

Oldham

Wigan

- 1 MURPHY, M.
- 2 ELLIOTT, M.
- 3 LARDER, P.
- 4 WAINWRIGHT, A.
- 5 BARTON, E.
- 6 TREASURE, D.
- 7 PATERSON, J.
- 8 ASHCROFT, K.
- 9 O'MAHONEY, R.
- 10 WELDING, R.
- 11 HALL, F.
- 12 HERBERT S.
- 13 BROWN, R.
- 14 BOTTOM, S.
- 15 REYNOLDS, J.

Referee:

P. A. Massey (Salford)

- 1 FAIRBURN, G.
- 2 WRIGHT, S.
- 3 FRANCIS, W.
- 4 HILL, D.
- 5 VIGO, G. or HORNBY J.
- 6 COYLE, B.
- 7 NULTY, J.
- 8 HOGAN, B.
- 9 CLARKE, C.
- 10 ASHCROFT, D.
- 11 IRVING, R.
- 12 GREGORY, B.
- 13 BLACKWOOD, R.

R. Dennett (Warrington) Red
T. Clayton (Widnes) Orange

OLDHAM MAN OF MATCH

Fill in the coupon below to nominate the Oldham player, who in your opinion was the most outstanding in today's match,

Drop your voting slip in at the Secretary's office, or Souvenir Shop, on your way home, or post it to reach us no later than 3 days after the game to "Man of the Match" The Pavilion Watersheddings, Oldham.

Name

Address

The Man of the Match

WIGAN

was

OLDHAM PLAYER OF YEAR

At the end of the season, the player who has received most Man of the Match votes over the whole season will become Oldhams Player of the Year.

All voting slips will be kept, and the Player of the Year will be asked to draw one out at random when he receives his award. The lucky voter will receive a £20 cash prize, so don't forget your name and address when you cast your vote — YOU could be on a winner as well as the player for whom you vote.

xx Only voting slips from the Oldham programme will be accepted — plain paper votes will be void.

VOTED MAN OF MATCH

v St. HELENS
P. LARDER

TODAY'S MATCH BALL

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OLDHAM

V

WIGAN



In-form Phil Larder drags Roy Mathias off his wing to give Mike Elliott a snappy try in the last home game against St. Helens.

(Picture by courtesy of the Oldham Chronicle)

Sunday 21st SEPTEMBER

kick-off 3.30 pm

8p

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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

IMPORTANT though today's game is from the point of view of picking up First Division points and reaching something like our true form after the setback at Featherstone our next two games will take some beating in terms of importance for the club's immediate future.

Next Sunday we travel to Huyton in the first round of the Player's No. 6 trophy and only two days later—on the Tuesday night—we entertain Widnes here at Watersheddings in the first round of the Floodlit Trophy.

The Player's draw couldn't have been worse in as much as Huyton, despite their revival in the last two seasons, still attract to Alt Park the smallest crowds imaginable.

The Player's competition can be a lucrative one financially for successful clubs but irrespective of the result the cash pickings from Alt Park will be very sparse indeed.

That makes it all the more important for us to win and progress to round two, thus giving ourselves the opportunity—given luck in the draw—of a much bigger financial haul from the second round.

You will no doubt have read that the sponsors have increased prize money this time by something like 40 per cent. and in the next two years it is likely to go up even higher because, as part of the three-year agreement, the terms for the 1976-7 and 1977-8 competitions will be aligned to the cost-of-living index.

Player's representatives and the Rugby League insist, in fact, that the contract recently signed, sealed and delivered is very much comparable to that entered into with the Rugby Football Union.

On the face of it the Union fared considerably better with talk of sponsorship worth £100,000 over three years for their national knock-out tournament.

The figures, however, are not exact and include promotional costs similar to those incurred by Player's in the Rugby League competition—but not included in the publicised amounts of sponsorship in our game.

The League is satisfied that it will at least match up to the Union in the final analysis. Certainly, the pickings are there for the taking now ... but first and foremost we have to beat Huyton on their own little ground.

To that end may we appeal to as many supporters as possible to make the trip to Merseyside next week-end, not only to help swell the gate, which will be split down the middle, but to provide the sort of vocal support from which any visiting team must derive a great deal of benefit.

