

OLDHAM TEAM CHECK CARLISLE

DUNCAN PLATT	- 1	- BARRY VICKERS
RICHARD IRVING	- 2	- COLIN COLES
DES FOY	- 3	- BRAD HEPI
JOHN HENDERSON	- 4	- PAUL LITHGOW
PAUL LORD	- 5	- ALAN LITTLE
BRETT CLARK	- 6	- KEVIN PAPE
MIKE FORD	- 7	- PAUL MURDOCK
LEO CASEY	- 8	- GARY SCHUBERT
RICHARD RUSSELL	- 9	- MALCOLM THOMASON
JOHN FIELDHOUSE	- 10	- STEVE BRIERLEY
KEITH NEWTON	- 11	- A N OTHER
SHAUN ALLEN	- 12	- PAUL ROBINSON
JOHN COGGER	- 13	- TONY SCOTT
KEITH ATKINSON	- 14	- MIKE KAVANAGH
JOHN FAIRBANK	- 15	- EDDIE SOUTHWELL

Referee: Mr. B. Galtress (Bradford). Touch Judges: Mr. W. Brown (Red Flag), Mr. P. Hind (Orange Flag)

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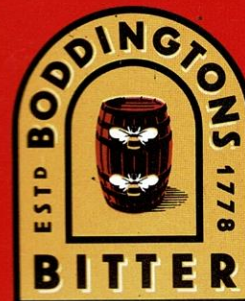
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Record Victory: 67-6 v Liverpool City, April, 1959

Record Defeat: 11-67 by Hull K.R., September,
1978

Record Attendance: 28,000 v Huddersfield,
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Record Receipts: £37,505.50 v Wigan,
5th October, 1989

Record Transfer Fee Paid: £70,000 to
Halifax for Tony Anderson March 1990

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

Highest number of points scored: Bernard
Ganley, 2,881

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Most Tries: Pre 1900, Jack Hirst, 233
Since 1900, Alan Davies, 182

CLUB HONOURS

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Second Division Champions:
1963-64, 1981-82, 1987-88

Rugby League Challenge Cup Winners:
1898-99,
1924-25, 1926-27

Runners-up:
1906-07, 1911-12, 1923-24, 1925-26

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

Runners-up:
1908-09, 1911-12, 1918-19, 1921-22, 1954-55,
1966-67, 1968-69, 1986-87, 1989-90

Lancashire Championship Winners:
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1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57, 1957-58

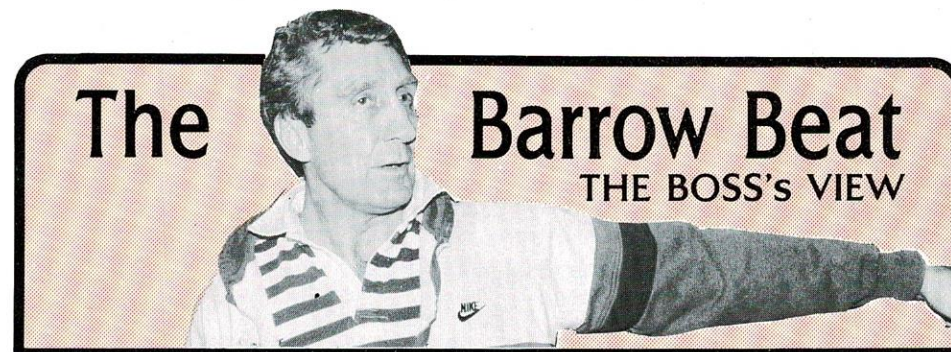
Runners-up:
1908-09, 1910-11, 1911-12, 1919-20, 1923-24,
1954-55

Lancashire Shield Winners:
1975-76, 1979-80

Colts Premiership Trophy:
1979-80

Second Division Premiership:
1987-88

WE'RE PUTTING OUR SHIRTS ON OLDHAM



A VERY big thank-you to all you wonderful fans who gave us such tremendous backing throughout our run in the Challenge Cup. Your support was terrific throughout, but never more so than at Central Park last Saturday and again when the team arrived back at Watersheddings on Saturday night.

The reception was very touching indeed for all concerned, especially so after being beaten by Warrington only because we had a try disallowed in injury time.

I know you must all have been just as disappointed as everyone else at the club but there you all were, as we got back, to welcome us like heroes with a rendering of our team's record, "Simply the Best."

It was enough to make grown men cry ... and it did!

I vowed there and then that, before I leave Oldham, I will break the Wembley jinx or die in the attempt.

We have the best supporters in the land. You were brilliant on the day and back at the club. "Simply the Best" ... that's you, fans, too!

The talking point about the tie, of course, was Paul Lord's injury-time "try" in the corner, disallowed because he was judged to be offside.

Was he offside, or wasn't he? No amount of talking will make any difference now, of course, but after looking at the video and slowing it down frame by frame I am convinced that Paul was at least one yard behind Mike Ford when the ball first touched Mike's foot.

So near — yet so far. But you can rest assured that I for one — and I know it applies to everyone else at the club — will never rest until we have given you great supporters the opportunity of seeing us at Wembley.

