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Fixtures for the Season

Date	Opponents	Venue	Date	Opponents	Venue
Aug. 9—Rochdale Hornets	Away		25—Swinton	Home	2-30
16—Halifax	Home	3-0	26—Hunslet	Away	
19—Blackpool	Away		27—St. Helens	Away	
23—Wakefield	Away		1959		
30—Whitehaven (L.C.)	Home	3-0	Jan. 3—Leigh	Home	2-30
Sept. 2—Workington	Home	6-15	10—Barrow	Away	
6—Halifax	Away		17—St. Helens	Home	2-30
13—Wakefield	Home	3-0	24—Salford	Home	3-0
20—Rochdale H.	Away		31—Leeds	Away	
27—Blackpool	Home	3-0	Feb. 7—Warrington	Home	3-0
Oct. 4—Warrington	Away		14—Leigh	Away	
11—Rochdale H.	Home	3-0	21—R.L. Cup		
18—Liverpool	Away		23—Whitehaven	Away	
25—Hunslet	Home	3-0	Mar. 7—R.L. Cup		
Nov. 1—Featherstone	Away		14—Hull	Away	
8—Featherstone	Home	3-0	21—Barrow	Home	3-0
15—Salford	Away		27—Swinton (G.F.)	Away	
22—Leeds	Home	2-30	28—E.S.		
29—Wigan	Away		30—Hull (E.M.)	Home	3-0
Dec. 6—Widnes	Home	2-30	April 4—Liverpool	Home	3-0
13—Workington	Away		11—Widnes	Away	
20—Wigan	Home	2-30	18—Whitehaven	Home	3-0

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No. 15—Saturday, 24th January, 1959

Kick-off 3-0 p.m.

OLDHAM v. SALFORD

WATERSHEDDINGS NEWS & VIEWS

The last two Saturdays has drawn a blank for both our teams and although unemployment is a bad thing it has given us a little breathing space to get our injured players fit again. January 10th we should have played at Barrow but this match was postponed until Monday, April 20th owing to a counter attraction in Barrow of the famous Wolverhampton Soccer team to play in the English Cup. The Barrow Club desired to reverse dates and come to Oldham on January 10th but we refused owing to a better chance of the weather in our home match with Barrow on March 21st, and how right we were, as on January 10th our ground was definitely unfit to play on and so was the Barrow ground on this date.

So everything has settled itself out by the weather conditions. The only dark spot in these postponed matches is that our centre Alan Davies still has three matches to miss owing to his suspension for being dismissed from the field at Hunslet on December 26th last.

On Saturday last we were the last club in the R.L. to call our match off against St. Helens. We kept hoping against hope that the desired thaw of the ground would set in but we were just twelve hours short of playing the match. On the Saturday evening the ground was fit for football, this is the luck and gamble with the weather. However we hope to fix an evening match against St. Helens and a suitable time of kick-off to enable our members and supporters to witness the match.

CHALLENGE CUP

The first round of the Challenge commences a fortnight later than in previous years, February 21st against February 8th, and the draw for the first round will be on B.B.C. Television on Saturday, 31st January.

There are 30 professional clubs and will be joined with two amateur qualifiers in Astley and Tyldsley Collieries and Kells, a Cumberland team.

The dead line for signing new players is the old traditional one of midnight, 1st February. There is sure to be great activity in the transfer market between now and the 1st of February.

Good players are scarce and in great demand and those in our game are much coveted by clubs anxious to strengthen their playing staff. Transfer fees are still high but the clubs appear to adopt an attitude of what we have we hold. Some clubs require forwards and others backs and the backs no doubt carry the greatest value. From enquiries, front row forwards are in great demand and the second row and loose forwards

TACKLING FROST and SNOW: STRAW, SALT or ELECTRICITY THE ANSWER?

By Cyril Briggs

One fixture played out of 15. That's not too good and the events at Knowsley Road and the Athletic Grounds last Saturday did not show R.L. up in good light. At St. Helens and Rochdale Hornets grounds there was much disappointment, and one wonders when this annual wangle on whether pitches are fit enough for play, will end. Last Saturday saw arctic conditions almost everywhere, but one wonders why only the Leigh v. Whitehaven game was played.

It will be remembered that on Saturday morning most clubs had promised to clear the snow from their pitches. It cost Leigh quite a sum to get their pitch in something like playable order, and at St. Helens an extra £150 had gone to the expense of getting men to remove the snow. At Rochdale too a great deal of extra work had been performed only for the referee (as was the case at St. Helens) to say "not today, thank you."

