

ROUGHYED REVIEW

2021 PROGRAMME NO.2

FRIDAY 2ND APRIL

KICK OFF

5:15PM



**REILLY LEADING
THE CHARGE**



**OLDHAM
RLFC**



**SWINTON
LIONS**



@roughyeds | enquiries@roughyeds.co.uk | 07904 898177
Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm

**CDX
SECURITY**

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BETFRED



CHAMPIONSHIP



CDX

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Hi and welcome, after a very disappointing result at Swinton in the cup last Sunday.

We dominated for long spells and it was incredibly frustrating not to get a positive result. In the main, that was due to our inability to hold the ball, especially in our opponent's half. We failed to build pressure, which usually leads to points, and we continually let Swinton off the hook.

The short turnaround, and the fact we play Swinton again, means the lads have an early opportunity to get last week out of their systems and to start off the league campaign on the front foot.

There are simple lessons to be learned from last week and that process started in the dressing room right after the game. Fingers crossed.

How has it been watching our games on tv rather than in person? I suppose it's a mixed bag. On one hand, you will be delighted to see the team playing again;

A CHAT WITH THE CHAIRMAN

CHRIS HAMILTON

on the other, nothing can match the feeling you get watching a game live.

We are living in a different world. It's strange with no atmosphere, but you soon become immersed in the game and the lack of a crowd almost becomes forgotten. The lads say the same, but they are concentrating on what's happening on the pitch.

Having said that, we all want to hear that "Oldham, Oldham" chant again and the sooner the better.

Let's hope that by May 17 and then by June 21 people will have behaved responsibly enough for fans to be admitted back into stadiums and for a significant lifting of restrictions in time for summer.

By then, of course, we will be well into the league campaign and it is important we start to get points on the board.

It is already plain to see that this year's Championship is going to be as hard fought as it ever was and we know

from previous experience that you need to be on your game week in, week out.

With investment, comes expectation and today is the start of a league campaign in which we want to establish ourselves in a division that has seen standards rise year on year.

It won't be easy, but things that come easy don't give you a buzz and the same pleasure and satisfaction.

We will miss you getting behind the team but we know you are rooting for the lads. Hopefully, we can get off to a winning start.

Enjoy the game.

Christopher Hamilton
Chairman



03

DISKIN'S DIARY

A peep behind the scenes with head coach Matt Diskin

In our last two Challenge Cup fixtures we've had a roller coaster of emotions, but ultimately an experience that left us frustrated and had to be judged as an opportunity wasted.

The Barrow game illustrated that, even though we made mistakes, our attitude to defend well and control field position eventually led to a win.

Unfortunately, we didn't learn our lesson and our disrespect for the ball in our round two game versus Swinton cost us the game. We controlled the territorial battle for much of the game but did not capitalise on the opportunities it provided.

Swinton were clinical when we gave them the ball and capitalised on our poor decision-making defensively.

The atmosphere in the changing rooms post-game was a cloud of exasperation and displeasure. The challenge is for the group and its individuals to quickly learn lessons without the need for repetition.

This evening we can right the wrongs. Rarely are you presented with back-to-back fixtures against the same opposition.

Swinton's confidence will be riding high and will present a sterner test that last time out, but we are working hard to improve with each game.

Should we improve our core skill and control the ball as it should be controlled, our performances and subsequently our results will increase in quality and points gained.

At the start of the Championship season, our mindset as a group is to look up the table not down.

We are striving to be as high in the second tier as possible. To achieve that, we require consistency with our performances and a commitment to complete the smaller details with focus and persistence.

Should we do that, the bigger picture will fall into place. There are no shortcuts. The season will be a roller-coaster.

But our group will always be tenacious in its endeavours.

Enjoy the game,

**Kind regards,
Matt Diskin**



YOUR CAPTAIN CALLING

Gareth Owen on the ball

It was a very disappointing game against Swinton Lions in the Betfred Challenge Cup last Sunday and those who watched the tie on the BBC must have thought so too.

Today's opening Championship game is on Our League and it will be our big chance to try to put the record straight in front of another big digital audience.

Last Sunday was a big opportunity to get into a semi-final (1895 Cup) and also into the third round of the Betfred Challenge Cup with a chance to play a Super League club.

I thought we dominated the first half through the middle, making good metres out of yardage and spending a good portion of the half in Swinton's side of the pitch while going uphill and into the wind.

Our poor handling let us down once we got near the Swinton line. We created a lot of opportunities but we didn't respect the ball enough and we made too many errors in the final third.

In the second half we carried on making the same mistakes, didn't learn from them and eventually we got punished.

Swinton took advantage of our defensive mistakes and scored tries that could have been easily avoided had we stuck to the game plan and used the wind and the slight slope to our advantage.

Instead, we made too many errors in midfield which gave Swinton ball in good positions and they managed to put points on us.

