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christopher Hamilton Chairman's Chatter



WELCOME to everyone from Hull K.R. this afternoon for a game that takes on a new importance after last Sundavs result and performance at Featherstone. The scoreline was a record defeat for the club and not a pleasant experience in any sense of the word for anybody associated with the club, particularly the fans who made the journey.

Since we played Hull K.R. and gained a creditable draw at Craven Park early in the season our fortunes have contrasted greatly,

with both sides doing what most experts would have predicted namely Hull K.R. having a very good consistent season with only the occasional blip, whilst ourselves have staggered for a variety of reasons. At this moment in time Rovers look a good bet not only for the top five but also the Grand Final. Let's hope that defeat today doesn't affect them too much!

Over the past few days Rochdale have parted company with coach Deryck Fox and with the other coaching casualties so far it just goes to show that even with £325,000, as opposed to our £165,000, it doesn't mean you will be any more successful.

Most of you will also have seen the recent headlines regarding the Association of Premiership Clubs "alleged" partial return to a winter season. To put the record straight at the last meeting clubs **did not** vote to change the playing season and the matter was not even discussed as an agenda item. The situation at the moment is that the game has a whole host of things to consider as it contemplates the way forward and for once hasty, rash, ill-informed decisions should not be made. We may well change the playing season but lets only do it once we know all the implications.

Best wishes,

Chris Hamilton

The views expressed in this matchday magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the management and staff of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd.



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Programme Editor Geoff Cooke

Club Honours A J Law Cup Winners 1998 Trans Pennine Cup Finalists 1998



ON the face of it there looks to be considerable merit in Bob McDermott's proposals to start the new Northern Ford Premiership season on Boxing Day and run through to July.

I will discuss the finer points of McDermott's master plan in the programme for the next Oldham match at Spotland on Wednesday when McDermott, chairman of the organisation which represents clubs outside Super League, will be here with his club, Dewsbury.

Suffice to say at this stage that my quick check around many of the Premiership clubs indicated that there will be plenty of support in principle for this latest move to try to get more fans on the terraces.

I need to get two things off my chest, however, because they bug me no end and they often crop up when folk who should know better say they are puzzled by falling attendances because we are talking about "the greatest game in the world" at a time when "the product has never been better".

A few home-truths might be more appropriate and, in the long term, might benefit our sport far more than constant references to hackneyed platitudes which might toe the party line but which merely represent PR at its very worst.

Try telling the millions who watch football across the world that little rugby league is "the greatest game". Or for that matter see if cricket lovers will agree with you, or those who like rugby union, not to mention the vast audiences that turn out in the States to watch ice hockey or American football.

As for rugby league being better than it has ever been . . . POPPYCOCK. The players, I'm sure, are faster, bigger, fitter and stronger, but good rugby league 1999 style is all about yardage, completing your sets of six, playing in the right areas of the field, a good kicking game and an enthusiastic chase.

You can listen to any coach you choose from top of Super League to the lower reaches of the Northern Ford Premiership and, give or take a few variations on a theme and a different accent or two you will be given an almost identical run-down of what is required by his team.

In the last 30 years or so we have gone from one extreme to the other – from an era in which coaching usually meant a few laps of the pitch and a game of tig-and-pass to a decade in which coaching techniques and ideas have become so uniform and sophisticated that they tend to produce contests that are predictable in their pattern, if not their outcome.

Rugby Union used to bore the pants off League fans when the fly-half would instinctively hammer the ball into touch on the full when he got it from the scrum.

I fear League fans now take a similar view of the almost inevitable kick for territorial position nearing the end of the set of six.

And what about those scrums? Oh, and whatever happened to the specialists . . . like the ball-handling prop, the footballing loose-forward who would combine with his scrum-half to weave magic at the back of the pack, the ball-winning hooker, the stand-off who could make the ball talk or the centre who would regularly send in his winger for 20 or 30 tries a season.

When examining the cause for dwindling crowds we must not make the dreadful mistake of assuming that the game is as near perfect as we are ever likely to get it.

There are a whole multitude of reasons for poor attendances, but high up on that list is a serious shortage of craft, skill and old-fashioned crowdpleasing rugby.

In recent years the Rugby League fan has voted with his feet. He wants to see more rugby, less drives and then the inevitable, boring kick for territorial position.

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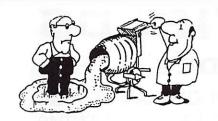
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MICK COATES Game On...



WELCOME to all those fans who travelled down all the way from Hull K. R.

We had a big disappointment from last week, when we got beaten at Featherstone and as you are aware Hull K. R. are at the top of the table and we are still down in the number of players we have.

We are struggling to fill the shirts, so it doesn't look any brighter. Hopefully something will happen before the end of the week, so we can have some players in to do the job in the last games of the season.

It will be a tough game today, but hopefully the players we have looked to all season will find one more performance to beat the team who are at the top of the table. Any improvement on last weeks performance will be a plus!

Enjoy the game,

Mick

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"THE product on the park has never been better". How often have you heard this? Tell a lie often enough and people will come to believe it's the truth. Well, I'm sorry, but I for one don't believe it!

