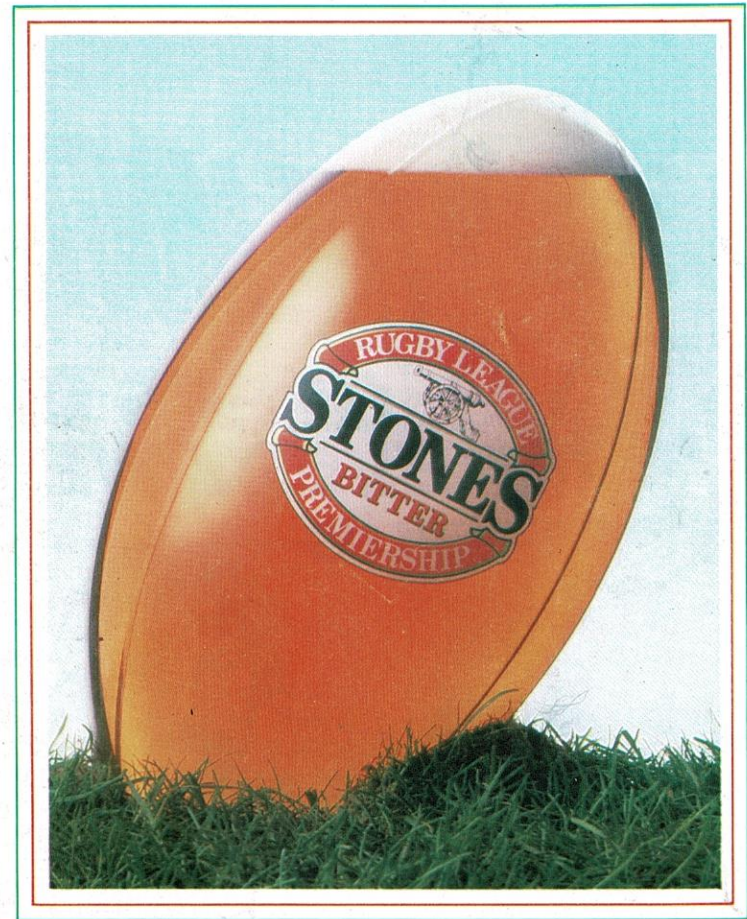


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STONES · PREMIERSHIP
FINALS



OLD TRAFFORD, MANCHESTER MAY 15TH 1988

STONES BITTER PREMIERSHIP FINAL 3.30 P.M.

SECOND DIVISION PREMIERSHIP FINAL 1.30 P.M.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME · £1.00

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★ **RICHARDS**
ON RUGBY



IN THE

DAILY Mirror



MEMO

Manchester United's world-famous Old Trafford stadium this afternoon provides a magnificent setting for the finale to another memorable Rugby League season.

The first-ever Stones Bitter Premiership doubleheader a year ago attracted a record Premiership crowd of 38,756, with more than 22,000 spectators in the ground for the kick-off of the new style Second Division Premiership. Gate receipts totalled £165,166 . . . three times the previous best.

This afternoon is a hat-trick of major dates for Rugby League at Old Trafford, the first Test between Great Britain and Australia in October 1986 having attracted a British record crowd of 50,583.

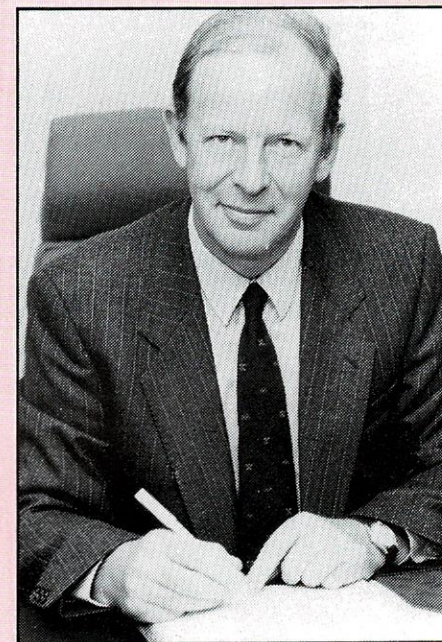
This gala afternoon will follow the style established so successfully last season, featuring the centre-field stars, the Sumo wrestlers.

Prize money, as well as the coveted trophies, is at stake with £9,000 awaiting the Stones Bitter Premiership winners and £3,500 for the runners-up, the Second Division victors receiving £4,000 with £1,500 for the beaten finalists.

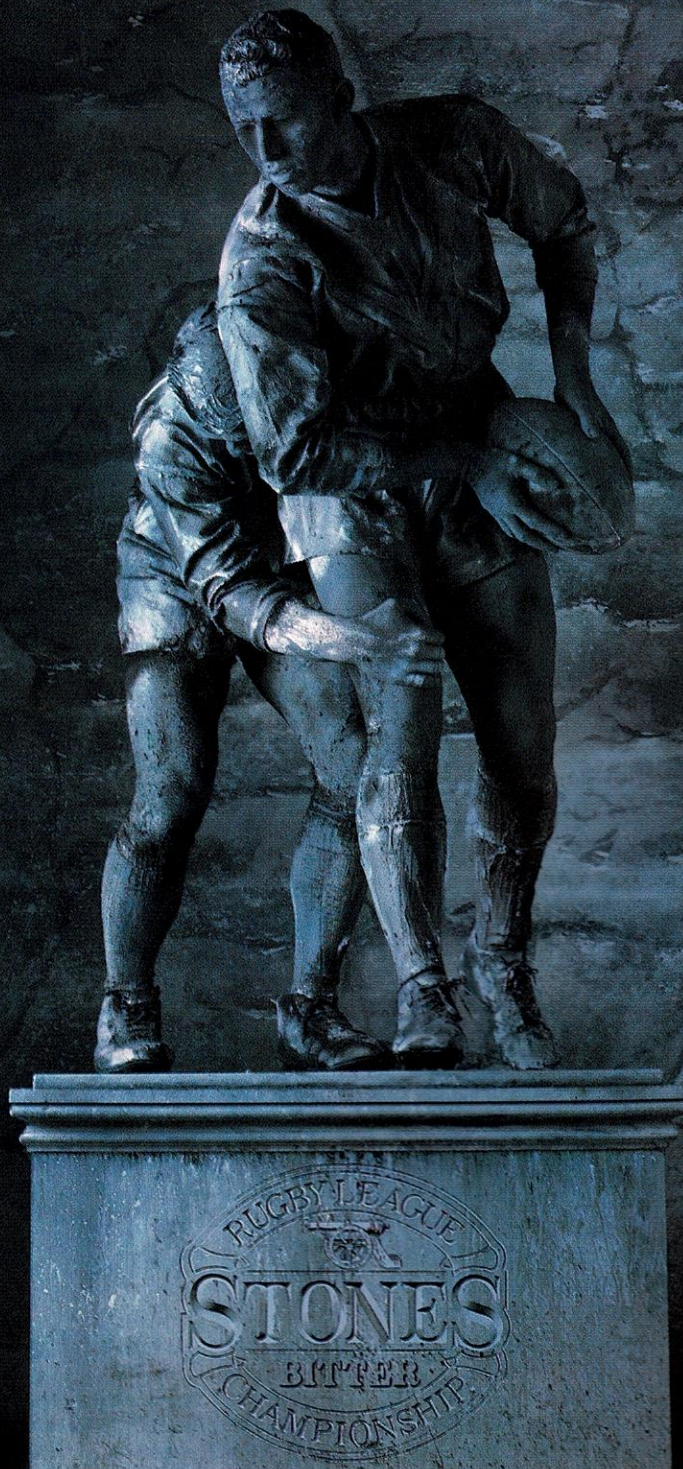
From the 1987-88 Stones Bitter sponsorship of £130,000 — the second of a three-year £400,000 deal — champions Widnes have already earned £20,000 prize money with St. Helens again collecting the runners-up purse of £8,000, while Second Division table toppers Oldham have earned £10,000, runners-up Featherstone Rovers collecting a consolation of £4,000.

This Stones Bitter Premiership doubleheader marks the end of a season of "firsts" in Rugby League. Wigan issued the first World Club Challenge to Sydney Premiers Manly recording an 8-2 victory in front of a packed near 40,000 Central Park crowd. Papua New Guinea and Auckland staged inaugural tours of the British professional scene, while British Coal invested £25,000 in a first-ever nine-a-side tournament televised on BBC TV's Sportsnight.

Tomorrow Great Britain set off on a demanding 10-week 17-match Tour Down Under bidding to lift the Ashes for the first time since 1970 thus ending Australia's 13-match winning run and to gain a place in the World Cup Final later this year. For the first time BBC will be giving full coverage on BBC2 across the north of England, on Radio 2 with Eddie Hemmings and national highlights on BBC TV's Grandstand, full details in the relevant issues of Radio Times.



Mr. Tom Morkill, Managing Director of Bass North, who will present today's trophies.



MAJOR SPONSOR OF THE RUGBY LEAGUE.



Widnes Captain Kurt Sorensen lifts the 1988 Stones Bitter Championship Trophy, Steve O'Neill hoisting the base.



REVIEW

The 84th peacetime season in English Rugby League history comes to a close in the magnificent setting of Old Trafford this afternoon. The hope now, after some exhilarating football from all Stones Bitter Championship sides in 1987-88, is for a genuine challenge from the Great Britain tourists when they compete for the Ashes and World Cup points in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Riversiders began the new season as hot favourites for just about everything. In 1986-87 they had virtually cleaned up, taking every trophy apart from the Silk Cut Challenge Cup. They began as they finished last season — with 11 successive wins. Those victories included a 44-12 mauling of Cup holders Halifax in the Okells Charity Shield, and the retention, for the third successive year, of the Lancashire Cup. But the air of invincibility, which had cloaked the Wigan team for a year, began to disappear when Halifax avenged their Isle of Man setback by gaining their first away league success of the season.

