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*Centenary
Season*

OLDHAM

v

WIDNES

SUNDAY, 24th APRIL

Kick Off 3-30p.m.

Programme

10p

OLDHAM RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB
THE PAVILION, WATERSHEDDINGS, OLDHAM

President: H. V. ASHWORTH
Treasurer: R. HARTLEY

Chairman: R. HATTON
Vice-Chairman: J. HALL

Committee:

A. ADLER, J. BOWDEN, K. BROADBENT, D. HULME, K. POTTER.

Secretary: K. WILKINSON, Tel. 061-624 4865

Promotions Manager: A. TAYLOR, Tel. 061-652 5244

Social Club Manageress: Mrs. F. BOWDEN, Tel. 061-624 7240

Physiotherapist: F. NAVESEY

Assistant Physiotherapist: J. WATKINS

Groundsman: D. TRUELOVE P. HARTER

HONOURS

Rugby League Championship Play-off winners: 1909-10, 1910-11 and 1956-57.

Runners-up: 1906-07, 1907-08, 1908-09, 1921-22 and 1954-55.

First Division Champions: 1904-05.

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.



The try that ended our black spell. Mike Elliott crosses the Leigh line for the match winner

Picture by courtesy of the OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

How time flies! It does not seem more than a couple of months since the season was opening and now here we are at the end.

To say that everyone connected with the club is not sorry to see the back of 1976-77 is an under-statement for it really has been a terrible season from everybody's point of view, not least you the supporters.

All we can do is to promise you that things will be different and we trust you will be pleasantly surprised at various announcements which will be made in the Oldham Chronicle in the next few weeks.

Coming up shortly, of course, is the annual meeting and we trust that as many members as possible will do their utmost to attend and cast their votes at the election in the normal manner.

The committee has a tremendous amount of work to do in the next few weeks, not least of which is the setting up of a backroom team to look after all aspects of the playing side of the club in the future.

The idea is that this will relieve committee men to concentrate entirely on financial matters and keeping the club financially viable.

Several names have already been linked with the Oldham club, as they inevitably are in these circumstances, but we are not yet in a position to say anything other than the fact that applications have been received and we will be conducting interviews at the end of the season.

Behind the scenes an awful lot of activity is taking place and we are confident that as the summer weeks unfold we will put together a team of backroom boys who will have the experience and the know-how to guide us along the right lines next season.

That season, sadly, will be in the second division and it is going to be extremely hard to get out of it at the first time of asking.

It is going to be a highly competitive division when you consider the teams who are going down and those who have just missed out on promotion this time.

However, all that is in the future and we hope that after you have enjoyed your close season you will soon be back here at Watersheddings next August and, hopefully, enjoying your rugby. None of us have enjoyed it this season. Let's hope for better things next!

But first things first and that means several outstanding dates for your diary as the seasons draws to its close. On Tuesday of course, there is the second leg of the Lancashire Shield final at Wigan and we hope as many of you as possible will make the trip and cheer on our boys in their bid to keep hold of the trophy.

After that there are two more "A" team dates - Saturday, April 30th, Workington away and Tuesday, May 3rd, Widnes at home. There are also two more reserve matches - Rochdale away and Widnes away - but dates for these have not yet been fixed.

Also at Watersheddings there are three big amateur events to look forward to. On Friday, May 13th, there is the Oldham Amateur League championship final (kick-off 7.30) and on the following Sunday, May 15th, there is the Ally Edwards Memorial Trophy seven-a-side tournament, kick off 1.45 p.m.

On Sunday, May 22nd, there is the BARLA national sevens, starting here at 1.45 p.m.

All these events should provide a lot of good entertainment and we trust that you will make a note of the dates and make an effort to attend.

SUPPORTERS CLUB

A coach will leave Watersheddings at 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday 26th April, to Wigan for the 2nd leg of the Lancashire Shield Final. Seats bookable in any canteen before and after the match.

OUR VISITORS BY DON YATES

Oldham's 1976-77 centenary season is brought to a close this afternoon with a visit from Lancashire Cup winners and Challenge Cup finalists Widnes who will be hoping to field something like their Wembley side this afternoon after several weeks in which injury has severely hampered team selection.

