

48
OLDHAM Team Check HUDDERSFIELD

	1	SCOTT HAMILTON
60 T	2	LEE ST MILAIRE <i>LEE</i>
	3	ANTHONY FARRELL
21	4	IAN THOMAS
	5	BRYAN LEE <i>ST MILAIRE</i>
	6	ANTHONY EDWARDS
	7	GARY MEEHAN
CLAWSON	8	JIMMY JOHNSON
	9	BILLY COOK <i>HUCK</i>
	10	NEIL WOOD <i>FITZPATRICK</i>
	11	ANDY DICKINSON <i>SIMPSON</i>
	12	FRANK SIMPSON <i>NELSON</i>
	13	SIMON KENWORTHY
	14	PHIL HUCK <i>WILLS</i>
HAWKYARD	15	DENNIS FITZPATRICK <i>COOK</i>

Referee: Mr. C. Hodgson (Maryport) Touch Judges: Mr. W. M. Walker (Red), Mr. W. Brown (Orange)

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Record Transfer Fee Paid: £65,000 to
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Record Try Scorer: Reg Farrar, 49 tries,
1921-22 season

Record Goal Scorer: Bernard Ganley, 224 goals,
1957-58 season

Record Point Scorer: Bernard Ganley, 28 points
v Liverpool City, April, 1959

First Game: 21st October, 1876 v Stalybridge

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Bernard Ganley, 2,881

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Since 1900, Alan Davies, 182

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1957-58, 1958-59

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CHARLIE McALISTER

PLAYER PROFILE NO.12



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Nick name: Chas
Birthdate: 17.3.63
Birthplace: Waitara, New Zealand
Marital Status: Patricia Ann/Luke
Occupation: Pro rugby player
Car: Nissan Bluebird
Fav. TV Show: Charlies In Charge
Fav. Film: Officer and a Gentleman
Fav. Music: ZZ Tops
Fav. food: Paha meat and spuds,
seafood Steak

Fav. reading: Sports books
Hobbies: Any sports
Fav. other sports: Golf, tennis, indoor tennis
Likes about game: Heaps

Dislikes about game: Unfair critics
Superstitions: None
Fav. Ground: Lancaster Park,
Christchurch, NZ
Fav. position: Anywhere in backs
Best Moment: Getting found out playing
for Oldham
Worst Moment: Not getting found out four
years earlier

Hardest player to tackle: Wayne Shelford
(No. 8 All Blacks)
Hardest tackler: Those who go round
my ankles

Fav. all-time player: John Kirwan Junior
New Zealand

CAREER WITH OLDHAM

Date signed on: 3.1.88 (initially
for trials)
Debut: v Springfield Borough
away, 3.1.88
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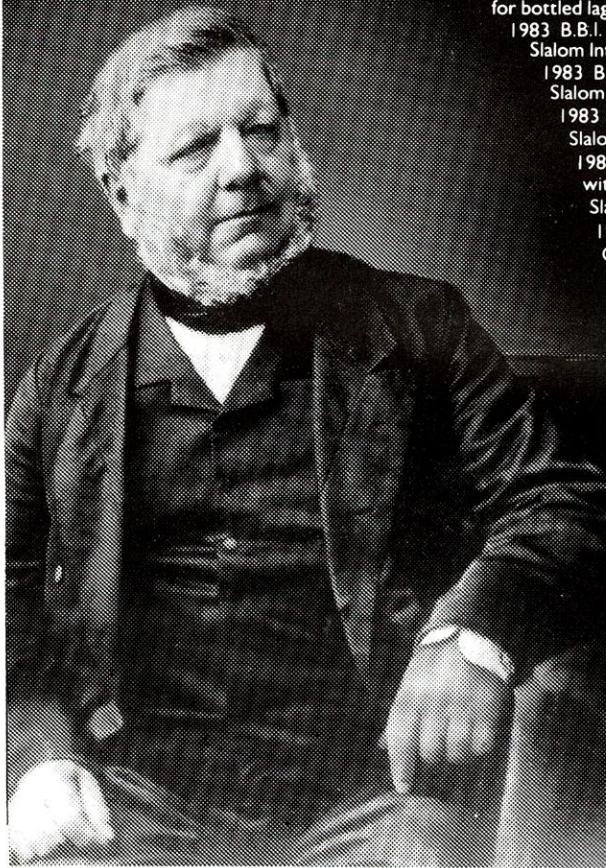
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- 1983 B.B.I. AWARDS SILVER MEDAL. Slalom D – for bottled lager.
- 1983 B.B.I. AWARDS DIPLOMA OF EXCELLENCE. Slalom International Strong Lager – for bottled lager.
- 1983 B.B.I. AWARDS DIPLOMA OF EXCELLENCE. Slalom D – for bottled lager.
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- 1984 MONDE SELECTION MADRID. Gold Medal with Palm Leaves and Certificate. Slalom International – for bottled lager.
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Oldham	22	10	0	2	338	170	7	1	2	204	102	35
Sheffield	24	8	1	3	217	151	6	0	6	196	180	29
Springfield	21	7	0	3	173	118	7	0	4	161	163	28
Workington	22	7	0	4	190	143	6	0	5	127	208	26
York	22	7	0	4	251	168	5	1	5	190	197	25
Barrow	23	9	0	2	167	95	3	1	8	116	230	25
Keighley	24	9	0	3	260	136	3	0	9	137	227	24
Mansfield	24	7	1	4	151	153	4	0	8	210	237	23
Runcorn	20	8	0	2	224	158	3	0	7	108	175	22
Rochdale	22	8	0	4	147	114	2	0	8	103	242	20
Doncaster	24	6	1	5	218	205	2	1	9	147	226	18
Whitehaven	22	7	0	4	181	105	1	1	9	155	239	17
Carlisle	21	5	1	4	152	126	3	0	8	110	211	17
Bramley	24	5	0	7	177	217	3	0	9	153	297	16
Huddersfield	22	5	1	6	220	226	2	0	8	99	209	15
Batley	22	3	1	8	150	197	3	0	7	90	139	13
Fulham	22	5	0	6	167	180	1	0	10	102	277	12
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An unusual picture of Hugh Waddell shot at the recent match between Great Britain and France at Leeds.