On the following Tuesday night Widnes come to Watersheddings in a match which heralds the start of the new series of BBC-2 televised matches on Tuesday evenings throughout the autumn.

Already in progress are the series of preliminary round matches, but ours is the first of the first-round games. Not all the first-round encounters are on television. Ours, is and we will receive the usual £400 fee under the terms of the contract between R.L. and BBC.

The money will come in very handy, indeed, in these hard times but we will only feel the real benefit from it if we can still attract a good sized attendance despite the presence of the cameras.

The last time Widnes were here—in the third round of the Challenge Cup last season—we had our biggest gate for many years ... more than 11,000.

Not even in our wildest dreams would we hope for a repeat of that in the Floodlit Trophy. The Challenge Cup, with Wembley beckoning at the end of the road, is still a competition all on its own.

However, Widnes are very much a top attraction these days with players like Jim Mills, the big prop, and newly-capped England player Eric Hughes in their midst.

We believe we can rely on the support of you all on the night to see the FULL match live and enjoy the atmosphere which is such a part of our game when seen from the terraces or the stands.

Play the Game

by

JOE HUMPHREYS

Daily Mirror R.L. columnist
Chairman, Rugby League Writers'
Association

Rugby League football is the finest game in the world—when it's played according to the rules.

Whether you follow York or Doncaster or the fortunes of the more successful clubs like St. Helens, Wigan or Salford, you must have heard that said time and again.

Herbert Chapman, a great name in soccer and a former Arsenal manager, once expressed such a view. He had seen one of those pre-Second World War games the League played under floodlight at London's White City.

Those were the days when the Rugby League strove hard to establish three clubs in London — London Highfield, Streatham and Mitcham, and Acton and Willesden.

To many southerners, the Cup Final at Wembley is today a must on their calendar of sporting events each year. Peter Wilson, the Daily Mirror's former sports columnist now in retirement, was among those who seldom missed a final.

He delighted to contrast the game's vigour, brawn and sportsmanship—and I must say in a most favourable light—with the F.A.'s Cup Final. Seldom did he fail to extol the virtues of Rugby League.

Maybe it is the occasion with all its pageantry, the cheering singing crowd and the competitiveness that makes the Rugby League Cup Final at Wembley what it is.

But as this great game of ours becomes more dependent on the sales of beer and lottery tickets instead of sea-

son tickets to keep its head above water I can't help but ask: "Have we stopped playing the game?"

My memory goes back to the time Broughton Rangers had a team in the League, when Liverpool City played on Merseyside and Wigan could find the support to field two professional clubs.

There were some great players in those days. Among them such as Gus Risman, Harry Beverley, Jim Brough, Jim Sullivan and Jonty Parkin. That is not to say that there are not talented players around today.

In those days, however, they were far more dedicated. Of course, times were different. A player in the thirties could pocket more from his football than he could draw for a week's work following his employment. His football was his business—not the side-line it is today.

Rule changes, too, have not contributed to the improvement hoped for. Restarting play after a tackle remains the biggest obstacle to progress.

But have players, coaches and—in particular — referees stopped playing the game? Watch any match. The rigid rule interpretation of pre-war years is not there.

To keep a game flowing almost anything is allowed to go. Offside, forward passes, head tackles, obstruction both blatant and scientific, scrums—so often a shambles, off-the-ball tackles, lying on a man after the tackle has been effected ... all go unheeded.

At the cost of an extra pea in a referee's whistle a lot of the game's loose ends could be tidied up by paying attention to such detail. Players would soon cotton on to observe the rules to the letter.

So let's play the game. Rugby League can still be the finest game in the world — but only if the rules are followed.

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Made it! Prop Ray Hicks, leaving David Hull and Peter Glynn in his wake, stretches to touch down for an Oldham try against St. Helens.

(Picture by courtesy of the Oldham Chronicle)

THANKS

Dear Friends,

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Committee for the organising of a collection on my behalf, and also to the collectors.

Most of all I would like to thank all the people who donated so generously, I was flabbergasted when I received £100.

Once again thanks a million, hope to see you soon.

JOHNNIE FARRELL.

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OUR VISITORS BY DON YATES

THIS afternoon Wigan pay their first visit to Watersheddings since November, 1973, and they are most welcome guests for they always attract a bigger than normal gate because of their fine reputation.