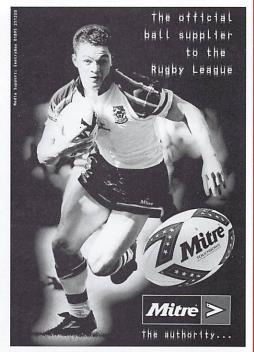
If the promoters of Super League wish to say players are bigger and stronger than ever before, I will agree. If they want to say players are fitter and faster than ever before, I will agree. And if they want to say preparation and planning are better than ever before, I will agree. And so they should be because players and coaches are now full time professionals and there would be something seriously wrong if full-timers could not improve on the standards achieved by part-timers. But the question remains: is the skill level and the entertainment value provided by our best players comparable to that of the players of yesteryear?

Personally, I believe not. I no longer see ballhandling props of the quality of Mick Morgan, Brian Hogan or Brian McTigue - I no longer see classical loose-forwards in the mould of Terry Flanagan, Harry Pinner, Mick Crane, 'Knocker' Norton, Doug Laughton, Johnny Whiteley, Derek Turner or Ken Traill. Where now are the quick silver scrum-halves in the Keith Hepworth, Gary Stephens, Tommy Bishop, Frank Pitchford, Alex Murphy, Stan Kielty, Gerry Helme style? And do you remember the days of the deadly wingmen: Drummond, Smith and Atkinson, Sullivan, Stopford, Boston, Van Vollenhoven, Prinsloo, Freeman, Etty? Why, even the minnows had wingmen to fear and excite: what about Alan Snowden at Hunslet and Peter Goodchild at Bramley and Doncaster?

Rose tinted glasses? Well, maybe. But if I'm that far off the mark can anyone tell me why spectators are staying away in droves when 'the product on the field has never been better'?

And if I'm that wrong can someone tell me why when I watch State of Origin on Sky I feel like I'm watching a different game, so far advanced beyond our standards are the Australians? And, having seen an odd match of Academy football, I have the feeling that Saddleworth Rangers Under 18s of a decade ago were every bit as good as the supposed élite of the junior ranks now?

I'm sorry to appear so negative because there are plenty of knockers of Rugby League around already and I for one, despite my criticisms, will never give up on my favourite sport. But Rugby League followers are not idiots and aren't taken in by 'hype' and 'spin'. Too many have been alienated by the cavalier attitude of the last few years. To those who say 'there is no alternative', I say there is ALWAYS an alternative. And that alternative begins by looking after everyone in the family of R. L. clubs, stabilising the finances, and providing rules and competitions that are not constantly changing - sometimes halfway through a season - thereby debasing the game and its values. It's time to restore some honour to our sport.









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HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR

ROUGHYEDS

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Spotland Hull Kingston

Supporters and Junior

from the Featherstone

Rovers game. I and

other

extremely wet and cold.

I write this article after returning home

Rovers'

members.

many

I think!





Debra Raffertv

But what a great turn out we had at Boundary Park against Rochdale. Well done to all the staff and supporters who made it a great success.

I would like to thank the Junior Roughveds and their parents for making the Kosovan Albanian children very welcome at our June Junior Roughveds meeting. This was held at the Clayton Arms before the Rochdale match. Each Junior Roughved was presented with a commemorative certificate from Chris Hamilton.

Each child was given a big bag full of goodies from the club and I would like to give a huge THANKS to Stuart Gough who provided a fabulous buffet for the Junior Roughveds meeting which was greatly appreciated. You're a star Stuart, and thank you for your on going support of the Juniors.

The next Junior Roughyeds meeting will be on Monday 12th July at 7.00pm, at Pennine Lounge, Mumps Bridge, Oldham,

We will have four players attending to join in the fun, so see you there.



My Day as a Mascot

My visit to Swinton was brilliant I really enjoyed my day as Oldham's mascot. Before the match I had my photo taken with Daniel Brown then Red Ed. Then I stood waiting for Leo and when the team came out, I ran out at the side of Leo.

Leo took me to do some exercises and pass the ball. Then we went to have our picture taken with 2 linesmen and the referee, Red Ed and Vinny Lion. Then I ran off with the Red Ed and Vinny the Lion. I went to watch the match. We did not win but I enjoyed my day anyway.

Stefan Holmes



My Day as a Mascot My day had finally come but I was very nervous and cold. When I ran out with Leo Casev I started getting a bit calmer. When I got onto the pitch I shook hands with the referee and the linesman then I flipped the coin. They chose heads and the coin landed on heads so we

David Gough

kicked to them. The best thing was I got to keep the coin. I had a great time, but unfortunately we ended up losing.

David Gough

The Mascot for today is ZOE BUCKLEY. Zoe is 10 years old. Her favourite player is John Hough. Have a great day.

Junior Jokes:

J: How do you tell if you've got a stupid dog? A: It chases parked cars. J: What do you call a girl who makes animals better? A: Yvette



Zoe Buckley

Debra Rafferty

RACISM IN RUGBY

RUGBY LEAGUE IS A GAME TO BE ENJOYED BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AND RACISM HAS NO PART TO PLAY IN OUR SPORT. RACIST LANGUAGE OR BEHAVIOUR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN THIS CLUB AND ANY MEMBER OR SPECTATOR ENGAGING IN SUCH CONDUCT WILL FACE THE SEVEREST PENALTIES AVIILABLE. WE MUST ALL TACKLE RACISM AND ENSURE THAT RUGBY LEAGUE IS A GAME FOR ALL.



Stefan Holmes

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11

DAVID TOPLISS CAPTAIN OF



IN THE middle of an icy January in 1986 Oldham outhalf David Topliss was pulled out of his wrecked car suffering a fractured skull. Up to that moment there had been talk in the town of perhaps long overdue first division glory and anticipation for the forthcoming Challenge Cup was high. The team that season ended up a creditable 9th and only narrowly lost to Castleford in the Challenge Cup semis. At that fateful moment in wintry Wakefield the Topliss ingredient was lost to the team and any reasonable chance of honours severely dented.