Picture by- Dave Sheppard, Sports Photography, Chessington Surrey

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FOLLOW THE 'A' TEAM

OUR end-of-season target now for the 'A' team is promotion to the first division of the Alliance. It was a disappointment to go out of the Alliance Cup at the quarter-final stage up at Barrow, but several factors contributed, not least the fact that three players who had played a major role in our second-round win at Widnes had been called upon for first-team duty, namely Ian Sherratt, Paul Lord and Keith Atkinson.

The cup-tie teams lined up as follows: Barrow-Irving, Moses, Jones, Kay, Hall; Rea, Marwood; Clayton, Wilkinson, Brown, Walker, Mossop, Richardson. Subs: Boyd, Campbell.

Oldham - Trialist; Copeland, Myler, Sherman, Irving; Patterson, Kirwan; Casey, Hall, Foley, Bardsley, Marsden, Morrison. Subs: Atkinson and Croston.

Barrow were vastly experienced, very strong and physical. They won the toss, took first use of a terrific wind and went out for early points which they got with tries from Moses and Richardson, one of them improved by Irving.

Oldham struggled to play their usual brand of rugby into the teeth of a gale, on a wet pitch, and with Barrow 'spotting' strongly. They came close to scoring once or twice, but a highly-committed Barrow defence worked hard to keep them out.

It needed some early Oldham points after the restart to put the visitors back into the match but again, after going close, they slipped further behind when first-team centre Kay scored a 70-yarder which Irving goaled.

It was all over bar the shouting then but, just to make sure, Kay added another Barrow try to put the home side 20-0 ahead, before a strong raid by Richard Irving allowed Chris Myler to go under the posts for a try which Atkinson goaled.

Rival hookers Hall and Wilkinson both went into the sin-bin and, after a spell in the 'bin', Tony Morrison was sent off and ultimately received a two-match ban.

So ended a run of eight consecutive victories, but all credit to the lads for getting back on their winning ways with a 22-14 home win over Featherstone Rovers last Saturday. We currently have several matches in hand on the teams in the top few places in the division and providing there was no slip-up when we met Blackpool at Watersheddings last Tuesday night we could be riding pretty high by now in the race to get promoted.

We were never in any real danger against Rovers, who never once went in front although they kept yapping at our heels. We missed a bagful of try chances and that kept Rovers in contention although we ran out comfortable winners in the end.

Team: Copeland; Trialist, Hawkyard, Irving, Robinson, Patterson, Kirwan, Sherratt, Hall, Foley, Casey, Croston, Marsden. Subs: Trialist, Bardsley.