It was Wigan's first defeat for 29 matches over nearly nine months. Their rhythm was broken, a succession of defeats followed, including their first in the John Player Special Trophy for three seasons and when the Silk Cut Challenge Cup commenced in February they were desperate to revive their season and keep the country's biggest fan club happy. Bradford Northern, Leeds and Widnes all went down to Cup defeats at Central Park and Salford suffered the biggest Cup semi-final beating of the Wembley era. Wigan, after one or two hiccups were well and truly back on the trophy trail.

Widnes, who only fleetingly hinted at success last season, were an altogether different force after a summer of hard work and shrewd investment. Doug Laughton took a gamble on a winger from Rosslyn Park RU, by the name of Martin Offiah. He failed to score in his first two matches, but then proceeded to grab 22 in a 15-match scoring run, including a First Division record of 11 consecutively, going on to shatter Frank Myler's 29-year old club record of 34 tries.

Any other side would have been devastated by the loss of a player of the calibre of luckless Tony Myler,

but Widnes lost just one of their first 13 league matches, at home to relegation-doomed Swinton, and led the table throughout the winter months. There was only one period of instability, notably after their controversial, demoralising Cup exit at Wigan, but they re-discovered their old verve to effectively clinch the title with an Easter defeat of Saints at Naughton Park. Only Wigan and Swinton defeated them on their own soil, but it was an away record boasting nine successes which paved the way to the title, won with such conviction in a 12-try, 66-14 defeat of Hunslet at Elland Road.

After their Wembley setback last May, St. Helens were determined to make amends this time, and they began in typical style. At Knowsley Road they were remorseless and amassed over 400 league points in winning 11 of their 13 home encounters, but six defeats on their travels — and three successive defeats over Easter — denied them their first Championship win in 13 years. For a second successive season, and the third time in four, Saints had to be content with the £8,000 runners-up prize.

On five occasions they topped the 50-points barrier, and their back division contained stylists of the calibre of Les Quirk, and astute signing from Barrow; Mark Elia, topping the 20-try barrier once again; and Shane Cooper, a New Zealand international, whose six tries, in the 70-6 rout of Hunslet, equalled a club record set by legends Ellaby, Vollenhoven and Myler. Though Saints' renowned inconsistency let them down in the Lancashire Cup at Leigh and in the Challenge Cup at Salford, they finally came good to lay their John Player Special bogey. Widnes, Hull and Oldham all went out to Saints, before Murphy's men pipped Leeds 15-14 in a gripping Central Park decider in January with centre Paul Loughlin emerging as a surefire tour candidate.

The success story East of the Pennines undoubtedly belongs to Bradford Northern and particularly their astute coach Barry Seabourne. The former Great Britain half back, in his third season in charge at Odsal, battled against appalling circumstances to lead the club to its first Yorkshire Cup win in nine years and to a place in the top four. Northern had to grimly hang on for a 12-12 draw in the Yorkshire Cup Final with Castleford at Headingley, but they duly lifted the trophy in the first replay for 32 years, at Elland Road. An end of season flourish of seven wins in their last nine matches clinched their home Premiership placing and they owed their lofty position to one of the finest packs in the country.

Their arch-rivals from West Yorkshire, Leeds, dug deep into their coffers in an attempt to get back amongst the elite — after narrowly escaping relegation in 1987 — and they broke the world transfer record on two separate occasions to take Lee Crooks and Garry Schofield from the Boulevard to Headingley. Leeds boasted the finest home record in Division One, just one defeat and a draw, but were let down by poor away form in their quest for a first-ever

Championship. They, unlike many of their rivals, leaned heavily on their overseas quota, but once Peter Tunks, Peter Jackson and Steve Morris departed they were a spent force.

Warrington were very much in contention for the Championship at Christmas, showing just two league setbacks, but their injury list stretched playing resources just too far, and they fell away to finish in sixth placing. The Wire also contested the Lancashire Cup Final, going down to Wigan at Knowsley Road, and reached the quarter-finals of the John Player competition. At Wilderspool they were hard to beat, only Salford and Widnes managing it at the tail-end of the campaign, but they suffered eight reverses on their travels. John Woods and Des Drummond were outstanding attacking mainsprings and new skipper Mike Gregory was a worthy tour selection, but they lacked the forward authority of past seasons due perhaps, to the injury setbacks of Australian veteran Les Boyd.

Dave Sampson faced one of the game's thankless tasks when he succeeded Great Britain coach Mal Reilly at Wheldon Road. He got off to a great start as son Dean scored the winning try in an opening day defeat of St. Helens. Typically inconsistent Castleford lost at Leigh the following week to set the tone for another mystifying season. They reached their third consecutive Yorkshire Cup Final and should have clinched victory at Headingley, only to lose out in the replay. Youngsters such as Irwin, Sampson, Boothroyd, Southernwood, Hill and Anderson promise much for Sampson's successor in the coming season but the Wheldon Roaders will be looking for better value than that received from their 1987-88 outlay on overseas players Bob Lindner, Michael Beattie and John Fifita. David Plange, a new Great Britain cap, was a big success on the wing and Kevin Beardmore and Kevin Ward remained automatic Test selections.

By their own high standards of the past three years, 1987-88 was a fairly modest one at Thrum Hall, but Halifax came good at the right time to make another visit to Wembley. Once again, their side showed vast changes from the previous season with Grogan, Anderson, Hanson and Meredith from Australia, and Wilkinson, Holliday and Taylor arriving from much nearer to home. Just two wins in the opening six league matches, accompanied by defeats in the Charity Shield, the Yorkshire Cup and the John Player competition, left Halifax looking at their first barren season for a few years. But the New Year saw them in free-scoring form with Paul Dixon at his irresistible best, and they put it all together on the Cup trail. Both Hull and Hull K.R. went the way of Rochdale and Heworth and Chris Anderson deservedly bowed out at Wembley, after three and a half unforgettable years in charge of the club.

Both Hull and Hull K.R. have spent much of the season looking over their shoulders at the relegation

zone, as three teams faced demotion from a smaller-than-ever 14-team top flight. Rovers, boasting an unbeaten home record for much of the season, were never really in serious trouble, but Hull, especially after losing at home to Swinton in February, looked in grave danger until Tony Dean and Keith Hepworth succeeded Len Casey and induced four wins from the final six league encounters from a side which went within an ace of an improbable Wembley visit.

Salford again saved their best until the bitter end to escape the bottom three rungs of the ladder for a second successive season. This time the Red Devils also found exceptional form in knockout football to reach their first Challenge Cup semi-final in 19 years and the quarter-finals of the John Player competition. It took the might of Wigan — three times — to knock them off the Cup trail. The acquisition of world-class Garry Jack grabbed the headlines, but it was unknown Brisbane utility back Steve Gibson who hogged the limelight, scoring 13 priceless tries as they cheated the trapdoor of relegation. Four wins from their last six league matches provided their lifeline, despite the worst away scoring record in the top division. Their performance of the season was undoubtedly the Cup quarter-final defeat of Saints at the Willows.

Only three wins from their final 10 league matches consigned Leigh to Second Division football in 1988-89. It is not hard to find the cause of their demise — just one away win at Castleford from 13 matches and some surprising setbacks at Hunslet, by the huge margin of 48-10, and Swinton.

Newly-promoted Hunslet and Swinton were always likely to find the going tough. Yet both had their moments in a long and difficult campaign. Swinton provided one of the shocks of the season with their 21-20 success at Widnes, erased a 20-points half-time deficit to win at the Boulevard; and produced breathtaking football to humiliate Castleford 45-14 at a time when their fate was sealed. These were isolated peaks in a season which saw Frank Barrow succeed Bill Holliday at Station Road. In Scott Ranson and Tex Evans, the Lions have two backs of outstanding potential and Tommy Frodsham should torment Second Division defences as the Manchester side attempt a swift return to Division One.

Hunslet's major highlight was a home defeat of Warrington, but they were the only team in the country unable to gain a solitary away win, a 4-4 draw at Swinton being their only reward from 13 matches on their travels. Australian David Gillespie was outstanding in a forlorn side, but his compatriots Hohn and Benson were early injury victims, crystallising Hunslet's ill-fated season. David Ward's men took some heavy beatings — conceding more than 60 points to St. Helens, Wigan and Widnes — and their worst moment came in Cup football — an away John Player setback at Batley, the Second Division wooden spoonists.



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LINE-UP

St. Helens

White jersey with red V
Coach: **ALEX MURPHY**

PAUL LOUGHLIN 1

BARRY LEDGER 2

DAVID TANNER 3

MARK ELIA 4

LES QUIRK 5

MARK BAILEY 6

NEIL HOLDING 7

TONY BURKE 8

PAUL GROVES 9

STUART EVANS 10

PAUL FORBER 11

ROY HAGGERTY 12

ANDY PLATT 13

SHAUN ALLEN 14

JOHN FIELDHOUSE 15

Widnes

White jersey with black trim
Coach: **DOUG LAUGHTON**

DUNCAN PLATT

RICK THACKRAY

ANDY CURRIER

DARREN WRIGHT

MARTIN OFFIAH

BARRY DOWD

DAVID HULME

KURT SORENSEN

PHIL MCKENZIE

JOE GRIMA

MIKE O'NEILL

PAUL HULME

RICHARD EYRES

ALAN TAIT

STEVE O'NEILL

Scrum

- 1 2 3 4
- 5 6 7 8
- 9 10 11 12
- 13 14 15 16
- 17 18 19 20

Penalties

- 1 2 3 4
- 5 6 7 8
- 9 10 11 12
- 13 14 15 16
- 17 18 19 20

STONES BITTER AWARD

Today's Man of the Match, judged by members of the Rugby League Writers Association, will receive the Harry Sunderland Trophy and a cheque for £200.

