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2nd Round

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SUNDAY, 4th MARCH, 1979 Kick off 3.0 pm

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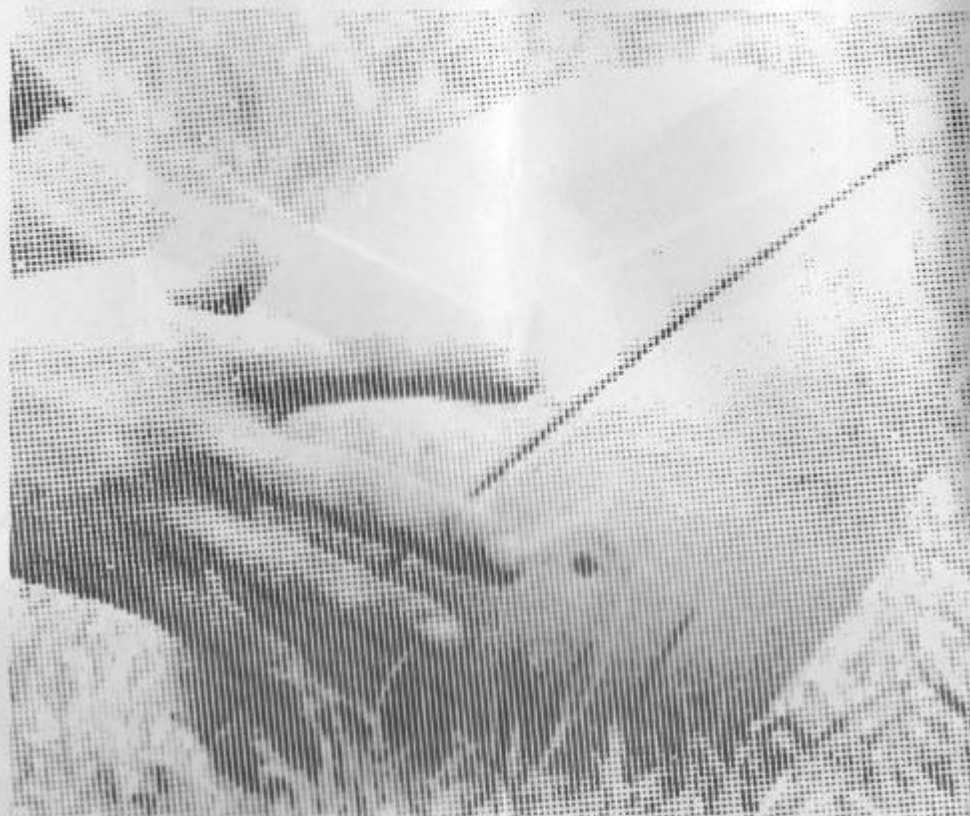
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Lancashire Cup winners: 1907-08, 1910-11, 1913-14, 1919-20, 1924-25, 1933-34, 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1958-59.

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, 1919-20, 1923-24 and 1954-55.

Lancashire Shield winners: 1975-76.

OLDHAM OUTLOOK

Well, here we are at last! First of all, may we take this opportunity of thanking the supporters who travelled to Salford on Wednesday to help cheer us on against Ace Amateurs of Hull.

The 'gate' of less than 900 was a disaster but it was not unexpected in view of the unavoidable circumstances which had prevailed because of the weather.

We had done everything in our power to avoid a mid-week game, a clash with Oldham Athletic or a trip to another ground but the weather finally beat us and we ended up having to settle for all three.

Geographically, of course, we are probably situated worse than any other team in the Rugby League. Straddling the Pennines, as we do, we get the worst of the winter and that's one very big reason why we seem to have more problems with our pitch than most.

The instruction from the Rugby League that we had to have the first-round tie over by Thursday put us very much on the spot.

Harvey Ashworth

(PRESIDENT OLDHAM RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB)

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The ruling was made just as the weather began to improve but we could hardly take the risk of hanging on -- and then possibly finding that we could not meet the necessary deadline.

In addition, we wanted to play the Ace tie reasonably early in the week to give our players more time to recover from knocks before today's tie.

Salford could not accommodate us on Tuesday because of their replay at Bramley so we had to settle for Wednesday at the Willows.

This cost the club a great deal of money in lost revenue at the bars, car park receipts etc. It also ruined the gate. There was no way we wanted to take a home tie to Salford, make no mistake.

It has been said that we could have taken the tie to Hull where we would have got a big gate and pulled in the cash. That is true. But our supporters had to be considered and it was felt it was not in their interests to take the tie all the way to Humberside.