It is this crippling list of injuries which has left Widnes battling for a place in the top eight and with it qualification for the Premiership play-off. The Chemics' hopes of being included in that lucrative competition have been dented somewhat by a recent 15-4 defeat at Leigh, a 12-9 home defeat to Rochdale Hornets and then a 31-0 hammering at St. Helens but all season Widnes have been rather erratic in league football where they have conceded double defeats to Hull Kingston Rovers and Featherstone Rovers but bounced back to beat Salford, Barrow and Bradford Northern both home and away. The Chemics also lost at home to their Wembley opponents Leeds but then reversed the result by winning at Headingley and in other home victories over Castleford and St. Helens they have looked quite impressive. As far as cup football is concerned, Widnes are always impressive for earlier this season they won the Lancashire Cup for the third consecutive season and are now set to make their third consecutive appearance at Wembley, tremendous feats in these days of overcrowded fixture lists.

However, when the Chemics came to Watersheddings in September 1975 for a televised Floodlit Cup-tie it was Oldham who took the honours against their more illustrious visitors. Widnes, who appeared in the Lancashire Cup Final four days after this tie, rested four of their top players and then were further handicapped after 12 minutes when international prop Jim Mills was sent off after an incident involving Dickie Brown. At first numerical disadvantage did not seem to bother Widnes for they led 10-2 after only 15 minutes and their tackling was so good that they looked like winning right up to the end when Mike Elliott's try put Oldham 16-10 in front and the issue beyond doubt. Dickie Brown was the Oldham star for apart from an all round competent performance he took over the hooking duties in the second half and was good enough to win ample possession for Oldham. Other Oldham stars were Mick McCone and Tony Wainwright while Mick Adams and Jim Fitzpatrick worked hard for luckless Widnes.

A similar result to this afternoon's match would make it a pleasant farewell to the First Division for Oldham but victory will be difficult to achieve for the present Widnes first team squad is one of the most powerful in the game and contains no fewer than 11 players who this season have appeared in representative football. It was no surprise therefore, to learn that three of their strength have been selected in the Great Britain squad for this summer's World Championship series in Australia. There is some speculation as to whether fiery prop Jim Mills will make the trip but everyone agrees that it is a deserved honour for both hard working hooker Keith Elwell and the most dangerous attacker in the Widnes line-up, their devastating winger Stuart Wright. Twenty-three-years old Wright was born in Warrington and was introduced to the game via Latchford Albion Juniors, joining Wigan in October 1969 and being their top try scorer during each of the past two seasons. He crossed for 18 tries last season but already this term he has scored 28, a total only bettered by Castleford's Bruce Burton. When Wright, who has played eight times for Lancashire and twice for England, moved from Wigan to Widnes last August, the £9,000 transfer fee was the highest ever paid by the Chemics but Widnes seem well satisfied by their capture as they prepare for another Wembley trip and the prospect of another exciting and profitable Cup Final clash with Leeds.

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Oldham

T G Dg P

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | O'BRIEN, C. | | | | |
| 2 | ELLIOTT, M. | | | | |
| 3 | RATCLIFFE, I. | | | | |
| 4 | MUNRO, G. | | | | |
| 5 | LUND, S. | | | | |
| 6 | HILL, D. | | | | |
| 7 | PATERSON, J. | | | | |
| 8 | HUGHES, B. | | | | |
| 9 | O'MAHONEY, R. | | | | |
| 10 | CLARKE, C. | | | | |
| 11 | ASHCROFT, K. | | | | |
| 12 | TAYLOR, I. | | | | |
| 13 | FLANAGHAN, K. | | | | |
| 14 | BARTON, E. | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |

Referee:
G. F. LINDOP
(Wakefield)

Widnes

T G Dg P

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | DUTTON, R. | | | | |
| 2 | WRIGHT, S. | | | | |
| 3 | ASPEY, M. | | | | |
| 4 | ECKERSLEY, D. | | | | |
| 5 | O'NEILL, D. | | | | |
| 6 | HUGHES, E. | | | | |
| 7 | BOWDEN, R. | | | | |
| 8 | RAMSEY, W. | | | | |
| 9 | FORAN, J. | | | | |
| 10 | WOOD, J. | | | | |
| 11 | KELLY, N. | | | | |
| 12 | LYON, E. | | | | |
| 13 | LAUGHTON, D. | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |

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Oldham FC Down the Years

LAST IN THE SERIES - BY TOM WEBB

The 1967-68 season saw Oldham drop into the bottom half of the table with 13 wins and 21 defeats. Brian Curry, (68) and Tommy Warburton (35) topped the goal-kicking list with Kevin Taylor and Mike Elliott (10 each) leading the try scorers, closely followed by Jim McCormack (9) and Terry Dolly (8). Warburton left for Leigh, Graham Wood for Swinton and Peter Smethurst for Salford. Dave Parker retired from the game after playing one match. Martin Murphy, Arthur Hughes, Colin Smith and Tommy Davies were gracing the team.

