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Fixtures for the Season

Date	Opponents	Venue	Date	Opponents	Venue
Aug. 10—Rochdale H.	Away		Dec. 7—		
(Charity Match)			14—Liverpool	Away	
17—Halifax	Home	3-0	21—Whitehaven	Home	2-30
22—Barrow (Thurs.)	Away		25—Swinton (Wed.)	Home	2-30
24—Wakefield	Away		26—Hull (Thurs.)	Away	
26—St. Helens (Mon.)	Home	7-0	28—Warrington	Away	
31—Barrow (L.C.)	Home	3-0	Jan. 4—Leeds	Home	2-30
Sept. 2—Huddersfield (Mon.)	Away		11—Barrow	Home	2-30
7—Halifax	Away		18—Widnes	Away	
14—Warrington	Home	3-0	25—Workington	Home	3-0
21—Leigh	Home	3-0	Feb. 1—Wigan	Away	
28—Workington	Away		8—R.L. Cup		
Oct. 5—Hunslet	Home	3-0	15—St. Helens	Away	
12—Rochdale	Away		22—R.L. Cup		
19—Hull	Home	3-0	Mar. 1—Blackpool	Home	3-0
26—Blackpool	Away		8—Widnes	Home	3-0
Nov. 2—Wakefield	Home	3-0	15—Whitehaven	Away	
9—Salford	Away		22—Rochdale	Home	3-0
16—Liverpool	Home	2-30	29—R.L. Cup semi-final		
23—Leigh	Away		Apl. 4—Swinton (G.F.)	Away	
30—Salford	Home	2-30	5—Wigan	Home	3-0
			7—Huddersfield (E.M.)	Home	7-0
			12—Hunslet	Away	
			19—Leeds	Away	

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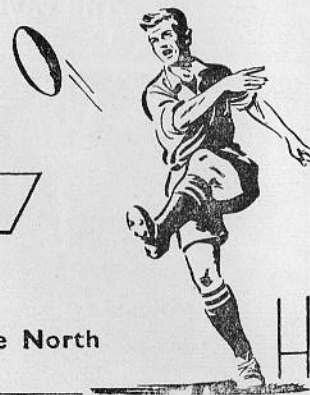


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WATERSHEDDINGS NEWS AND VIEWS

Again, within the space of a couple of weeks, it is our pleasure to welcome the Wigan Club to Watersheddings. This being a league fixture should be played in a far different atmosphere than was the last occasion. We have not, as yet, got over our defeat of March 8th at the hands of the Wigan boys. However, that is water under the bridge, and to-day, we seek ample revenge. It is absolutely necessary that victory comes our way to-day, that is, of course, if we are to retain any interest in the Lancashire League Championship. Any slip-up with a Lancashire club will mean the end of another dream.

We know where we came unstuck in the cup match. Never have our forwards been so decisively beaten this season. Or was it a day when the Wigan pack excelled itself. To-day should show the answer to a few questions Oldham has been asking since March 8th, and gives our forwards the opportunity of showing that it was only an off-day after all.

In any case, we hope that to-day's game will prove that our code is well worth playing, and watching. Let us see some good open play with good sportsmanship. Let the spectators see the ball. Let the teams give value for money and we shall all be satisfied—especially with a home win.

JUNIOR COUNTY MATCH

The Junior County match played on our ground on Saturday last resulted in a victory for Lancashire—they beat Cumberland by thirty points to two. Although the score gives the appearance of a one-sided game, and conditions were bad, one must give credit to these amateurs for making the game so attractive and so well worth watching.

The best amateurs for both counties were on view and there is no doubt that some of the seniors of the future could be picked from the two teams. As with the players, there is no lack of enthusiasm amongst the Amateur Committee. These people make a great sacrifice for the good of the game and spend much time with the juniors.

These legislators contribute a splendid service to the Rugby League and are an essential in the make-up of the management of the game. Ordinarily, they have no palatial stands to shelter in, but they are content to watch from a sodden touch-line. Heroes all—players and committee—in the amateurs section.