We can now look forward to promotion, of course, and the return to the First Division next season. I can't wait.

Before that, we must endeavour to win all our remaining games so that we will finish either first or second and then have a home run in the Premiership.

The Easter weekend will be just as tough as it is important — Swinton away next Friday and then Rochdale at home in the all-ticket game on Easter Monday.

If you haven't got your ticket, get it now. On Easter Monday we have an old score to settle and the game is particularly important because of league positions for the Premiership.

TONY BARROW

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TODAY'S

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Welcome to Carlisle

TODAY we welcome Carlisle to Watersheddings, with a special greeting for their recently-appointed coach from New Zealand, Cameron Bell. Since Oldham won up in Cumbria last October, there have been two significant changes in the Carlisle camp, notably the departure of coach Tommy Dawes and the team's early-season general and tactician, Harry Pinner.

Carlisle and Tommy Dawes, the former Barrow boss, parted company in January after a defeat at York and within a fortnight the club had engaged Cameron, who was then living in Auckland, on a two-year contract. It took him some time to clear up his business affairs in New Zealand, but he arrived in Carlisle at the end of February and he is now settled there — the first time in the club's history that its senior coach has been based in the city.

The father of Wigan's Test centre Dean Bell, Cameron has had considerable success as a coach back home in New Zealand and one can assume that he will already have introduced new methods. New patterns of play and perhaps more emphasis on organisation and defence are now an accepted part of the Carlisle routine and he is getting a good response from the players.

Carlisle began the season full of optimism, having engaged former Great Britain loose-forward Pinner on a two-year contract. Pinner certainly gave Oldham a lot of trouble in the game up there, but he has not played for Carlisle since last November, and the club is suing him through the courts for breach of contract.

He had been signed not only as a tactical general on the field of play, but a player who would influence what is essentially a young side. It was not to be and Carlisle struggled for long periods after his departure, resulting in the split with coach Dawes some two months later.

In Cameron Bell's first two games there were defeats by Halifax away and Dewsbury at home, but then followed a 60-0 victory at Nottingham, a narrow 4-2 home defeat by Hunslet and an impressive 24-18 win at Bramley.

These notes had to be written before the home games against Fulham last weekend and Trafford Borough in midweek, on the day we played at Workington.

New Zealander Brad Hepi — a fast, strong-running second-row man when we played up there — is now operating in the centre, with Kevin Pape having switched from centre to stand-off. Kevin is a good player, once much in demand by other clubs, and he is scoring and creating just as much now at No. 6 as he did in the centre.

Unfortunately for Carlisle, they have just lost the services of a former Junior Kiwi, Hitro Okesene, who has been doing well in the second-row for the Cumbrians. He has returned home only this week, so Carlisle will be looking for a replacement to join a trialist, A N Other, who was booked to have his third run-out against Fulham last Sunday.

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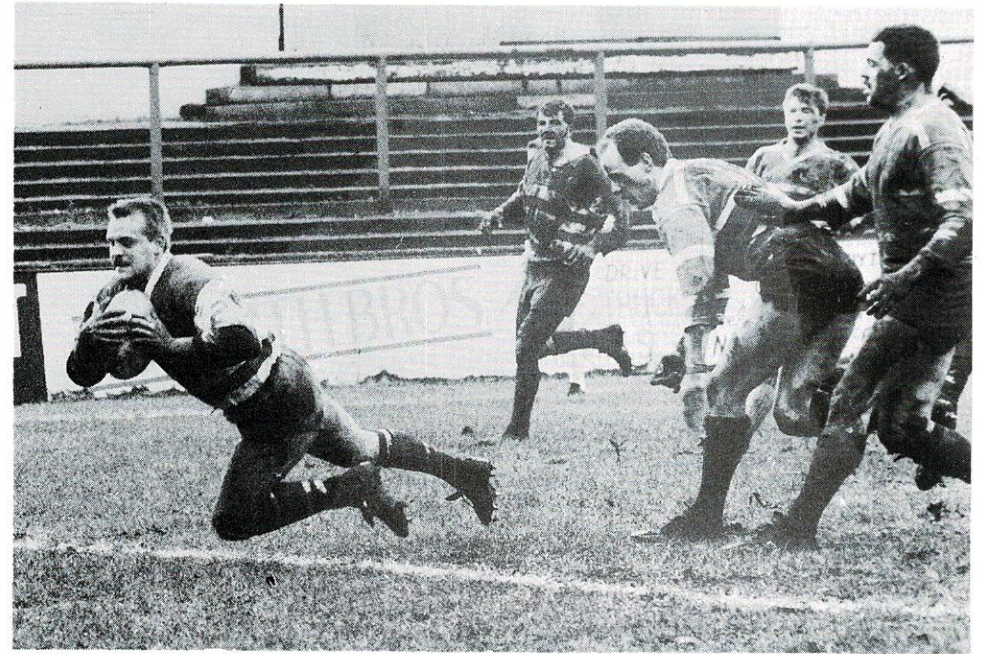
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Flashback . . .

