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SUNDAY 29th APRIL, 1979 Kick off 3.0 pm



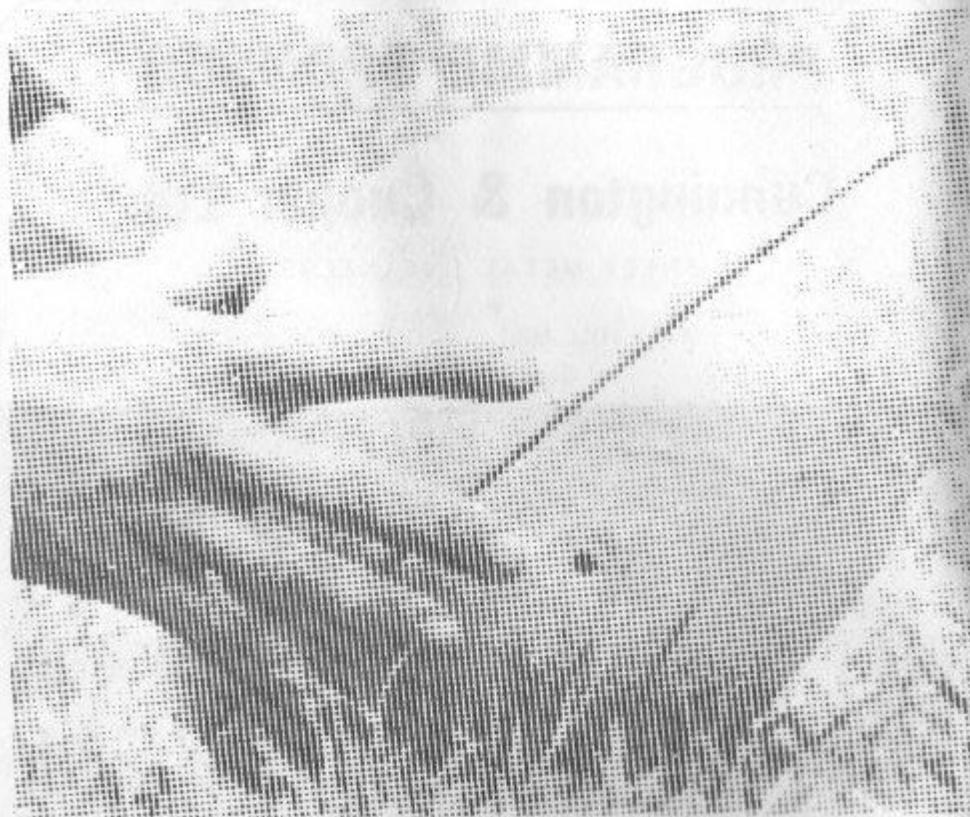
10p

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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.

OLDHAM OUTLOOK

We have only one home match remaining after today's game but what a good one it could be!

Hull, already assured of promotion and already having beaten Bradford Northern's record of 19 consecutive Second Division wins, come here on Monday week, May 7th (7.30pm) to provide us with what will undoubtedly be our biggest home crowd of the season.

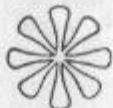
The men from the Boulevard have fantastic support and if they are still unbeaten when they come here we can rest assured they will bring a great army of support.

The match has been a controversial one off the field, you will recall, because we could not agree on a new date after the original game was postponed because of the big freeze.

Harvey Ashworth

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We wanted Hull to come here on a Sunday but the only available Sunday date fell at a time when the Hull club was away in France on a goodwill visit a trip arranged and planned before the season was extended beyond April 22nd.

The Oldham club firmly believes the gate could suffer as a consequence of playing the match in the evening.

Nevertheless, we should have a good turn-out and we would urge as many spectators as possible to turn out, our last home match until next season, to give us a shout.

It is true that, in recent weeks, the team has done little to encourage good support but you can rest assured that everything will be put right.

The summer will see a lot of hard work going on concerning the playing strength as well as other matters and we should be in a position by the start of next season to make a real challenge for promotion.

Having got our Development Association functioning superbly under the guiding hand of Peter Mason, we have recently turned our attention to doing a similar, professional job with public relations, advertising and sponsorship.

Revenue from these sources can add up to a considerable sum if the job is tackled in a professional manner by someone who is in a full-time capacity.

We have thus appointed Mrs Barbara Wilde, and she becomes the first full-time Public Relations Officer in the Rugby League.

Mrs Wilde, who lives at Moorside, will work from the Development Association offices in Clegg Street.

She will be responsible for all advertising, both on the ground and in the programme, and will also "sell" sponsorship; of matches, balls, programmes etc.

She will also be responsible for the hiring out and leasing of the social club concert room and her job generally will be to ensure that the Oldham club pulls in a steady and substantial profit from these off-field sources.

It is on the field, of course, that most people want to see success and you can rest assured that there is no way this will be neglected.

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Our Visitors

Whitehaven are one of several Second Division clubs whose early-season progress was something of a revelation.