Today, we have a great chance to put right the wrongs of last week and take some revenge on Swinton. We know we can roll them through the middle; we just have to be a million times better in good-ball and the points will come.

**Enjoy.
Gaz**

Player Focus

Phil Joy

**Q: What do you do for your day job?**

A: I work for Yorkshire Building Society in the risk division. My role is to look after model risk frameworks and provide oversight of the models built by the modelling teams. This ensures any models used for decision-making purposes are fit for use (ie. scorecard for credit-scoring purposes). It's a technical job that involves a lot of maths.

Q: What was the worst thing you did at school?

A: I was pretty good at school, so most likely being cheeky to a teacher every so often.

Q: If you won the lottery what would you buy first?

A: That's a difficult one. I'm pretty tight. I don't like spending money for the fun of it. I'd probably pay off the mortgage.

Q: What sports star do you most admire, and why?

A: Adrian Morley was my favourite player because of the way he played -- tough, aggressive and he didn't take a backward step.



HOME TIME AGAIN . . . AND THAT'S HARRISON WITH HIS ICE CREAM.

Q: How would your team mates describe you?

A: Different

Q: What's your biggest professional achievement to date ?

A: Got to be beating Hull KR in the Challenge Cup. I've been part of two promotions at Oldham, but the Hull KR cup game will always be remembered.

Q: And your biggest disappointment?

A: Losing two promotion finals with Oldham in my first two years in the first team.

Q: Outside your day job and rugby, what do you do most?

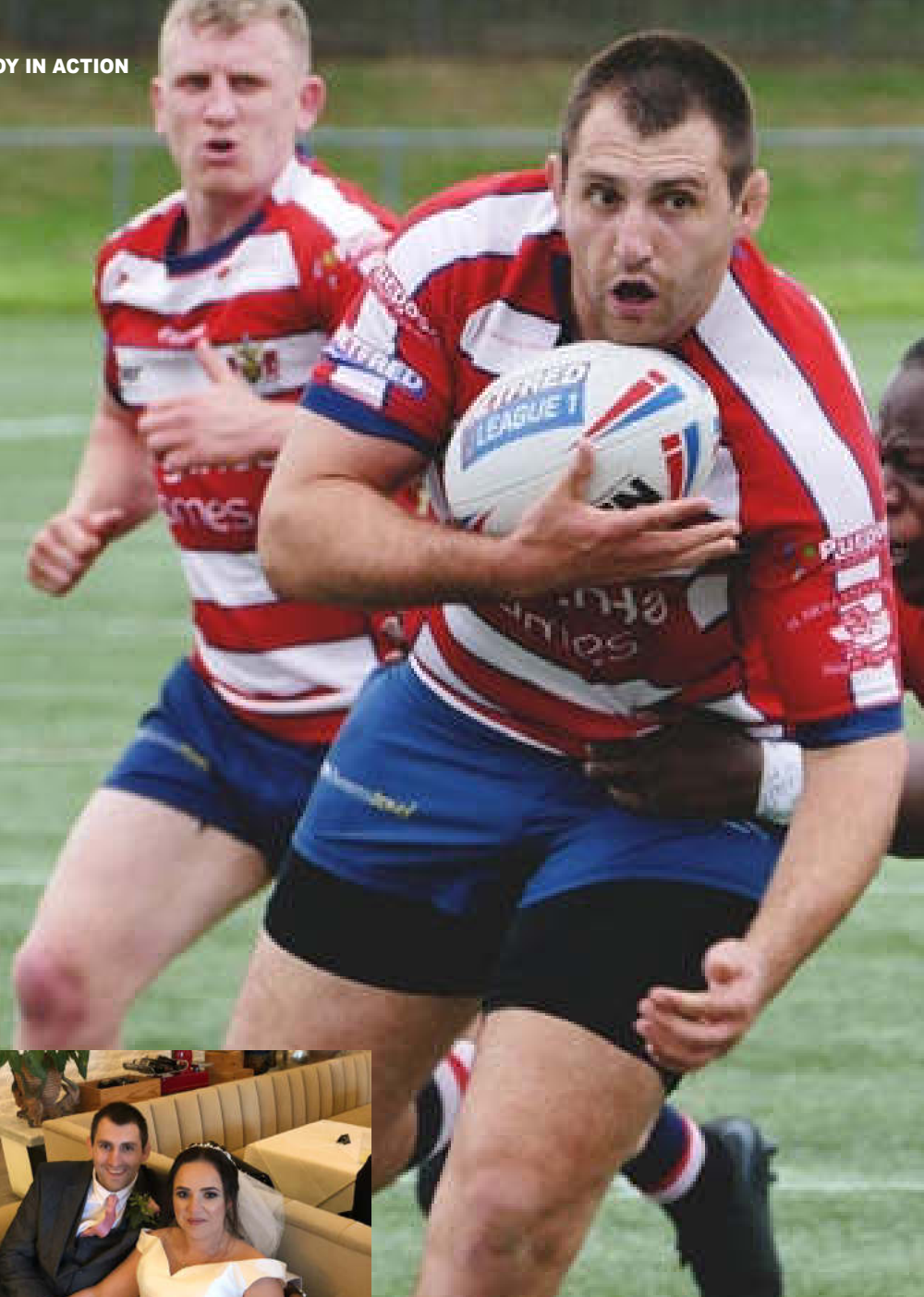
A: I enjoy spending time with the family, whether it be at home or heading out for the day.

