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*Centenary  
Season*

**OLDHAM**

**v**

**LEIGH**

MONDAY, 11th APRIL

Kick Off 3-00p.m.

Programme

**10p**

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**Second Division Champions:** 1963-64.

**Rugby League Challenge Cup winners:** 1898-99, 1924-25, 1926-27.

**Runners-up:** 1906-07, 1911-12, 1923-24 and 1925-26.

**Lancashire Cup winners:** 1907-08, 1910-11, 1913-14, 1919-20, 1924-25, 1933-34, 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1958-59.

**Runners-up:** 1908-09, 1911-12, 1918-19, 1921-22, 1954-55, 1966-67 and 1968-69.

**Lancashire Championship winners:** 1907-08, 1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57 and 1957-58.

**Runners-up:** 1908-09, 1910-11, 1911-12, 1919-20, 1923-24 and 1954-55.

**Lancashire Shield winners:** 1975-76.



David Hill pulls in two men and prepares to release a pass in the home defeat by Wakefield.

Picture by courtesy of the OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

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# OLDHAM OUTLOOK

May we take this opportunity of wishing you all a belated but happy Easter. Certainly, we hope you have had a less anxious time over the holiday period than the club, who are currently experiencing the worst set of injury set-backs to hit the club for many, many years.

Sadly, there is little we can do about it at this point of time and we can only ask you to be patient with us as we make our long-term plans to try and ensure that never again do we have to experience the sort of things that have combined to make the 1976-77 season one to quickly forget!

You are all aware by now that next season we will be in the Second Division.

It is not something we relish, make no mistake, but it is not - as some would have us believe - the end of the world. Without any shadow of doubt next season is going to see one of the best, most competitive Second Divisions since the two-play split was first instituted.

Barrow will be in contention for promotion again and there will be a big push from Leigh, boosted by the engagement as player-coach of John Mantle.

It is not yet mathematically certain that Rochdale will go down but the chances are that they will and here again the Hornets will be one of the better sides in Division Two.

We hope and intend to be right up there among the challengers ourselves and of the five clubs currently in contention for promotion there is going to be at least one still left down there to fight again next year.

And that's not even to consider the sort of challenge that might come from famous clubs such as Swinton, Huddersfield and Halifax.

No danger, life is going to be tough and it will prove a very important season for us with promotion at the first attempt a very important priority to achieve.

There will, of course, be all the usual cup competitions to put the icing on the cake and one must hope that, if we have a decent run in the Second Division, the confidence gained from picking-up-regular-winning-pay-packets will stand us in good stead in the knock-out games.

Let us not forget that Oldham was Second Division side when he went to the Challenge Cup semis in 1964 and came within a few minutes of reaching Wembley for the first time.

However, returning to today's match we would like to welcome the players and officials of Leigh club, especially their hooker, Kevin Taylor, whom we recently sold to Leigh after his wonderful career here at Watersheddings.

Kevin set a post-war record of Watersheddings first-team appearances - - 444.

He was always a model club man and terrific servant of the club and we wish him a long and happy stay at Hilton Park where, by all accounts, he has soon settled down well.

At the time of writing he was out of action with a broken nose sustained at Wakefield but we hope and trust that he will have recovered sufficiently to play today against his home-town club.

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# OUR VISITORS

BY DON YATES

This afternoon's Easter visitors to Watersheddings are Leigh, a club who, like Oldham, will probably be glad to see the back of this 1976-77 season, a season which for them started so brightly but then turned sour with an 11 match losing sequence which included two defeats at the hands of Wigan in which 19 tries were conceded. The excellent performances produced by Leigh in cup football before Christmas plus the creditable league results dotted throughout the season such as the 13-12 win at Salford and the home victories over Wakefield Trinity 30-16, Leeds 25-11 and Widnes 15-4 indicate that Leigh have the talent to hold their own in the First Division but there is a big question mark against their consistency after conceding double defeats to Castleford, Featherstone Rovers, Warrington, Hull Kingston Rovers and Wigan. The 41-3 hiding they received at Wakefield recently was the final nail in their First Division coffin but it was oh so different early in the season when they won at Wigan to reach the Lancashire Cup semi-final and then beat Warrington, Salford, Wigan and Huddersfield to set the Hilton Park terraces alight by reaching the final of the BBC2 TV Floodlit Cup. Leigh also reached the semi-final of the Players Trophy and in so doing beat Oldham at Watersheddings in the second round by a score of 28-13.