Referee: **JOHN HOLDSWORTH**, Kippax

Touch Judges:

J. E. CHAMBERLAIN, Warrington (Red flag)

H. F. T. MASON, Halifax (Yellow flag)

Scrum

- 1 2 3 4
- 5 6 7 8
- 9 10 11 12
- 13 14 15 16
- 17 18 19 20

Penalties

- 1 2 3 4
- 5 6 7 8
- 9 10 11 12
- 13 14 15 16
- 17 18 19 20



SAINTS

St. Helens this afternoon launch a bid for their second trophy of the season as they and Widnes extend their record to five Premiership finals, each having won a record three.

The Saints have already lifted the John Player Special Trophy for the first time this season, beating Leeds 15-14 at Wigan in January. Centre Paul Loughlin earned the Man of the Match award by scoring 14 of those points with two tries and three goals, scrum half Neil Holding adding a drop goal.

Ironically, Alex Murphy's men disposed of today's challengers, Widnes, in the first round by 12-10 in a televised tie.

St. Helens appeared in the first three Premiership finals after the new style end-of-season competition was launched in 1975. In the inaugural final they lost 26-11 to Leeds at Wigan before tasting success twice at Swinton. In 1976 Salford were defeated by 15-2, Warrington being conquered a year later by 32-20, full back Geoff Pimblett establishing a Premiership final record with a 17-point haul from seven goals and a try.

There was an eight-year gap before the Knowsley Road outfit reached the final stage again. This time the venue was Elland Road, Leeds and newly-crowned Champions Hull K.R. were the opponents. In an entertaining encounter, the Saints ran home comfortable winners by 36-16, skipper Harry Pinner taking the Harry Sunderland Trophy, the fifth Saint to take the individual honour.

Having taken the Widnes scalp in the John Player tournament, Saints trailed to the Chemics in the tense chase for the Stones Bitter Championship title and the £20,000 prize money. St. Helens were in the driving seat up to the Easter holidays, falling at home to Wigan on Good Friday and going down 16-6 to a rampant Chemics side at Naughton Park on Easter Monday, leaving Widnes needing only a draw in their final match at Hunslet to clinch the top spot.

It is £8,000 runners-up place in the Stones Bitter title race for the second year as Saints trailed behind runaway winners Wigan last season, also being runners-up in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final at Wembley. This afternoon, the irrepressible Murphy will be seeking his second trophy success since taking over as Knowsley Road supremo in November 1985.

St. Helens were the top scorers in the league campaign with a total of 672 in their 26 fixtures for an average of nearly 26 points a match, having the fourth best defensive record.

Their playing strength was reflected by the selection of four of their squad for the Great Britain touring party which leaves for Papua New Guinea and Australasia tomorrow.

The quartet is hooker Paul Groves, a £40,000 recruit from Salford earlier this season to be capped by both Britain and Lancashire; second row man Roy Haggerty, who earned two caps against France last season; centre Loughlin, capped against France in Avignon in January to add to two Under-21 appearances; and back row forward Andy Platt, who this season brought his tally of caps to five.

With Australian full back Phil Veivers ruled out with a broken thumb, Loughlin will take the number one jersey, a bonus in his bid to claim the spot for Great Britain in the absence of broken arm victim Steve Hampson. St. Helens' scoring power is highlighted by the choice of threequarters in Great Britain Under-21 star Kevin McCormack, Test flanker Barry Ledger, this season's signing from Barrow, Cumbria selection Les Quirk, New Zealand Test star Mark Elia and Fylde Rugby Union convert David Tanner.

Local product Holding is enjoying a well earned benefit, having toured in 1984, while the cornerstone of the pack is hardworking prop forward Tony Burke, formerly with Bramley and Leeds. Former Llanelli Rugby Union prop Stuart Evans has established himself in the senior ranks after representing Wales in the 15-a-side code, turning professional in September last year. Paul Forber is fulfilling the promise which brought him Lancashire honours in the inaugural Rodstock War of the Roses encounter at Wigan in 1985, while Test forward John Fieldhouse, voted Man of the Series against New Zealand in 1985, has been listed at £95,000.

Utility man Chris Arkwright has returned from injury to fill the loose forward or stand off jersey in the absence of skipper Shane Cooper who has returned to New Zealand club duty.



CHEMICS

Widnes this afternoon bid to become only the third set of champions to make it a double with the lifting of the Premiership Trophy. Hull Kingston Rovers were the first to achieve twin end-of-season success in 1984, followed by Wigan last season.

Seven other sets of champions have reached the final stage since the Premiership was launched in 1975, ending up as beaten finalists including Widnes themselves. The septet is St. Helens (1975), Salford (1976), Widnes (1978), Bradford Northern (1980), Hull (1983), Hull K.R. (1985) and Halifax (1986).

It was in 1978 that the Chemics first contested the Premiership final, losing 17-8 to Bradford Northern at Swinton. Two years later the pair met again at Station Road, Widnes turning the tables with a 19-5 success. After the all-Humberside contest of 1981 came two memorable Widnes victories over Hull at Headingley, by 23-8 in 1982 and 22-10 a year later.

The Chemics have also provided the Harry Sunderland Trophy winner in three of those four contests — centre Mal Aspey in 1980, full back Mick Burke (1982) and stand off Tony Myler 12 months later.

The Naughton Park club holds three Premiership records. This afternoon both Widnes and St. Helens extend their record number of appearances in the final to five, both having won a record three times. Scrum half Andy Gregory established the record for most goals in the competition when hitting the target nine times for Widnes against Leeds in the first round in 1982.

Widnes are seeking their second piece of silverware of the season, having received the Stones Bitter Championship Trophy at Elland Road, Leeds, last month after a 66-14 hammering of Hunslet in their final league fixture, highlighted by a 12-try haul.

The Chemics, who finished eighth the previous season, were four points clear in the race for the title and the £20,000 Stones Bitter prize money. They clinched their first title success for a decade with 20 victories in the new style 26-match programme, finishing second best points scorers behind St. Helens and second best defenders behind Bradford Northern.

Widnes entered the Easter break leading fellow title contenders by two points, having played two more matches than nearest rivals St. Helens. While Saints were being defeated by Wigan on Good Friday the Chemics routed Warrington 35-6 before beating Alex Murphy's men 16-6 at Naughton Park on Easter Monday to leave themselves needing only a draw at Hunslet to claim the top spot.

Two of the Chemics line-up were selected for the Great Britain tour party which departs for the round-the-world trip tomorrow. Personality of the Season Martin Offiah was rewarded for his impact on his first campaign since leaving Rosslyn Park Rugby Union club last summer, gaining a debut for Great Britain and Lancashire, while finishing as top try scorer and recipient of a host of top awards. Half back David Hulme goes on tour seeking his first cap having made three appearances for the Under-21's.

Coach Doug Laughton has combined experience with the emergence of young talent who he has been nurturing patiently for a couple of seasons.

The experience has been provided by the likes of skipper Kurt Sorenson, in his fourth season at Naughton Park and the O'Neill brothers, Mike and Steve. The potential has been realised by backs Andy Currier, Darren Wright and Barry Dowd, plus packmen Paul Hulme and Richard Eyres.

Widnes have also delved successfully into the transfer market in the past two seasons, buying winger Rick Thackray from Warrington, hooker Phil McKenzie from Rochdale Hornets, prop Joe Grimmas from Swinton and former Leigh skipper Derek Pyke, out with a broken hand.

The Rugby Union game has also produced Scottish international centre Alan Tait, a late season recruit on a 10-year contract as the Chemics bid to re-establish themselves as the Cup Kings, a title they thoroughly deserved in the late 70s and early 80s.

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RECORDS

● First staged 1975. ALL ROUNDS TEAM

Highest score:
Hull K.R. 54 v. Leeds 0 1984
(Also widest margin)

Biggest attendance:
29,448 Hull v. Hull K.R. Final at Leeds 1981

INDIVIDUAL

Most goals:
9 by Andy Gregory (Widnes) v. Leeds
..... Round 1 1982

Most points:
22 (7g, 2t) by John Dorahy (Hull K.R.) v. Leeds
..... Round 1 1984

Most tries:
4 by David Hall (Hull K.R.) v. Castleford
..... Round 1 1983
4 by Phil Ford (Wigan) v. Hull
..... Round 1 1985
4 by Ellery Hanley (Wigan) v. Hull K.R.
..... Round 1 1986