Featherstone: Beach, Bannister, Rodgers, P Fox, Kellett, M Fox, Sharp, Slatter, Wild, Bradford, Busby, Hall, Smales. Subs: Wragg and Campbell.

Rival forwards Campbell and Casey were sin-binned for separate incidents in another hard battle in which Hall peddled the ball from the scrums for Oldham to capitalise with tries by Irving, Marsden, Croston and Hall and three goals by Hall.

Robinson, playing for the first time since recovering from a broken thumb, looked particularly lively on the left flank and caused problems for Rovers nearly every time he touched the ball.

WITH THE SUPPORTERS CLUB

PICK up thy boots - and walk! Rochdale Hornets v Oldham on Good Friday. It's all-ticket, so get one for what will probably be the last match at the Athletic Grounds, which is being sold for supermarket development. Then, get out your boots or trainers and let's walk the eight miles to the ground, lads and lassies, Mums and Dads alike. Get yourself sponsored, make some money for the Oldham club, and let's all be part of an historic event.

Going the long way round, through Royton and over Summit Hill, it is only eight miles, so get out your fancy dress and let's have a bit of fun on Good Friday, starting out from the social club a short time after the completion of the Standard Cup final, which will be held in the morning.

By the time you read these notes, the juniors will have finished their walk - a minimum of ten laps of the car park and a maximum of 20. Well done, kids!

Thanks to everyone who travelled up to Barrow for the 'A' team's cup quarter-final. A disappointing result, but a good day out. It cost £4 for fish, chips, beans and a cup of coffee in the motorway cafe - a fact that makes our match-day offering here at Watersheddings look fantastic value for money: pie and coffee or soup for 65p from one of the canteens around the ground and open all through the match.

The souvenir hut has some new bobbie hats and rugby balls at £3 and £2 - great value.

The player of the year dance is coming up soon. Voting forms will be going out, so get them filled in and sent back. These are exclusive to members of the supporters club.

For the away match at Wakefield we have some stand tickets to raffle off, kindly donated by David Topliss as a thank-you for the response give to his team at our last meeting. Keep it up, you Oldham fans. We are proud of you. Away support has been great all season, but don't forget to book early for coaches with Joe Gallagher on 627-0235 or Donald Pilkington on 665-1832.

Wigan and Leeds have been boasting in the press that they get 1,000 gates at 'A' team games. We've been having reserve team crowds like that for ages, and in fact we took so many fans to the recent 'A' team game at Fartown that the home club must have thought it was a first-team fixture... well, almost!

Finally, a big welcome today to all our friends from Fartown. We hope we can all enjoy a good, clean game in true Rugby League style, after which you will all have a safe journey home.

FACE IN THE CROWD



JACK DEARDEN

- our man on
the terraces.

At the time of writing these programme notes, we had just returned to winning ways following our home defeat of Workington Town, which helped to erase from the memory the previous week's disappointing display against Featherstone.

Thankfully, the players accepted the opportunity to secure two more points in the quest for the title and they produced some entertaining rugby, keeping the ball alive in conditions not really suited to ball-handling skills.

I am certain all the players welcomed the chance to get back out on the field, thus enabling them to get the poor display against Featherstone out of their system. I am equally certain that they will all learn from the experience of that home defeat.

You can often learn a lot more in defeat than can be seen in victory - a point which I am sure will not have been missed by our coaching staff.

Speaking of the coaching staff, Iain MacCorquodale deserves a pat on the back for the way the 'A' team have responded recently. I must, however, express a personal dissatisfaction at the way the Rugby League authorities allow our clubs to call off 'A' team fixtures.

After recording eight successive wins, our 'A' team got knocked out in the cup quarter-final at Barrow. They were no doubt looking forward to the next match - Featherstone at home in the league - to rid their systems of that cup defeat. Only 24 hours before kick-off, however, the game was postponed because Rovers' cannot raise a team.'

Some clubs appear to be able to postpone fixtures whenever it suits them. This gives the game a bad image and reflects badly on the Alliance competition.

I can only hope that the authorities look more closely at future fixture postponements because the Alliance League and Cup competitions have an important part to play in Rugby League.

All clubs benefit from regular Alliance fixtures, either by allowing first-team players to gain match fitness, helping young players in their learning process, or just providing healthy competition for places.

Fortunately, the Featherstone match was rearranged for last Saturday, but it then clashed with the televised cup semi-final from Burnden Park and would doubtless hit Oldham's Alliance gate. So I urge all clubs in the Alliance to make a more determined effort to fulfil their fixtures, as Oldham did when they took a hastily - organised side up to Barrow early in the season.