R.L. HAS ITS OWN BRAND OF HUMOUR

by CYRIL BRIGGS

(Sports Editor, "Warrington Guardian Series," and B.B.C. Reporter)

A few years ago, I wrote an article for the Belle Vue (Manchester) Boxing Programme in which I related some funny incidents I have experienced in the boxing halls of the North. The laughs have usually come from the men in the cheaper seats, but their humour has been anything but second-class. R.L. has its own characters and you must have met them either at Oldham, or elsewhere.

The late Laurie Thorpe who was on the panel of first-class referees for many years, and who died when taking charge of a match at Whitehaven, often referred to his own deformity in order to raise a smile.

Once, when refereeing a game at a ground where there are iron railings surrounding the pitch, a local, who was a little more biased than some supporters I have met, made a number of improper references to Laurie. When Hull had scored a try—they were the visitors that day—the amateur critic from the terraces roared, "Does tha' cum fra Hull?" When the goal-kick had been taken and the ball was soaring safely between the posts and over the bar, Laurie replied, "No, but that does!" Was the critic silenced? I'll say he was.

SPECTATOR ARRESTED

On another occasion at the same ground, Laurie was getting a good roasting from a certain gent who was very close to the aforementioned railings. Nothing Laurie did during the afternoon pleased this particular spectator. All the way through, Laurie had to stand hostile criticism, and then, a try was scored against the barracker's team. Laurie stood behind the posts, close to the gent who was making all the moans. Then when the kick had been taken, Laurie rushed to the railings—he had previously noted that the moaner had a knee between one of the gaps—and grabbed the surprised onlooker's leg. Then he called up a police officer. "That settled his ash," Laurie told me. And there was a twinkle in his eye

OUT OF THE PIG PEN

Once, at the Wakefield ground, the loud speakers re-layed a message for a fan who was urged to return home immediately. It wasn't an illness of a relative this time, but the poor fellows pigeons had got loose! Then when the laughs had dropped, a corrected message came to the

chap with a name I have forgotten. It was not his pigeons that had got away, but his pigs! That did it. The crowd were then in fine fettle for the match, but how they enjoyed the pig yarn.

Once, Mr. Thorpe was refereeing at Castleford when he heard someone refer to him as "humpy." Now Laurie did not mind making that remark himself, but if anyone else did so, he was on their track straight away. Up came the packs and Laurie was between the two front rows asking, "Who said that?" A Yorkshire lad (unknown) said, Crossley, sir." "Come out Crossley," said Laurie. Then after a pause, someone said rather meekly, "Crossley's not playing to-day, sir."

Laurie had to join the laughter but just as the forwards were about to envelope him in the scrummage, he wagged a finger at each hooker, and said, "If you dare to trap me in the pack, I'll send all of you off." And the forwards at once stood back because they thought he meant it. And hadn't Laurie been told off officially for rattling a player's shins for not getting back into the pack?

Yes, Laurie was a grand tonic on and off the field. If you wanted a joke he would supply it in a flash. Travel with him to Workington or Whitehaven and after the game he would make sure he was on the station platform some time before the arrival of the train. When the loco arrived Laurie would say "watch my bag while I have a word with the driver." A few seconds later the tiny referee would be back and join you in the compartment. Where had he been for that short absence? Merely to give the driver a piece of silver so that the train would be on time in arriving in Carlisle. Don't forget that Laurie had to catch a connection to Leeds, and failure to do so meant that he had to stay overnight in Cumberland! It was not often this happened. If it did, then it was no fault of the steam driver.