1987/88

Oldham 26, Carlisle 4



Going up — over 3,000 fans watched Oldham defeat Carlisle 26-4 at Watersheddings with tries by Paul Round, Mal Graham, Kevin Meadows (seen here diving over the line to touch down), Terry Flanagan and Charlie McAlister. Peter Walsh kicked three goals to help Oldham on to an eventual Second Division Championship/Premiership double.

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Spotlight on... **TONY ANDERSON**

WITH promotion to the First Division assured, coach Tony Barrow is already busy strengthening his squad for the top flight following the signing of utility back Australian Tony Anderson from Halifax for a club record £70,000.

Tony, whose transfer fee tops the previous £65,000 record held jointly by Paul Round and Mike Ford, has signed for three years and is already impressed by what he has seen at Watersheddings.

"I feel that I am beginning to settle down at Oldham, although changing teams is always a big upheaval as it always takes a lot of adjusting to get used to playing with a completely different team no matter how good they are," comments the Sydney-born Aussie, who marked his home debut against Hunslet with a brilliant solo try and a broken nose!

"I'd heard that Oldham had a great club spirit and that's proved to be true in the short time I've been here. The supporters are extremely loyal," commented Tony, who joins fellow Aussies Brett Clark and John Cogger at Watersheddings, although he isn't classed as an overseas player, having spent over five years in the UK since joining Halifax.

Tony, 28, originally played his rugby for the Brisbane Easts before deciding to move to England to help satisfy his desire to see the world.

"I saw the move to Halifax as a golden opportunity to see a bit of the world because England is a great base for travelling, which is my great passion."

"My original contract was for just one year but Halifax wanted me to stay on. I owe the club a lot for giving me my first break in British rugby league and the chance to travel," commented Tony, who has already taken in Europe, Canada and the United States since arriving from Australia and is already planning a trip to the West Indies this summer.

Despite his love of travelling, Tony, who lives in Halifax with his fiancée Tracey and cat Spongy, is very much at home in England.



"The people here, especially in the North, are probably more friendly and open than from where I come from in Australia. Here, you soon become part of your local community.

"I love the atmosphere of local pubs where everyone gets together and the faces are always familiar. Back in Australia, people have to travel miles to socialise so it is much more impersonal!"

Although happy in the UK, Tony has one reservation: "Basically, I miss Australia's great weather, the beach and the outdoor activities that good weather makes possible. I love playing golf and although I try not to let the British weather stop me playing, I think I'd be able to improve my handicap if there was a little less rain."

Eventually, he plans to return home to open a restaurant so he can concentrate on his hobbies during the day. For the time being, he is more than happy to be at Watersheddings.

"I must admit that I was pretty shocked to find I was transfer-listed at Halifax, but I was lucky to be approached by Tony Barrow. Now I am looking forward to my future with the team, which looks promising because I believe Oldham are really going places."

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Action Replay... ACTION FROM OUR RECENT FIXTURES



Richard Irving touches down against Warrington to give Oldham the lead in last Saturday's 10-6 Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final defeat.



So close and yet so far — Paul Lord crosses the line only to have the injury-time try disallowed for offside.

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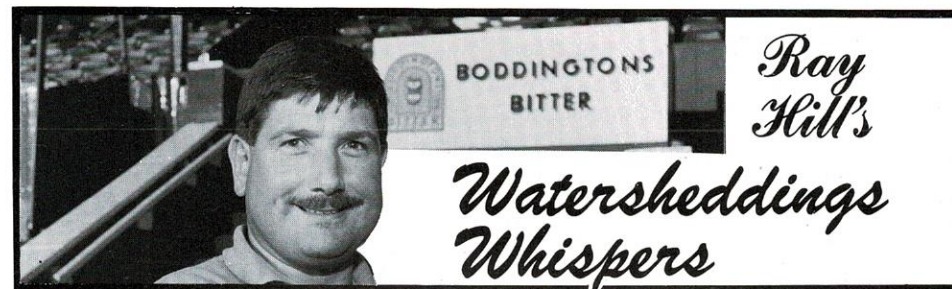
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I WAS a proud man last Saturday, even though Oldham lost a desperately-close Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final against Warrington.

I was proud of the team who tried so hard to win through to Wembley for the first time in the club's history.

And I was equally proud of the tremendous support of the thousands of loyal Oldham fans who really got behind the team throughout the most exhilarating and tense 80 minutes of Rugby League I've ever watched.

Everyone at the club, directors, officials, players and backroom staff, appreciated your efforts, and I would like to thank you on their behalf for all the encouragement you gave the team at the semi-final.

Your support has been unbelievable throughout this remarkable season and, hopefully, by the time you read my notes, we should be back in the First Division where we belong, which will be just reward for your commitment to the club.

After the disappointment of the Challenge Cup, we'll now be concentrating on winning the Second Division Championship and on reaching another 'glamour' day at the double-header Premiership finals at Old Trafford on May 13 (see the advertisement in this programme for details of where and how to buy tickets for the climax to the season).

So there's still a lot to look forward to, and to celebrate promotion the players have made a record, Tina Turner's appropriately-titled classic 'Simply the Best', with a little help from the Sheddings resident rock band, the fabulous Morgan's Every Which Way.