That Leigh victory was their first win on this ground since December 1971 when they also won a Players Cup-tie but one has to go back even further, to April 1970, for Leigh's last league success here at Watersheddings. That match came towards the end of the longest losing sequence in the club's history for Oldham had not won a league game since the previous November and they entered that match facing their 19th consecutive defeat. That dismal run was reflected in the attendance figures for only 1,652 spectators came to see the following two sides in opposition: Oldham: Martin Murphy; Phil Larder; Terry Garrett; John Mullarkey; Trevor Buckley; Tommy Warburton; Cliff Sayer; Danny Gardiner; Kevin Taylor; Fred Russell; Bob Irving; Ray Hicks and Ray Fletcher. Substitutes: Johnny Blair and Ken Payne (for Russell).

mmLeigh: Stuart Ferguson; Les Chisnall; Stan Dorrington; Mick Collins; Joe Walsh; Dave Eckersley; Tommy Canning; Dave Chisnall; Tommy Dickens; Derek Watts; Jimmy Fidler; Roy Lester and Geoff Lyon. Substitutes: Alec Hart (for Ferguson) and Charlie Middlehurst (for Dave Chisnall).

The match proved to be a hard fought affair between two well matched sides and only a Jimmy Fidler penalty separated the sides at half-time. After the interval Leigh slowly got on top and were able to press home their numerical advantage following the dismissal of Danny Gardiner. Tries by wingers Les Chisnall and Joe Walsh carried them to an 8-4 win while Oldham's points came from two Terry Garrett penalties.

Oldham ended that season in next to bottom place in the league table and this season find themselves in a similar position as they face a Leigh side containing one of Oldham's most loyal servants, Kevin Taylor, who ended a 14 years association with the club last February when Leigh signed him for £2,750. Although now aged 31 years and at the twilight of his career, this hard working hooker still considers that he has a couple of seasons rugby left in him and he approaches each game with the same enthusiasm which he displayed when Oldham first signed him way back in October 1962 from Werneth Juniors. Taylor represented Lancashire at both school-boy and under 17 level before turning professional and was always on the brink of representative recognition throughout his stay at Watersheddings which saw him make 446 first team appearances for the club and score 63 tries, including 13 in season 1972-73. Despite his consistency and high work rate Taylor made only two appearances for Lancashire, two for England under 24 and one for the full English side. He was a try scorer in his one full English appearance which came in autumn 1968 against Wales at Salford but despite giving a competent display he was overlooked by the British selectors and seems destined to end an otherwise distinguished career without a British appearance or a trip to Wembley, two honours which would surely have come his way with a more fashionable club.



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## Oldham

- |                 | T | G | Dg | P |
|-----------------|---|---|----|---|
| 1 O'BRIEN, C.   |   |   |    |   |
| 2 ELLIOTT, M.   |   |   |    |   |
| 3 MUNRO, G.     |   |   |    |   |
| 4 WHITTLE, A.   |   |   |    |   |
| 5 LUND, S.      |   |   |    |   |
| 6 BLAIR, J.     |   |   |    |   |
| 7 PATERSON, J.  |   |   |    |   |
| 8 ASHCROFT, K.  |   |   |    |   |
| 9 O'MAHONEY, R. |   |   |    |   |
| 10 CLARKE, C.   |   |   |    |   |
| 11 PETERS, A.   |   |   |    |   |
| 12 STARBUCK, P. |   |   |    |   |
| 13 REYNOLDS, J. |   |   |    |   |
| 14              |   |   |    |   |
| 15              |   |   |    |   |

Referee:  
P. M. OLIVER  
(Bolton)