SALT, STRAW or SAND

Is there any way of beating the frost and snow? There are several ways, but clubs have been warned against the use of straw, salt and sand. The three "S's" point to sheer devilry to the turf, which is already badly cut up everywhere and is in serious danger of complete elimination. That's what some people think.

Before the war straw was generally considered as the best ground protector. It was used everywhere and the price was just right. A ground could be covered for about £20 and members of the Supporters' Clubs, plus the ever-willing juveniles picked up the pikels or hay forks and removed the covering in double quick time. They were also quick on the draw when the time came to put the straw in position again after the match concluded. To see scores of men and boys carrying loads of hay on forks in the gathering dusk was like an African Village suddenly becoming mobile. Little could be seen of the people carrying the flopping straw so the scene was really eerie.

RISK OF FIRE

Nobody could deny that an ample covering of straw usually kept out the frost. The job of covering and recovering made the task pretty difficult unless there were plenty of volunteers. During the match, the piles of straw were vantage points for youths. Many a player has been thankful of that soft landing when he had be thrown over the touchline.

Then we had the snags. Irresponsible folk WOULD throw matches on the piles of straw and much damage was caused to wooden railings by the flames. It was grand arson on a scale which even the police and firemen could not prevent. Happily it did not prevent the matches from being played, but the flames were really menacing before they were finally extinguished.

Turf experts were ever ready to decry the use of straw. They claim (and still do) that the seeds from the straw often killed the turf. Though games were possible even under the keenest outbreak of frost, the damage to the pitch was sufficient to give second thoughts to the use of straw. We have also to remember that the cost of straw is now pretty stiff.

One noted Lancashire Official told me that a straw covering on any R.L. ground was an expensive business. At least £100 had to be spent to do the job, and that was cheap. Labour costs have increased by a marked degree. The insurance companies, who are always keen on keeping to the terms of any policy, insist that there should be an extra premium because of the possible damage to stands etc., by the straw suddenly becoming alight. (See what you match throwers have done!)

SALT IS OUT

Salt was used freely at Central Park some while ago. This scheme was expected to do the trick. But the job was not quite as satisfactory as was first thought so Wigan directors decided against further use of salt. There was also a chemical substance placed on some pitches in wintry weather, but again clubs refused to repeat the idea. Warrington thought they had the frost duly taped in 1947. They bought 200 tons of specially washed sand and had it spread nice and smoothly over the pitch. It looked as if Blackpool's spanse of golden sands had been removed to Wilderspool.

While other clubs were battling against the weather and losing in consequence — the 1946-47 season had to be continued until June because of so many postponed games, — Warrington played most of their fixtures. They attracted extra support because supporters from a wide area wanted to see the "only game of the day". Everything seemed O.K. and most people seemed satisfied, until one individual said, "I wonder what will happen when the rain comes.?"

Well the rain did come. It came with a vengeance so much so that the monsoons which are so well known in South West Lancashire, converted Wilderspool in a "paddy field." The scene was almost complete except for the absence of rice planters. Drains and sumps were blocked and at the end of the season a plan was adopted to dig up the ground and

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- 8—ROWBOTTOM R.
- 9—KEITH J.
- 10—LOMAS H.
- 11—WINSLADE C.
- 12—LITTLE S. D.
- 13—KELLY G.

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(Red)

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- 3—CHESHIRE
- 4—PREECE
- 5—LOWDEN
- 6—GREGORY A.
- 7—GREGORY H.
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- 9—BOARDMAN
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Salt is Out Continued

lay two or three miles of new drains! Warrington made money out of the sandy beech fixtures but what they had made they almost had to pay it out in the pitch improvement scheme. Wilderspool at the end of the season looked like a battlefield prepared for trench warfare. The sandy pitches have not been repeated.

BRAZIERS' AND ELECTRICITY

The brazier scheme was first introduced before the war by Widnes. The biggest difficulty was to secure enough "braziers". This problem was eventually overcome when the Naughton Park officials converted oil drums for the purpose. Then came the job of keeping the braziers burning all night. Scraps of wood, paper, etc. were used and finally the pitch was O.K. for the following day's game. St. Helens followed the example a year or two ago. They converted hundreds of oil drums into braziers. Then the "braziers" were placed on the Knowsley Road pitch at regular intervals. Again the frost defying idea proved successful—but costly and with a bit of hand labour thrown in. Barrow Soccer club tried out a new experiment for the F.A. cup tie with Wolverhampton Wanderers at Holker Street last Saturday. It was almost a "match winner." For the hard spots a pick was used, and braziers had been burning all night. Steam jets were also operated and how the ice patches disappeared.