We've been singing the song in the office ever since the players and the band recorded 'Simply the Best' a couple of weeks ago, and I've already

placed my order for a copy of the single, which is backed by a cracker of a song written and performed by Morgan's Every Which Way.

You can buy the record, priced £2, from local record shops and, of course, our souvenir shop and the Sheddings social club, where Morgan's Every Which Way regularly perform their exciting brand of rock 'n' roll. If you haven't seen them yet, you ought to because you don't know what you are missing.

Today's match is our last home match before the Easter Monday game against fellow championship contenders Rochdale. Our club sponsors, Boddingtons, will be announcing the winners of three awards on that day, namely the OB Player of the Year, the OB Young Player of the Year and OB Supporter of the Year.

There are hundreds of contenders for the OB Supporter of the Year award, but unfortunately there can only be one winner. However, one supporter I'd like to give a special mention to is Andrew Ridgeway, who married his wife Jayne last October, when John Cogger and Mike Ford attended the wedding reception.

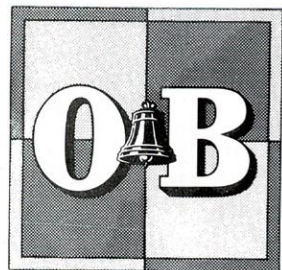
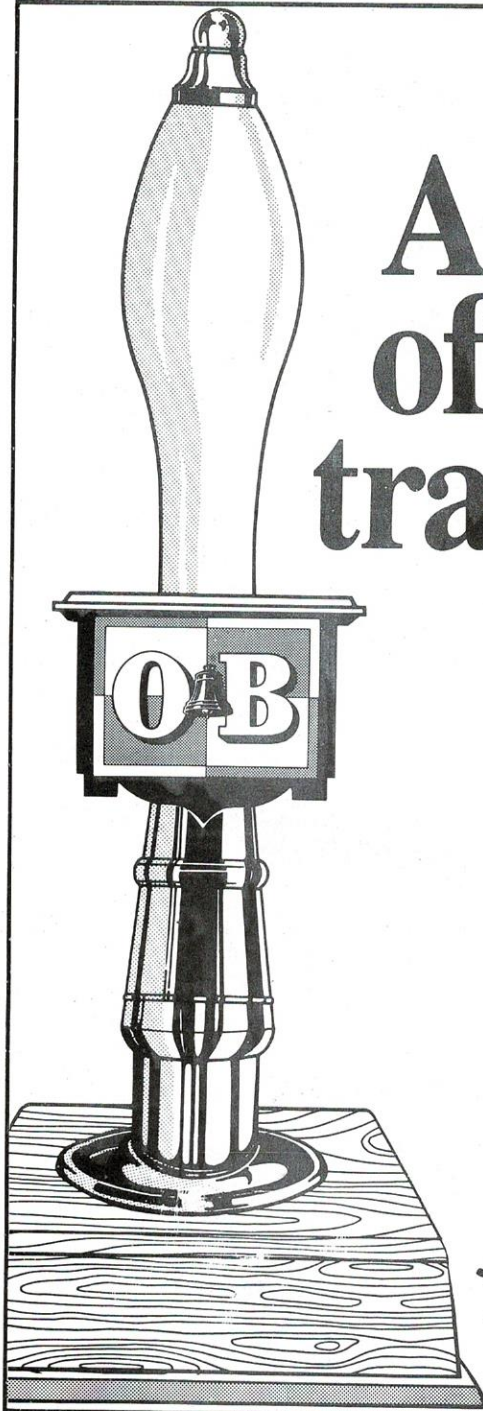
Ardent Oldham fan Andrew can't see the Roughyeds as often as he'd like because he's working in Japan. Enjoy your time in the Far East. We look forward to seeing you back at Watersheddings soon.

And that goes for all you, too, the best supporters a Rugby League club could ask for. Thank you!

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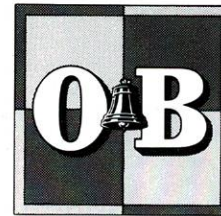
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RICHARD IS PLAYER OF THE MONTH

RICHARD Russell is the Evening Chronicle OB Player of the Month for March.

He will receive an inscribed medal, £100 cheque and a case of Boddingtons Bitter before today's game with Carlisle.

Comments Roger Halstead, Oldham Evening Chronicle's Rugby League writer and award judge: "Richard has been outstanding last month when Oldham played a lot of games in the run up to the Silk Cup Challenge Cup semi-final. He has played in several positions, proving that he has the versatility and the skill to adapt, no matter what position he is asked to play."

AWARDS DAY ON EASTER MONDAY!

EASTER Monday is Awards Monday as Boddingtons, Oldham's official club sponsors, will be presenting three major awards before the home league game against Rochdale.

We've been inundated with votes for both the OB Player of the Year, won last year by Aussie Chris O'Sullivan, and the new OB Young Player of the Year, as well as nominations for the OB Supporter of the Year.

The player who is voted the OB Player of the Year will be presented with a handsome trophy, a £250 cheque and a case of Boddingtons to celebrate in style, while the young player, who must be under 21, receives a silver salver, £150 cheque and a case of Boddies, the North West's number one bitter.