From the age of eight Topliss had followed in his grandfather's footsteps as an ardent Featherstone supporter but ten years later the by now exciting, lightning fast and elusive eighteen year old outhalf took the decision to turn pro with arch-rivals, but home town club, Wakefield.

The Trinity side had just lost the 1968 Challenge Cup final, to Leeds, changes were afoot and outhalf Harold Poynton, then thirty two, was due to retire. David took the opportunity with both hands (so to speak!) and his illustrious pro career had begun.

There were no medals to be won with the Belle Vue outfit although Topliss captained the side in the 1979 Wembley defeat by Widnes and was awarded the Lance Todd Trophy. Throughout his time with his home town club the half back was chased by most of the top sides including Wigan, St. Helens and Leeds who saw him as a ready made replacement for the ill fated Mike Shoebottom.

'Stop Topliss and you stop Wakefield' - and David Topliss was taking more than his fair share of poundings! In 1982 Wakefield were approached by the then crack Hull outfit and, short of cash, agreed a fee. This time Topliss welcomed the approach and over the next three seasons was to win every major domestic honour, visiting Wembley on two further occasions.

Comparing his representative record against his contemporaries would at first appear disappointing - just four Great Britain appearances. All four were against Australia spread over three different tours being selected twice against the 1973 Kangaroos and once each against the 1979 and 1982 tourists when, against the latter, he was also selected as captain. He also represented England on two occasions (against France and the Australians). Selected fifteen times for Yorkshire, Topliss was a member of the County Championship winning side on five occasions.

David Topliss is proud of his representative honours and strongly makes the point that his loyalty to the struggling Trinity side did not enhance his International selection chances remarking that 'It was more difficult to be dropped from the International scene than gain a place within it!'

It should be remembered that throughout David's career competition for the International outhalf spot was fierce coming from the likes of Roger Millward, Steve Nash, Ken Gill, John Holmes, John Woods, Bill Francis, Steve Hartley, Steve Evans and Tony Myler.

Topliss's former team-mate and ball playing prop Mick Morgan had been on the Watersheddings scene for a couple of seasons and with coach Frank Myler had guided Oldham to the first division 5th spot. Half back and utility player Paul Taylor had returned to Australia and both player and coach saw the Hull skipper as having the ingredients to take the club to further success. The Watersheddings outfit had also acquired International forward David Hobbs and Australians David Liddiard, Gary Warnecke and Mal Graham.

From mid October to mid January David Topliss was outhalf for thirteen successive



BRIAN WALKER WITH OLDHAM & GT. BRITAIN





OLDHAM R.L.F.C. 1986-87 Back row: R. Marsden, K. Atkinson, M. Taylor, C. Hawkyard, M. Bardsley, N. Clawson, M. Worrall. Third row: B. Gartland, F. Myler, P. Sherman, T. Foley, G. Bridge, A. Morrison, S. Raper, G. Warnecke, J. Ogburn, M. Parrish, W. Jones, A. Bonnelle, G. Starkey. Second row: B. Clark, H. M'Barki, D. Foy, D. Topliss (capt), M. Hall, P. Lord, C. Myler, I. Sanderson, J. Edwards.

Front row: L. Casey, L. Chadwick, T. Nadiola, P. Kirwan, R. Ashton, D. Hobbs.

matches the team losing only twice. Winning had now become a habit and the club was in a strong position in the higher reaches of the first division. After Topliss's accident all but four of the remaining League games were lost.

However, the club reached the Challenge Cup semis and were drawn against Castleford the game to be played at Central Park. Oldham lost 18-7. Mick Morgan whilst an Oldham player had earlier in the season joined the Castleford commercial staff and Frank Myler had questions about both his commitment and fitness. Whilst selected as a member of the cup squad Morgan was to be the man left out. David Topliss is convinced we would have beaten the Yorkshire team with Morgan in the pack. Mick had never played at Wembley and would have relished the chance to have one last throw of the dice!

Topliss returned to the team the following season but by his own admittance never quite got over that car accident. However, during that campaign we fell just short of knocking over the undefeated Aussies and beat Wigan on those two unforgettable Watersheddings nights. Alas, we managed to lose our last six league games ending the campaign in 13th position and with three others the club was relegated. David points out that we were not a bad side and it was just bloody stupid that a quarter of the league was to suffer relegation.

Topliss returned to Wakefield as player/coach and the following season saw both Wakefield and Oldham promoted back to the first division.

David celebrates his 50th birthday two days before the millennium. He is one of two partners in a Wakefield based heating and plumbing merchants and will further celebrate by announcing his retirement. He is also currently active within the game as a radio commentator with both Radio Leeds and Live Radio.

Predictions are that he will soon acquire a position with a Super League club as Football Director.

David, an early birthday toast from all Oldham fans and former colleagues.



David Topliss in his Hull F.C. days

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TABLE-topping Hull KR come to Spotland today with sights set on a Super League place.

Fifteen wins and a draw give them a one point lead over Leigh Centurions in the race for the N.F.P.L. title. The Robins' three defeats have all been on their travels, at Barrow, Dewsbury and Leigh. Oldham of course being the only team to take a point at Craven Park.

Hull KR are coached by Dave Harrison, an ex-Cowley G.S. product. He captained Lancaster University at R.U. before playing with Waterloo. Signing for St. Helens in 1984 he enjoyed four seasons at Knowsley Road before joining Hull KR. His coaching career began as assistant at Scarborough Pirates before returning as coach to the Robins 'A' team. His influence on his side obviously runs deep as nearly all his players list "training' among their favourite hobbies!