A slight improvement in 1968-69 saw Oldham win 18 and lose 16 matches in the league. Once again defeat was our portion in the final of the Lancashire Cup, St. Helens triumphing by 30-2. Derek Whitehead scored 115 goals, Wilf Briggs (9) Brian Curry (8) and Phil Larder (7) Briggs (26), Canning (14), Elliott (12) and Taylor (10) were the pick of the try scorers Taylor played for England v Wales at Salford. Charlie McCourt, Ray Clark, Jim Crellin, Ged Smith and Ray Hicks were some who wore the Oldham jersey.

Disaster struck in 1969-70 when the Oldham club had its worst season on record. Six matches only out of 34 league fixtures were won and only superior scoring averages kept the club above Blackpool Borough otherwise we would have occupied the bottom position. Bob Irving went on tour at the end of the season when the Great Britain side visited Australia and New Zealand. Standing played for Wales but his connection with the club was short lived. Not much progress was made in the two cup competitions and we also finished next to the bottom in the Lancashire League.

Oldham bounced back to midway in the league during 1970-71 but it was a mediocre season taken all round. Terry Garrett (85 goals), Larder (16 goals), Starkey (21 goals) and Johnny Blair (6 goals) kicked all but two of the successful shots. Phil Larder (17) led the try list with Irving and Clark on the 3 mark and Murphy and Tommy Davies on (9). Keith Ashcroft, Dick Bonser Trevor Buckley, Bill Chum and Jim Reynolds were making the First team quite regularly.

Phil Larder reached the "ton" with his goalkicking, his actual total being 114. Blair 10, Frank Foster the great tactician 8, Garrett 5, Tommy Davies 4 and Alan Kellett and Graham Starkey, a couple each completed the list. Elliott (23), Norman Hodgkinson (14), Irving (13) and Larder (11) were the ones to cross the line most, and 116 tries in all were scored. Our ventures in all the cups, R.L., Lancashire, Floodlit and Player's were all most unsuccessful. 1971-72 was again just a mediocre season. The decline in spectator support in all games was hitting Oldham as hard as any.

An improvement took place in 1972-73 and Oldham advanced to ninth place in the table. We did reach the third round of the R.L. Cup only to go down at Castleford. Larder kicked 129 goals and Foster 20. Elliott (20), Hodgkinson (18), Walnwright (16) (plus 5 goals) Taylor (13), Larder (13), Irving (13) and Davies (11) were most successful try scorers. Mick McCone, Tony Walnwright, Cliff Hill, Johnny Farrell, Fred Hall, Chris O'Brien and Geoff Munro were taking their places in an improving team.

The league had reverted to two divisions in 1973-74 and after appearing to be quite safe, Oldham slipped into the relegation area and finished on level points with Bramley. Our inferior scoring average took us to fourth from the bottom and thus into Division Two at the end of the season. Terry Clawson represented Great Britain in three Tests against the visiting Australians. Goalkickers were Clawson (29), Larder (25), Holland (23) and Blair (10). Only Walnwright (with 14) had much success in crossing the goal line to score tries. Tony Peters, Dave Treasure, Brian Gregory, Bill McCracken and one or two others were making their presence felt in the side but too many narrow defeats caused relegation.

Third place in the second division was our portion in 1974-75 so that meant that we had regained our place in the first division. After a second round draw at Rochdale, Oldham won the replay only to succumb to Widnes at home in the Challenge Cup, in a great third round tie. We did not proceed very far in the other cup competitions. Larder (77), Blair (31) and Hall (5) were our only goal scorers. Elliott (22), Treasure (12), Larder (10), Walnwright (9) and Barton (8) led the try chart. Brian Hughes and Bob Welding were among the leading players.

Brian Batty

With the Australian season moving nicely into its beefy stride is not surprising that Eastern Suburbs are setting the pace.

They have taken the first major trophy the Wills Cup - and their success spells out another warning for Great Britain.

Player-coach Artie Beetson is still the top Aussie prop and is still doing as much damage as ever with his strength and ball distribution.

But it is a slightly slimmer-looking Beetson this season as he tries to become even more of a slippery customer.

Big Artie has taken to heavily greasing his thighs with vaseline before a game and is causing tacklers more problems as they try to put him to the ground.

Loose forward Ron Coote has made the successful comeback I predicted and is putting himself in line for an international return.

Another significant feature of Easts success has been the encouraging return to form of golden boy Ian Schubert, who lost his senior spot for a spell last season.

The powerful running and finishing of young Schubert made him the star of the 1975 World Championship in this country.

He is now high in the running to make the World Championship side again and scored 17 points three tries and four goals, in the Wills Cup.