WORKSHOP COMPETITIONS

You must have seen the funny side of the workshops competitions. There's always a chuckle when a player turns out in socks because there's a shortage of stockings. This was a usual sight before the war, but in these times of plenty, you don't see it happening so often. Workshops competitions have their own brand of humour. At a certain match, one side had the smallest full back I've ever seen. Suddenly this player's side was awarded a penalty **near his own line**. He was given the ball with the instruction to try to find touch. But before he could take the kick, one of his pals from the stand yelled "Bill, don't kick to touch". The full back looked up as if to ask "well, what should I do"? The answer came back right away, "have a shot at goal." That brought the house down, as the player was only capable of punting the ball a few yards!

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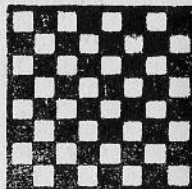
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RESULTS

OLDHAM

Blue and White

- 1—GANLEY, W. B.
- 2—CRACKNELL, R.
- 3—AYRES, D.
- 4—DAVIES, A.
- 5—ETTY, J. W.
- 6—KELLETT, A. B.
- 7—PITCHFORD, F.
- 8—JACKSON, K.
- 9—KEITH, J.
- 10—McKEOWN, D.
- 11—WINSLADE, C.
- 12—LITTLE, S. D.
- 13—TURNER, D.

WIGAN

Cherry and White

- 1—CUNLIFFE
- 2—BOSTON
- 3—ASHTON
- 4—ASHCROFT
- 5—SULLIVAN
- 6—BOLTON
- 7—THOMAS
- 8—BARTON
- 9—SAYER
- 10—McTIGUE
- 11—CHERRINGTON
- 12—COLLIER
- 13—EVANS

Referee: Mr. T. W. WATKINSON of Pendlebury

Touch Judges:

Mr. W. E. Higginson, Warrington (Crimson) Mr. T. Tyler, Leigh (Yellow)

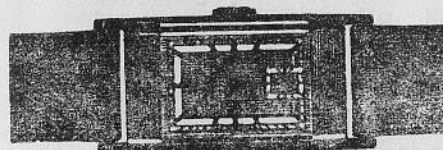
OLDHAM'S OWN SPORTS PAPER

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In the days of St. Helens Recs, one of the staunchest supporters was Mrs. Greenall, mother of the never-to-be-forgotten Recs scrum half Johnny Greenall. Mrs. Greenall was not blessed with height, but oh what lungs she possessed. Even if some spectators tried to "take a rise" out of the old lady, she always had an answer for them.

At Workington I have had to endure female voices roaring down my ear-holes for long periods, telling me what I should write about the referees of today. Believe me there was slander in every line. Had I printed one word I should have been on the mat for libel.

I cannot vouch for the authenticity of the next story, but it has been told over and over again in a Lancashire town. A workshops game was in progress and the light had already faded. Rain swept down and the ball was suddenly kicked over the goal line. Three or four men dived for the ball and one yelled in glee, "try" as he touched down what he thought was the ball. A second or two elapsed and the ball turned out to be a chap's head. That was the first time in R.L. that a try has been scored with a player's head.

But all the jokes and unconscious humour at Rugby matches helps to make it a satisfying afternoon for thousands of people in all walks of life. Agree?

List of Appearances and Performances—First Team only

(Up to, and including, Saturday last)

Player	A.	G.	T.	Player	A.	G.	T.
Ganley	35	185	5	Turner	32		9
Cracknell	34		23	Stirrup	9		
Ayres	18		5	Jarman	9		1
Nestor	27		13	Daley	22		1
Etty	36		13	Noon	19	13	10
Moat	6		2	Rowbottom	13		
Pitchford	34		11	Carruthers	4		
Jackson	32		2	Winslade	25		3
Keith	34		9	Davies	19		14
Vines	24		1	Kellett	7		1
Little	32		10	McKeown	4		
Duffy	9			Laverty	1		
				Lomas	1		

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY LEAGUE RESULTS

(Up to, and including, Saturday last)

