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Club News

WHEN Kel Coslett became player coach at the Athletic Grounds just before Christmas relegation to the Second Division looked a certainty for us. With just one win to our credit, we were propping up the rest of the First Division teams.

Since Kel's arrival there has been a remarkable improvement in our playing performances, "Hornets are a good First Division team now" said one National newspaper writer last week, but there are still three or four defeats which cause a certain amount of anguish in the dressing room.

We are referring to the points dropped against Barrow(twice), at Wakefield and at Oldham on Boxing Day. Those were four games which we should have won and had we done so, we would not now be in the nall-biting position of wondering if the revival has come too late.

But the boys are still confident they can stay in the top flight and three wins in succession is definitely NOT relegation form. In the past formight we have beaten Salford 11-10, Leigh 22-0 and, on Monday night, Wembley Cup finalists Widnes 12-9 at Naughton Park.

And before critics point out that our task was made that little bit easier with Widnes being without scrum half Reg Bowden, hooker Keith Eiwell and loose forward Doug Laughton, it must not be forgotten that we were forced to make three key changes.

Centres Tony Wainwright (shoulder) and Steve McGiffen (knee), plus scrum half Jeff Heaton (knee) were all ruled out. Dave Hartley and David Burke filled the centre spots very well, indeed, while 18 year old colt Mark Sanderson made his debut at scrum half and he looks a star for the future.

It was a great night, too, for full-back John Maloney, who has been in superb form this season. John landed four goals and scored a brilliant try, linking up with the threequarters as he has done so well all season.

So now, we have just four games to go, including today's Easter holiday match against neighbours Oldham. After today we entertain Castle ford at the Athletic Grounds next Sunday, go to Hull KR the following Friday (April 22) and then wind up the season by entertaining Wigan on Sunday April 24th. That match, incidentally, is being sponsored by Worsley businessman George Holt.

For today's game we are expecting to have Tony Walnwright fit to face his old Oldham colleagues, plus the return of Steve McGiffen and Jeff Heaton.

HALF TIME SPECIAL

This week we are again giving a day's food for 2 as the first prize comprising of Breakfast, Ham and 6eggs. Lunch Chicken and Vegetables and for Tea a Tin of Salmon and a Tin of Peaches and Cream. Second Prize 100 Benson and Hedges cigarettes. Third Prize a Set of Kitchenware. Tickets are on sale at all parts of the ground 5p. each. Help us to help the Colts for all profits are donated to them.

NEXT HOME MATCH
Sunday next APRIL 17th Kick-off 3.0 p.m. CASTLEFORD

Our Visitors

Today we extend a warm welcome to all our Oldham friends. The past season has been one of upset and turmoil for the Watersheddings club.

They tragically lost their accomplished coach Jim Challinor, whose death in the middle of the season after a four month illness, was a loss to both Oldham and Rugby League. Their willing servant Ken "Tug" Wilson took over, only to resign a couple of months later, but "Tug" is now back in charge after the departure of Terry Ramshaw, who was player-coach for a short spell. Also, there is a new chairman at Watersheddings in Ray Hatton, who succeeded Arthur Walker, chairman at the Athletic Grounds for several years in the Sixtles.

At one stage this season it looked as though Oldham were going to be a force in the First Division, especially when their young forwards were bang in form. Ian Taylor, brother of David, Gareth Owen, Steve Herbert, Roger P'Mahoney, did a great job in the early part of the season, but they seem to have suffered through lack of experience. Still, they have plenty of time in front of them and there is no doubt that one or two of theses youngster will become outstanding forwards in the future.

When the teams met at Oldham at Christmas, we surrendered a 6-0 half-time lead to lose 14-6 and one of the Oldham stars that day was Tony Walnwright. Within three weeks we had signed Tony and it has proved to be money well spent.

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

KEVIN ALLATT is married with one son and one daughter. Passed Referees' Examination in 1963, promoted to Grade 2 in 1970 and to Grade 1 in 1972. Honours include Yorkshire Senior Competition Final in 1970 and match between Castleford and Australia in 1973. Played amateur Rugby League. Hobbies include all sports and keeping fit. He is employed as a Field Sales Manager in the Packaging Industry.