FINAL TEAM

Most final appearances:
4 by Widnes, St. Helens

Most wins:
3 by Widnes, St. Helens

Highest score and widest margin:
Warrington 38 v. Halifax 10
..... 1986

Biggest attendance:
38,756 Wigan v. Warrington (at Man. Utd FC)
..... 1987

INDIVIDUAL

Most tries:
No player has scored 3 or more

Most goals:
8 by Kevin Dick (Leeds) v. Bradford N.
..... 1979

Most points:
17 (7g, 1t) by Geoff Pimblett (St. Helens)
v. Warrington 1977

PREMIERSHIP ROLL OF HONOUR

Year	Winners	Runners-up	Venue	Attendance	Receipts
1975	Leeds26	St. Helens11	Wigan	14,531	£7,795
1976	St. Helens15	Salford2	Swinton	18,082	£13,138
1977	St. Helens32	Warrington20	Swinton	11,178	£11,626
1978	Bradford N.17	Widnes8	Swinton	16,813	£18,677
1979	Leeds24	Bradford N.2	Huddersfield	19,486	£21,291
1980	Widnes19	Bradford N.5	Swinton	10,215	£13,665
1981	Hull K.R.11	Hull7	Leeds	29,448	£47,529
1982	Widnes23	Hull8	Leeds	12,100	£23,749
1983	Widnes22	Hull10	Leeds	17,813	£34,145
1984	Hull K.R.18	Castleford10	Leeds	12,515	£31,769
1985	St. Helens36	Hull K.R.16	Elland Rd. Leeds	15,518	£46,950
1986	Warrington38	Halifax10	Elland Rd. Leeds	13,683	£50,879
1987	Wigan8	Warrington0	Old Trafford, Manchester	38,756	£165,166

SECOND DIVISION PREMIERSHIP

1987	Swinton27	Hunslet10	Old Trafford, Manchester
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A-Z of 1987-88

by PAUL WILSON, of *The Independent*

- A** for . . . *Anderson*, who despite a crushing defeat at Wembley, managed to leave Halifax on a high note. "We might have lost, but there are worse places to finish than Wembley."
- B** for . . . *Bond*, Albert not James. The roly-poly York director who achieved a certain early-season notoriety by running on the pitch to have a word with the referee. "Somebody had to do something, all hell was breaking loose and the referee was just standing there watching."
- C** for . . . *Chariots*, the top tryscorer of the season and the most over-used slogan in newspaper headlines until Harry Enfield came along. Des Lyman got in on the act, about 10 months too late, on Cup Final Grandstand. Martin was much too polite to mention it, but he doesn't pronounce his name that way. He says it with the stress on the first syllable, and the last two vowels are short.
- D** for . . . *Doormen*, and stewards everywhere, especially the ones at Wembley, who surpassed themselves a fortnight ago. There are many questions to be asked about the organisation of the Cup Final, the fans on the dog track, the duplicated tickets etc. Personally, I feared the worst when I saw not one but two stewards on the press entrance. One was allowing people in, the other was shaking his head at the same ticket, insisting it was more than his job was worth to let you pass.
- E** for . . . *Enterprise*, The Richard Branson Award for Entrepreneur of the season goes to Maurice Lindsay of Wigan for that marvellous night back in October when 37,000 people watched Wigan beat Manly.
- F** for . . . *Fisticuffs*, and also for fines. The disciplinary aspect of the game was much in the news before Christmas, when every time P.R.O. David Howes went to a game a brawl erupted before his eyes.
- G** for . . . *Granada*, that most progressive of TV companies, who withdrew Scrumdown from North West screens in favour of Prisoner Cell Block H. Cheers lads, but well done to Yorkshire for keeping up the Lancashire connection.
- H** for . . . *Heartbreak*, and Hampson, the two seem to go together. At least the full back will be able to take part in the tour, though missing a third Wembley was dreadful luck. Holliday of Halifax is a close second in this department.
- I** for . . . *Iros*, the two quiet lads from New Zealand who look to be the discoveries of the season.
- J** for . . . *Judge*, as in here comes Adrian Shelford. A fine prop forward, but not a keen student of contract law. The judge's comments seemed to indicate that St. Helens too were a little rusty in the latter sphere.
- K** for . . . *Kerry Gibson*. "I wish I had two good arms so I could have given the assistant coach a smack as well."
- L** for . . . *Loadsamoney*, which is what Mal Reilly thinks Les Boyd received for his Loadsarubbish article in the Daily Mirror.
- M** for . . . *Murphy*, not to be confused with Loadsarubbish articles in the Mirror. A successful season for Alex, who became the first St. Helens coach to guide his team to a John Player Special Trophy final success.
- N** for . . . *North-South divide*, more pronounced than ever to judge from some of the stuff in the southern papers about the Challenge Cup final. They don't actually accuse us of owning flat caps and whippets anymore (that image is continued only in Open Rugby and The Rugby Leaguer) but the patronising tone is still there.
- O** for . . . *Optimism*. This time tomorrow the Great Britain touring party will be en route

to Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. Nothing is impossible.

- P** for . . . *Papal Blessing*, which Swinton obtained prior to their most recent, ill-fated season in Division One. This is no place for theological unorthodoxy, but it does seem that there was some fallibility somewhere along the line.
- Q** for . . . *Quota*. The system for limiting the number of overseas players has been so successful that the European soccer authorities have just copied it. Can't think why the football clubs are so unhappy about it, do they not realise that English national status is automatically granted to anyone who can hum the theme tune from Coronation Street?
- R** for . . . *Revival of the Season*. Hull parted company with Len Casey and pulled themselves from the brink of relegation to a whisker away from Wembley.
- S** for . . . *Stones Bitter*, two words from the sponsors.
- T** for . . . *Televised Test matches*. Yes folks, the BBC will bring you all the action from the three Tests in Australia — two games live, edited highlights of the other.
- U** for . . . *Union*. Thanks chaps, for Martin Offiah, Alan Tait and Mark Preston.
- V** for . . . *Vultures*, which is one First Division club secretary's pet name for we gentlemen of the press. Charmin' innit?
- W** for . . . *Welshmen*, most of who seem to stay in Wales. Stuart Evans came North, Terry Holmes sadly returned home. Johnathon Davis, Mark Ring, David Bishop . . . who knows?
- X** for . . . *X-tra help*. A certain building society in Wigan was not allowed to deck its window in cherry and white prior to the Challenge Cup Final.
- Y** for . . . *Yorkshire Cup*. A very good thing there is one, otherwise all the silverware in the game would have ended up on this side of the Pennines.
- Z** for . . . *Zero*. Sorry to be cruel Leeds, but some of the most fancied teams ended up with nothing at the end of the season.

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MAN OF STEEL

IAN PROCTOR meets MARTIN OFFIAH

The 1987-88 season will be forever recalled as the one in which an unknown named Martin Offiah hit the 13-a-side code with an impact not seen since Salford's Keith Fielding left the Rugby Union ranks fourteen seasons ago.

Fielding from Moseley RU club, was, at 24, well established in the Union game, possessing 10 full England caps, before joining the Red Devils in the summer of 1973. Salford were backing a surefire winner, even if his initial impact, 49 tries including a Salford record of 46, exceeded all expectations. Offiah was in a different category altogether, coming to Rugby League unheralded, having appeared for the Barbarians and the English Students side. He had shown unquestionable potential in Rugby Union, but a future England cap was by no means a certainty, and Widnes, having sold Great Britain winger John Basnett to Leeds in the summer, were taking something of a gamble.

Coach Doug Laughton was the man who put his reputation well and truly on the line in signing Offiah. But the former Great Britain and Widnes skipper was as certain as he has ever been that this was a winger of unlimited potential and backed his judgement by offering the coloured flier a 10-year contract. Being so far-sighted could have backfired on Laughton, in the event he has tied the game's hottest young property to Naughton Park for virtually the rest of his career.

Offiah has seen League only on television, watching the Wembley Finals out of a curiosity for the game which actually kept it's wingers gainfully employed, but felt that he was taking a gamble. Money, and the cocksure Laughton, convinced Offiah that he was making the wisest career move of his young life.

Widnes began the season well, with a convincing home defeat of Halifax and a fine success at Odsal Stadium, Offiah's name was missing from the scorers sheet. His first tries did not come until the Chemics defeated local Second Division neighbours Runcorn Highfield at Canal Street in the first round of the Lancashire Cup. It was the start of a remarkable scoring run of 15 consecutive matches, including a First Division record of 11 in succession, incorporating 22 tries.

Alex Murphy did not hesitate and gave Offiah his Lancashire debut against the Papua New Guinea tourists, at Knowsley Road, in October. The match was a free-scoring 22-22 draw, but Martin drew a rare blank. Malcolm

Reilly, meanwhile, was more cautious and selected Offiah for the Chairmans XIII against the Auckland tourists, rather than for Great Britain against Papua New Guinea in the Central Park World Cup encounter. On his first appearance at Headingley, the Widnes winger scored an unstoppable early try in a 12-6 victory for his side, but caused one or two palpitations with his defensive naivety.

A try in the Lancashire Cup semi-final against Champions Widnes was of vital importance to Offiah. "It proved I could compete with the best." A televised effort in the dying seconds of a John Player Special Trophy tie against St. Helens alerted the armchair millions to his rare pace and nonchalant ability to beat any cover defence from distance.

His Test claims could not be ignored any longer, and he was given a Great Britain debut at Avignon, scoring a typical try out of nothing, in a 28-14 victory. When he was omitted for the return at Headingley there was public outrage. Offiah had the perfect answer for his doubters and his sense of timing was impeccable.

The day after Britain's rather sterile 30-12 Headingley defeat of the French, he tormented his Test successor Phil Ford, scoring his first try hat-trick in Widnes' 26-4 defeat of Bradford Northern. Two further hat-tricks took him past Frank Myler's long-standing Widnes try record of 34, but, for the first time, he earned a rebuke from his mentor Laughton.

In totally foreign conditions of thick, cloying mud, Offiah sped in for three marvellous tries in Widnes's defeat of Leeds, mocking his vain pursuers in a memorable 80 yards sprint for his second touchdown. It was the showmanship in Offiah, playing to the gallery, but Laughton, while inwardly admiring the youngster's audacity, had to put a brake on such antics. The waving at opponents had to stop, but the tries did not.