We need fixtures on a regular basis - and not just when it suits - if the Alliance is to retain its credibility.

JACK DEARDEN

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MATCH

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Manchester Evening News

COMMERCIAL CORNER

(Development Office Topics with Ray Hill)

FORTY lucky Lifeline winners have won £10 - and a horse - in the Grand National at Aintree on April 9. All the winners will be invited to a champagne buffet at Watersheddings on the day of the big race to watch it on television - and see if they are really in the money!

The holder of the winning horse will pick up £250 and there will be smaller prizes for second place (£125), third place (£75) and fourth place (£25).

The 40 Lifeline members who are coming to the start for the Watersheddings Grand National are as follows: 0251, A Reade; 0528, Mrs J.Boote; 0695, P. Collier; 1355, R.Taylor; 0419, J.Pragg; 0708, B.Giddons; 0966, L.Marland; 0460, B.Davies; 0020, D.Cleaver; 1115, V. Brooks; 0416, E.Lowe; 0970, C.Maslem; 1282, V.Corr; 0022, P.Butterworth; 0709, E.Ainscough; 0875, B.Mitchell; 0933, P. Derbyshire; 1184, I.South; 0540, L.Buckley; 0522, S.Lawton; 0428, Two Counties Service Station; 1277, Diva Fashions; 1278, The Barber's Shop; 1140, J.Gaunt; 1530, A.Smith; 1108, A.Bennett; 0619, F.Shipman; 0103, Mrs. Livsey; 0465, Players' pool; 1161, E.Thornton; 0982, Service Mouldings; 1093, D.Ratcliffe; 0139, Dr.Atherton; 0464, Players' pool; 0121, M.Marris; 1171, J.Welsby; 1466, M.Benson; 1601, S.Warner; 0730, S.Wons; 0556, L.Fletcher.

The recent sportsmen's lunch in the social club, at which England Cricketer Allan Lamb and our own club captain Terry Flanagan were guests and speakers, was a huge success and will probably be the forerunner of many more. More than 150 people sat down to lunch and when everything is finalised we expect to have raised more than £1,000.

Meantime, we are delighted to report once more that our Lifeline and Cashline figures are increasing all the time. Our projected rate of improvement for Lifeline is 50 new members per week and we have been hitting those targets for the past few weeks.

After today's game we have only one more home game in the Second Division - against Runcorn on April 4 - before we hit at the premiership play-off.

It seems only like yesterday that the season started. Now, the end is in sight and for us in the Development Association that means a heavy concentration on ways and means of keeping our figures rising - and keeping the money coming in - during the summer.

The success of that, to a large degree, depends on the loyalty and support of our supporters, but you can rest assured that the Development Association will be doing all in its power to retain interest and make things as simple as possible for paying-in etc.

RAY HILL

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THE BOSS TALKING...

(A personal view by Oldham coach Eric Fitzsimons)

AMONG our most consistent performers this year have been Hugh Waddell and Neil Clawson. It is clear why the GB selectors have taken interest in Hughie and if he continues to work as he is doing I think there is little doubt about him touring. Neil has emerged from the dark this season. He has taken his chance well and proved his worth to more than one or two 'doubting Thomases'. With a little more building, particularly in his legs, Neil could go much further.



Ian Sherratt also performed very well in his game at No.8 against Workington. He is now ready for first-team football and that's got to be good news for the club. With Leo Casey proving his undoubted worth at Featherstone, I am delighted at the genuine competition for places in the pack. Gary Warnecke moved up to No.13 for the Workington game and showed tremendous enthusiasm as usual. His support play and general work rate make him a very valuable man to have around.

The back line has performed with real credit and the standard of attacking play has certainly improved. It holds great promise for what lies ahead in the coming weeks.

One of the biggest problems in Rugby League has always been scrummaging and we have had more than our share of them this season at Oldham. My opinion on scrums is this : they are a restart, and the team that has the advantage should get the ball. The rule to give one side loose head and the other side the feed is nonsense. It should be changed to give the attacking side the advantage. It is a lottery when advantages are shared and inevitably results in a scrum penalty. Referees are the main culprits for scrum problems. They have the power to interpret the cause of breakdown and, in my opinion, they should go towards the side with the advantage. As soon as both sides realise that it is unlikely to deviate from that unless there is rank bad play (e.g. kicking the ball to the other side from the second-row) or blatant cheating (usually from scrum-half or hooker), then the game can settle into some kind of pattern.