## Leigh

- |                 | T | G | Dg | P |
|-----------------|---|---|----|---|
| 1 FAIRHURST, A. |   |   |    |   |
| 2 DAVIES, J.    |   |   |    |   |
| 3 BILSBURY, T.  |   |   |    |   |
| 4 PRESCOTT, A.  |   |   |    |   |
| 5 DRUMMOND, D.  |   |   |    |   |
| 6 WOODS, J.     |   |   |    |   |
| 7 BAKER, G.     |   |   |    |   |
| 8 BREHENY, S.   |   |   |    |   |
| 9 TAYLOR, K.    |   |   |    |   |
| 10 PLATT, M.    |   |   |    |   |
| 11 ROWLEY, A.   |   |   |    |   |
| 12 JONES, C.    |   |   |    |   |
| 13 BOYD, D.     |   |   |    |   |
| 14              |   |   |    |   |
| 15              |   |   |    |   |

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# Oldham FC Down the Years

NO. 18: BY TOM WEBB

1962-63 saw the introduction of two divisions and Oldham were in division one with a subsidiary western division to give extra fixtures. Sad to say Oldham were next to the bottom and had to go down into the second division. Harry Goodwin a former soccer player with Oldham Athletic defeated Bill Howard for the club presidency. Ousted from the Lancashire Cup in the semi-final the club played Wigan at home in the third round of the Challenge Cup when the crowd was given as 23,000. We lost 18-0 at home. Neon (48 goals) topped Sims (38) to be leading goal kicker but his 11 tries only took him to second place among the try merchants, Trevor Simms obtaining 15. Only Brian Lord (10) joined them with double figures. Frank Pitchford moved to Wigan, Peter Goddard to St. Helens, Keith Holden to Warrington and Terry Ogden to Huddersfield, incomers were Harry Major (Warrington), John Donovan (St. Helens), Jimmy Gaskell (Blackpool), Ray Fisher (Leigh), Don Platt (Leigh), John Cheshire (Salford) and Brian Fallon (Barrow). Charlie Bott, Mike Elliott, Kevin Taylor and Graham Wood first played this season. After the end of the season Alan Kellott left for Halifax at a fee reputed to be £4,600.

The Second Division football to which we were committed in 1963/64 saw the club emerge as champions at the first time of asking. We also took part in the semi-final play-off in the Western Division. The Team were also semi-finalists in the Lancashire Cup and the Challenge Cup. After Len McIntyre had dropped a sensational last minute goal to draw with Hull Kingston Rovers in the semi-final we went on to Swinton where we were getting on top after 12 minutes of extra time when the game was abandoned with Oldham leading 17-14.

Unfortunately we lost at Huddersfield in the next replay which was the nearest we have ever been to Wembley. Frank Dyson's 133 goals and tries by Trevor Simms (24), Peter Smotherst (17), Geoff Sims (16, plus a dozen goals), Jack Pycroft (15), Vin Nestor (10) and Johnny Neon (9, plus half a dozen goals) helped us to regain our reputation. The league was re-organised into one division so our promotion efforts were wasted.

So improved was the team that we reached the top 16 play-off only to lose once again to Hull Kingston Rovers in 1964/65. Leading goal kickers were: Dyson (84), John Winton (26) and Sims (16). At the head of the try scorers were Sims (10) and John Denovan, Stan McLeod and Malcolm Price with 9 each. Jim McCormack, Ken Wilson, Charlie Bott, Dave Parker and Alf Mumberson made most first team appearances. McCormack, McLeod and Winton were all signed from Wigan.

In 1965/66 we were again included in the top 16. The first match at Workington was won but we lost at St. Helens by 15-10. John Winton registered 121 goals. Tommy Warburton (16) and Stuart Whitehead (11) were the only two players to register double figures on the try chart. There was a mass exodus, Geoff Sims went to Salford, Jimmy Gaskell to Rochdale, Len McIntyre to Liverpool, Harry Major to Wigan, Jack Pycroft to Batley and D. Kershaw to Wigan. Newcomers included Terry Dolly, Alan Burns, Mick Mooney and Peter Bamford.

Once again, in 1966/67, we were in the top 16. A draw at Swinton delighted the supporters but the replay at Waterheadings was lost. Brian Curry (81 goals), Tom Warburton (60 goals) and 8 tries, Kevin Taylor the hooker 11 tries (the first time a hooker had scored most tries in a season) and Bob Irving (10 tries) were leading scorers. Tommy Canning, Geoff Fletcher and Geoff Shelton were making their mark but Whitehead and Nestor joined Sims at Salford. A home defeat by Leeds in the third round of the R.L. Cup once again disappointed the supporters. In the Lancashire Cup Wigan beat us in the final by 16-13. Bob Irving played international games against France at top level as well as for the under 24's.