As Easter approached the destiny of the Championship was in the balance. The Chemics, controversially beaten in a Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-final at Wigan, also conceded a double to the former Champions, and Offiah endured his most barren spell in Rugby League... three matches! Two tries at Wilderspool inspired a vital 35-6 win, and his moment of matchless triumph came three days later, on Easter Monday, when Widnes met Saints at Naughton Park in a virtual Championship decider. Three moments of sheer magic give him his third hat-trick in 10 matches, ensuring success for Widnes and cementing the remarkable bond between player and fans. It was opportunism at it's very best and Martin Offiah, who acknowledges the less glamorous contributions of his colleagues, was confirmed as the jewel in Widnes' Championship crown.

A well-deserved tour Down Under now awaits the man nicknamed *Chariots*, and he is likely to be just as big a sensation on the firm tracks Down Under as he has been in varying conditions in his first season in the North of England. At 22 a brilliant Rugby League career stretches ahead and Doug Laughton is able to permit himself a wry smile of satisfaction. Laughton, who played in the same team as South African Tom Van Vollenhoven, played with and against Billy Boston, and skippered Keith Fielding when he scored three tries on his 1974 Test debut in Grenoble, believes that, in time, Offiah will compare favourably with any of them. No one will be doubting his words after the events of this season.

Ace personality and try-scoring sensation Martin Offiah.



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FORUM

Tom O'Donovan is Rugby League's man of the future. Recently appointed as the National Development officer this son of Limerick has been charged with spreading the gospel of the 13-a-side code.

The Irishman has learned his Rugby League by helping run the famous Heavy Woollen area junior team St. John Fisher and now he moves into the national arena as the latest subject in the Big Match face-to-face interview with Sunday Mirror columnist JOHN HUXLEY.

Q: What made you seek your new job?

A: My motivation was based in the love of the game I had drawn from my involvement with St. John Fisher. I could see the potential of the game as a whole and I wanted to be able to help it along. I believe it helps that I am a convert to the game because I can see just what the game has to offer people who are not already involved in it.

It's a massive challenge but another part of the motivation for me was the size of the job. I like to be offered challenges in my professional life and I believe that I can succeed. We have a very special product to offer and we have to spread the message on a national basis.

Q: What are your first targets?

A: I believe that the definition of my job means that I have to consider every area of the game and its ambitions. My view is that we won't be able to become a national game unless we can interest the school children and that means we must influence the people who lead them, the teachers. And I don't just mean PE teachers. It must be any of them who are still interested in giving time to sport.

In spite of what has happened with school sport over the last few years because of the disputes there are still men and women who are prepared to give their

time to sport. And we must spread our message to include all groups, infants to High School.

I am also very interested in the development of Youth Rugby. You must realise that running a team for youngsters is much harder work than for the open age group. For a start youngsters between 11 and 16 don't have their own means of transport and have to be taken to their matches. They need considerably more organisation too.

Q: Will you be moving around to introduce yourself?

A: I have been down to Bristol and up to the North East so I am already making inroads into introducing myself to the people inside and outside of the game. I believe that by the time we reach the 1988-89 season I shall have taken in most of the areas we need to target and that most of the ground work will have been done.

I was told when I took the job that I may need six months to achieve what I had set myself initially but I hope to be ready for full action before then.

Q: How do you see your role in the established areas of the game?

A: Apart from the important areas for development outside the north, in London and the South West for example, there still remains a considerable amount of hard work left to do within what people believe to be our stronghold areas. If you were to stick flags into a map you would find clusters of clubs round certain specific areas and large tracts in between where the game is simply not played. That we must rectify as soon as we can.

One of the secrets of Barla's success over the last ten years has been its planned development. We have now reached the point when we must take on even more work for the sake of the whole game. I'm looking forward to the job and relish the opportunity to work alongside the professional clubs. After all, we both have the same ambitions and hopes . . . the success of Rugby League.

Conducted by JOHN HUXLEY, of the

**Sunday
Mirror**

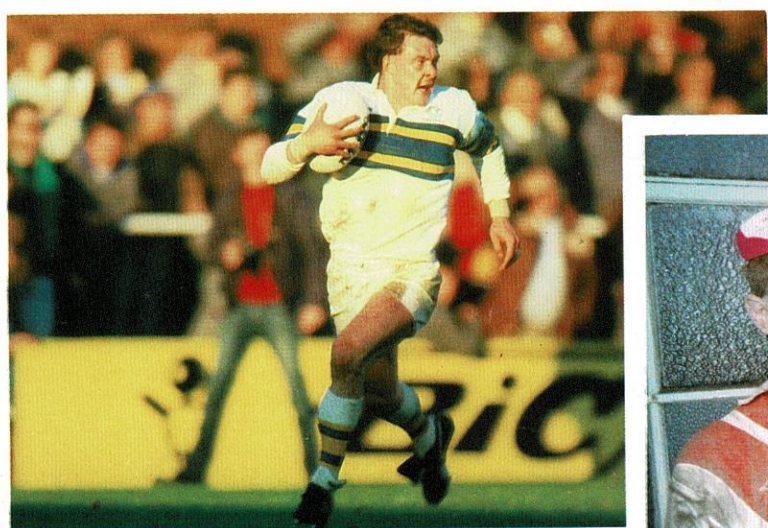


FLASHBACK

November . . .
Auckland staged their first-ever tour of Britain.

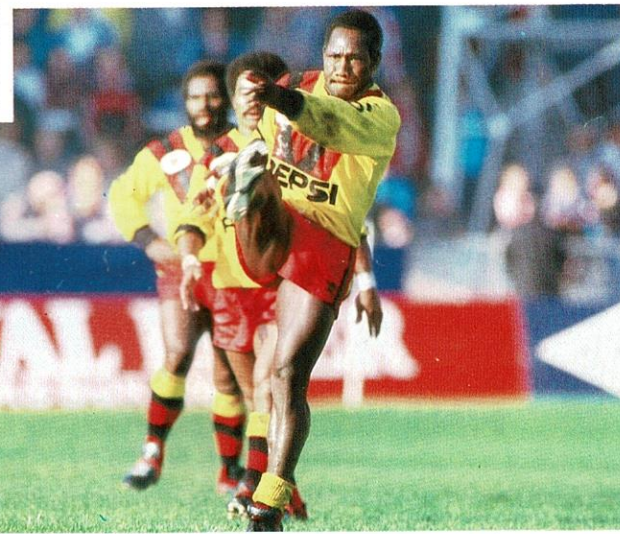


October . . .
Leeds set a new world record transfer fee, paying £178,250 to Hull for Garry Schofield.



January . . .
St. Helens win the John Player Special Trophy for the first time, held by skipper Shane Cooper (left) and Man of the Match Paul Loughlin.

October . . .
Papua New Guinea mount their first-ever tour of the British professional circuit, losing the World Cup-rated Test at Wigan 42-0.



April . . .
Hull K.R. supporter Sue Walford meets Great Britain stars on being acclaimed Travelads Top Fan of the year with a prize of a 17-day trip Down-Under for the summer Tests.



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AWARD

For the 24th time, the Harry Sunderland Memorial Trophy will today be presented to the Man of the Match in the end of season Premiership or Championship play-off. The award is in memory of the famous Queenslander, former Australian Tour manager, broadcaster and journalist and is donated and judged by the Rugby League Writer's Association. This season, the trophy is being sponsored by Stones Bitter to the tune of £250.

Past Winners are:—

- 1965 Terry Fogerty (Halifax).
- 1966 Albert Halsall (St. Helens).
- 1967 Ray Owen (Wakefield Trinity).
- 1968 Gary Cooper (Wakefield Trinity).
- 1969 Bev Risman (Leeds).
- 1970 Frank Myler (St. Helens).
- 1971 Bill Ashurst (Wigan).
- 1972 Terry Clawson (Leeds).
- 1973 Mick Stephenson (Dewsbury).
- 1974 Barry Philbin (Warrington).
- 1975 Mel Mason (Leeds).
- 1976 George Nicholls (St. Helens).
- 1977 Geoff Pimblett (St. Helens).
- 1978 Bob Haigh (Bradford Northern).
- 1979 Kevin Dick (Leeds).
- 1980 Mal Aspey (Widnes).
- 1981 Len Casey (Hull K.R.).
- 1982 Mick Burke (Widnes).
- 1983 Tony Myler (Widnes).
- 1984 John Dorahy (Hull K.R.).
- 1985 Harry Pinner (St. Helens).
- 1986 Les Boyd (Warrington).
- 1987 Joe Lydon (Wigan).

The Stones Bitter Man of the Match in the Second Division Premiership will also be selected by the Rugby League Writer's Association and will receive £100 and an inscribed memento.

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BELFAST	(by air)	£115.00	£117.00	£119.00	£121.00	£123.00	£141.00
LIVERPOOL	(by air)	£119.00	£121.00	£123.00	£125.00	£127.00	£145.00
MANCHESTER	(by air)	£120.50	£122.50	£124.50	£126.50	£128.50	£146.50
GLASGOW	(by air)	£120.50	£122.50	£124.50	£126.50	£128.50	£146.50
HEATHROW	(by air)	£137.00	£139.00	£141.00	£143.00	£145.00	£163.00

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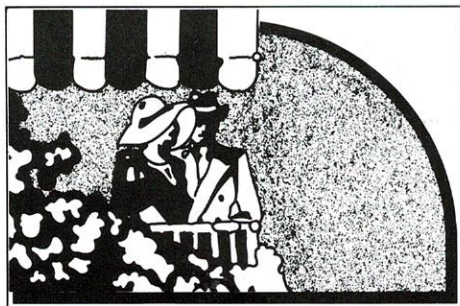
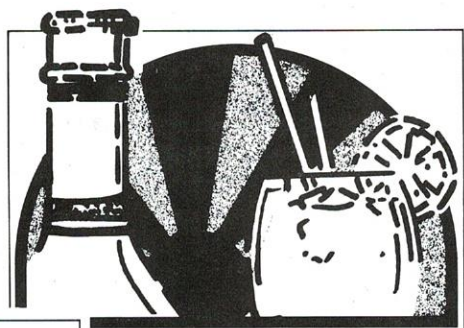


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REVIEW

The Second Division promotion places went to clubs relegated at the end of the 1986-87 season, with Peter Fox's Featherstone Rovers recovering magnificently from a disastrous start which appeared to have cost them any hope of a top-three placing in the opening month.