(continued on page 21)

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APPEARANCES & SCORERS

SEASON 1987-88
(to date - 29 possible)

	APPTS (inc. Subs) T		G	DG	PTS
Atkinson K.	9	3	36	-	84
Irving R.	9	1	-	-	4
Hawkyard C.	23	3	-	-	12
Meadows K.	29	12	-	-	48
Edwards J.	6	-	1	-	2
Peters S.	13	-	-	-	-
Kirwan P.	9	2	-	-	8
Sherratt I.	7	1	-	-	4
Sanderson I.	21	4	-	-	16
Waddell H.	27	7	-	-	28
Worrall M.	6	2	2	-	12
Graham M.	29	7	-	-	28
Flanagan T.	28	5	-	-	20
Round P.	28	15	-	-	60
Sherman P.	3	-	-	-	-
Copeland T.	3	-	-	-	-
Morrison T.	5	-	-	-	-
Bardsley M.	9	-	-	-	-
Marsden R.	1	-	-	-	-
Burke M.	22	5	4	1	29
Walsh P.	23	8	61	-	154
Bates I.	3	1	-	-	4
Clawson N.	24	2	-	-	8
McCarthy B.	17	10	-	-	40
Foy D.	19	10	-	-	40
Robinson S.	8	1	-	-	4
Nadiola T.	3	-	-	-	-
Warnecke G.	18	6	-	-	24
Myler C.	3	-	-	-	-
Hall M.	3	2	-	-	8
Ford M.	10	4	-	1	17
McAlister C.	9	4	1	-	18
Lord P.	5	2	-	-	8
Casey L.	3	-	-	-	-

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OLDHAM RLFC FIXTURES & RESULTS 1987-88

Opponents	Att.	F	A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Aug 29 Whitehaven	3,122	20	9	Atkinson 3G	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Sep 2 Keighley	3,122	3	-1	Atkinson 3G	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Sep 6 Barnley	2,861	46	-1	Atkinson 3G	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Sep 13 Warrington	5,554	8	42	Atkinson 3G	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Sep 20 Springfield	3,114	22	-20	Atkinson 4G	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Sep 27 Huddersfield	2,808	20	-20	Burke	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Oct 4 Huddersfield	3,272	2	2	Burke	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Oct 11 Sheffield	3,174	44	-20	Burke 2T	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Oct 18 Carlisle MATCH POSTPONED - NO NEW DATE YET																		
Oct 25 Barrow	3,325	36	-8	Burkett IT	Iving IT	Hawkyard	Meadows	Edwards	Peters	Kirwan	Sherratt IT	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round
Nov 1 Keighley	1,787	12	-10	Burke	Traillist	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Kirwan	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Nov 8 Keighley	3,197	38	-8	Burke	Traillist	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Kirwan	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Nov 15 Barrow	4,858	22	-6	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Kirwan	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Nov 22 Batley	2,888	44	-0	Burke 3G	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Kirwan	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
(JPST 3)																		
Nov 29 Warrington	5,084	14	-10	Burke	Robinson	Warnecke	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
(JPST 3)																		
Dec 6 Doncaster	3,551	17	-16	Burke/DG	Robinson	Warnecke	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Dec 13 Barrow	1,800	14	-18	Burke	Robinson	Warnecke	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Dec 19 S.H.Halms	8,316	8	-18	Burke	Nadella	Warnecke	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Dec 26 (JPST 3 Semi)	4,866	24	-12	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Jan 3 Springfield	2,892	20	4	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Jan 10 Whitehaven	3,007	20	-20	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Jan 17 Runcorn	2,731	34	-0	Burke/DG	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Jan 24 Wakefield	5,107	10	20	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Jan 31 Warrington	7,540	7	17	Meadows	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Feb 7 Warrington	1,257	17	0	Meadows	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Feb 14 Carlisle	3,877	27	-4	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Feb 21 Featherstone	3,804	8	-8	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Feb 28 Featherstone	5,884	15	-18	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Mar 6 Warrington	2,888	38	10	Burke	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Mar 13 Barnley	1,839	36	16	Burke IT	Robinson	Foy IT	McCarthy IT	Meadows	Walsh 3G	Peters	Sanderson	Waddell IT	Worrall	Graham	Flanagan	Sherman	Round	
Mar 20 Huddersfield																		
Mar 27 Sheffield																		
Apr 4 Rotherham																		
Apr 11 Walsley																		
Apr 17 Carlisle																		

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THE BOSS TALKING... (continued)

They should lean heavily on the 'offending side and not use scrums as an opportunity to even things up. The league ruling for the last couple of seasons has been interpreted by most (but not all) referees that the two packs should be kept apart as long as possible, then it's down and 'in'. What room is there for team skill with this kind of application? There is certainly no need for good binding and timing of push etc. All you need is (a) a good 'chucker in' and (b) a good 'blocker off' of the opposing hooker.