Thirteen out of nineteen first team squad players were born in Hull with five having played for the Sharks as well as the Robins. Four of these are Hooker **Mike Dixon**, a real livewire around the play-theball; **Chris Kitching**, a pacey stand-off or centre who lists dancing among his favourite recreations; **Rob Danby**, an everpresent in the centre last season and a D.I.Y. enthusiast; and **Andy Smith**, a hardhitting loose-forward and former Sharks Alliance Player of the Year.

Rovers also boast three players with Wakefield Trinity connections. Utility player **Kevin Gray** spent time at Belle Vue, but is the fifth player who has also played at Hull Sharks as well as on loan at Rochdale and Hunslet. At 6' and nearly 14 stone he adds presence to the back division. **Ian Hughes** is a former Trinity and Sheffield Eagles back-rower, coming to Craven Park for this season after picking up a winner's medal in last year's Grand Final at the McAlpine. Coming with him to Humberside for 1999 is **Jon Wray**, a former Morley RUFC, England Colts and England U21 RU wingman. He also has experience with Castleford Tigers and can be a deadly finisher.

The local lads are Prop Craig Hardy known as 'hard-hat': Chris Charles, a loose-forward and electrician; ex-Skirlaugh winger Paul Rouse: powerful prop Alex Thompson, who at 6'4" and 17 stone can be hard to handle, and who has seen service with Sheffield Eagles; hooker Rick Chamberlain, a Great Britain U21 international; and three long-serving Rovers who have given sterling service over the years. First of these is big prop Des Harrison, probably playing his last season and respected throughout the league. Second-row Paul Fletcher is in his testimonial season and never gives less than 100%. And scrum-half and assistant coach Wayne Parker, now in his second spell at Craven Park after plaving with Halifax, and who is well known as the scourge of Oldham Bears in previous seasons.

Also ex-Halifax is three-quarter **Richard Smith**, a fast and elusive Irish international.

Finally, Rovers' overseas players are **David Luckwell** an ex-Canterbury Bulldogs back-rower; **Whetu Taewa** a New Zealand born centre with a Challenge Cup winners medal whilst at Sheffield Eagles, plus experience with Auckland Warriors and North Queensland Cowboys; and the inimitable **Stanley Gene**, a Papua New Guinea international rightly nominated Division One Player of the Year in 1998.

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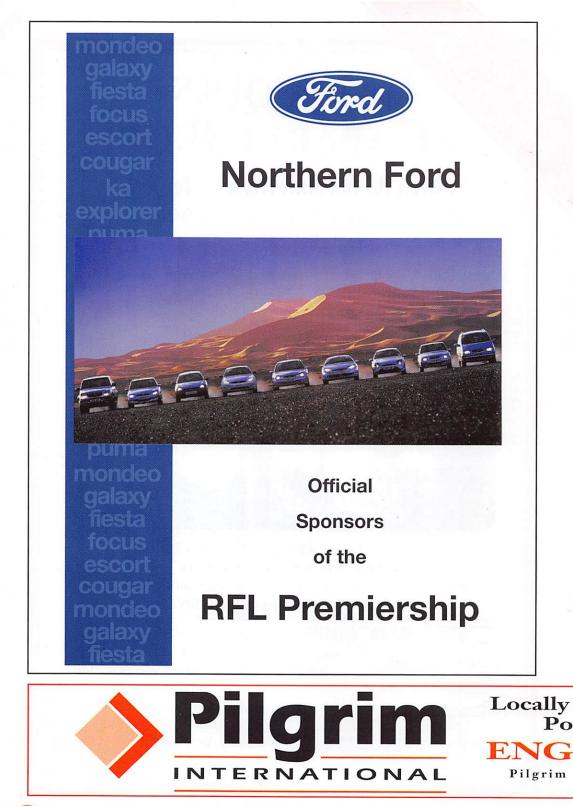
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Billy Kershaw, Phyllis & their son Billy of the Tenerife Supporters Club wish Oldham RLFC all the best for the coming season and a long and successful future.

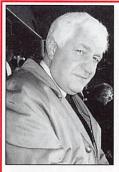


If you choose Tenerife for your holidays, call in at the Harlequins for a real Oldham welcome. See photos of the all-time greats, Bryn Day, Alan Davies, Bernard Ganley, Derek Turner, Martin Murphy, Terry Flanagan and Co.





DON LOOKS BACK TO A MATCH FROM YESTERYEAR



THIS afternoon's visitors to Spotland are the Northern Ford Premiership favourites Hull Kingston Rovers, whose followers will be hoping that the Robins replace arch rivals Hull F.C. in the Super League next season. There never is, and never has been, any love lost between these Humberside rivals and matches between the two really are the ultimate

'derby' confrontation. The Robins have met the Airlie Birds 198 times in competitive matches, including nine meetings in various cup finals. They have met in three Yorkshire Cup finals, two Player Trophy finals, a Floodlit Trophy Final, a Premiership final, a Championship final and, as far as Rovers' fans are concerned, that never to be forgotten Challenge Cup final at Wembley in 1980.