The Supporter of the Year, won last year

by Mark Holmes, collects a trophy, replica kit and a pair of season tickets.

Already we've received numerous nominations for the award, which not only prove that Oldham has Rugby League's most loyal supporters, but also the wittiest, too.

Here are just a few of the comments included with nominations for the Boddingtons-sponsored OB Supporter of the Year award.

"He's been a supporter for donkeys years, so it is about time he had a seat as his legs are buggered from standing on the terraces."

"He neglects his wife and family of eight in order to travel to away matches."

"He always turned up for matches, even when remanded in custody."

"My aunty takes my mum to all the 1st and 'A' team matches and gets her out of my hair."

"She's addicted to Oldham rugby — if she misses a game she suffers from withdrawal symptoms."

"Because he hasn't many friends and it might improve his ego."

"He has to put up with more stick from Hornets supporters than anyone else because he lives in Rochdale."

"I nominate the wife for letting me go to matches home and away."

WELCOME TO THE NEW-LOOK BATH

OLDHAM'S ever-popular Bath, situated in Union Street, which has recently undergone a major £90,000 refurbishment, opens for business again next week.

New landlady Lorraine Russell, who is looking forward to greeting customers old and new at the OB local, has introduced a range of exciting hot snacks at lunchtime which are well worth trying out!

Adrian Alexander, former Oldham forward and popular former landlord at the Bath, is now at the Smut Inn, Hollinwood.

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(Kick-off
3.00p.m.)

PENALTIES

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SCRUMS

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PENALTIES

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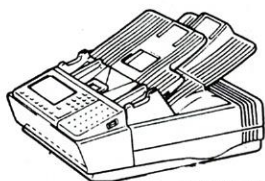
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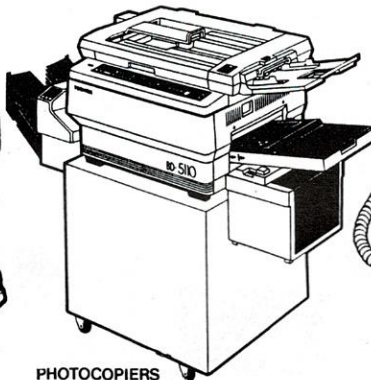
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Fixtures and Statistics

Date	Opponents	V	KO	P	Res	F-A	Tries	Goals	Att
Sep 3	Workington T	H	3.00	W	40-8	Henderson (2), Cogger (2), McAlister, Lord, Ruane, Russell	Platt (4)	3,743	
10	Hallifax	A	3.00	L	12-22	Platt, Cogger	Platt (2)	8,612	
16	Barrow (Lancs Cup)	A	2.30	W	46-2	Lord (2), Ford, Casey, Platt (2), Allen, Hyde, Cogger	Platt (5)	2,300	
27	St. Helens (Lancs Cup)	A	7.30	W	36-6	Robinson, Ford, Platt, Cogger, Allen, Newton	Platt (6)	7,894	
Oct 1	Hull KR	H	3.00	W	12-4	Lord	Platt (4)	5,797	
5	Wigan (Lancs Cup)	H	7.30	W	19-18	Fieldhouse, Newton, Ford	Platt, Hyde (2), Ford (dg)	8,603	
8	Runcorn H	A	3.00	W	34-6	Russell, Clarke (2), Meadows (2), Clawson, Irving	Hyde (2)	2,500	
14	Warrington (Lancs Cup final)	-	3.00	L	16-24	Irving, Robinson, Lord	Hyde (1)	9,895	
18	Hallifax	H	7.30	W	14-3	Lord, Fairbank	Hyde (3)	6,953	
22	Carlisle	A	3.00	W	10-32	Fieldhouse (2), Hyde, Fairbank, Cogger, Meadows	Hyde (2), McAlister (2)	1,200	
29	Batley	H	3.00	W	22-4	Ruane, Martyn, Meadows, Irving	Martyn (3)	4,120	
Nov 5	Doncaster	A	3.00	W	22-20	Casey, Lord, Hyde, Fairbank	Hyde (3)	3,813	
12	Keighley	H	3.00	W	50-34	Clark, Hyde, Irving, Ford, McAlister, Meadows, Ruane, Lord, Russell	Hyde (7)	4,113	
19	Fulham	A	2.30	W	40-10	McAlister, Ruane (2), Clark, Cogger, Allen, Ford	McAlister (6)	1,440	
26	Doncaster	H	3.00	W	30-8	Lord, Meadows, Ruane, Robinson, Clark	McAlister (5)	4,914	
Dec 3	Bramley (Regal Trophy)	A	3.50	W	48-16	Robinson, Cogger (2), Lord, McAlister, Clawson, Clark, Croslon	Platt (8)	1,632	
10	Huddersfield (Regal Trophy)	H	3.00	W	22-8	Cogger (2), Croslon	Platt (5)	5,205	
17	St Helens (Regal Trophy)	A	3.00	L	18-32	Fairbank, Cogger (2), Lord	McAlister	7,752	
26	Rochdale H	A	3.00	L	24-12	McAlister, Lord	McAlister	8,150	
Jan 1	Swinton	H	3.00	W	29-14	Ford, Lord (2), Cogger, Russell	Platt (4), Ford (dg)	4,954	
7	Hunslet	H	3.00	W	48-10	Foy (5), Cogger (3), Fairbank	Platt (6)	3,644	
14	Huddersfield (SCCC)	H	3.00	W	30-8	Clark, Allen, Newton, Cogger, Fairbank	Platt (5)	4,593	
17	Hull KR	A	7.30	W	9-6	Irving	Platt (2), Platt (dg)	6,530	
21	Chorley	A	3.00	W	44-6	Irving (3), Foy (2), Cogger (2), Newton	Platt (6)	2,851	
28	Workington (SCCC Rnd 1)	H	3.00	W	30-8	Platt, Henderson (3), Clark	Platt, Atkinson (4)	3,710	
Feb 4	Fulham	H	3.00	W	52-4	Henderson (4), Foy, Casey, Newton (2), Platt, Lord	Platt (5)	3,549	
11	Salford (SCCC Rnd 2)	A	3.00	W	18-7	Russell, Clark	Platt (5)	6,542	
18	Chorley	H	3.00	W	66-16	Clark (3), Russell (2), Martyn, McAlister, Casey, Cogger, Irving, Foy, Round	Platt (9)	3,576	
25	Widnes (SCCC Rnd 3)	A	3.00	W	16-4	Henderson, Newton	Platt (4)	11,820	
Mar 4	Huddersfield	H	3.00	W	23-8	Cogger, Lewis, Lord, Martyn	Platt (2), Atkinson, Martyn (dg)	5,615	
7	Keighley	A	7.30	W	30-10	Ruane, Lord (3), Martyn, Irving	Platt (3)	1,252	
11	Batley	A	3.00	W	30-14	Lord (2), Casey, Clark	Hyde (7)	2,800	
18	Runcorn	H	3.00	W	60-2	Allen (2), Casey (2), Cogger (2), Lord, Irving, Anderson, Hyde, Clark	Platt (8)	5,132	
21	Hunslet	A	7.30	W	42-14	Lord (2), Russell, Henderson, McAlister, Platt, Fieldhouse	Platt (7)	2,000	
24	Huddersfield	A	3.00	W	22-14	Ruane, Robinson, Fairbank, Irving	Atkinson (3)	1,900	
31	Warrington (SCCC semi-final)	-	2.00	L	6-10	Irving	Platt	15,631	
Apr 4	Workington	A	6.15						
8	Carlisle	H	1.30						
13	Swinton	A	3.00						
16	Rochdale	H	3.00						