The Southern Amateur League will again be running their popular Cup Final Night Thames Cruise Dance on Saturday, 7th May, from 8 p.m. to midnight. The cruise starts from Westminster Pier, and tickets (including buffet) are £3,75 each. Full information from G. Anderton, 59 Sidlaw Close, Basingstoke (Tel. Basingstoke 64389).

Brian Batty

Now that the dust has finally settled on another controversy it is clear that Great Britain coach David Watkins welcomes all the support he can get for the coming World championship.

He realises that we must regain the championship if we are to put the game back on its feet at international level in this country.

It is obvious that Watkins is going to have to call on the qualities of toughness and determination in his character on this demanding trip.

He had a tough enough baptism in League and has had to live with a golden boy image which has brought him plenty of challenges off and on the field.

To his credit and courage he has met them all and won over a lot of people in the process, people who clearly overlooked his Rugby Union achievements.

As If winning 21 caps for Wales, the last three as captain, were not enough proof of his experience he led the British Lions in two Tests in New Zealand in 1966.

When Great Britain picked Watkins to play in the centre in the First Test against Australia in 1974 I wondered if they had made a mistake.

But Watkins was one of the few successes in defeat and it was in defence, the one department where I felt he might be suspect because of his size, that he excelled against the powerful Aussies.

Watkins was struck down by a knee injury the following week and apart from a brief appearance in New Zealand did not play again on the trip and thought his career was finished.

But he dedicated himself to his work behind the scenes and still continued to knock over a few Aussies, Artie Beetson and Bobby Fulton among them, with his commentaries.

The Aussie listeners could hardly believe their ears when Watkins let fly but I firmly believe that if you want to get any respect over there you give as good as you get if not better.

But generally Watkins has become better known for his role as the diplomat in this country and has certainly provided a great link with Wales in recent years.

Roger Millward has played and toured with Watkins and says: 'I reckon Dave will do a good job. I have always been impressed with his approach on the trips we have made together.

'He is not the sort to let anything get him down and will command the respect that a coach needs from his players'.

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Full details of the above scheme may be obtained from the Secretary's Office after the match this evening or by completing this application form and forwarding to G. Parry, The Athletic Grounds, Milnrow Road, Rochdale. Telephone: 48004.

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This afternoon we welcome our friends and rivals from Oldham for our traditional holiday clash. Over the past few seasons Good Friday and Boxing Day have seen some memorable battles between the two clubs, and with Hornets still struggling desperately to retain their first division status this afternoon promises to be no exception. This was written before the result of our match at Widnes was known, but if Hornets were able to exploit Widnes exertions in their cup semi-final last Saturday, and have picked up two vital points, then todays game assumes an even more vital importance.

The spetlight today falls on newly signed colt, Brett Garside, in his own words here is what Brett had to say:-

My name is Brett Garside. I was born on the 20th November, 1959, in Rochdale. My height is 6'4", and I weigh 14/2 stone. I am single. I earn my living outside rugby by being an apprentice Sheet Metal worker at Tomlinsons in Milinrow. I like to spend my holidays in Spain, where I just relax. I have no other favourite sports besides rugby. I was interested in Rugby from being a boy because my Grandad played for Hornets, then I finally decided I wanted to play when I was thirteen. I started playing for Hornets Colts and occasionally had a game with Mayfield under 16's. I signed for Hornets on the 23rd December, 1976. I feel that rugby is not covered enough on television also that we could do with a different commentator. The player I admire most from the present is Phil Ceokson who plays for Leeds. If I was able to change positions I would like to have been a stand-off. My greatest ambition for the club is to play at Wembley, and for myself to play for Great Britain. I would like to change the differential penalty rule. If given the chance I would like to play in Australia. My favourite team is St. Helens, it is also the team I like playing against most.

May I commend visiting fans to any one of our three tea bars. They all serve excellent hot pies while pie and peas is a speciality of the main tea-bar. Our ladies are always pleasant and will serve you quickly and efficiently.

The Supporters Committee are once again staging a Gala Day and this will take place on Sunday, 17th July, 1977. It is hoped to make it a more ambitious project than last years and details will appear in the local press nearer the date.

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