Hull FC had enjoyed slightly the better Championship season than Hull K.R. during that 1979-80 campaign. They ended the season in third position whilst the Robins were seventh. However, Rovers had drawn 20-20 at the Boulevard early in the season and then beat the Airlie Birds 29-14 at Craven Park the following Good Friday. In between those matches, the Humbersiders had met at the Boulevard in December when they contested the last ever final of the BBC2 Floodlit Trophy. Hull won that trophy with a 13-3 victory watched by a record crowd for that competition of 18,500. The attendance was no big surprise as the Humbersiders had attracted the two highest aggregate league attendances of the season. Hull FC averaged 10,021 whilst Hull KR were watched by an average crowd of 6,953.

Big crowds were also a feature of the Challenge Cup competition. There were 9,018 at the Boulevard for the visit of Cumbrian amateurs Millom in round one whilst the biggest crowd of the season outside Wembley, 20,827 watched Hull win at Bradford in the quarter-finals. Equally impressive was Hull KR's march to Wembley which began with an 18-13 win at Wigan. Castleford (28-3) and Warrington (23-11) were beaten at Craven Park before the Robins beat Halifax 20-7 in the semi-finals at Headingley. Wembley housed a capacity crowd of 95,000 for the historic final with the teams lined up as follows:

Hull FC: Paul Woods; Graham Bray, Graham Walters, Tim Wilby, Paul Prendiville; John Newlove, Clive Pickerill; Keith Tindall, Ronnie Wileman, Charlie Stone, Charlie Birdsall, Sammy Lloyd & Steve Norton.

Substitutes, Brian Hancock & Vince Farrar.

Hull KR: David Hall; Steve Hubbard, Mike Smith, Steve Hartley, Clive Sullivan, Roger Millward, Allan Agar; Roy Holdstock, David Watkinson, Brian Lockwood, Phil Lowe, Paul Rose & Len Casey.

Substitutes, Phil Hogan & John Millington.

The match was hard, exciting and had its fair share of controversy. Five tries were disallowed and Ron Wileman could have been sent off in the incident which saw Roger Millward break his jaw. It was a typical Humberside 'derby'.

First score went to Rovers after just eight minutes when Steve Hubbard scored off a superb Brian Lockwood pass. Paul Woods fouled Hubbard in the act of scoring and so Rovers were awarded another kick at goal. Although Hubbard missed the conversion attempt he made no mistake with the penalty. Rovers went 7-0 up five minutes later when Hubbard landed another penalty following further Hull indiscretions. After half an hour Hull scored through Tim Wilby but, on the stroke of half time, Millward dropped a goal so at the interval the Robins led 8-3.

Ten minutes after the break Sammy Lloyd landed a penalty, his only success from five attempts, but at 8-5, the match was wide open again. Steve Hubbard landed another penalty five minutes from time and that's how the match finished.

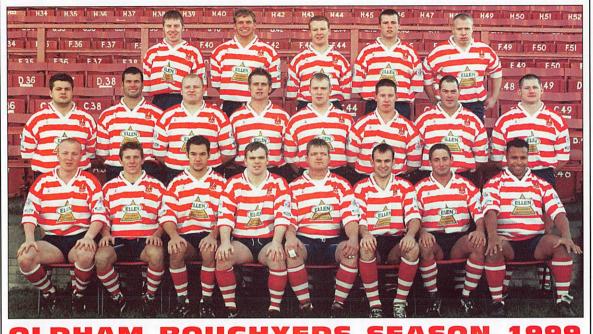
10-5 to Rovers.

Not a classic, but OH! how those Rovers fans enjoyed it.

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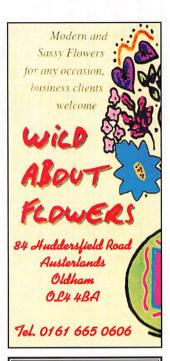
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Back Row (left to right) Kevin Fitzpatrick, Daniel Brown, Mick Farrell, Craig Barker, Emerson Jackman, Middle Row: Emmanuel Peralta, Josh Bostock, Jason Clegg, Garv Coulter, Graeme Shaw, Nathan Varley, Mike Prescott. Brian Ouinlan.

Front Row: Mark Perrett, Laurent Minut, Joe McNicholas, John Hough, Leo Casey, Paul Crook, Adrian Mead, Afi Leuila