That was the same amount as Easts talented full back Russell Fairfax, but the man who topped the points table turned out to be a Pom!

Former Test star John Gray finished on 26, with 13 goals, two more points than Graham Eadie, the Manly full back, who looks certain to fill the No. 1 spot for Australia.

Gray had a good series and even in the final pinched the headlines despite North Sydney's defeat. He was introduced to Prince Phillip and is reported to have said 'I am one of yours, Sir!'

The Prince is supposed to have replied: 'I bet you are from Wigan.' Well, at least it went down well in Sydney!



TONY PETERS makes a break in our last home game against Leigh, which represented our first win after 14 consecutive defeats.

PICTURE BY COURTESY OF THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE.

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NEXT MATCH AT WATERSHEDDINGS

FIXTURES 1976-77

FIRST TEAM

Date	Opponents	Ground	F. A.
1976			
Aug. 22	(Sun.) 1st Round County Cup-Blackpool (3-00)	.....A	10-17
Sept. 5	(Sun.) Widnes (3-00)	.....A	20-22
12	(Sun.) Leeds (3-30)	.....H	10-18
19	(Sun.) Leigh (3-30)	.....A	13-19
26	(Sun.) Wigan (3-30)	.....H	23-20
Oct. 3	(Sun.) Wakefield T. (3-30)	.....A	13-11
10	(Sun.) Barrow (3-30)	.....H	33- 01976
15	(Fri.) Castleford 7-30	.....A	5-11
23/24	(Sat./Sun.) Player's No. 6 1st Round Batley	.....H	17- 9
31	(Sun.) Bradford N. (3-30)	.....H	10-20
Nov. 6/7	(Sat./Sun.) Player's No. 6 2nd Round-Leigh	.....H	13-28
14	(Sun.) Barrow (2-30)	.....A	23-16
21	(Sun.) St. Helens (3-30)	.....H	9-20
28	(Sun.) Workington T. (3-30)	.....H	11- 2
Dec. 5	(Sun.) Featherstone R. (2-30)	.....A	5-23 1977
12	(Sun.) Featherstone R. (3-30)	.....H	0-18
19	(Sun.) Wigan (3-00)	.....A	14- 6
26	(Sun.) Rochdale H. (3-30)	.....H	12-33
1977			
Jan. 2	(Sun.) Salford (3-00)	.....A	7-17
9	(Sun.) St. Helens (3-00)	.....A	P.P.
16	(Sun.) Leigh (3-30)	.....H	8-23
23	(Sun.) Workington T. (2-30)	.....A	Mar. 12
30	(Sun.) Wakefield T. (3-30)	.....H	19
Feb. 6	(Sun.) Hull K.R. (2-45)	.....A	5-35
12/13	(Sat./Sun.) Challenge Cup 1st Round, Dewsbury	.....H	8-15
20	(Sun.) Hull K.R. (3-30)	.....H	7-15
27	(Sun.) Warrington (3-30)	.....H	

Mar. 12	(Sat.) Leeds (3-00)	.....A
20	(Sun.) Castleford (3-30)	.....H
27	(Sun.) Bradford N. (3-30)	.....A
Apr. 3	(Sun.) Salford (3-30)	.....H
8	(G.F.) Rochdale H. (3-00)	.....A
17	(Sun.) Warrington (3-00)	.....A
24	(Sun.) Widnes (3-30)	.....H

"A" TEAM

Date	Opponents	Ground	F. A.
Aug. 21	(Sat.) Huyton L.S. (3-00)	.....A	36- 4
28	(Sat.) Huyton L.S. (3-00)	.....H	25- 9
18	(Sat.) Leigh (3-00)	.....H	22-17
25	(Sat.) Wigan (3-00)	.....A	15-35
2	(Sat.) Swinton (3-00)	.....H	26- 8
9	(Sat.) Barrow (2-30)	.....A	22-17
20	(Sat.) St. Helens (3-00)	.....A	3-21
27	(Sat.) Workington (2-30)	.....A	
18	(Sat.) Wigan (3-00)	.....H	8-18
Dec. 18	(Sat.) St. Helens (3-00)	.....H	10-11
15	(Sat.) Leigh (3-00)	.....A	10-21
22	(Sat.) Workington (3-00)	.....H	21-14
5	(Sat.) Huyton (3-00)	.....H	12-11
18	(Fri.) Warrington (7-30)	.....A	
25	(Fri.) Rochdale (7-30)	.....A	
12	(Sat.) Warrington (3-00)H	
19	(Sat.) Swinton (3-00)A	
26	(Sat.) Huyton (3-00)A	
Apr. 9	(Sat.) Rochdale (3-00)H	

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