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Fixtures for the Season

Date	Opponents	Venue
Aug. 9—	Rochdale Hornets	Away
16—	Halifax	Home 3-0
19—	Blackpool	Away
23—	Wakefield	Away
30—	Whitehaven (L.C.)	Home 3-0
Sept. 2—	Workington	Home 6-15
6—	Halifax	Away
13—	Wakefield	Home 3-0
20—	Rochdale H.	Away
27—	Blackpool	Home 3-0
Oct. 4—	Warrington	Away
11—	Rochdale H.	Home 3-0
18—	Liverpool	Away
25—	Hunslet	Home 3-0
Nov. 1—	Featherstone	Away
8—	Featherstone	Home 3-0
15—	Salford	Away
22—	Leeds	Home 2-30
29—	Wigan	Away
Dec. 6—	Widnes	Home 2-30
13—	Workington	Away
20—	Wigan	Home 2-30

Date	Opponents	Venue
25—	Swinton	Home 2-30
26—	Hunslet	Away
27—	St. Helens	Away
1959		
Jan. 3—	Leigh	Home 2-30
10—	Barrow	Away
17—	St. Helens	Home 2-30
24—	Salford	Home 3-0
31—	Leeds	Away
Feb. 7—	Warrington	Home 3-0
14—	Leigh	Away
21—	R.L. Cup	
28—	Whitehaven	Away
Mar. 7—	R.L. Cup	
14—	Hull	Away
21—	Barrow	Home 3-0
27—	Swinton (G.F.)	Away
28—	E.S.	
30—	Hull (E.M.)	Home 3-0
April 4—	Liverpool	Home 3-0
11—	Widnes	Away
18—	Whitehaven	Home 3-0

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No. 14—Saturday, 3rd January, 1959

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OLDHAM v. LEIGH

WATERSHEDDINGS NEWS & VIEWS

The Christmas Holiday fixtures have come and gone and after a strenuous three matches in three days we find ourselves on the fifty mark having secured three points out of six points.

In our game against Swinton on Christmas Day our team did not appear to function as of old due no doubt of our inability to secure possession of the ball from the set scrums. There is no doubt about it, chasing the other fellow is hard work and doing the tackling in the bargain, in fact we consider we were lucky in coming out of the match victorious by eight points to seven points. Of course the Swinton team have been our bogey team on Christmas Day at Watersheddings many times.

You cannot play our game unless you have a certain amount of possession, without this one will never score tries unless you have to rely upon mistakes by your opponents plus the ability of a good goal kicker in the team. May we record congratulations to Bernard Ganley in putting over four goals which enabled us to gain the verdict.

Boxing Day saw us in a tough encounter at Hunslet and we were very unlucky in not coming away with victory. The match resulted in a draw of fourteen points each. We had glimpses of brilliance in this match and led at half time, fourteen points to four points.

In this game Alan Davies had the unfortunate experience of being dismissed from the field through the intervention of the Touch Judge, this happened sixteen minutes from the end. From this period of the game we were holding our own with twelve men and leading by 14 points to 9 points and everything pointed to victory but in the last half minute our opponents equalized with a converted try and making the game a 14-14 draw.

Saturday last saw us up against one of the stiffest opposition of the holiday fixtures in our visit to St. Helens and we lost the match by 22 points to 6 points and we must admit we were well and truly beaten. Considering the forward strength we had on this match we did well to come out of the game as we did as the strong St. Helens pack were too much for our six.

It is obvious that a team beaten in forward play is up against it, you can have the finest backs in the game, but beaten in the forwards becomes a difficult task for the whole team.

"RUGBY MAD" LANCASHIRE TOWNS

By Cyril Briggs

Though it would be comparatively easy for St. Helens folk to attend if they desired, home fixtures of the Liverpool and Everton Soccer clubs, the people of the famous glass town are ever faithful to the professional handling code. Sixty two thousand of them paid admission, or presented their members' ticket for the last two games at Knowsley Road. The "gates" in these instances proved that (a) enterprise pays rich dividends (b) that the public WILL pay to see stars on parade (c) that R.L. football is no back number though we still are breaking records without breaking too often into the National paper headlines.

FORGOTTEN POINT

The scene at these two important games would have convinced the Sports Editors of some of our more important newspapers that there is a future in Rugby League. If the Saints can attract a gate of 34,000 for a league game, then Manchester United, or Everton with millions to call on instead of 150,000 at the disposal of the St. Helens R.L. club, should chalk up attendances of 90,000. That point is often forgotten by Soccer scribes.