This season referees have got themselves into all sorts of problems by some weird and wonderful interpretations. Against Workington, for example, the ball rebounded straight out of the tunnel twice consecutively and the referee said 'play on'. On the third occasion he made the scrum-half put the ball in again. The decision went against the same team on each occasion. Is it any wonder players lose faith and respect and sometimes temper?

I have total support for a referee on the day. His authority must be absolute and all my players have the same instructions - "Even when he's wrong, he's right!" Scrummaging is never going to be A.O.K. but I think referees would not go far wrong if they stuck to the 'advantage' theory and treated the good tactical kick up to fifth tackle as an attacking advantage.

Nice to see two local lads doing so well with the whistle this season - Alan Burke, who is getting a lot of league fixtures, and Johnny Blair, an old favourite at 'Sheddings who is catching the eye with some sound refereeing also. Keep it up, lads, the town is proud of you!

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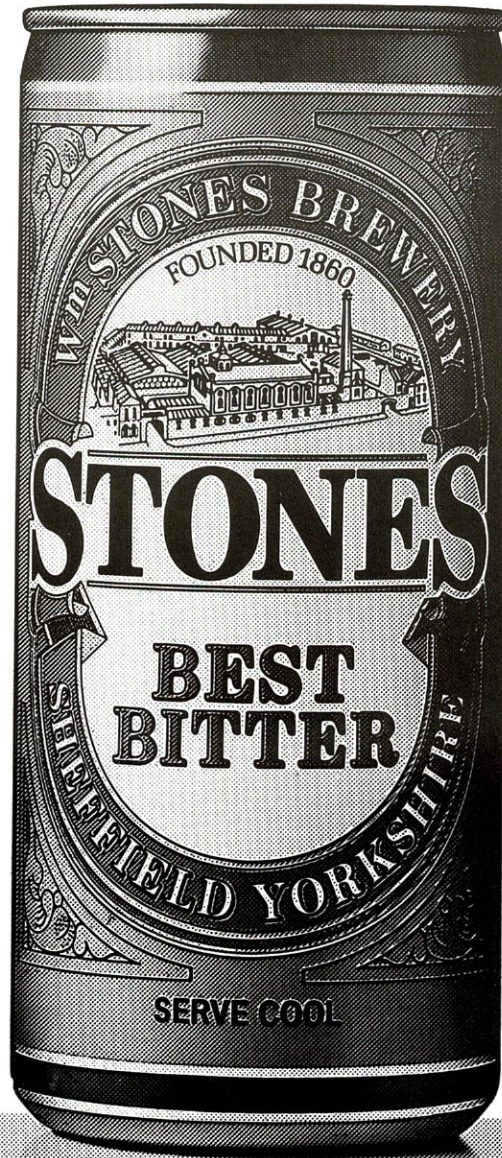
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DIRECT FROM THE BOARD

(A regular feature in which a member of the board takes you behind the scenes)

THIS WEEK - DAVID GARDNER



WHAT makes this season unique! Throughout the winter we have not had one game at Watersheddings postponed - and that must be something of a record. The heavy pitches, however, have proved a great leveller and that's something that must be considered when looking at performances.

Our 'A' team has been doing exceptionally well of late, so full marks to all concerned - and full marks, too, to Charlie McAlister, who is proving to be a very exciting player in his first season as a professional.

Charlie is one of those players who the fans love to see - big, strong, often unorthodox, and always exciting.

Our fans are continuing to support us in great numbers and, with a little more time and a little more patience on their part, I am sure we will provide a team that can make everybody proud to be associated with the club.

Next season, in the first Division, we will be battling hard to establish ourselves in the top flight and, hopefully, have a good run in the Challenge Cup.

Could it be Wembley? I think most League fans would like to see us make it to London for the very first time. It's within our reach and we will be striving for it - particularly if we get a great response to the sale of shares in the new company.