	Barrow	Blackpool	Leeds	Leigh	Liverpool	OLDHAM	Rochdale	Salford	St. Helens	Swinton	Warrington	Whitehaven	Widnes	Wigan	Workington
Barrow	.....	19-16	14-18	14-4		10-27	29-10	22-12	12-18	9-7	25-15		24-10		5-12
Blackpool		.....	16-11	9-15	15-8	5-34	12-17	5-14	7-17	5-13	14-18	13-18	9-12	2-13	
Leeds	52-12	68-6	.....	13-12				25-25	23-5	20-10	12-8		18-8	17-5	3-13
Leigh	12-8		30-13	.....	18-11	14-24	12-5	12-7	15-5	24-3	8-2	25-14			13-18
Liverpool	18-3	33-8	9-30		.....	11-15		19-24	4-28	8-4	9-18			11-39	4-19
OLDHAM	24-5	21-11	17-10	23-5	28-12	.....		34-12	7-21	9-17	17-15	28-12	17-15		
Rochdale	11-15	28-20		2-7	4-4	21-29	.....	10-16	5-10	9-5	16-12	15-8	10-17		5-19
Salford		10-9			16-3	5-14	15-4	.....	12-7		10-8	18-3	5-16	7-14	
St. Helens	35-7	25-11	36-7	11-9	27-8	5-4	51-0		.....	43-11	14-2	26-9			29-6
Swinton	11-11	16-5		27-16	16-9		7-11	6-7	14-16	.....		5-2	0-6	5-28	13-20
Warrington	16-14	19-6	13-23		36-6	14-15		20-16	11-13	32-6	.....		28-2	21-5	10-5
Whitehaven	14-4	38-17	14-5	4-2		11-13	40-8	16-13	7-15	26-10	28-12	.....	29-19	6-16	
Widnes		30-3	21-3		21-7	2-12	4-13	12-3	13-22	15-12		11-2	.....	11-28	10-11
Wigan	48-5	30-13	20-17	7-9	44-5	6-9	22-10		9-12		22-13	28-6	18-5	.....	35-11
Workington	15-0		36-0		22-11	13-24	33-6		15-10		10-10	17-11	42-5	8-3	.....

Home Team on left. Away Team on top. Home Team's score given first.

"PLAY THE BALL" RULE

Our game against Widnes on Tuesday, 25th March, was one of the duller games seen at Watersheddings this season. Not that our opponents were to blame—far from it—and we can count ourselves lucky to win the match by seventeen points to fifteen.

Never was "play the ball" rule shown to such a disadvantage by two sides. Of course, both sides were playing to the rule—which now proves the absurdity of the rule. For a team to be able to go practically the whole length of the field in "play the ball" shows it to be a complete farce. Spectators cannot see the ball for fully ten minutes and the game is closed up. One may call it a creeping barrage—a case of "what we have we hold, until we are knocked off it."

This rule is evidently not good for the game. Is it the reason for the great decline in attendances at some grounds this season? We have seen the rule played to advantage and some splendid tries have been scored from it, but there is that flaw which allows one team to keep possession indefinitely, especially when that team is in front with the score and intends to keep the ball from their opponents, for without the ball, one side cannot score unless the side playing the ball is penalised.

This rule wants scrapping or amending. One may suggest that after the ball has been played three times, possession must be given to the opposing side, or a scrum formed. There is no doubt that the present rule is a blot on our game.

BRIEFS

Congratulations, if not too late, to Frank Pitchford, upon being asked to join the Tourists to Australia and New Zealand during the coming summer.

Although Frank is only second choice, we think him well worthy of selection. We now create a club record by having five players selected for this tour.

Don Vines is making a very good recovery from his knee injury and we can expect this whole-hearted player back in action before we close for the season.

The close season will see much activity at our ground. The covering of the Watersheddings Street end of the ground; extensions of the players' dressing accommodation in the Pavilion for the inclusion of toilets, etc.; the necessary renovation of our playing area; and the re-laying of the training field.

All this work must be accomplished within ten weeks. For the Season, 1958-59, we can look forward to a very much improved and a new-look Watersheddings.

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