That meeting in season 1973-74 was the fifth match between the two clubs in the opening four months of that season. They had met in the first round of the Lancashire Cup, when Wigan won 20-12 at Watersheddings, and also in a two-legged first round of the Floodlit Cup when Oldham progressed through to round two thanks to a shock 16-9 win at Central Park after losing at home 14-12. The First Division matches that season ended in home wins on each occasion, Wigan winning 18-0 at home but losing 17-9 here at Watersheddings. In the two seasons prior to that, the meetings between these two clubs ended in double victories, firstly to Wigan in season 1971-72 and then to Oldham the following season. In 1971-72 Wigan won at Oldham 23-7 and at home by 28-13 whilst Oldham's double victories in season 1972-73 were by 11-6 at home and 12-9 away.

But let's look back to Wigan's last visit to Watersheddings almost two years ago, for a First Division fixture which marked the debut in the Oldham team of David Treasure and Brian Gregory. Gregory, of course, has since moved on to Wigan but it is still hoped that both these players have come through yesterday's international unharmed and able to do battle this afternoon. Oldham's signing of Gregory and Treasure boosted the attendance for that last meeting to a creditable 3,416 who saw the home side play with plenty of enthusiasm to lead 12-9 at half-time. Unfortunately for Wigan, Green Vigo broke his ankle and this set back proved too big a handicap to overcome and Oldham were able to run out winners by 17-9. The Oldham try scorers in that match were Tony Peters, Bill Mc-

Cracken and Chris O'Brien whilst Phil Larder kicked three goals and Terry Clawson one. Wigan's nine points came from three goals kicked by John Gray and a try by Keiron O'Loughlin. The two sides were:

Oldham — Martin Murphy; Geoff Munro, Phil Larder, Tony Wainwright, Chris O'Brien; David Treasure, Mick McCone; Terry Clawson, Kevin Taylor, Fred Hall, Brian Gregory. Bill McCracken and Tony Peters. Substitutes: Mike Elliott and Keith Ashcroft (who replaced McCracken).

Wigan—Bill Francis; Stuart Wright, Green Vigo, Keiron O'Loughlin, Bob Howlett; Warren Ayres, Jim Nulty; Peter Smethurst, Colin Clarke, John Gray, Bob Irving, Dave Robinson and Eddie Cunningham. Substitutes: Tommy Highton (who replaced Vigo) and Kevin O'Loughlin (who replaced Francis).

Oldham will be looking for a repeat win today but so will Wigan who have made a rather erratic start to the season. In First Division matches Wigan have recorded two excellent victories over Wakefield Trinity away 18-9 and Hull Kingston Rovers at home 34-13 but they lost at home to Widnes by 14-13 in the opening match of the season. Last weekend Wigan surprisingly lost 22-21 at home to Second Division Workington Town in the Lancashire Cup, and, what was even more surprising, was that this defeat followed a great first round win at Wilderspool when Warrington were swamped 39-14.

The outcome of this match then, could depend on the mood Wigan find themselves in. Last week's disappointment will make Wigan determined to atone for that lapse but Oldham, too, in their last match at Featherstone were not very impressive, so with both sides striving to win back friends it looks as if it will be a rousing match between two well matched sides.

THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

PETER ARTHUR MASSEY—Height: 5 ft. 4ins.; Weight: 9½ stone; Hobbies: Coaching schoolboys and students; Occupation: Shipping Clerk. Married with two children. Passed Referees' Exam. in 1969. Promoted to Grade 2 in 1972 and upgraded to Grade 1 in 1974.

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Chat with Challinor

THE second phase of the Rugby League world championship began yesterday when England played Wales, their conquerors in Brisbane in June, at Warrington.

There is much to be said in favour of the new-style tournament and as Rugby League people, be it as spectators, players, coaches, club officials or League administrators, we will all wish it well.

Certainly, I do not wish to be too critical when I say that I hope the new format is not too flexible and unweildy for the average Rugby League fan who normally likes his competitions set out in a simple and straightforward manner.

Indeed, there was some criticism expressed two seasons ago at the way the various knock-out competitions were allowed to overlap each other.