Q: What's the best thing about being in the Oldham squad?

A: Togetherness. They are a good set of lads and always have been over the years.

Q: What would be your dream in life?

A: I've always fancied running my own business.

**PHIL JOY IN ACTION**

WEDDING DAY BLISS, LAURA AND YOURS TRULY

Past players | Craig Barker

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

No 5: Craig Barker, a young stand-off, local lad, who stuck with his reborn home-town club when the Bears were liquidated in 1997.

Q: When were you at Oldham RLFC and where are you now?

A : 1998/99. Still living in Oldham.

Q: What was your most memorable game, and why?

A: The 'new' Oldham club's first-ever game, a Law Cup clash at Rochdale. We were massive underdogs as we had been training together for only a few weeks. We had the belief that if we worked for each other we could pull it off and we did.

Q: What sports star do you most admire, and why?

A: Wally Lewis. He was one of the reasons I started playing rugby, and why I wanted to play stand-off. He didn't have much pace (sounds a bit like me, lol), but he had a sharp attacking mindset and I loved how he could organise a team on both attack and defence.

Q: What would you consider to be your biggest professional achievement?

A: Winning our first-ever Law Cup against all odds.

Q: And your biggest disappointment?

A: When I was at Oldham Bears the last game at Watersheddings was against Swinton. Paul Deacon and I were called up to train with the first team because of injuries.

Andy Goodway told us we both had a chance of playing. One of the regulars failed a fitness test, but Paul got the nod and I missed out.

Q: How would your Oldham team mates have described you?

A: I think they would regard me as a player who tried to give 100 per cent in every game.

Q: What did you like most about being in the Oldham squad?

A: The camaraderie was brilliant. I loved being part of that team of 1998.

Q: What prompted your decision to leave Oldham?

A: My job in water utilities meant I had to miss training sessions which, in turn, cost me my place in the starting 13. I had a mortgage and a family to support and I felt I had to put my job first.



Playing days . . . never to be forgotten

Q: What is your current day job ?

A: Operations Manager for P and H Pipelines.

Q: What would be your dream role in life?

A: I coach Waterhead under-15s and I would love to continue in coaching, hopefully to be in a position to help the young players I've already helped to progress to become future stars.



ABOVE: Wife Sally and I, all smiles

RIGHT: Waterhead prize night. Left to right: Me, son Harry, and two coaches, Chris McAndrew, Kristian Constantinou.



With our boy Harry, a goalkicking loose-forward who hopes to turn pro one day.



SWINTON LIONS

In what seems like no time at all since last Sunday's Challenge Cup tie between Swinton and Oldham, Stuart Littler brings his team to Bower Fold for the opening fixture of the 2021 Championship season.

Last Sunday's encounter at Heywood Road was watched by an appreciative BBC audience and both sides received plaudits from online neutral fans. One viewer commented on the TotalRL forums: "Oldham in red and white hoops and blue shorts, and Swinton in blue with a white V pleases me - even if it makes me feel old for being pleased about it...". Two heritage clubs in traditional strips entertaining a 21st Century audience, lovely stuff.

Swinton's last visit to Bower Fold was in April during the 2017 season. Tries from Swinton's Butt, Murphy and Hankinson with 3 goals from Atkin wasn't sufficient to takes the spoils as Gee, Ward and Lepori all went over for Oldham tries with Leatherbarrow kicking 5 goals. A 22pts to 18 Oldham victory.

Further games between the two clubs took place in 2017 with Swinton defeating Oldham by healthy margins on both occasions at Heywood Road. The second of those two games effectively relegated the Roughyeds and assured the men in blue

of further Championship football.

It's a testament to the Swinton club that they have managed to prevent themselves from yo-yoing between the second and third tier of British rugby league. They always provide a tough and gritty opposition and no team relishes travelling to their Sale home for any competitive game.

Promoted from Championship 1 in 2015 at the same time Oldham were crowned Champions, the Lions have embedded themselves as an established Championship side, something that is wholly desired by Matt Diskin and his Oldham charges.

Today's game is vital to both clubs as each wants to put down a marker for the teams that follow. An early two points in the bag is the prize on offer.

Former Oldham players Richard Lepori and Will Hope are likely to feature for Swinton this evening; both played in last Sunday's Challenge Cup game. They may face the likes of Gareth Owen, Danny Langtree and Phil Joy, all team mates in Oldham's 2015 trophy winning season.