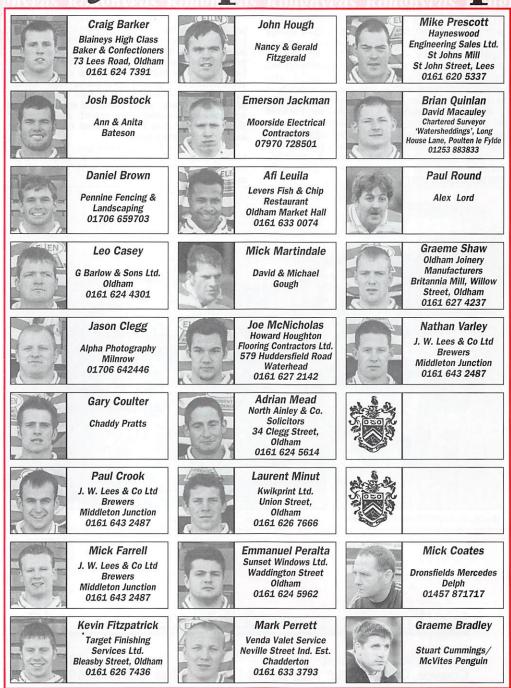


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I DON'T think there would be too many dissenters with Chris Hamilton's opening phrase of his programme notes for the Charter Day game against Hornets – 'WELCOME TO OLDHAM'. Certainly not me. I am a founder member of the 'play in Oldham brigade'. A successful professional rugby league side playing hopefully in a new, joint stadium within the Borough is a must – or should be! You've got to believe me I started to write this article before the Chronicle arrived blazing the headline, 'Lords ruling may scupper Sports Park' (something about crown green bowling!) – This article may now need a new title – MOSES HAMILTON LEADS ROUGHYEDS BACK TO PROMISED GROUND'. BOUNDARY PARK RUGBY GROUND – WERE WE THERE FIRST? It has been well documented that 'On Sunday 10th of January 1982 the Latics and Oldham Rugby League Club, who were bidding for promotion, joined forces to create local sporting history. With the rugby club's Watersheddings ground frost-bound their 'home' game against Yorkshire rivals Batley took place at Boundary Park, where the pitch was protected by undersoil heating. The result, a victory for Oldham by 17-9 in the first ever rugby league match at Boundary Park'.

The fact is that the first rugby league game took place at Boundary Park on the 14th of September 1901 – WERNETH V OLDHAM 'A'. To explain-



Watercolour of Werneth v Oldham 'A', at Boundary Park; 14th September 1901





In September 1895 the town's first professional soccer team OLDHAM COUNTY FOOTBALL AND ATHLETIC CLUB, playing at Hudson Fold, Westhulme made an attempt to introduce professional soccer to the rugby mad Oldham public. In July 1896 the first sod was cut at their new stadium 'THE ATHLETIC GROUND', the Boundary Park embryo. In 1897, having moved into their new stadium, the club was soon under severe financial strain and, **failing to pay the rent**, went into liquidation. The new ground, boasting two stands, lay dormant.

Pine Villa, an amateur soccer team, were formed in 1894 and played in the Oldham Junior League on land at the side of the Pine Mill, Oldham. In 1899 they gained entry into the better standard Manchester Alliance league, took on the lease to the ATHLETIC GROUND, and changing their name to OLDHAM ATHLETIC, moved in. In 1900 having performed well in the Manchester Alliance the by now 'Latics joined the semi professional Manchester League. During their first season (1900-01) the club hit financial troubles and fell into dispute with the landlords. Like their predecessors they **could not pay the rent** and midseason moved out and into OLDHAM COUNTY's old stadium at HUDSON FOLD.

So yet again the ATHLETIC GROUNDS lay dormant.

WERNETH, a force in local rugby, played at BLOCK LANE, CHADDERTON and, whilst accepting being second fiddle to the powerful OLDHAM club, regularly attracted crowds of three to four thousand. Their Block Lane ground lacked spectator comforts so the club 'upped sticks' and moved into the ATHLETIC GROUND. Playing in the Lancashire Combination they played mostly the second teams of Lancashire's senior clubs. So their inaugural game at the new stadium was on the 14th of September 1901 against Oldham 'A', THE FIRST RUGBY LEAGUE MATCH AT BOUNDARY PARK.

Oldham, when Watersheddings was unfit played several of their 'A' team games there, as they had at the old Block Lane ground.

Oldham Athletic were not to move back to the by now BOUNDARY PARK for a second time until 1906 when local brewers JW Lees had secured the lease and they were elected to the Football League in 1907.

THERE YOU HAVE IT - LATICS BY A WHISPER. So no Moses Hamilton! But moving away from the whimsical and onto a more serious note, perhaps to coincide with JW Lees announcing they are now prepared to dispose of their shares in the Latics, someone can at last get to grips with the rent situation. Perhaps it may have to wait for the new owners. For over a hundred years it's been a problem. Some fans tolerate the current situation easier than others. but recently most have voted with their feet. 3,000 at Boundary Park compared to 700, 900 and 1,000 at the last three Spotland matches. They are prepared to 'sleep with the enemy' for only so long. Most would say 'lets get home', certainly for next season!



First Time-Last Time

TODAY we welcome Hull Kingston Rovers to Spotland for the return fixture after our creditable draw at New Craven Park back on March 17th.

The first time the two clubs were in opposition was for a friendly game in Hull on April 7th 1900 when the Roughyeds won by fourteen points to nil. This was the first season after Rovers were admitted to the senior section of league competition. The first competitive match took place again in Hull on September 27th 1902. Oldham again returned home the victors by the margin of seven points to two. Joe Ferguson and Sam Lees Jnr kicked a goal each with the only try of the game being credited to winger Frank Spottiswoode.

Oldham Team: T. Sellars; S. Williams, T. Cash,, E. Pearce, F. Spottiswoode; S. Lees Jnr, A. Lees; J. Ferguson, J. Wilkinson, G. Frater, H. Topham, H. Ellis, J. Owens, H. Vowles, H. Broome.

Over the years the two clubs have featured in some titanic struggles in major Rugby League fixtures. The epic, three match, Challenge Cup semi-final in 1964 which culminated in Rovers reaching Wembley for the first time. The second division Premiership final at Old Trafford in 1990 when Oldham came back from being well behind to record a 30-29 victory and perhaps most famous of all the 1925 Challenge Cup Final at Headingley when the Roughyeds hit top form to take the trophy for the second time in their history with a sixteen points to three success.



Rival captains Laurie Osbourne of Hull K.R. and Herman Hilton of Oldham wait for the coin to fall under the watchful eye of referee Mr R. Jones of Widnes, before the 1925 Challenge Cup Final.

Before the drawn match earlier this season, the last game between the clubs was a Regal Trophy second round tie at Watersheddings on December 4th 1994. Oldham won 28 - 0 with tries from Scott Ranson, Joe Faimalo, Shaun Irwin, David Jones and Darren Abram with four goals from Paul Topping. The attendance was 2,277.