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Appearances and Scorers

	P	Sub	G	D	T	Pts
Shaun Allen.....	29	3	0	0	6	24
Tony Anderson.....	2	0	0	0	1	4
Keith Atkinson.....	8	11	8	0	0	16
Mick Bardsley.....	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ian Bates.....	1	0	0	0	0	0
Leo Casey.....	24	1	0	0	7	28
Brett Clark.....	30	1	0	0	14	56
Neil Clawson.....	4	1	0	0	2	8
John Cogger.....	34	0	0	0	24	96
Trevor Croston.....	4	4	0	0	2	8
John Fairbank.....	15	11	0	0	7	28
John Fieldhouse.....	32	1	0	0	4	16
Neil Flanagan.....	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mick Ford.....	31	0	0	2	6	26
Des Foy.....	13	0	0	0	9	36
John Henderson.....	16	2	0	0	12	48
Gary Hyde.....	19	3	28	0	5	76
Richard Irving.....	26	2	0	0	13	52
Peter Lewis.....	2	0	0	0	1	4
Paul Lord.....	33	0	0	0	24	96
Charlie McAlister.....	15	6	16	0	7	60
Tommy Martyn.....	4	1	3	1	4	23
John Maxwell.....	0	1	0	0	0	0
Kevin Meadows.....	6	5	0	0	6	20
Keith Newton.....	26	0	0	0	9	36
Duncan Platt.....	23	0	104	1	7	237
Steve Robinson.....	13	4	0	0	5	20
Paul Round.....	3	2	0	0	1	4
Andy Ruane.....	18	2	0	0	8	32
Richard Russell.....	31	4	0	0	7	28