The crowds at Watershedings have been very good this season, in fact, for the Wigan fixture more than £100 went into the game's coffers than on the corresponding day of last season. The Lancashire Challenge Cup receipts this season were a big improvement, so much so that a record was established. So were the cup pool receipts and we can add ditto, ditto, when the inter county match details are taken into account.

HAND IT OVER!

The Rugby League has gone through a searching period, and there are some clubs battling against adversity, so why withhold the receipts (records again) from the successful R.L. tour of Australasia? The money should be handed to those struggling clubs forthwith. There will always be difficult times for some clubs, but the enterprising ones may always have to subsidise them through the cup and league pool. But does it always pay to "carry" some of the weaker clubs under the present situation? The time may arrive when teams like Oldham, St. Helens, Wigan and Warrington will be glad of the cup pool money, but what chance have Bramley, Liverpool, Doncaster, Castleford, and Rochdale against the top league teams?

There are occasional—very occasional—shock results but in the main the meeting of leading teams and those under the half-way mark in the Northern League are usually foregone conclusions. So the sporting public will not attend those games in large numbers.

BATTLE OF THE STARS

Yet when St. Helens face Oldham or Wigan then people will fall over themselves to see the battle of the stars. Clubs who show little or no enterprise season after season are on a good thing—they still draw from the pool more cash than they put in. Surely the recent gates at Knowsley Road points to the reintroduction of two divisions? The weaker clubs think that because two divisions was scrapped many years ago it should never be tried again.

But what chance have new clubs? Little. Workington Town are an exception, but when they were called to league status, the young men of the Cumberland Rugby League rallied round in large numbers all seeking a place in the new team. The town took the cream of the Cumberland talent and when Whitehaven were elected they had to be content with what was left.

The teams that have been swept into the ground by the big clubs never had a real chance to get going. Put Oldham team or the present Saints set-up in Leigh, Doncaster or Blackpool and see what would happen to the "gates" in those places. Sure enough the gates would leap up to an unbelievable level.

The only way R.L. can keep pace with Soccer (and television attraction on Saturday afternoons) is to make the game more competitive. The improvement in the Leigh side brought in 14,000 on Christmas Day at Kirkhall Lane and on Saturday there was another useful "gate" for Wigan's visit. Warrington's run of success resulted in two five figure attendances on respective days. That's something new at Wilderspool where support has dropped off with the departure of Helme, Palin, Derbyshire, Riley, Johnson, Knowlden and Francis.

THE LIONS ROAR

And it's a long time too since Warrington folk heard such a roar from Swinton followers as they did last week. The lions may not have packed the ground at Station Road, this season, but it has been a slow climb back for them. Yet interest in the Manchester suburban club has grown this season and is still continuing. The place in the "top four" will gain them plenty of publicity. There has been a re-born enthusiasm among the Lion's followers.

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- 8—ROWBOTTOM R.
- 9—KEITH J.
- 10—LOMAS H.
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- 12—LITTLE S.
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- 8—ROBINSON W.
- 9—TABERN W.
- 10—OWEN S.
- 11—HURT D.
- 12—MARTYN M.
- 13—DICKENS M.

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Mr. W. Fitzhenry, Wigan, (Crim.)

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Have you taken stock of the present season or two? Have you compared grounds like Watersheddings, Wigan, Warrington, Hull, St. Helens and so forth, with what was offered in the early years after the war? St. Helens is Rugby mad; Oldham even with Soccer opposition is not doing so badly either, while Hull is certainly a Rugby City again after the Raich Carter era threatened both the futures of Boulevard and the Craven clubs.

Two things can make R.L. really sparkle. It is in the very hands of the clubs themselves. Two divisions could be tried for two seasons—and while it was being tried couldn't we get the ban lifted on Australian and New Zealanders signings? Surely this would help the strong and the weak.

DEPARTED FRIENDS

Another Trevor Allan at Leigh; a second Bill Shankland at Warrington; another Eric Harris at Leeds and a counterpart of Ces Mountford or Brian Nordgren at Central Park could work wonders. Have you noted how attendances in some cases have fallen off through the departure of the Aussies. We have to face that fact sooner or later.

There is not the Northern talent to keep R.L. clubs well supplied. South Walsians don't seem to like us very much these days, but what would happen if there was a super league, playing super football nearly every week. The thought is bright enough, and I'm pretty sure the horizon would not be dark for Second Division clubs. They have been given a helping hand a little too long. What would happen if the weaker clubs were asked to hand over some of their hard earned cash to help a Third Division? There would be some moaning. The resolution for all R.L. clubs in 1959 should be "enterprise at all times."