Oldham, Wakefield Trinity and Barrow, also relegated last season, began in confident, determined fashion. The *Roughyeds* suffered just one defeat in their opening 10 league matches; Trinity remained unbeaten in their first seven; and Barrow lost just once in their opening seven league matches. A familiar pattern had emerged. By contrast, Rovers conceded four defeats in their opening eight matches but from then on found the resolve to win promotion on the back of a long, unbeaten run of 16 league matches throughout the winter months.

Wakefield's big pre-season exchange deal with Leeds paid handsome dividends as coach David Topliss attempted to bring the former giants to the First Division at the first attempt. The quartet of Mark Conway (20 tries), Andy Mason (15), Phil Fox (17) and Keith Rayne (10) formed the backbone and the cutting edge of a side which ensured promotion with a 10-match winning spell after conceding a Christmas double to Rovers. Four defeats in their last five league matches — by such as Bramley, York and Barrow — rang alarm bells but it promises to be a summer of great activity at Belle Vue.

Springfield's move from the seaside to Wigan brought a storm of protests, yet despite poor attendances, Stan Gittins and Mike Peers built a very solid side. But for three successive defeats at Christmas, Borough would have gone much closer to promotion. Just three sides won at Springfield Park and Borough enjoyed some of their best moments in Cup football, reaching the John Player quarter-finals and leading Salford for much of their Challenge Cup tie at the Willows. Mike Smith had the satisfaction of breaking John Maughan's 29-year-old club goalkicking record.

Sheffield continued their steady progress in their fourth season leading the table for a spell,

losing just one of their first seven before four successive defeats in October and November unhinged their promotion ambitions. The names of Daryl Powell, Steve Lidbury, Dave Nelson and David Close are among the most respected in the lower ranks. An end-of-season experiment of playing at Sheffield United's Bramall Lane ground brought them their biggest attendance.

York's season was one of two halves, gaining just one win in their opening eight league matches, but finishing strongly with nine successes in their final 13 fixtures. Ian Wigglesworth with 20 tries was the pick of an up-and-coming back division, well supported by such as St. John Ellis, Paul White and Gary Atkins. Just five away wins leaves the Minster Men room for improvement if they are to be in the promotion frame next time.

The battle for top eight places intensified as the season reached it's climax, with seventh and eighth placings going to two of the most improved sides in the country. The achievements of both Keighley and Mansfield, having finished in the bottom three last season, offers genuine hope for every struggling team. The Marksmen, under the guidance of shrewd Cumbrian Jim Crellin, made big strides forward and a fine home record, just four defeats, plus seven wins in their last eight matches clinched seventh place in the table — the club's highest in four seasons. Mansfield owed much to the Tupaea brothers, Ashley and Shane, with Joe Warburton contributing 10 tries.

Keighley, wooden spoonists last season, recruited wisely in the off-season, bolstering a lightweight pack with experienced forwards Trevor Skerrett, Gary Moorby and Brendan White. It was the youthful exuberance of such as Richardson, Hirst, Bragger and Manning which offers real promise for the future for the Lawkholme faithful. Like Mansfield, Keighley finished confidently, with six wins in their last seven league matches and a battling Premiership effort at the Watersheddings.

It was a depressing season in Cumbria as the quartet of Barrow, Workington Town, Carlisle and Whitehaven finished grouped together in mid-table anonymity. The Furnessmen began well, but faded in mid-season, and Dennis Jackson gave way as coach to Australian Test legend Rod Reddy, who now faces the vital task of restructuring one of the game's sleeping giants. Barrow remained difficult to beat at Craven Park, defeating the promoted trio of Featherstone, Wakefield and Oldham and their Alliance team reached the Cup Final so there is much to build on for the popular ex-Kangaroo tourist. Town were a complete enigma, gaining 12 wins in their first 15 matches to look Championship contenders only to concede 10 defeats in their last 13 matches and lose out on even a play-off berth.



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LINE-UP

Featherstone Rovers

Blue and white hooped jersey

Coach: **PETER FOX**

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| CHRIS BIBB | 1 |
| DAVID SYKES | 2 |
| STEVE QUINN | 3 |
| ALAN BANKS | 4 |
| RICHARD MARSH | 5 |
| GRAHAM STEADMAN | 6 |
| DERYCK FOX | 7 |
| GARY SIDDALL | 8 |
| KEITH BELL | 9 |
| KARL HARRISON | 10 |
| PAUL HUGHES | 11 |
| PETER SMITH | 12 |
| PAUL LYMAN | 13 |
| JOHN CROSSLEY | 14 |
| GARY HALL | 15 |

Oldham

Red and white jersey

Coach: **ERIC FITZSIMONS**

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| MICK BURKE | 1 |
| RICHARD IRVING | 2 |
| DES FOY | 3 |
| CHARLIE McALISTER | 4 |
| KEVIN MEADOWS | 5 |
| PETER WALSH | 6 |
| MIKE FORD | 7 |
| IAN SHERRATT | 8 |
| IAN SANDERSON | 9 |
| HUGH WADDELL | 10 |
| COLIN HAWKYARD | 11 |
| MAL GRAHAM | 12 |
| GARY WARNECKE | 13 |
| PAUL LORD | 14 |
| TERRY FLANAGAN | 15 |

Scrum

- | | | | |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |

Penalties

- | | | | |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |

STONES BITTER AWARD

Today's Man of the Match, judged by members of the Rugby League Writers Association, will receive an inscribed memento and a cheque for £100.

Referee: **ROBIN WHITFIELD**, Widnes

Touch Judges:

A. J. BROWN, St. Helens (Red flag)

K. REED, Leeds (Yellow flag)

Scrum

- | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |

Penalties

- | | | | |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |



COLLIERS

Homespun Featherstone Rovers this afternoon battle for only their eighth piece of silverware since joining the League in 1921.

The Colliers have lifted the Challenge Cup three times, in 1967, 1973 and 1983; the Championship Trophy in 1977; the Second Division Championship Bowl in 1980; and the Yorkshire Cup in 1940 and 1960.

In addition the West Yorkshire pit village side has contested another 11 finals, including the now defunct Captain Morgan Trophy in 1973-74.

Rovers were in the First Division when it was re-introduced in 1973, taking the title in 1977 before being relegated two years later. They returned to the premier flight as Second Division Champions at the first attempt, sustaining First Division status until last season when the famous blue and white jerseys were relegated from 14th position.

This season, the Colliers recovered from a poor start to take runners-up spot in the exciting Second Division title race, finishing three points behind Oldham to earn a £4,000 Stones Bitter prize. They finished as the division's second top points scorers and with the third best defensive record.

The Colliers' promotion coincides with the arrival of Peter Fox as coach this season, his second spell at Post Office Road. His first stint between January 1971 and May 1974 realised a winners and losers medal in the Challenge Cup final, before a two year stay at Wakefield Trinity. One season at Bramley featured promotion, before joining Bradford Northern.

An eight-year service at Odsal brought two First Division Championship successes, plus the lifting of the John Player Trophy, the Premiership Trophy and the Yorkshire Cup, plus four other finalists as runners-up and the Coach of the Year title in 1980. A season and a half at Leeds commencing in May 1985 ended in December 1987 with a spell out of the game until his appointment at Post Office Road exactly a year ago.

One of the unsung heroes of the Featherstone Rovers side is veteran centre Steve Quinn, who celebrated a 10-year benefit last season, having previously served York. During the last campaign, Quinn passed his 3,000th career points mark while registering his 1,000th goal for the Colliers. He also holds the records for most goals 163, and points, 375, in a season, both established in 1979-80, when he was voted Second Division Player of the Year. In addition, the York-born threequarter holds the club record for most points in a match with 29.

Scrum half and skipper Deryck Fox is in the stand-by squad for the Great Britain tour party having been awarded nine caps, being nominated for the Second Division Player of the Year title along with clubmate Peter Smith and Oldham's Hugh Waddell. Smith, a target for Hull early in the season, has also enjoyed a benefit at Post Office Road and is the cornerstone of the renowned Featherstone pack, having gained Great Britain and England honours.

Full back Chris Bibb and loose forward Paul Lyman have both achieved Great Britain Under-21 honours in recent seasons, Keith Bell earning Under-24 status back in 1977 in his original loose forward position.

Featherstone Rovers are not well known for their excursions into the transfer market. Recent forays include club record signing Graham Steadman, who was recruited after setting two York club records with most points in a season — 318 in 1984-85 — and most points in a match — 26 against Batley in 1984. Also brought into the home - produced fold were prop forward Karl Harrison, from Bramley, and utility back John Crossley, previously with Wakefield Trinity, York, Fulham and Halifax.



ROUGHYEDS

Newly-crowned Stones Bitter Second Division Champions Oldham are this afternoon bidding to become the first club to lift the Second Division double. Last season, in the first-ever Second Division Premiership, top of the table Hunslet fell to runners-up Swinton in the Old Trafford encounter.