It was bad enough expecting them to travel to Salford. We would not have imposed any further hardships on them.

The faithful few who did go to the Willows saw us come away with a comfortable 23-5 win against the Ace Amateurs, who did well without ever really threatening to cause a big surprise.

So, at last, we qualified for today's tie against Wakefield Trinity.

It will be the first game on this ground since Boxing Day and, whatever the result, we trust the long and enforced break will have been worth putting up with!

DO YOU KNOW THE RULES?

Alex Givvons the well known local referee will set questions in each programme to test your knowledge of the rules of the game. If any supporter wants a query answered write to the Club and Alex will answer the query in the following programme. Answers to this weeks questions will be in our next programme.

- 1 A player is effectively grounded near Touch, an opponent drags him into touch
- 2 Does a ricochet or rebound cancel the count of tackles.
- 3 Is the player marking the tackled player allowed to strike for the ball.
- 4 A player is fouled as he grounds for a try.

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Our Visitors

WAKEFIELD TRINITY are welcomed to Watersheddings today for the second-round of the State Express Challenge Cup -- and not before time!

Indeed, Oldham and Trinity have not met in the Challenge Cup since the palmy days of the 1920's and in only the four previous occasions Oldham have won and gone on to reach the final. Wouldn't it be nice if the same could happen again!

Trinity bring a star-spangled side to Watersheddings with most members of the side boasting big names in Rugby League circles.

Perhaps the biggest of the lot, Bill Ashurst, is out because of a knee injury. But that hardly weakens a side which, potentially must be one of the strongest in the game.

Trinity have not spared expense in recent seasons in building a side which has former England RU star Keith Smith at right centre and Welsh pair Steve Diamond and Brian Juliff on the left flank.

Smith has made an immediate impact in the pro game as an accomplished centre and sound goalkicker and he has deservedly won a place in the English League side to play Wales at Widnes later this month.

Diamond and Juliff were wing partners for Newbridge RU club, Wales.

Juliff, a strong finisher, had Wales "B" honours and has since graduated to the Welsh RL side.

At stand-off David Topliss needs no introduction, nor does his scrum-half partner Mike Lampkowski, another former England RU international.

The pack, too, has a strong look about it with John Burke, Alan McCurrie and veteran Terry Clawson forming a strong and vastly-experienced front-row.

Trevor Skerrett, in the second-row, is also a current Welsh international while there have been Yorkshire county honours for his partner Graham Idle -- a player who certainly does not live up to his name!

Clawson will be rembered as our former prop, as will Brian Gergory, who might well be the forward sub today.

Gregory came back from corriemal, Australia last year and has been with Trinity since.

All in all it looks a most accomplished and experienced side and one which will have to bring out the very best in Oldham.

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State Express Challenge Cup

The Rugby League Challenge Cup is to be a major feature of the State Express Challenge scheme in a £220,000 three-year deal.

Prize money for the 1979 competition will total £55,500, the richest purse for any Rugby League competition in the world.

State Express of London is the first company to sponsor the illustrious 82-year-old competition, which will be further boosted by the issuing of a series of State Express Challenges.

Rugby League Secretary-General, David Oxley, said "In our search for a sponsor for Rugby League's most prestigious competition we were looking for a company who would honour and respect the traditions and very special character of the Challenge Cup.

"We are confident that the participation of State Express in the Challenge Cup can only enhance the competition. It is surely a happy event that the first sponsorship marks the 50th anniversary of the brave and progressive decision to take the Challenge Cup Final to Wembley Stadium.

"It is the combination of progressive thinking and respect for tradition which makes this one of the most outstanding sponsorships in the world of sport.

"The staging of the State Express Challenges will add an extra dimension to the appeal of the competition, for which the ultimate prize will always be the lifting of the Challenge Cup at Wembley."

Chairman of the State Express Challenge Committee, Geoffrey Reeve, said "In 1978 over £170,000 was awarded to sport through the State Express Challenge. This form of sponsorship plus Challenge element represents a broadening of the base of the State Express Challenge - the intention this year being to reward British success in sport at both national and grass root level.

This is the first challenge to be issued in 1979 and we are delighted with the prospect of participating in Rugby League."

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S O S--SHIFT OUR SNOW!

Our S O S (as the Oldham Chronicle appropriately put it) for help to remove snow off the ground was answered immediately by scores of local schoolboys.

The boys did a magnificent job and we would like to publicly thank all the volunteers for the big contribution to the club's cause.

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