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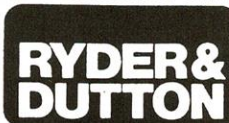
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CORKY'S COMMENTS...

(Iain MacCorquodale on the local scene)

Spotlight on the junior town team - a good season to date under the guidance of Paul Scott with a Lancs semi-final spot at West Cumbria already secured and a probable runners-up spot in the league, having secured victories over Widnes, Leigh, Warrington, St. Helens, Dewsbury and Castleford but, alas not against Wigan this year. It's the third successive season that the juniors have been coached by a man from the senior section - myself and Fred Laughton in the last two - but hopes are high that next year the recent revival in the junior section, helped by an upsurge in teacher interest and some fine promotional work by the Oldham professionals, will encourage junior school teachers to come forward to do the coaching and the essential backroom work, such as sorting out grounds, kit, food, referees etc.

Captained by Ian Knott of Parish Church, the squad includes Craig Barker, Nigel Donbavand (Mayfield), Damian Munro, David Milne (St Edwards), Christian Wheeler (Watersheddings), Paul Highton, Paul Sculthorpe (Thorpe), Craig Dockray (St Georges), Daniel Kearns, Martin Whitehead (Sacred Heart), Ian Sinfield, Ian Mullin (Knotts Lane), Paul Jackson (Leesfield), Michael Slicker (St Anne's), Stephen Crowther (St Paul's), Chris Ardern (Holden Clough), Steven Charlesworth (Werneth), Richard Cheetham (Our Lady's).

Fourteen schools are represented and this is a pleasing change from only a couple of seasons ago when Watersheddings, St Edward's and Greenfield provided two-thirds of the boys and it shows how many boys are being introduced to the game by the local amateur clubs and not by the schools. Although inter-school fixtures are now taking place in greater numbers, the introduction to Rugby League is most likely to occur through a local club with their ever-increasing number of willing coaches, referees and helpers from among the boys' parents.

These boys played a curtain-raiser earlier in the season, more than half have acted as bell-boys and at the end of the season it is hoped to give them the opportunity of showing their skills to you again with another fixture. We are aware of the tremendous support many local people give the team and we regularly hear of the efforts people go to to support the sides. James Buckley of Newroyd Ave. is one such supporter and since March 6, 1983, when Oldham played Leigh, he has not missed a single first-team game and has now notched up 188 consecutive first-team games. If anyone can beat that, please let us know at the club.

Muriel Kirwan's fine detective work has located more than 70 professionals who used to play for Oldham Schools, but she is anxious that none should slip the net for her special 'do' at Uppermill Civil in April. Stan McCormick, that fine winger of yesteryear, now resident in St. Helens, will be just one of the many stars present.

Congratulations to Richard Russell of Wigan, one of my former pupils at Fitton Hill, who was due to play for the GB under-21 side at St Helens yesterday. I vividly remember many of his fine performances, first for Watersheddings Junior School and later for Fitton Hill and Oldham Schools and, in particular, an absolutely brilliant pass while playing for Oldham Schools in France at under-15 level.

In this match a team of boys seemed to become a team of men during the course of a game and showed such character that they won a fixture that really they had no hope of winning. It just shows what determination and team spirit can achieve. Richard's parents, Jim and Pauline, have been great allies of schoolboy rugby and their two other sons are keen players too, with Nick starring for St. Anne's under-17s while Philip plays for Oldham Juniors under-13 and Lancashire despite being one of the youngest players in the year.

Special thanks to four regulars from the Phoenix - Alan Fitton, Vinnie McHugh, Kevin Huntington and 'Cockney' Duncan - who have sold raffle tickets for a ball autographed by the ex players and are going to buy our youngsters the best seat tickets for the third Test in Sydney on July 9. A great gesture which the boys really appreciate.

HERE COME HUDDERSFIELD

BEING truly realistic Huddersfield must feel they have a mountain to climb to reverse, in today's game at Watersheddings, the heavy defeat they suffered by Oldham at Arena '84 - we still prefer Fartown - early in the season.

Huddersfield's win at Batley on February 21 was the club's first away victory in more than 12 months, but it must certainly have increased confidence and morale because the Mount Pleasant success was followed by victories over Rochdale at home and Fulham away.

All this followed a disastrous 48-0 drubbing at York - the team's worst performance for a long time - which resulted in a players' meeting and a resolve to make sure that such a pasting would not happen again.