Oldham carried off the 1987-88 title in style, finishing three points ahead of today's opponents, Featherstone Rovers, with only four defeats in 28 fixtures. The Roughyeds were the division's top points scorers, an average of nearly 28 points a match, with the second best defensive record behind third-placed Wakefield Trinity.

The climax of the programme came on the penultimate weekend of a thrilling Second Division title chase. Oldham travelled to Trinity where defeat for the Lancastrians would set up their joint leadership with one match each left to play. The Roughyeds secured a 23-22 success to clinch the title and £10,000 Stones Bitter prize money.

Oldham have experienced plenty of ups-and-downs during the two division era. They were in the First Division on re-formation in 1973, being relegated in that first campaign from 13th position. They came up again 12 months later from third spot, only to go down again two years later in bottom position. They spent three seasons in the lower grade until promotion in 1980, relegation following a year later.

Up they came again in 1982, this time as champions, enjoying five campaigns in higher grade company until relegation last season from 13th spot, four clubs being downgraded to create the new look 14-strong Stones Bitter Championship.

This season, the Watersheddings club made an early season impact with a superb run in the John Player Special trophy, reaching the semi-finals having taken Bradford Northern and Warrington en route. In the Central Park semi-final, Oldham equalled St. Helens until the late stages.

Oldham have received silverware on 18 occasions, including the Challenge Cup three times and the Lancashire Cup nine times. Their last appearance in a final was in the county cup in 1986, going down to Wigan.

Watersheddings is providing two Great Britain tourists in scrum half Mike Ford and prop forward Hugh Waddell. Ford, formerly with Wigan and Leigh, moved to hometown Oldham this season in a £45,000 deal, having received four Great Britain Under-21 caps. Waddell, a bargain buy from Blackpool Borough last season, was capped twice by Britain this season, earning Man of the Match rating against France at Avignon in January. The ex-Burton Rugby Union forward was also nominated for the title of Second Division Player of the Year.

The Australian influence is evident with the recruitment of skipper Mal Graham for a second stint, Gary Warnecke and Peter Walsh. One of the most popular signings this season was Maori centre Charlie McAlister from Bingley Rugby Union club where he was guesting.

An effective capture was full back Mick Burke, capped 15 times for Britain and once for England, being a tourist in 1984. The former Widnes star is one of only four men to be awarded both the Lance Todd Trophy and the Harry Sunderland Trophy. Another experienced campaigner is Terry Flanagan, currently enjoying a 10-year benefit, having toured in 1984.

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DATA

1988 RESULTS

STONES BITTER PREMIERSHIP

First Round

Bradford N.....32	Leeds.....18
St. Helens40	Castleford8
Widnes36	Halifax26
Wigan12	Warrington24

Semi-Finals

St. Helens24	Bradford N.....10
Widnes20	Warrington.....10

Second Division Premiership

First Round

Featherstone R. ...42	Mansfield M.....1
Oldham.....34	Keighley24
Springfield B.11	Sheffield E.10
Wakefield T.44	York23

Semi-Finals

Featherstone R. ...20	Wakefield T.16
Oldham18	Springfield B.10

STONES BITTER — STARMAN AWARDS

Kurt Sorensen, the Widnes skipper, won the £1,000 Starman award with Dewsbury's Chris Vasey the Second Division winner.

Stones Bitter Championship

Kurt Sorensen (Widnes).....29
Paul Harkin (Bradford Northern).....27
Andy Goodway (Wigan)22
Mike Smith (Hull KR)22
John Woods (Warrington).....18
Martin Offiah (Widnes)18
Ellery Hanley (Wigan)18
Harry Pinner (Leigh)16
Paul Groves (St. Helens)16
Wayne Parker (Hull KR).....16

Division Two

Chris Vasey (Dewsbury).....32
Deryck Fox (Featherstone).....32
Mark Conway (Wakefield).....24
Bob Eccles (Springfield Borough).....18
Steve Carroll (Bramley)17
Derek Lamb (Mansfield)16
Andy Ruane (Rochdale).....16
Ian Fletcher (York)16

TOP TEN TRY SCORERS

1. Martin Offiah (Widnes).....44
2. Ellery Hanley (Wigan)36
3. Garry Schofield (Leeds)25
4. Carl Gibson (Leeds)24
5. Kevin Pape (Carlisle)23
Andy Goodway (Wigan)23
7. Peter Smith (Featherstone)21
Shaun Edwards (Wigan)21
9. Mark Conway (Wakefield T.)20
Les Quirk (St. Helens).....20
Chris Bibb (Featherstone R.)20
Mark Elia (St. Helens).....20

TOP TEN GOALS SCORERS

1. John Woods (Warrington)152
2. Steve Quinn (Featherstone R.)123
3. Kevin Harcombe (Wakefield T.)116
4. Gary Pearce (Hull).....111
Paul Loughlin (St. Helens).....111
6. Mike Smith (Springfield B.)98
7. David Stephenson (Leeds)95
8. Mike Fletcher (Hull KR)94
9. David Hobbs (Bradford N.)83
10. Ken Johns (Salford)79

TOP FIVE POINT SCORERS

	Tries	Goals	Drop Goals	Points
1. John Woods (Warrington)	13	147	5	351
2. Steve Quinn (Featherstone R.)	11	120	1	289
3. Paul Loughlin (St. Helens)	8	122	0	254
4. Kevin Harcombe (Wakefield T.)	6	116	0	246
5. Gary Pearce (Hull)	6	102	9	237

Top goals and points scorer John Woods.





HISTORY

Rugby League historian **ROBERT GATE** chronicles today's Man of the Match Award...

Man of the Match awards are nowadays commonplace. Exceptions, however, are the awards given in the game's major finals, the Challenge Cup and the Premiership.

Forerunner to all the Man of the Match awards was the Lance Todd Trophy, presented annually to the player making most impact in the Wembley final. This mark of prestige was instituted in 1946 so it is perhaps surprising that nothing comparable followed until 1965 when the Harry Sunderland Trophy was first presented to the outstanding player in the Championship Final and subsequently the Premiership Final since 1975.

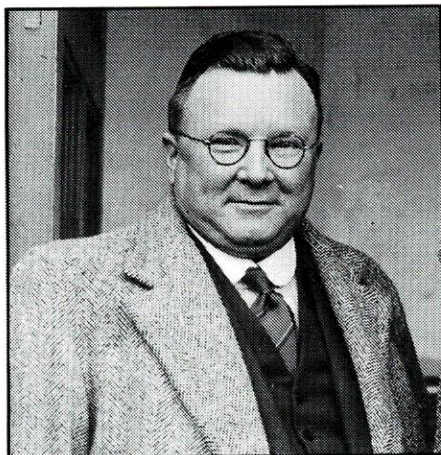
It is an odd coincidence that the game's two most coveted individual match awards commemorate, not two outstanding British Rugby Leaguists, but a New Zealander and an Australian. Both, however, contributed hugely to Rugby League in this country and to the game in the wider perspective.

Todd, a gifted three quarter with the 1907 New Zealand All Golds, played for Wigan and Dewsbury before going on to manage Salford's famous teams of the 1930's. Harry Sunderland, a native of Toowoomba in Queensland, had no pedigree as a player but became one of the most influential characters the sport has known. As an organiser, journalist and propagandist Harry Sunderland pioneered ceaselessly for League in many different areas.

He first came to England as a journalist, at his own expense, to cover the 1921-22 Kangaroo tour. In later years he came back three times in 1929, 1933 and 1937 as joint-manager of Australian touring teams. He also managed the 1935 Australian tour to New Zealand. For some time he was secretary to the Queensland Rugby League and was also one of the prime movers in establishing Rugby League in France.

In 1938 he became secretary-manager of Wigan but the war brought an early end to his involvement at Central Park although he did remain in this country until his death in 1960 working in journalism and broadcasting. In 1954 he organised games between the Australian and New Zealand World Cup teams in California... clearly, a man ahead of his time!

Apart from being remembered through the Harry Sunderland Trophy in this country, this great man of Rugby League's name is enshrined in Australian League through the award of the Harry Sunderland Memorial Medal, which is presented to the outstanding Australian player in each Anglo-Australian Test series Down-under.



The legendary Harry Sunderland

This year's Premiership Final will see the awarding of the Harry Sunderland Trophy to its 24th recipient. Whoever takes the accolade will be treading in the footsteps of a number of notable players. Only four of the previous winners never won international or Test honours and remarkably, four — George Nicholls, Geoff Pimblett, Mick Burke and Joe Lydon — have actually won both the Harry Sunderland and Lance Todd Trophies.

Lancashire clubs have so far produced 12 Harry Sunderland Trophy winners to Yorkshire's 11, whilst 12 of the winners have been backs and 11 forwards. The stand off position has produced four winners as have full back and second row. Prop and loose forward have furnished three each and scrum half two. Wing, centre and hooker have each provided only one winner. The following clubs have produced winners: 5 St. Helens; 4 Leeds; 3 Widnes; 2 Hull Kingston Rovers, Wakefield T., Warrington, Wigan; 1 Bradford N., Dewsbury, Halifax.

The first winner of the award was Halifax's Terry Fogerty, a 20-year-old second rower whose powerful breaks and deft handling sent St. Helens to a shock 15-7 defeat in 1965. The following year St. Helens exacted sweet revenge on the Thrum Hallers by hammering them 35-12 in a stormy rematch at Swinton. Saint's South African winger Len Killeen rattled up 21 points in that 1966 Championship Final from three tries and six goals but the Harry Sunderland Trophy went deservedly to heavy-weight prop Albert Halsall whose fearsome charges brought him a hat-trick of tries.