The ideal scheme is that at Goodison Park. But what R.L. club can afford the expensive underground electrical scheme? Eight inches below the Everton Soccer Club's turf are 30 miles of wiring. The intricate system cost a small fortune, said to be in the region of £18,000. But an advertisement in Everton's official programme states that no more games will be postponed. That's the claim of the Electricity Board.

On Saturday last the match with Sunderland at Goodison was played on green and firm turf. Elsewhere it was a case of ice and snow. Perhaps the Electricity Board could bring out a cheaper scheme for the more wealthier R. L. Clubs. I realise that a treated pitch might be playable for a soccer game but the same ground could not be used for Rugby. But after all, straw salt, sand or the newly-fangled electric wiring scheme were **not** used at Leigh for the Whitehaven match. It makes you think doesn't it!

NEXT HOME MATCH AT WATERSHEDDINGS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7th, 1959

OLDHAM v. WARRINGTON

Please note, KICK-OFF 3-0 p.m.

LIST OF FIRST TEAM APPEARANCES AND SCORERS

(Up to and including Saturday last)

Player	A.	G.	T.	Player	A.	G.	T.
Ganley	26	115	1	Little	19		5
Cracknell	21		13	Daley	1		
Nestor	7		1	Noon	17	14	7
Ayres	11		3	Edwards	2		
Etty	17		5	Turner	22	1	1
Kellett	25	1	12	Stirrup	7		2
Jones	2		2	McKeown	17		2
Rowbottom	19		1	Sims	10		7
Keith	24		10	Hatherall	2		
Lomas	3			Mee	1		
Davies	24		16	Jackson	8		
Pitchford	19		7	Kelly	9		1
Duffy	10		1	Quinlan	3		1
Winslade	27		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	10-20		19-26	9-17	21-20	23-20	9-21		
Leeds		32-20	.....		59-20		12-23		12-11	12-16	17-47			17- 8	
Leigh		25-26		.....			21- 5	15-20	6-10	9-22		20-3		15-25	20-15
Liverpool	12-11		16-20	20-16	.....	13-28					8-44	22-16	11-26		
OLDHAM		44- 3	13-12	19-16		.....	22-18			8- 7			44- 8	21-18	30- 4
Rochdale	7-11			10- 5		13-14	.....	16-26	5-15		5-13		16-15	16-23	
Salford	19-10			12-16	8- 6	14- 9		.....	12-28		16-22	19-15			
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	25-3
Warrington			32-15	15-13	23-26		19- 0		15-29	5-15	.....				30- 4
Whitehaven			8-0		24-15			19-10	2-25		19-2	.....	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

appear to come under semi-forwards and backs, in fact, second row are now expected to catch wing-threequarters, so much as the game altered from the dim distant past.

But forwards will be forwards as long as our game exists and you can take all the top and class teams today, their great strength lies in the forwards, coupled with the ability to secure the ball from the set scrums in reason, and the backs to have sufficient speed and strength to finish off the good work of the forwards. There you get a team that will go places.

OUR VISITORS

Today we give a special welcome to the Salford Club to Water-sheddings. Our visit to Salford on November 15th last they created a surprise by winning the match by fourteen points to nine points. This was a defeat we never expected and so today we hope to take ample revenge in getting back in our winning ways and to record a good victory. The Salford team are having what one may call a moderate season but are capable of just bringing off some surprise victories. They have played 23 league matches, won 10 and lost 13.

BRIEFS

Shaun Quinlan our Irish boy is now settled in the town and has commenced employment with a Manchester biscuit manufacturers as a representative. He will travel certain parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire in search of his livelihood. He appears to be well satisfied with the situation he has secured.

Ken Jackson visited a specialist on Thursday last and continued progress is being made with the damaged wrist. Ken has kept in full training throughout this injury and is keeping very fit. He does not feel any ill effects from his previous injury that he received in Australia the result of which was a cartilage operation. In fact the enforced rest appears to have improved the knee immensely.

This is Frank Daley's testimonial year and permission has been given by the Rugby League for us to grant him a testimonial. Frank will have completed 10 years service with the club on the 31st January 1959 and has been a very good servant to the club. He deserves a bumper testimonial and various events are now being provisionally made to this end. A dance is provisionally arranged for Saturday 21st February at the Town Hall when all our players will be in attendance. Tickets will be 4/- each and will be in big demand. Further announcements will be made in the local press. So you good people can now book Saturday, 21st February for the dance of the season.

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