During last Sunday's cup tie, Richard Lepori was operating on the same edge as Danny Langtree

and commented that "Langers is all over me". There's nothing like old mates catching up.

Swinton's star attraction this season is the evergreen Martyn Ridyard. An intelligent and composed player, Ridyard established himself as a stalwart of the successful Leigh Centurions side of recent years. He's the type of half-back that operates behind the line, marshalling his team and delivering the right ball just at the right time. He's sure to draw the attention of Oldham's defenders but he'll relish that challenge.

So here we are, a season of 22 games in front of both teams, each hoping to confirm their rightful place in this league amongst the likes of Featherstone, London Broncos and Toulouse. There'll be thrills and spills along the way, but who'd have it any other way.

Let's go.



Three To Watch



GERONIMO DOYLE

Geronimo spent a brief period training with the Lions early in 2020, but Covid-19 intervened before possible terms could be finalised. However, his services were secured ahead of the 2021 season.

Geronimo is a New Zealander, who was previously with the Otahuhu Leopards in the Fox Memorial Premiership, the senior league in Auckland.

The Kiwi, who turned 24 in January 2021, also has extensive experience playing representative rugby league in his own country, including appearances for the New Zealand Maori residents' team. Geronimo is a strong running, assured and well-balanced player.



LEWIS HATTON

Lewis represented a major capture for the Lions ahead of the 2019 season, having arrived at Heywood Road from Rochdale Hornets. He is a forward that can keep going relentlessly for the full 80 minutes, which in itself is a rare ability in the modern game.

Lewis played his early rugby league in the St Helens area before joining the under 19s set up at Salford. From there he went to Warrington Wolves, and spent time on loan with the Hornets during their promotion campaign of 2017. He then joined Rochdale on a permanent transfer for 2018, and scored four tries in 25 appearances for the Spotland club.

Lewis had some impressive games against Swinton in 2018 for Hornets, where he won their coveted Player of the Year award, which made him a prime target for Head Coach Stuart Littler.



MARTYN RIDYARD

Martyn is one of the Rugby League Championship's most outstanding players of the past decade.

An accomplished and experienced half-back, Martyn originally progressed through the community game at Leigh Miners Rangers, before earning his first professional contract in 2009 with his hometown club, Leigh Centurions.

Martyn then enjoyed a stellar career at Leigh, during which time he earned a reputation as being one of the Championship's most exciting and influential performers.

At Leigh he twice lifted the Northern Rail Cup, and then won the Man-of-the-Match award when Leigh carried off the Championship title in 2014. That same season Martyn was crowned the Kingstone Press Player of the Year.

Lions roar in cup, now we meet again in the league

SWINTON LIONS 23 - OLDHAM 14



DANNY BRIDGE AND LIAM BENT



LIAM BENT



DANNY LANGTREE



TYLER DUPREE



CALLUM GREEN



MAX ROBERTS



LIAM KIRK



BEN HEATON



14 NEW BOYS IN YOUR CLASS OF 2021



NEW SIGNING

#3 BEN HEATON

(Centre): Age 31. DOB 12/3/90.

Back 'home' after nearly a decade away, mainly at Halifax where he became one of the best backs in the Championship.

Sponsor: Stephen Butterfield.



NEW SIGNING

#27 BEN HOLCROFT

(Wing): Age 20. DOB 29/11/2000.

Yet another youngster from Wigan. He and Roberts played alongside each other many times in Wigan's academy team.

Sponsor: Available.



NEW SIGNING

#23 CALLUM GREEN

(Half-back/full-back): Age 21. DOB 27/9/99.

Nephew of Neil Roden. Noted for his speed. Came through the youth systems at Wigan and Warrington.

Sponsor: Available.



NEW SIGNING

#21 SHAUN PICK

(Second row): Age 27. DOB 21/9/93.

Formerly played for Toronto Wolfpack, Sheffield and Batley. Played for Sheffield in the 2019 1895 Cup final at Wembley.

Sponsor: Available.



NEW SIGNING

#2 TOMMY BRIERLEY

(Wing): Age 24. DOB 8/9/96.

One of three newcomers from Dewsbury Rams. Played in both our pre-season warm-up games against Featherstone and Halifax.

Sponsor: David and Val Webster.



NEW SIGNING

#26 JAMES BARRAN

(Half-back): Age 22. DOB 24/10/98.

Another local lad, who signed for Wigan from Waterhead and had a few years with the Super League side. Lives in Lees and back with his home-town club.

Sponsor: Available.



#4 CAMERON LEEMING

(Centre): Age 25. DOB 3/7/95.

Played ten games at the end of the 2019 promotion season and enjoyed nine wins. Played previously for Hunslet, Keighley, Dewsbury.

Sponsor: Anne Kearns.