Oldham Team: W. Gibson; D. Jones, S. Irwin, D. Abram, S. Ranson, P. Topping, M. Crompton; I. Sherratt, D. Stephenson, J. Temu, G. Lord, J. Faimalo, M. Kuiti, SUBS: I. Green, D. Bradbury.

It is hoped to continue this feature in the programme showing photographs of the 'Roughyeds of Yesteryear'. If anyone has any photos that they think would be of interest please contact Brian Walker 01457 875084' or Michael Turner 0161-620-6005



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DON RECALLS THIS DAY IN RUGBY LEAGUE HISTORY



DON VATES

ONE of the proudest moments in British rugby league history took place exactly 85 years ago, on Saturday 4th July 1914.

On This Day

On that day Great Britain met Australia at Sydney Cricket Ground in the deciding third test of the 1914 tour. That match was one of the many last minute changes forced upon Britain by the Australians which totally disrupted the tourists' playing and training plans.

The Lions won the first test 23-5 but then lost the second international 12-7 only 48 hours after their first test victory. Amazingly, the Australians then decided to play the third test on the following Saturday. That is, all three tests in eight days. The Lions had suffered several injuries in the second test and went into the final test with a depleted team which played under protest. There were three Oldham players in that third test team, full-back Alf Wood, centre Billy Hall and prop Dave Holland. Britain suffered further injuries in the game and at one point were reduced to ten men.

Despite all these problems Britain defended magnificently and still found the time and energy to build up a 14-0 lead, Alf Wood having landed two penalties and two conversions. Late in the match Australia scored two tries and threatened to snatch victory and with it the test series but Britain held out to win 14-6 in a match which ever since has been known as 'the Rorke's Drift Test'.

There have been 38 test series between Great Britain and Australia with each nation having lifted the Ashes on nineteen occasions. Australia have won the last twelve Ashes series. The last time Great Britain claimed the Ashes was on this day in 1970, Saturday 4th July. Sydney Cricket Ground was again the setting for a decisive third test which, on this occasion, attracted an attendance of 61,258. Britain scored five tries to Australia's one in their 21-17 victory, the final touchdown coming from stand-off Roger Millward (Hull KR) who also landed three goals.

There were five Hull KR players on the 1979 tour of Australasia, Phil Hogan, Brian Lockwood, Mike Smith, David Watkinson and Roger Millward, who was making a third successive trip. On Wednesday 4th July 1979 Britain met Western Division at Orange in a match which involved three of those players. Brian Lockwood and Phil Hogan formed the second-row whilst David Watkinson was on the bench. Britain won the match 19-12 with Hogan scoring one of the three British tries.

In 1995 the international action had moved on to New Zealand when, on Tuesday 4th July, the BARLA under-18s opened their tour of New Zealand with a 16-8 victory over Canterbury at Christchurch Showground. There were two Humberside juniors involved in that match, prop David Holdstock and substitute Matt Farmer, both of West Hull. There was a third West Hull junior in that tour squad, Steve Hepworth, but he did not play in that match. Surprisingly, no players from the Oldham area were selected for that tour although Dr David Atherton, who is connected with Higginshaw, accompanied the party.

Finally, it was on this day in 1899, Tuesday 4th July, that the Oldham Athletic football Club was officially founded by members of the Pine Villa FC who had themselves been formed two years previously.

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WHAT stood out was the difference in size between Featherstone's players. largely graduates from the club's Academy side and therefore regulars on the weights at the Lionheart Stadium's excellent facilities, and Oldham's, Apart from Craig Barker and the experienced backrow of Perrett, Peralta and Prescott, Oldham fielded a team pretty well all fresh from the amateur ranks. Not surprisingly the lads struggled to cope and at 10-28 at half-time looked likely to take a hammering. That they did not, conceding only one further score. is much to their credit and all can take pride in their second-half tackling stint. Oldham's tries came from Peralta and Barker with Coates kicking a goal.

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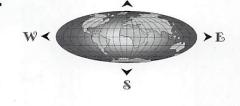
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Good Fortunes to the Roughyeds throughout the 1999 Season

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Match by Match Analysis 1999

