 24-0; Pens 13-10; Lepori; Clay, Ashton, Bibby, Holmes; Palfrey, Grimshaw; Joy, Owen, Spencer, Langtree, Hope, Thompson; Subs: Gee, Ward, Hughes, Crowley; tries, Ashton, Owen (2), Langtree (2), Ward, Clay; goals, Palfrey 5/8.

Featherstone 20, Oldham 6; HT 10-6; Pens, 11-9; Lepori; Clay, Bibby, Holmes, Chisholm; Palfrey, Grimshaw; Joy, Owen, Spencer, Langtree, Hope, Thompson. Subs: Hughes, Ward, Gee, Crowley; try, Lepori; goal, Palfrey 1/1.

Workington 23, Oldham 12; HT 16-6; Pens, 10-7; Lepori; Clay, Bibby, Holmes, Chisholm; Palfrey, Grimshaw; Joy, Owen, Spencer, Middlehurst, Langtree, Hope; Subs: Ward, Thompson, Files, Hughes; tries, Middlehurst, Joy; goals, Palfrey 1/1, Holmes 1/1.

Gary's all Set! for his big new challenge!



GARY Middlehurst, one of the latest addition to our forward pack, has built himself a reputation over the last few years as a highly-respected back-row forward and one of the most experienced in the Kingstone Press divisions.

He had a couple of seasons at Rochdale before becoming a mainstay of the North Wales Crusaders side that narrowly pipped us to the automatic promotion spot from League One in 2013; finished higher than Rochdale, Swinton and Barrow in the 2014 Championship campaign; and then won the 2015 iPro Sport Cup with the 14-8 defeat of Swinton Lions in the final at Blackpool on Summer Bash weekend.

To get there they won a semi-final thriller against Roughyeds at Whitebank 18-16, although Gary didn't play in that game because of injury.

He played in most of the other Oldham-Crusaders games though since 2013, four won by Crusaders, two by Roughyeds.

In 2013, Scott's first season in charge at Whitebank, the Welsh side beat us 48-12 at Wrexham in what was then the Northern Rail Cup. It was our young side's very first game under Scott's tutelage and Crusaders capitalised on their far greater experience to score eight tries, one of them by Middlehurst.

By the time we returned to Wrexham in the league we had grown in stature and confidence, narrowly losing this one 22-20 and conceding two tries to Middlehurst, who went on to become the Crusaders' 2013 players' player of the year.

We avenged those two defeats at Wrexham with a 28-10 victory on home soil as both teams went neck-and-neck for top spot in League won, Crusaders getting there finally with only two points to spare.

We didn't meet in 2014, when Crusaders were in the Championship, but in 2015 we again had three great games against them, the Welshmen prevailing in the iPro Sport Cup semi-final and in the league game at Whitebank, but our boys pulling off a magnificent 23-6 victory at Wrexham as one of 14 wins in a row.

In his three seasons at Wrexham, Middlehurst scored 24 tries in 62 appearances. In 2013 he was the club's only ever-present and his haul of 16 tries placed him second in his club's try-scoring list to winger Rob Massam on 25.

"He's a top player. We are confident he will make a big contribution this season,"

It says much about his work ethic and his regard for his team mates that he was voted players' player of the year in both 2013 and 2014.

As Scott has said: "Whenever we've played Crusaders in the past three years, Gary has been one of their top men. He works hard, plays the game tough -- how I like it -- and he never takes a backward step, which is very important in the Championship.

"We've done well to get him in competition with other clubs. He will be a great addition to the squad."

Aged 32, but claiming: "People reckon I look no more than 25", Gary is contracted to the club to November 30. He has recently returned from long-distance travelling with his wife Kelly, so it took him some little time to get in shape for his first game as a Roughyed up at Workington.

He added: "I'm naturally fit, so it won't take me long. In fact, I lost a bit of weight while we were on our travels.

"I'm looking forward to a new challenge, a new club and a new set of lads. I used to watch Scott when he was a player and now he's going to be coaching me. I'm looking forward to that as well.

"At 32, some people might say I am getting on a bit, but I feel as good as ever and I reckon I've a good two years left in me yet."

Final word goes to our club chairman Chris Hamilton, who said several clubs were interested in the player, some from the Championship, some from League One.

"He's a top player. We are confident he will make a big contribution this season," said Chris.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE TEAMS IN THE 2016

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FIXTURES & RESULTS



Comp,	Date	Opponents	Venue	Kick Off	Result	Att
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FEBRUARY

KP Champ	Sunday 7th	London Broncos	H	3.00pm	L 0:22	767
KP Champ	Sunday 14th	Leigh Centurions	A	3.00pm	L 48:18	3,371
KP Champ	Sunday 21st	Dewsbury Rams	H	3.00pm	W 38:16	816
KP Champ	Sunday 28th	Featherstone R.	A	3.00pm	L 20:6	1,739

MARCH

KP Champ	Sunday 6th	Bradford Bulls	H	3.00pm	Post*	
KP Champ	Sunday 13th	Workington T	A	3.00pm	L 23:12	637
CC (4)	Sunday 20th	Kells	H	3.00pm	W 40:6	385
KP Champ	Good Fri 25th	Halifax	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Mon 28th	Swinton Lions	A	3.00pm	TBC	TBC

APRIL

KP Champ	Sunday 3rd	Batley Bulldogs	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 10th	Sheffield Eagles	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
CC (5)	Sunday 17th					
KP Champ	Saturday 23rd	Whitehaven	A	6.30pm	TBC	TBC

MAY

KP Champ	Sunday 1st	Featherstone R	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
CC (6)	Sunday 8th					
KP Champ	Sunday 15th	Leigh Centurions	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 22nd	Halifax	A	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
Summer Bash	Sunday 29th	Swinton Lions	BR*	3.00pm	TBC	TBC

JUNE

KP Champ	Sunday 5th	Batley Bulldogs	A	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 12th	Dewsbury Rams	A	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 19th	London Broncos	A	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 26th	Whitehaven	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC

JULY

KP Champ	Friday 1st	Sheffield Eagles	A	8.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 10th	Swinton Lions	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 17th	Bradford Bulls	A	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
KP Champ	Sunday 24th	Workington T	H	3.00pm	TBC	TBC
CC (S/F)	Sunday 31st					

NOTE: The above 23 Kingstone Press Championship fixtures *(11 home and 11 away plus the additional Summer Bash game against Swinton Lions at Bloomfield Road, Blackpool) will be followed by another seven in the Super 8s, these to be played on Sundays throughout August and September.

*NOTE: The postponed home game against Bradford Bulls has been provisionally rearranged for Sunday, May 8 at Bower Fold (3pm), but it will only happen if both clubs are out of the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup by then.

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