Wakefield Trinity provided the next two Trophy winners, 1967 seeing Trinity and St. Helens draw 7-7 at Headingley before Wakefield romped to a 21-9 victory in the replay at Swinton. Outstanding in both games was Trinity scrum half Ray Owen, a try-scorer in each. The following year Trinity retained their Championship with a 17-10 beating of Hull K.R., Gary Cooper becoming the first full back to take the award.

It was not long before another full back emulated him however, as Leeds' Bev Risman kicked four goals to crown an immaculate display in 1969 as Castleford were downed 16-14 at rain-soddened Odsal in one of the great

Championship finals. Leeds were back at Odsal the following season but could not cope with St. Helens who ran out 24-12 winners thanks in large measure to a masterly second-half display by Frank Myler, the first stand off to win the Harry Sunderland Trophy. Saints retained their Championship the following year with a 16-12 victory over Wigan in a dramatically pulsating match but for the only time a member of the losing side won the match award, Wigan second rower Bill Ashurst giving a towering performance in defeat.

Decisive goal kicking by Leeds prop Terry Clawson brought him the award in 1972 as the Loiners edged out St. Helens 9-5 at Swinton, whilst the following year saw a hooker win the honours for the only time, Dewsbury skipper Mike Stephenson scoring a brace of tries in a surprise 22-13 defeat of Leeds at Odsal in the last Championship Final ever played. In 1974, Warrington loose forward Barry Philbin turned on the style to take the award in the newly-styled Club Championship final as the Wire held on to a 13-12 win over St. Helens.

The first Premiership Final pitted hot favourites St. Helens against Leeds in 1975 but the form book was overturned and Leeds won easily 26-11 with stand-off Mel Mason's telling contribution earning him the match award. St. Helens provided the winners in both 1976 and 1977, second rower George Nicholls winning the first award as Salford succumbed 15-2, whilst in 1977 full back Geoff Pimblett excelled in scoring a try and seven goals in a 32-20 mauling of Warrington. Pimblett thus became the first man to win the Harry Sunderland and Lance Todd Trophies having been awarded the latter at Wembley in 1976.

Try-scoring Bradford Northern captain Bob Haigh's impressive display in the 17-8 defeat of Widnes at Swinton in 1978 brought the loose forward a well merited claim to the Harry Sunderland Trophy. Northern were back in the final in 1979, heavily defeated by Leeds at Fartown, the award going to Leeds' scrum half Kevin Dick who contributed eight goals to his team's 24-2 triumph.

A typically cultured centre display brought Mal Aspey the match honours in 1980 as Widnes accounted for Bradford Northern at Swinton whilst recent years have seen the prestigious trophy go to Len Casey, Mick Burke, Tony Myler, John Dorahy, Harry Pinner, Les Boyd and Joe Lydon, the latter the first wingman to win the award.

No doubt Harry Sunderland would rejoice to see the successes of his fellow country men Dorahy and Boyd!

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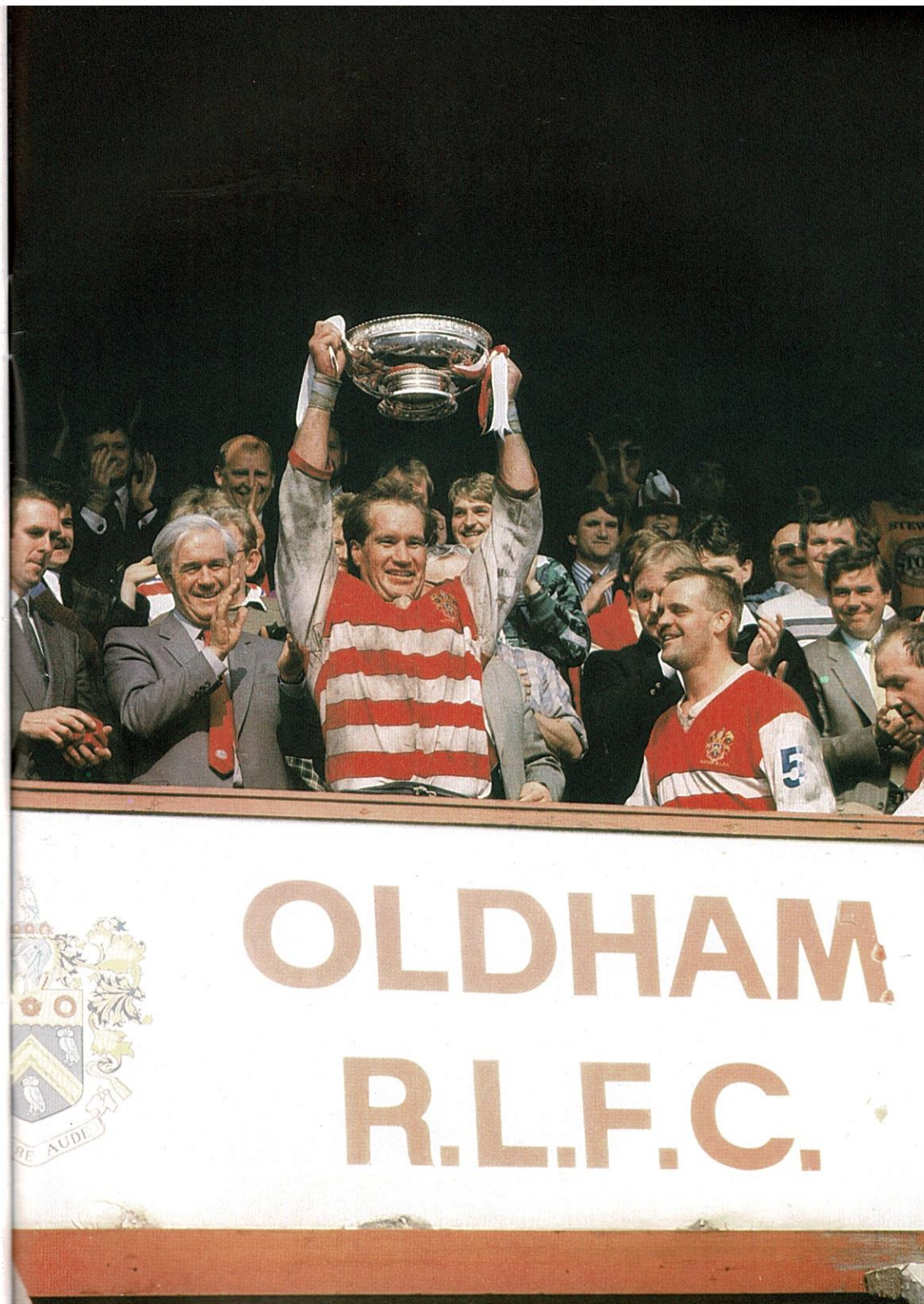


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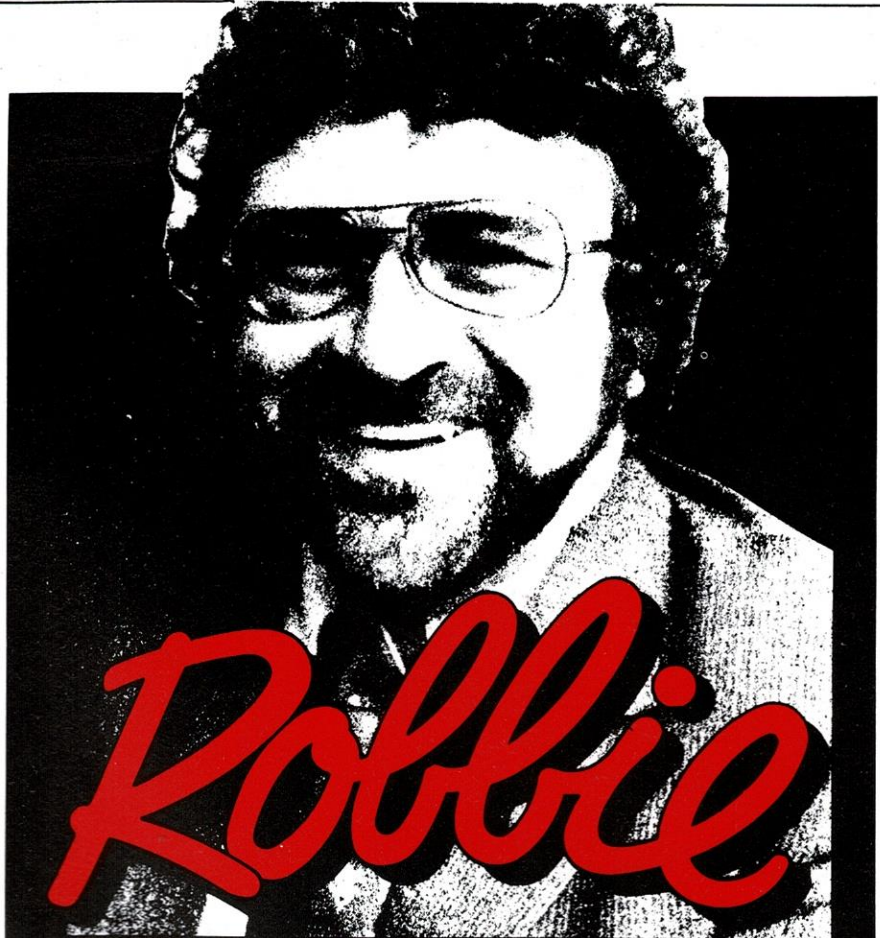
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