#1 DAN ABRAM

(Full-back): Darren's lad. Age 25. DOB 11/11/95.

Previously played at St Helens, Barrow, Whitehaven, Rochdale. Played in all six games at the start of last season.

Sponsor: Rugby Oldham



#25 DANNY BRIDGE

(Second-row): Age 28. DOB 4/1/93.

Oldham-born, played in the academy squads at Warrington and Bradford, then Rochdale, a spell in Australia, then 'home' to Oldham.

Strong, try-scoring forward.
Sponsor: Gerald Brierley.



NEW SIGNING

#30 DECLAN GREGORY

(Hooker): Age 24. DOB 18/1/97.

Like, Hartley also trained with us all pre-season. Nippy from dummy half. Played previously at Rochdale, North Wales Crusaders and Castleford.

Sponsor: John and Lynda McAndrew.



NEW SIGNING

#28 JOE HARTLEY

(Centre/wing): Age 22. DOB 2/5/98.

Signed from Oldham St Anne's after training all pre-season with Roughyeds. Oldham-born, but lives in Huddersfield.

Sponsor: Available.



#22 KYRAN JOHNSON

(Wing): Age 26. DOB 23/3/94.

Ready to start his fourth season at Oldham, having signed from Featherstone Rovers ahead of the 2018 League 1 campaign. Can also play full-back.

Sponsor: Mick Harrop



#11 DANNY LANGTREE

(Second-row): Age 30. DOB 18/2/91.

In 2019, he was League 1's top forward try scorer with 17 in 17 games. Overall at Oldham, he has scored 89 tries in 172 games. Of the current squad, he leads in both tries and appearances.

Sponsor: David and Val Webster.



NEW SIGNING

#15 LUKE NELMES

(Prop): Age 27. DOB 7/6/93.

Tough, aggressive front-row forward who's in his second spell with Oldham, having been at Dewsbury in-between. One of three signed from Dewsbury for this season.

Sponsor: Gareth Hughes.



#20 JODE SHERIFFE

(Prop): Age 34. DOB 4/7/86.

Signed a year ago from Dewsbury Rams, but damaged a knee in training and didn't play until the recent friendlies. The 'daddy' of the squad, he has now joined the backroom team as an assistant coach.

Sponsor: Property Buying Company.



#12 LIAM BENT

(second-row): Age 23. DOB 11/10/97.

Tackling machine. Fans' player of the year in the last two years. Fitness fanatic. Rarely makes fewer than 50 tackles in a game.

Sponsor: Pam Taylor/LTS.



NEW SIGNING

#17 LIAM KIRK

(Prop): Age 23. DOB 26/3/97.

Joined Bradford Bulls Academy when he was 16 and played 82 senior games for the Bulls before signing for Oldham 'for a new challenge'.

Sponsor: Fab-Tec Installations Ltd.



#7 DAVE HEWITT

(Scrum-half): Age 25. DOB 4/11/95.

Ex-St Helens. In 101 Oldham games he's scored 34 tries, 83 goals, two drop goals, 304 points.

Quick off the mark with a big left-foot step.

Sponsor: Gordon Sedgwick.

(cont. on next page)



#13 MARTYN REILLY

(Prop): Age 25, DOB 5/1/96.

One of several experienced forwards recruited for this year. His journey to Oldham started at Wakefield under-9s, then Halifax, then Dewsbury. Sponsor: Dynesty Denture Solutions.



#19 MATTY FLETCHER

(Second-row): Age 21, DOB 15/2/2000.

Went to Bradford from Waterhead at the age of 16, then out to Australia playing for a Melbourne Storm feeder club. Signed for Oldham on his return. Sponsor: Waterhead under-13s.



#24 MAX ROBERTS

(Centre/hooker): Age 20, DOB 8/9/2000.

Another up-and-coming youngster from Wigan. Can play in a variety of positions. Sponsor: Available.



#6 LEWIS CHARNOCK

(Stand-off): Age 26, DOB 2/9/94.

Starting the second year of a two-year deal, but has made only six appearances because the 2020 season was curtailed. Worked with Matt Diskin at Bradford. Another ex-Bradford player. Sponsor: Available.



#14 MATTY WILKINSON

(Hooker): Age 24, DOB 13/6/96.

Broke a leg in pre-season training -- a blow for player and club. Since had surgery. Usually starts on the bench, then replaces Gareth Owen. Explosive from dummy half



#31 JOHN HUTCHINGS

(Wing or centre): Age 21, DOB 8/9/99.

Signed a year ago from St Helens and made his debut at Barrow in a friendly -- at prop! Sponsor: Available.



#8 PHIL JOY

(Prop): Age 29, DOB 4/9/91.

Oldham-born, one of the longest-serving players at the club. Will soon have completed ten years at Roughyeds, having been a first-team prop since 2012. Sponsor: Past Players' Association.