In-and-out form has been typical of what Huddersfield have achieved this season. A successful run in November, producing wins over Batley, Carlisle and Fulham, raised hopes of better things to come, but defeat in the next match at Runcorn had a disheartening affect and the team then went from mid-November to mid-February without a win.

Seven defeats in a row - six in the league and one in the cup - preceded a home draw with Whitehaven on January 31 before the disaster at York, where-upon things began to improve.

Full back is Scott Hamilton, an Aussie from Brisbane, and the only surviving Fartown Aussie from the three who joined the club in early season.

The centres and wings are all local lads, with colts internationals in centres Anthony Farrell and Ian Thomas, a player who has often been linked with Oldham in the past. Farrell was due to play for Great Britain colts against France at

(continued on page 27)

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HERE COME HUDDERSFIELD (continued)

St Helens yesterday, so Huddersfield will be hoping he came through to take his place in today's line-up.

Stand-off Anthony Edwards, last year's player of the year is another ex-colt, while scrum-half Gary Meehan is a Bradford lad, who was once on Northern's books and has also played for the now defunct Kent Invicta club.

Prop Jimmy Johnson took over from Mick Bostock as club captain a few weeks ago. A long-serving stalwart in his testimonial year, Johnson was a hero of the recent win over Rochdale when he dropped the winning goal in a 23-22 success.

The hooking job rests between Phil Huck and Billy Cook, while former Keighley forward Neil Wood and ex-Oldham colt Dennis Fitzpatrick will jostle for the No.10 jersey. Andy Dickinson, signed from the same amateur club that produced Tom Nadiola (Browns), will link up with another former Oldham colt, Frank Simpson, in the second-row, with Simon Kenworthy, a Huddersfield lad signed from Underbank, the favourite to wear the No.13 jersey.

It would take one of the biggest shocks of the season for the Fartown lads to win against title-chasing Oldham today, and the home side will be out to pile up the points in a bid to cut the points difference leeway on title rivals Wakefield Trinity.



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PRESS BOX CHATTER



(Roger Halstead, Oldham Evening Chronicle)

DAVID TOPLISS'S prediction that the Second Division title could well be won on points difference looms closer as we hit the final run-in.

If Oldham win all their remaining games, including victory at Wakefield, and Trinity do not slip up in any more matches, the title will hinge on which club has the better scoring and defensive record.

At present Trinity are ahead by 64 points, Oldham losing ground last weekend when they won 36-16 at Bramley as Wakefield beat Fulham 32-0 at Belle Vue.

I saw Trinity beat Rochdale Hornets a few days earlier. The score of 18-8 flattered the Yorkshiremen, but it was also indicative of their willingness to work hard on defence to restrict the eager Hornets to 8 points.

Now Oldham must now be kicking themselves for letting Workington in for that 'soft' try in the last home game and, more particularly, for easing off to let Bramley score 16 points without reply last week at McLaren Field.

Twenty points saved there would have cut Trinity's lead to 44. As it is, Oldham now have a mountain to climb to turn that deficit into a points lead.

Every chance must be taken on attack and the defence must work overtime in a bid to 'nil' the opposition. If not, Oldham could win at Wakefield - and still miss out on the title.

ROGER HALSTEAD

MATCH REPORTS

Oldham v Workington

A terrific exhibition of centre play by Charlie McAlister was the highlight of our 38-10 win over Workington at Watersheddings. We scored eight tries in terrible conditions and big Charlie had a hand in most of them.

An indication of the quality football we played, particularly in a half-hour spell either side of half-time, was the fact that the backs scored seven of the eight tries through Kevin Meadows, Keith Atkinson (2), Des Foy (2), Mike Ford and Paul Lord, Terry Flanagan being the odd man out.

We started off badly in the first 20 minutes and in the last 20 minutes we struggled for ball, otherwise we would doubtless have scored a lot more points - and points could be crucial in the title race at the end of the season.

Bramley v Oldham

We roared into a 30-0 interval lead on another gluepot pitch - and then let Bramley back into the game by scoring 16 points without reply. Those 16 points might well prove the difference between finishing as champions and finishing as runners-up.

Our first-half performance was great stuff and we scored five tries through Mal Graham, Mick Burke, Mike Ford (2) and Kevin Meadows but, incredibly, we then had to wait until the last five minutes before we added to our try tally when Hugh Waddell crossed.

A lack of concentration on Oldham's part, a much more determined display from Bramley, and a second-half penalty count of 9-3 in Bramley's favour all had a bearing on the big about-turn.

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