Up to and including Hunslet match

Division Two League Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
OLDHAM	24	12	0	0	446	115	10	0	2	329	156	44
Rochdale.....	25	11	0	1	508	173	11	0	2	345	191	44
Hull KR.....	23	11	0	1	526	79	10	0	1	432	76	42
Ryedale-York.....	26	11	0	1	304	116	8	1	5	297	199	39
Swinton.....	25	10	0	3	366	184	8	0	4	259	184	36
Halifax.....	24	11	0	1	349	129	6	0	6	265	169	34
Dewsbury.....	25	9	0	3	252	133	8	0	5	212	246	34
Fulham.....	25	8	0	4	253	205	7	1	5	175	237	31
Trafford.....	25	8	0	6	272	243	7	0	4	227	195	30
Doncaster.....	26	7	2	4	234	183	6	0	7	254	208	28
Huddersfield.....	25	5	0	7	171	167	7	0	6	238	217	24
Batley.....	26	7	0	6	243	182	5	0	8	180	234	24
Hunslet.....	27	5	0	9	256	302	5	0	8	169	225	20
Bramley.....	26	5	0	8	196	294	5	0	8	189	294	20
Whitehaven.....	25	7	0	6	220	248	2	0	10	155	360	18
Chorley.....	25	6	0	8	219	275	2	0	9	117	295	16
Carlisle.....	25	4	0	8	215	214	3	0	10	232	353	14
Keighley.....	24	4	0	8	205	360	2	0	10	182	340	12
Workington.....	25	2	0	10	146	281	3	0	10	140	385	10
Nottingham.....	26	3	0	10	161	485	1	0	12	146	471	8
Runcorn.....	26	0	0	12	89	290	0	0	14	115	596	0

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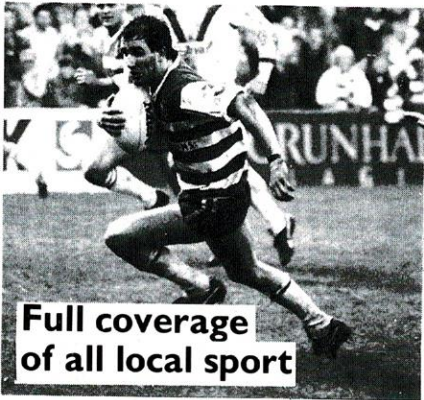


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'A' Team Round-Up

Slalom Lager Alliance League

FIRST DIVISION							P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hull	25	20	1	4	689	307	41						
Leeds	25	19	1	5	689	370	39						
Castleford	23	16	0	7	650	449	32						
Hull K.R.	24	16	0	8	521	332	32						
Warrington W.	24	14	1	9	580	533	29						
Wigan	24	14	0	10	579	434	28						
St. Helens	24	13	0	11	557	508	26						
Halifax	25	13	0	12	476	511	26						
OLDHAM	24	11	1	12	450	454	23						
Widnes	24	9	0	15	390	645	18						
Swinton C	24	9	0	15	377	691	18						
Featherstone R.	24	8	0	16	500	567	16						
Salford	24	5	2	17	501	559	12						
Hunslet	22	5	0	17	310	603	10						
Carlisle	22	4	0	18	380	686	8						

'A' Team Young Player of the Year

Who is going to become the first OB Young Player of the Year — a brand new Boddingtons-sponsored award for Oldham youngsters voted for by Oldham supporters?

Find out on Monday when Oldham play Rochdale.

'A' Team Fixtures and Statistics

Date	Opponents	Venue	Res	F	A
Sep 1	St. Helens	A	L	2-15	
8	Halifax	H	W	24-16	
15	Castleford	H	L	16-27	
29	Hull KR	A	L	14-20	
Oct 6	Salford A (LCCS)	A	L	0-6	
12	Halifax	A	L	10-22	
27	Hull	A	L	6-20	
Nov 3	Widnes	H	L	10-14	
10	Wigan	H	L	16-20	
17	Hull	H	D	16-16	
24	Leeds	A	L	16-28	
Dec 1	Warrington	H	W	36-12	
8	St. Helens	H	W	20-18	
22	Featherstone	H	W	28-26	
29	Swinton	A	L	20-23	
Jan 5	Hunslet	A	W	32-0	
12	Hull KR	H	L	6-12	
19	Warrington	A	L	12-18	
26	Salford A	H	W	26-18	
Feb 3	Salford (SACC Rnd 1)	A	L	12-30	
9	Castleford	A	W	32-18	
23	Wigan	A	W	17-12	
Mar 2	Featherstone	A	W	20-16	
16	Leeds	H	W	32-22	
23	Salford A	A	W	22-23	
30	Hunslet	H	A		
Apr 7	Carlisle	H	A		
13	Swinton	H	A		
20	Widnes	A	W		

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IT would appear that Oldham are destined not to appear at Wembley. The situation at Central Park last weekend was reminiscent of the first game against Hull KR when another refereeing decision meant heartbreak for the town, players and supporters. The evidence from last Saturday's semi-final is there for all who video-taped the game to see.

To be fair, referees have to make instant and snap decisions, but personally I long to see the day when a referee in any sport will have the honesty and character to admit that possibly they may have made a mistake. Further, the authorities of sport's governing bodies, in my opinion, can help situations like the one we had at Central Park, and also help their own referees, umpires and associated adjudicators.

With the modern technology available today, I feel the powers that be should either make use of it or ignore it completely. I base this judgement not only on the incident at Central Park, but having witnessed many other obvious and most blatant inaccuracies which decimate modern sport.

The most recent that springs to mind was the "handball" incident in England's international soccer match played at Wembley last week but one. It was reminiscent of the famous "hand of God" declaration by Maradona in the last World Cup. The handling offence by England's full back Stuart Pearce against Brazil was so obvious that even John Holdsworth would have given a "knock-on"!