#5 RYAN INCE

(Centre/wing): Age 24, DOB 16/9/96.

Played twice on loan before the 2020 season was curtailed and has since signed fully from Leigh. Scored 19 tries in 22 games for Widnes before moving to LSV. Sponsor: Oldham RL Heritage Trust.



#9 GARETH OWEN

(Hooker): Age 28, DOB 3/7/92.

Starting his fifth season as club captain, having succeeded Lewis Palfrey in 2017. Another ex-Waterhead player, he had 38 Super League games with Salford before joining his home-town club. Sponsor: Available.



#10 JACK SPENCER

(Prop): Age 30, DOB 21/12/90.

Joined us in 2016 when his dad, Lee, was assistant boss. Formerly with Salford, Halifax, Barrow and also having played in France and Australia. One more game for 100 in the Oldham jersey. Sponsor: Graeme Lee.



#16 TYLER DUPREE

(Prop): Age 21, DOB 8/2/2000.

Young prop signed from Leeds Rhinos. Was in the Rhinos first-team squad in 2019, having worked through the Academy system. Sponsor: Available.



#18 THE FANS

Dedicated to our 18th man for their awesome support both on and off the field.

Players and management truly appreciate the contributions of our fans, who fully deserve a mythical No 18 shirt.

WE'LL TACKLE IT -- NO DANGER!

We at Oldham RLFC are playing our part in delivering the TACKLE-IT campaign in order to make a positive and lasting difference.

We are doing it because Black Lives Matter and Rugby League stands in solidarity with players, coaches, match officials, fans, volunteers, staff and supporters in the fight against racism and, indeed, discrimination of any kind in sport and in society generally.

Our commitment includes having a 13-second window at all league and cup games, which started with the Barrow cup-tie and will continue through the season,

in which the teams will line-up pre-match. It will then be up to the players themselves how they choose to approach it.

Increasing inclusion and diversity, while tackling all forms of discrimination, is key to the growth and success of Rugby League.

The TACKLE-IT action plan is sport-wide and sets out specific measures which the sport is taking together to deliver real change.

We'll TACKLE IT all right, you can count on that !

Gregory was a target long before Wilky was injured

THE popular belief is that Roughyeds swooped for hooker Declan Gregory because we knew that Matty Wilkinson's broken leg would cause him to miss most of the season.

In fact, the little dynamo that is Declan had been training with us for several weeks and was going to be offered a contract anyway because we strongly favour THREE hookers in the squad and we liked what we saw of the former Hemel, Rochdale, North Wales Crusaders and Castleford Tigers man while he was in pre-season training with us.

Two or three years ago, Zack McComb signed after a similar introductory route and there have been others too, including centre or wing Joe Hartley, who also spent several weeks with us before putting pen to paper just a few weeks ago.

It's good because it gives our coaching staff an ideal opportunity to look at the player carefully and monitor his credentials as a pro player over a period of several weeks and,

just as importantly, it gives the player the chance to see at first-hand what we as a club are; how we go about things; and to form an opinion about how he would react if offered a deal.



GARETH OWEN . . . 80 MINUTES AT SWINTON

Not all cases are the same. Joe, for instance, accepted our invitation to join us from Oldham St Anne's, where he had played since he was a small boy, while Declan had lots of previous experience on the pro circuit with several clubs.

His previous club to Oldham, in fact, was none other than Super League outfit Castleford Tigers, so he was no stranger to the professional arm of the

game and you could tell from the moment he first walked into the club that he had been around a bit and would quickly feel at home alongside the likes of fellow hookers Gaz and Wilky... not to mention the boss himself, Disco, who had also done a bit of No 9 work in his time !

It's a different game now, of course, to the days when Disco was winning the Harry Sunderland medal at Old Trafford and was picking up Leeds Rhinos player-of-the-year awards for his work in the middle of the front row.

Hookers these days were not required to "hook" even when there were scrums and they won't be asked to win the ball in the scrumage if and when Covid relents sufficiently to allow the forwards to again come together in formation.

The sport could easily delete "hooker" from its vocabulary and replace it with "dummy half" because the No 9 (if he's not wearing a squad number) has made that role a science, or an 'ology' and a job that is regarded widely as key to the way a team goes about its business.



MATTY WILKINSON -- BROKEN LEG IN TRAINING

A hooker used to be judged on his scrum figures and whether he had out-hooked his rival hooker.

Nowadays, he's judged on his ability around the play-the-ball, or ruck as its become known, and on whether he's got the speed from a standing start to break free or the rugby brain and know-how of a half-back to cause damage with guile and craft.

Disco believes Owen, his captain, Wilkinson and Gregory all bring something different to the table.

In confirming that Gregory was going to be signed even before Wilky broke his

leg in an innocuous training accident, Disco said: "We needed three hookers. We've got them now and we've got plenty of quality.