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JANUARY		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5142	<u>۲۱۶</u>	م1 16	577
1 Rochdale H. (Law C)	110-48 2879	Mead	Farrell G	Quinlan	Jackman	McNicholas	Crook	Barker	Casey	Hough	Clegg T	Shaw	Varley	Martindale	Coulter	Leuila T	Prescott	Round
7 Widnes	L6-12 2500	Mead 1T	Farrell	Leuila	Jackman	McNicholas	Crook	Barker	Round	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Quinlan 1G	Martindale	Coulter	Prescott	Fitzpatrick	A.N.Other
4 Leigh	L12-34 1000	A.N.Other	Mead	Leuila	Jackman	McNicholas	Crook G	Farrell	Round	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Quinlan G	Coulter T	Bostock	Barker	A.N.Other T	Fitzpatrick
FEBRUARY	112 04 1000	A.H.Oher	mouu	Lound	outhingin	montholio	ereen a											
1 ECCLES CC 3rd Rd	W26-7 1764	Minut 3G	Mead 2T	Leuila	Bostock	McNicholas	Crook	Brown 1T	Casey	Hough	Clegg 1T	Shaw	Coulter	Jackman	Round	Peralta	Prescott 1T	Perrett
7 Batley Bulldogs	LO-30 1018	Minut	Mead	Leuila	Bostock	McNicholas	Crook	Brown	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Quinlan	Jackman	Coulter	Prescott	Perrett	Peralta
5 DEWS, R CC 4th Rd		Minut 2G	Mead 1T	Leuila	Bostock	McNicholas	Jackman	Brown 1T1G	Casey	Hough	Clegg 1T	Shaw	Perrett	Martindale	Coulter	Prescott	Quinlan	Peralta
28 Whitehaven CC 5th I		Minut	Mead	Leuila	Bostock	McNicholas	Jackman	Brown 1G	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Peralta	Perrett	Shaw	Coulter	Prescott	Quinlan	Crook
MARCH																		
2 BARROW B.R.	W24-20 1123	Minut 2G	Mead	Leuila	Bostock 2T	McNicholas	Jackman	Brown 2T	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Perrett	Martindale	Coulter	Prescott	Quinlan 2G	Peralta
7 Hull K. R.	D8-8 2080	Minut	Mead	Leuila	Bostock 1T	McNicholas	Crook	Brown 1G	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Quinlan 1G	Martindale	Coulter	Peralta	Perrett	Prescott
21 Hunslet Hawks	L2-44 1533	Minut	Mead	Leuila	Bostock	McNicholas	Crook	Brown	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Peralta	Quinlan 1G	Martindale	Jackman	Prescott	Perrett	Shaw
8 WIDNES VIKINGS	L18-33	Minut	Mead	Leuila	Jackman 1T	McNicholas 2T	Wood 3G	Brown	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Peralta	Martindale	Farrell	Prescott	Perrett	Quinlan
APRIL																		
2 Doncaster Dragons	W27-12 878	Minut	Mead 1T	Jackman	Farrell	McNicholas 1T	Wood 1T3G1	DG Brown 1T	Casey	Hough 1T	Clegg	Shaw	Prescott	Martindale	Varley	Lewis	Crook	Peralta
5 LEIGH CENTURIONS	L20-26 2163	Minut	Mead 2T	Jackman	Farrell 1T	McNicholas	Wood 4G	Brown	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Prescott	Martindale	Varley	Quinlan	Crook	Peralta
1 Bramley	L18-24 500	Minut 3G	Mead	Jackman	Farrell 1T	McNicholas 1T	Crook	Brown	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Shaw	Prescott	Martindale 1T	Barker	Varley	Round	Peralta
5 YORK	L14-43 1125	Minut	Mead 1T	Jackman	Farrell	McNicholas	Wood 1G	Brown 1T	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Varley	Prescott	Martindale	Crooke	Barker	Round	Peralta
YAN																		
1 SILK CUT CC Final																		
3 Rochdale Hornets	L18-29 1568	Minut	Mead	Wood	Farrell	McNicholas	Crook 5G	Brown	Casey	Hough	Peralta	Clegg 1T	Prescott	Martindale 1T	Quinlan	Varley	Round	Sinfield
9 Keighley Cougars	L28-32 1842	Minut	Mead	Wood 1G	Farrell 1T	McNicholas 2T	Crook	Brown 1T, 3G	Casey	Hough 1T	Clegg	Round	Quinlan	Sinfield	Coates	Varley	Jackman	Peralta
23 Swinton Lions	L24-31 1478	Minut	Mead	Jackman	Farrell	McNicholas	Crook	Brown 1T, 4G	Casey	Hough	Clegg 1T	Round 1T	Varley	Sinfield	Coates	Shaw	Prescott	Quinlan 1T
30 WHITEHAVEN W.	L24-32 775	Minut	Mead	Farrell	Jackman	McNicholas	Crook	Brown 4G	Casey	Hough	Clegg 1T	Round 1T	Varley 1T	Sinfield 1T	Fitzpatrick	Shaw	Prescott	Barket
JUNE																		
6 Workington Town	W22-17 1148	Minut 1T	Mead	Leuila 1T	Farrell	McNicholas	Crook 2T	Brown 1G	Clegg	Barker	Peralta	Round	Varley	Shaw 1T	Coates	Darkes	Hough	Jackman
9 FEATHERSTONE	L18-25 901	Minut	Mead	Leuila	Farrell	McNicholas	Crook 1T	Brown 3G	Casey	Hough 1T	Clegg	Round	Varley	Shaw	Darkes	Barker	Jackman 1T	Peralta
13 ROCHDALE	W26-18 3023	Minut 1T	Mead	Leuila	Darkes 1T	McNicholas	Crook	Brown 5G	Casey	Hough 1T	Clegg	Round	Varley	Shaw	Farrell	Barker	Jackman 1T	Peralta
18 BATLEY BULLDOGS	D20-20 1013	Farrell	Mead	Leuila	Darkes	McNicholas 1T	Crook	Brown 1T1G	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Round 1T	Peralta	Shaw 1T	Coates 1G	Barker	Jackman	Sinfield
27 Featherstone Rovers	s L6-61 1437	Farrell 1T1G	Mead	Sinfield	Darkes	McNicholas	Crook	Brown	Casey	Hough	Clegg	Round	Peralta	Shaw	Perrett	Barker	Jackman	Prescott
JULY																		
4 HULL K. R.	Н																	
7 DEWBURY RAMS	н																	
11 Barrow B. R.	A																	
18 HUNSLET HAWKS	Н																1	
5 Widnes Vikings	A																	
30 DONCASTER DRAGO	ONS H 7.45																	
AUGUST																		
8 Leigh Centurions	A																	
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22 LANCASHIRE LYNX	Н																	
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