I well remember that before the season was very old clubs were competing in county cup ties, Player's No. 6 matches, BBC Floodlit games, and the now defunct Captain Morgan Cup during one hectic period when the tournaments were run concurrently.

The result was confusion for all concerned and, sadly, a spreading of emphasis which merely served to take the spotlight off any one competition.

In some respects there is a likeness between the situation that existed then and the situation today involving the world championship.

Before yesterday's match at Wilderspool, each of the five competing countries—England, Wales, Australia, New Zealand and France—had played four games each, way back in June and July, with most of the games played on the other side of the globe.

If you are lucky you will doubtless, by now, have read in your newspaper of the current situation, how the League table looks, and who needs to beat who, and by how many, to be in with a chance of taking the world title.

But there is a very good chance, because of the comparatively sparse coverage that our game gets, that you haven't been reminded of the mid-summer results down under, that you don't know how the table is formulated at present, and that you are unaware of the full programme of dates and venues for the games in Lancashire and Yorkshire over the next few weeks.

Another point I would like to discuss is the way the squads of the competing countries, particularly England's, has been changed since the tournament started.

To my way of thinking the old system was much more satisfactory. Namely, a competing country picked a squad of, say, 20 players and stuck to those players, come what may, throughout the duration of the championship.

England yesterday made wholesale changes in the side from that which represented the country in the summer and if my information is correct there are going to be a good number of changes, too, in the Australian side when it arrives in this country shortly.

I hear that Bobby Fulton and Ron Coote, to name but two, are top-class Kangaroos who won't be coming for either business or domestic reasons.

This is a pity because they can be such marvellous players to watch and I'm afraid I'm left with reservations about the credibility of the tournament when the teams that finish it can be practically reshaped and rebuilt from those that started it.

It's a far cry from the days of the old World Cup when the competition was started and completed within the space of a week or two, the squads were picked and kept together until the tournament was over, and everyone was fully aware of what was happening as it happened.

Believe me, I hope my fears are unjustified for the game could do with a shot-in-the-arm — and an exciting, well-organised world tournament could provide it.

Most of us would like England to do well, for obvious reasons, and if they have beaten Wales by the time you read these notes I believe they can go on and give the Aussies, current leaders and hot favourites, a tough time even if they don't overhaul them at the top of the table.

With the greatest of respect to France, Wales and New Zealand it will be the England-Australia game that can be expected to arouse most interest and excitement — and I believe that could be the crucial match.

I am sure you will all join with me in wishing our stand-off David Trea-sure, the Welsh half-back, the very best of luck as the tournament progresses.

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FIXTURES 1975-76

1975

Aug. 10—Rochdale (Law Cup)A

17—WarringtonA

24—KeighleyH

31—St. Helens (Lancs. Cup)H

Sept. 7—FeatherstoneA

14—Lancashire Cup—round 2

21—WiganH

28—Players' No. 6

Oct. 5—KeighleyA

12—HuddersfieldH

18—LeedsA

26—WakefieldA

Nov. 2—DewsburyH

9—Players' No. 6—round 2

16—SalfordH

22—HuddersfieldA

30—LeedsH

Dec. 14—St. HelensH

21—BradfordA

26—SwintonH

Jan. 1—SalfordA

4—CastlefordH

11—Hull K.R.H

18—DewsburyA

25—WidnesH

Feb. 8—St. HelensA

15—Challenge Cup (1)A

21—WiganA

29—Challenge Cup (2)H

Mar. 7—WakefieldA

12—CastlefordA

21—WidnesA

28—FeatherstoneH

Apr. 7—WarringtonH

11—BradfordH

16—Hull K.R.A

19—SwintonA

F. A. 1975

29- 2 Aug. 30—Swinton (Lancs. Shield).....A

—Sept. 6—Swinton (Lancs. Shield).....H

13-12 20—WiganA

17-19 Oct. 4—SwintonH

5-27 18—WarringtonH

25—LeighH

Nov. 14—SalfordA

29—RochdaleA

Dec. 6—SalfordH

13—St. HelensA

20—HuytonH

27—BarrowH

1976

Jan. 10—SwintonA

23—WidnesA

31—RochdaleH

Feb. 7—St. HelensH

21—WiganH

Mar. 5—WarringtonA

13—LeighH

20—WidnesH

27—BarrowA

Apr. 3—HuytonA

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