Halifax and Blackpool are just two clubs who have made tremendous forward strides this season and the men from Rugby League's north-west frontier of Whitehaven were not far behind until recently.

For years the Cumbrians survived by selling their best players and then shouting down one of the many coal mines that push outwards under the sea from the Solway Firth to unearth another star of the future!

Many Whitehaven lads have left the Recreation ground and the closely knit community to which they belonged to make their fame and fortune in Lancashire.

Dick Huddart, who became a great star with St Helens and Great Britain, was but one of a long line of Cumbrians who moved south, including John Tenby, Bill Holliday and our own Geoff Robinson and Alan Burns.

Bill McCracken also joined Oldham from the Recreation ground four years ago and there have been many others who, over the years, have helped to keep the R.L. flag flying in West Cumbria by reaping good transfer fees for the club.

One of the most recent was hooker Alan McCurrie, who joined Wakefield for a fee of about £10,000.

In the McCurrie case, however, there was one major difference, the cash was not "swallowed" up in keeping the club going but was set against one of the biggest and most exciting entries into the transfer market ever undertaken by the Whitehaven club.

The Cumbrians have laid out nearly £30,000 this season to take to Whitehaven players of the calibre of Ray Dutton, Barry Sheridan and Dennis O'Neill (Widnes), Alan Ashton (St Helens) and Paul Grimes (Leigh).

Dutton, one of the game's best and most reliable full backs and goalkickers in recent seasons, was elevated to player-coach within a few weeks of his arrival at the Recreation Ground.

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BRIAN BATTY

Sport never stands still for long and that is why Rugby League this season will lose two more great characters.

Salford's David Watkins has already bowed out and his team mate Chris Hesketh will follow suit by ending a distinguished career with courage and dignity.

Since his business commitments took him to South Wales, Watkins has had to play on borrowed time to wind up a career which he has crammed with colour, class and scoring records.

The pages of each chapter of his days in Union and League are richly filled with exploits of his success from Wales to Wellington and Salford to Sydney.

And yet Hesketh has proved his equal as a statesman of his sport with his professional approach winning him admiration across the world.

His qualities of leadership were underlined when he captained the Great Britain tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1974.

It is typical of Hesketh that in Salford's hour of need this season he has repeatedly fought off injuries and played under the weather when many lesser players would have taken to the touchline.

One of the strongest and fittest players the game has ever produced Hesketh has matched his endurance with tremendous enthusiasm and determination.

And there is no doubt that these two footballing sons of Brian Snape are going to leave a gap that will take some filling.

But as Salford now look to the future they have made a capture in David Stephenson that has coach Murphy licking his lips in anticipation.

'Stephenson has so much to offer but it will be next season before we see him striking his full potential,' says Murphy.

'He can go a long way in this game.'

Hesketh says, 'Stephenson has the perfect build to make a great centre and I like his approach, I shall watch his development with real interest.'

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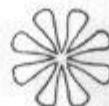
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With the Amateurs ALAN BURKE

Mayfield of Rochdale finally took the Oldham Standard Challenge Cup in one of the most keenly contested Finals for several years when they defeated St. Anne's at Watersheddings by 8 points to 0, but only after the Saints had held them to an 11-all draw on Good Friday. The first match drew a crowd of over 4,000 and record gate receipts for any amateur match in Rugby League history of £1,071, with St. Anne's scoring a last minute try to produce a replay.

Although it might have been expected that an even larger crowd would have been present at the replay, the Oldham League's wisdom in playing their Final on a set date was shown, when there was a smaller 'gate' for the second game, but which was still in excess of 3,000 spectators who produced over £800 at the turnstiles.

With the Standard Cup competition now completed, the amateur teams in the Oldham area are now concentrating on their league fixtures which are still outstanding, mainly due to the loss of 11 consecutive weeks of matches throughout the Pennine League area during the recent bad weather. As well as these games, the Oldham League Championship Play-off has got under way, with the quarter-finals having taken place last Thursday. The winners of those matches will now contest the semi-finals on Tuesday week, May 8, with the Oldham Championship Final taking place at Watersheddings, on Friday, May 11th. (7pm.)

In the BARLA National Cup, both of our remaining teams went out in the 4th Round, with Saddleworth Rangers going down at home to Pilkington's, and Mayfield falling to Garden Gate (Leeds). In the BARLA National Youth Cup, the Saddleworth Rangers' Under-18s team have reached the semi-finals, following their 74-0 defeat of National Dock Labour Board (Hull) last Sunday, and this afternoon are visiting Wigan to play St. Patrick's for a place in the Final. The Finals of both the open-age and youth BARLA National Cup competitions will take place at Borough Park, Blackpool, on Saturday, May 26th.

The British Amateur Rugby League Association are considering raising the current youth age groups to Under-17 and Under-19, and therefore allowing boys to continue to play for their school teams before moving into the amateur leagues. This would also mean that the senior of the two sections would then bring Britain's youth teams in line with those of France and Australia, whose boys are usually about twelve months older when playing against BARLA teams.



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