# 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 Beeson and Bobby Fuhton 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'.



John Paterson attempts to get away around the blind-side against Wakefield Trinity but is taken by former England RU scrum-half, Mike Lampkowski.

Picture by courtesy of the OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE.

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## Oldham v Widnes

### FIXTURES 1976-77

FIRST TEAM				"A" TEAM			
Date	Opponents	Ground	F. A.	Date	Opponents	Ground	F. A.
1976				Mar. 12	(Sat.) Leeds (3-00)	A	
Aug. 22	(Sun.) 1st Round County Cup-Blackpool (3-00)	A	10-17	20	(Sun.) Castleford (3-30)	H	36-4
Sept. 5	(Sun.) Widnes (3-00)	A	20-22	27	(Sun.) Bradford N. (3-30)	A	22-17
12	(Sun.) Leeds (3-30)	H	10-18	3	(Sun.) Salford (3-30)	H	15-35
19	(Sun.) Leigh (3-30)	A	13-19	8	(G.F.) Rochdale H. (3-00)	A	26-8
26	(Sun.) Wigan (3-30)	H	23-20	17	(Sun.) Warrington (3-00)	A	22-14
Oct. 3	(Sun.) Wakefield T. (3-30)	A	13-11	24	(Sun.) Widnes (3-30)	H	12-11
10	(Sun.) Barrow (3-30)	H	33-01				
15	(Fri.) Castleford 7-30	A	5-11				
23/24	(Sat./Sun.) Player's No. 6 1st Round Batley (3-30)	H	17-9	Aug. 21	(Sat.) Huyton L.S. (3-00)	A	36-4
31	(Sun.) Bradford N. (3-30)	H	10-20	28	(Sat.) Huyton L.S. (3-00)	H	25-9
Nov. 6/7	(Sat./Sun.) Player's No. 6 2nd Round Leigh (2-30)	H	13-28	18	(Sat.) Leigh (3-00)	H	22-17
14	(Sun.) Barrow (2-30)	A	23-16	25	(Sat.) Wigan (3-00)	A	15-35
21	(Sun.) St. Helens (3-30)	H	9-20	2	(Sat.) Swinton (3-00)	H	26-8
28	(Sun.) Workington T. (3-30)	H	11-2	9	(Sat.) Barrow (2-30)	A	22-17
Dec. 5	(Sun.) Featherstone R. (2-30)	A	5-23	20	(Sat.) St. Helens (3-00)	A	3-21
12	(Sun.) Featherstone R. (3-30)	H	1977	27	(Sat.) Workington (2-30)	A	
19	(Sun.) Wigan (3-00)	A	14-6	18	(Sat.) Wigan (3-00)	H	8-18
26	(Sun.) Rochdale H. (3-30)	H		8	(Sat.) St. Helens (3-00)	H	10-11
1977				15	(Sat.) Leigh (3-00)	A	10-21
Jan. 2	(Sun.) Salford (3-00)	A	12-33	22	(Sat.) Workington (3-00)	H	21-14
9	(Sun.) St. Helens (3-00)	A	Feb. 5	5	(Sat.) Huyton (3-00)	H	12-11
16	(Sun.) Leigh (3-30)	H	7-17	18	(Fri.) Warrington (7-30)	A	
23	(Sun.) Workington T. (2-30)	A	P.P.	25	(Fri.) Rochdale (7-30)	A	
30	(Sun.) Wakefield T. (3-30)	H	8-23	Mar. 12	(Sat.) Warrington (3-00)	H	
Feb. 6	(Sun.) Hull K.R. (2-45)	A	5-35	19	(Sat.) Swinton (3-00)	A	
12/13	(Sat./Sun.) Challenge Cup 1st Round, Dewsbury	H	8-15	26	(Sat.) Huyton (3-00)	A	
20	(Sun.) Hull K.R. (3-30)	H	7-15	Apr. 9	(Sat.) Rochdale (3-00)	H	
27	(Sun.) Warrington (3-30)	H					

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