"We'll be without Wilky for a while and that's a shame. Dec has been given his chance a bit sooner than we had envisaged, but he's a confident lad who backed himself when he joined us for pre-season training.

"All three offer something different and it's great for a coach to have those options.

"Some matches we might only use one. In others we will interchange. It just depends who we are playing."

On top of Wilkinson's serious injury, he didn't reckon on Gregory getting concussed against Barrow and missing last week's cup-tie against Swinton.

At the time of writing it isn't known whether Gregory will be back this evening, but the fact that, due to both pre-selection injury and a further setback during the game, Owen had to play a full 80 minutes at Heywood Road is plenty of reason for

Diskin's belief that three hookers in a squad is a must.

Club skipper Owen, the senior member of Oldham's triumvirate, agrees.

He said: "I'm gutted for Wilky. He's a great lad and a good mate and since he joined the club we've worked well together.

"It's great to have Dec on board too. It can be the same between he and I as it is with me and Wilky. When Wilky's fit again there will be some real competition."

At the time of writing, Gregory was waiting for a medical report from his neurosurgeon to indicate whether he could play this evening.



DECLAN GREGORY -- COPPED A HEAD KNOCK

LUKE'S RED-LETTER DAY

It isn't widely known, but when we beat Barrow Raiders in the first round of the Betfred Challenge Cup in our last appearance at Bower Fold, Luke Nelmes made his first start in his 29th game for Oldham, not counting pre-season friendlies.

It was a red-letter day for Luke (27), who made 27 appearances for us in 2018 -- all off the bench --- and figured as a sub again in the first game of the 2019 season, which we lost to Workington, 32-28,

After that game he left the club and ultimately signed for Dewsbury Rams, but he and his Rams team mates Martyn Reilly and Tommy Brierley were among Matt Diskin's 14 new signings for the 2021 Championship season which starts this evening.

Like Michael Ward before him, he was always regarded as an impact player coming off the bench by Scott Naylor, but even though its a 17-man game these days, with subs chosen for tactical reasons, it must have been a nice change for Nelmes to run out at the start and take his place in the starting line-up.

Not many players - not even props and hookers --- will go through an entire season on the bench, as Luke did in 2018, so it will be interesting to see how he fares in the selection stakes from now on.

There's a lot of competition for starting places at prop with Phil Joy, Liam Kirk, Nelmes himself, Jack Spencer, Tyler Dupree and Martyn Reilly all in the running.

Reilly gave a masterful performance at Heywood Road last time out -- his best performance of the season -- while Spencer was a proud prop to make his 100th appearance in a Roughyeds shirt.

Nelmes was injured and at the time of writing it wasn't known whether he would be available for today's game, but he'll surely never forget that win against Barrow when he was named to make a start --- a red letter day indeed.



How we come to be featured on Donkeystone cans

This is the picture that's captured on 'Glory Days 1982', a limited-edition light ale from Donkeystone Brewing Company.



The Mayor, Councillor Ginny Alexander, and her Consort husband Adrian, our former player and now the club ambassador, soon come to the end of their mayorship and their official duties on behalf of the borough.

And in a tribute to all they've done in the past two years -- their term of office was extended because of Covid and the pandemic -- they were invited by Greenfield-based craft beer specialists Donkeystone Brewing Company to put their names on two limited edition cans of beer.

In turn, they took the opportunity to involve Roughyeds, a result of which sees our club and players featured on the limited-edition cans (250 of each) which will be delivered any time soon to people who pre-ordered them.

One is called the 'Mayor's Tipple' and the other is 'Glory Days 1982', both featuring Oldham Rugby and the latter carrying a picture of Adrian and his former Union pal Bob Mordell carrying the Second Division cup around a packed Watersheddings.

Every sale from each will include a donation to the Mayor's charity, which goes to good causes locally.

Donkestones sponsor Roughyeds and their logo is on the front of our playing shirts and replicas.

The mayor said: "Adrian and I are very honoured to receive this wonderful tribute and it was great to involve Roughyeds too."

The story was featured in The Oldham Times, who also sponsor us and who now publish daily six days a week, Monday to Saturday inclusive.

On a similar theme please go to the website and follow the links to our shop where you can see all our club merchandise, which is now extensive as we continue to extend our online business.

Latest additions are replica shirts for babies, but there's all sorts of merchandise in there, most of it from our special kit manufacturers, 1895 Sports of Warrington, who are passionate about all sports but who specialise in Rugby League.

Bower Fold is Rough-yeds and ready

The Correspondent sees the moment sport returned to Stalybridge Celtic

AFTER what seemed like an eternity, Bower Fold reverberated once again to the sound of fans on the terraces. Just one problem - there were none there.

While Stalybridge Celtic's Northern Premier League season is off, the rugby league campaign is just getting started.

And Oldham RL's home draw in the Challenge Cup meant the stadium they call home saw action once again.