To remove unnecessary pressures being placed on officials, I wonder why the authorities don't consider banning the use of the "action replay." If they are not prepared to accept technological progress, then surely they can relieve extra burdens by eliminat-

ing its use. On the other hand, they could decide to use it to its full potential in assisting the officials in the making of hairline decisions, especially where the outcome is crucial.

On now to more positive thoughts. Congratulations to Tony Barrow and his boys on their achievement in returning Oldham to British Rugby League's premier division, and let's hope we can now have a long and rosy future in the top flight. The easy part has now been achieved (mind you, ask any Halifax supporter and I'm sure they would agree, second division rugby is not as easy as it appears), but first division, as we all know to our unhappy cost, is a particularly demanding gladiatorial arena.

We look to have some exciting young talent at Watersheddings, which is encouraging for the future, but next season may well turn out to be one of the most important in the recent history of the Roughyeds. It won't be easy and we must learn from our past experience, but somehow Tony Barrow's inspirational battlers on the field seem to provide a contagious recipe for success.

Finally, lest we forget, Warrington were defeated in last year's Challenge Cup semi-final and returned to turn heartbreak into triumph. To do this takes character and courage, and they are two things that Oldham have in abundance, supporters and players alike.

Enjoy your sport.



Jack Dearden

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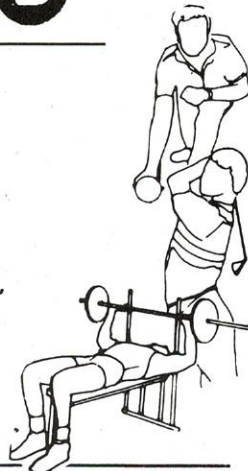
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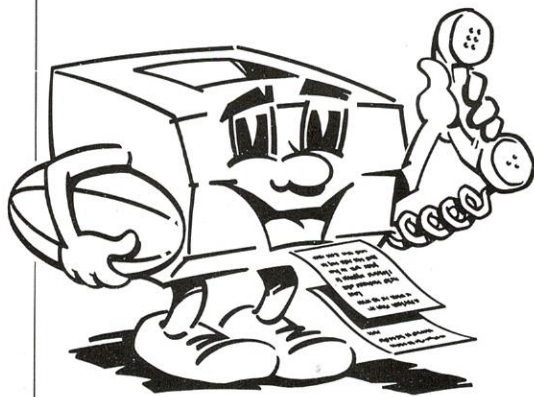
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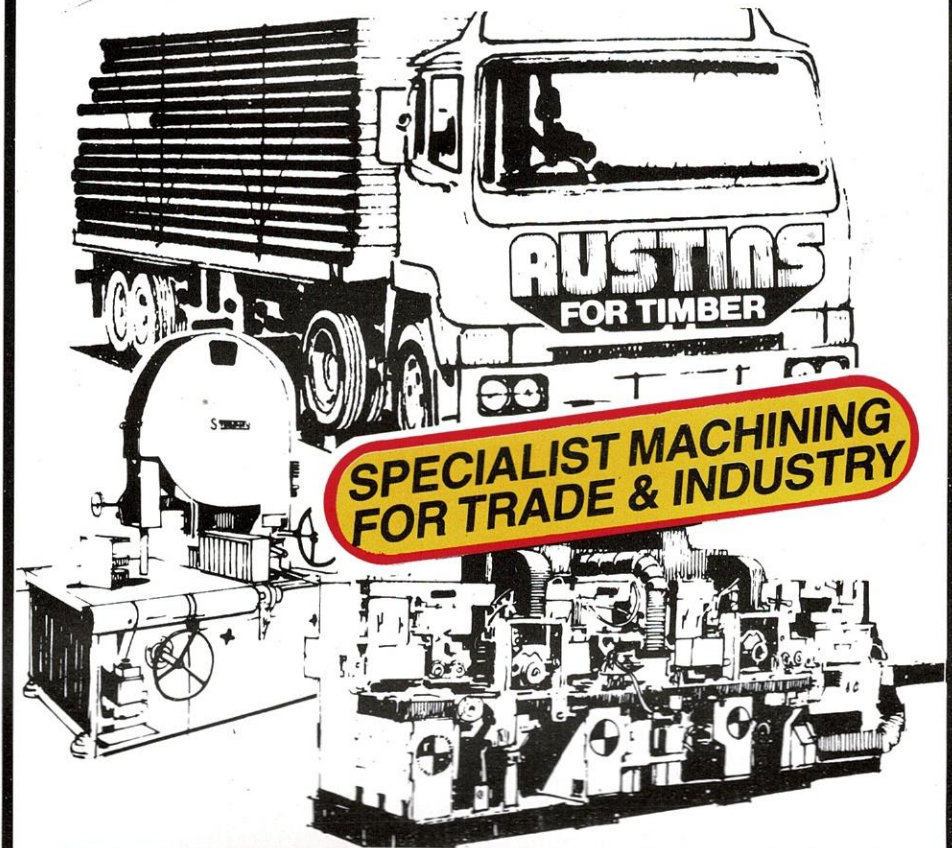
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