OUR VISITORS

Today we welcome visitors in the Leigh Club, who after an indifferent commencement have appeared to have found their true form. Injuries and the sad and untimely death of the Captain-Coach Peter Foster has been a great blow to their playing resources. Peter was the mainstay of the Leigh pack and his replacement will take a long time. A whole-hearted player for his club, county and country, the game has lost a personality and is much poorer for his passing.

However, the club of Leigh and the game must go on even in adversity and we know that the Leigh team will give of their best by the open football they play. Our team will have to be in their best form today to bring victory and we can be assured of a game worthy of the name. Many fine games have been seen on this ground between the two clubs and we hope that today's game will be no exception.

LIST OF FIRST TEAM APPEARANCES AND SCORERS

(Up to and including Saturday last)

Player	A.	G.	T.	Player	A.	G.	T.
Ganley	25	110	1	Little	18		5
Cracknell	21		13	Daley	1		
Nestor	6		1	Noon	17	14	7
Ayres	11		3	Edwards	2		
Etty	16		4	Turner	22	1	1
Kellett	24	1	12	Stirrup	7		2
Jones	2		2	McKeown	17		2
Rowbottom	18		1	Sims	9		7
Keith	24		10	Hatherall	2		
Lomas	2			Mee	1		
Davies	23		15	Jackson	8		
Pitchford	18		6	Kelly	8		1
Duffy	10		1	Quinlan	3		1
Winslade	26		6	Goddard	2		
				Lloyd	1		

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

(Up to and including Saturday last)

	Barrow	Blackpool	Leeds	Leigh	Liverpool	OLDHAM	Rochdale	Salford	St. Helens	Swinton	Warrington	Whitehaven	Widnes	Wigan	Workington
Barrow	.....	13-9			21-14			28-8	5-7					17-23	25-5
Blackpool	9-17	.....	6-19	8-7		12-34			19-26	9-17	21-20	23-20	9-21		
Leeds		32-20	.....		59-20		12-23			12-16	17-47			17-8	
Leigh		25-26		.....			21-5	15-20	6-10	9-22				15-25	20-15
Liverpool	12-11		16-20	20-16	.....	13-28					8-44	22-16	11-26		
OLDHAM		44-3	13-12			.....	22-18			8-7				44-8	21-18 30-4
Rochdale	7-11			10-5		13-14	.....	16-26	5-15		5-13	19-15	16-15	16-23	
Salford	19-10			12-16	8-6	14-9	.....	.....	12-28		16-22				
St. Helens			38-12			22-6	42-12	.....	.....	32-3	15-7			13-9	
Swinton	13-6	27-15					23-11			.....		25-10	6-0	7-22	
Warrington			32-15	15-13	23-26		19-0		15-29	5-15	.....				30-4
Whitehaven			8-0		24-15			19-10	2-25			.....	2-14	24-12	0-2
Widnes	17-8	46-7	5-16				34-11	35-10	25-16		13-17		.....		21-15
Wigan	49-16			26-12		19-7		31-14		24-8		39-16	.....		
Workington	21-2		16-8	19-4		0-23		19-12	10-10	9-10		17-9	14-34	.....	

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

COMPARISONS

One can now look back on the half season work in comparison with the previous season. The figures go up to the end of December as follows:

Season	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points For	Points Against
1957	21	17	1	3	453	267
1958	22	17	1	4	462	260

It is amazing how close we are running with last season although we are two points less in the League Table, having lost four matches against three last season.

During the current season we have played the major portion of our away matches at Halifax, Rochdale, Warrington, Featherstone, Wigan, Workington, Hunslet and St. Helens. We consider we have come out with credit on visiting these clubs who are always a difficult proposition to overcome.

Our final position as No. 1 in the League Table at the end of the 1957-58 season was as follows.,

Season	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points For	Points Against
1958	38	33	1	4	803	415

We realise that up to the present we have lost four matches which compares with the whole of lost matches last season. We know that the road ahead may be a hard one but we are confident, we have fulfilled the hardest part of our fixtures in away matches. Stastics prove that no team must lose ten matches to appear in the first four of the play-off for the championship, in fact we do not want to lose any more matches to secure a chance of a home match in the play-offs.

Excluding todays match we have nine league matches at home and seven matches away.

BARROW — AWAY

To all intents and purposes we can consider our away fixture with Barrow on January 10th postponed until Monday, 20th April. We should play at Barrow on the above date and Barrow visit us on March 21st. Owing to the English Cup soccer match Barrow v. Wolverhampton W. at Barrow on January 10th, Barrow wanted this club to reverse fixtures but we could not agree to this owing to the possible weather conditions.

We have already three matches at home during January and to make it a fourth would be gambling with the weather during January. We have a much better chance of the weather around Easter time.

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