The only people allowed in, other than the players and coaching staff, were media, club officials and a few stewards.

So in total, about 60 people saw the 20-6 win over Barrow.

When supporter noise was piped through the tannoy, you would have been forgiven for thinking it was 6,000.

In a sign of how unfamiliar the hubbub and chants of, 'Oldham, Oldham,' are now, people said they could hear it in Dukinfield.

Now, rugby league is not a sport where prisoners are taken and not having a crowd only accentuates the punishment the players put themselves through.

Every tackle, every hit, every confrontation was seemingly amplified.

So was every word on the touchline.

"Dalli's injured, where I'd he?" said Barrow staff as Jamie Dallimore limped off injured.

Step in replacement Dan Toal. "He's coming now. He's just gone for a p***!"

And when they complained about decisions by referee Marcus Griffiths, the touch judge told them in no uncertain terms, 'Shut up.' Twice.

Some discussions in the stand were also not what you would normally hear. The lack of planes flying overhead as Bower Fold lies on the flight path to Manchester Airport.

This week, it was not the performance of Oldham and Barrow, not even a referee's decision - it was whether or not the bird sanctuary that lies behind the Lord Pendry Stand is indeed the oldest in the country!

In the end, Oldham won out and progressed to the second round of the Challenge Cup.

And it was a blessed relief for Roughyeds' boss Matt Diskin, who cannot underestimate the role Stalybridge Celtic play in making sure the club can operate

in the Championship as their base at Whitebank Stadium is not good enough for them to play in rugby League's second tier.

He said after they booked a second-round trip to Swinton:

"It's a great facility with a fantastic pitch.

"If you're a diehard Oldham fan, it's always going to be hard to call it home because of the locality but from a playing point of view, we're really happy with it.

"It's a fantastic surface, it's well looked after and when it's good conditions, you can play good rugby, which we did at times.

"The pitch is always good, and it's well looked after. For us, it's ideal.

"We've been at Stalybridge for a couple of years and the chairman's relationship with the people at Stalybridge Celtic is key to that.

"We're really happy to call it home and we can't wait for the opportunity to put some crowds in there."



Photo thanks to Dave Naylor

HOW others see us . . . GARY CARTER, who wrote this, was at Bower Fold to see us beat Barrow in the first round of the Betfred Challenge Cup. As Rugby League writer for The Sun newspaper he's no stranger to the greatest game. He's also a Tameside resident, living not far from Bower Fold, and a local correspondent for this Correspondent, edited by TONY BUGBY, who was once on the sports desk at the then Oldham Evening Chronicle.



OLDHAM RLFC



SWINTON LIONS



01	Dan Abram	Rugby Oldham
02	Tommy Brierley	David and Val Webster
03	Ben Heaton	Stephen Butterfield
04	Cameron Leeming	Anne Kearns
05	Ryan Ince	Oldham RL Heritage Trust
06	Lewis Charnock	-
07	Dave Hewitt	Gordon Sedgwick
08	Phil Joy	Past Players Association
09	Gareth Owen	-
10	Jack Spencer	Graeme Lee
11	Danny Langtree	David and Val Webster
12	Liam Bent	Pam Taylor/ LTS
13	Martyn Reilly	Dynasty Denture Solutions
14	Matty Wilkinson	John & Lynda McAndrew
15	Luke Nelmes	Gareth Hughes
16	Tyler Dupree	-
17	Liam Kirk	Fab-tek Installations Limited
19	Matthew Fletcher	Waterhead under 13s
20	Jode Sheriffe	The Property Buying Co
21	Shaun Pick	-
22	Kyran Johnson	Mick Harrop
23	Callum Green	-
24	Max Roberts	-
25	Danny Bridge	Gerald Brierley
26	James Barran	-
27	Ben Holcroft	-
28	Joe Hartley	-
30	Dec Gregory	John and Lynda McAndrew
31	John Hutchings	-

Matt Diskin	Property Buying Company
Brendan Sheridan	Property Buying Company
Jode Sheriffe	Property Buying Company

01	Mike Butt
02	Richard Lepori
03	Mitch Cox
04	Liam Forsyth
05	Sam Grant
06	Martyn Ridyard
07	Jack Hansen
08	Sam Brooks
09	Luke Waterworth
10	Lewis Hatton
11	Rhodi Lloyd
12	Nick Gregson
13	Will Hope
14	Billy Brickhill
15	Louis Brogan
16	Paddy Jones
17	Jose Kenga
19	Deane Meadows
20	Tayler Brown
21	Ben Heyes
22	Geronimo Doyle
23	Jacob Smillie
24	Paul Nash
25	Luis Roberts
25	Jordan Brown

Coach: Stuart Littler

Referee: C. Worsley	M Com: K. Leyland
Touch Judge 1: E. Mccarthy	Time Keeper: P. Hewitt
Touch Judge 2: M. Mannfield	

