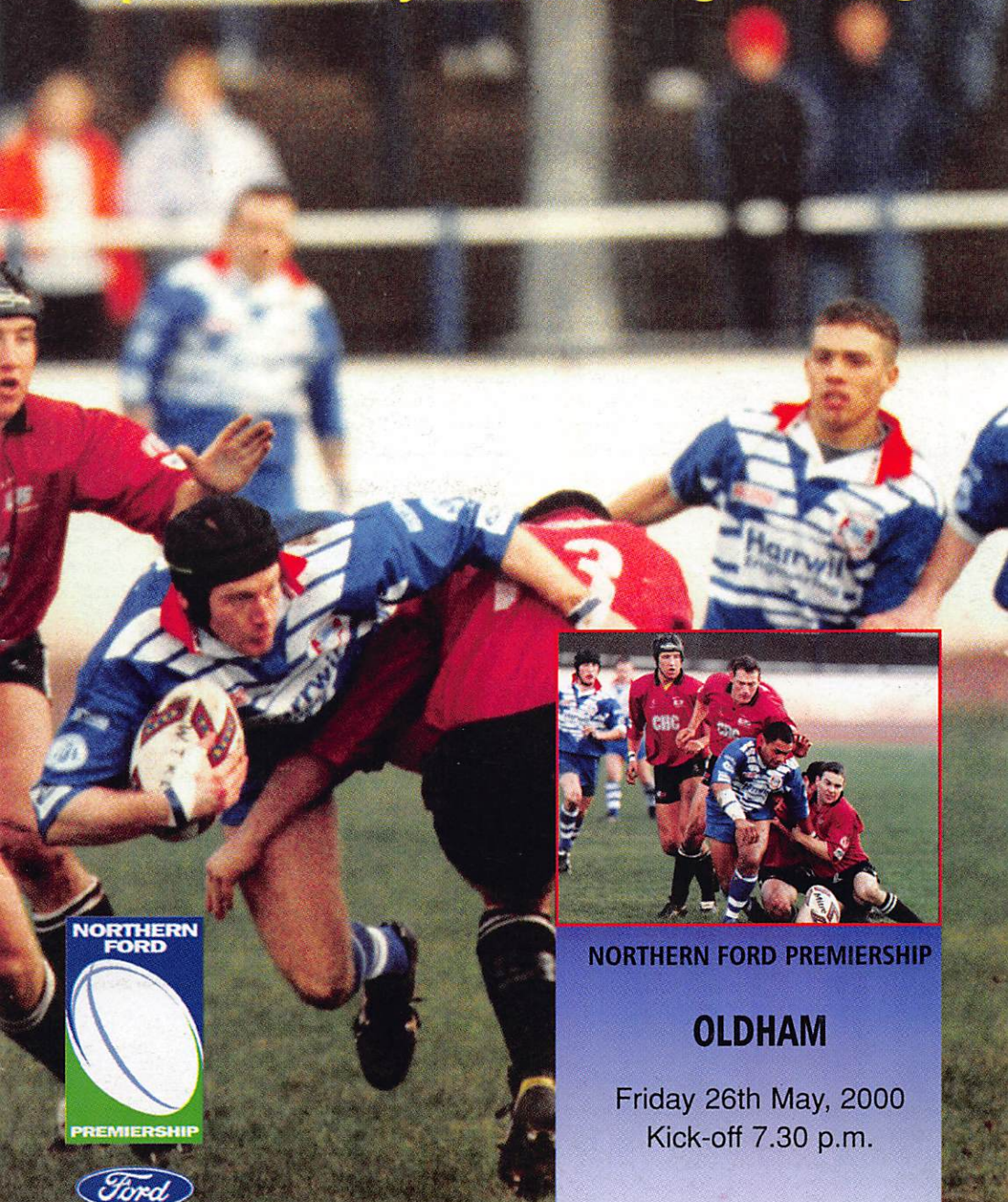


Town

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NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP

OLDHAM

Friday 26th May, 2000

Kick-off 7.30 p.m.

WORKINGTON TOWN RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Club Officials 2000

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B. Earl, W. Harrison, K. Kirkwood, A. Varty
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Junior Development Officer: M. Cunningham

Head Coach: G. Murdock **Assistant Coach:** C. Hall

Academy Coach: P. Penrice **Kit Supervisor:** J. Woolaghan

Medical Officers: Mr. D. Richards, Dr. K.R. Joy

Hon. Surgeon: Mr. M. Griess Mch(Orch)FRCS

Physiotherapist: Mark Frazer **Time Keeper:** G. Short

Programme Contributors: K. Singleton, P. Williamson, R. Coulter

A warm welcome to today's visitors Oldham. After a disappointing performance last Sunday, I am looking to the players to put in a much improved eighty minutes tonight.

We have a very tough game in prospect tonight. Oldham are a top five team and some of their results have been very impressive, so we will need a top performance to get anything from this game. Injuries will dictate the team selection, and I can tell you that we have plenty. These notes are being written on Thursday, and as yet I still don't know the team. But it's easy to make excuses, and whoever is playing all I ask is that they give 100%.

Some youngsters will get a run tonight, and the experience of playing in the first team and getting matches under their belts augurs well for the club's future.

Just a quick note about my comments on mergers which appeared in the local press on Wednesday. I have said many times recently that your support is first class and very much appreciated by all concerned, but the bottom line is Cumbria needs a Super League team, sooner rather than later, and a combined NFP team will help sow the seeds and bring everybody together for a Super League side the following year.

We need a fresh start, by that I mean new team, new strip, new marketing strategy, pre-match corporate entertainment and lastly top class sides visiting West Cumbria every other week, which should in turn produce larger crowds.

I must point out that these are purely my own thoughts on the matter, and not Workington Towns.

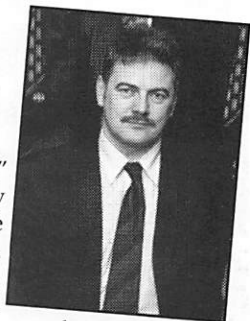
Enjoy the game...Gary



Team Matters by Head Coach Gary Murdock

From the Boardroom

..... by Barry Earl



Having missed last Sunday's match against Dewsbury I hope to see the team return to form tonight against our old friends from Oldham.

It will certainly be a tough match as having watched Oldham recently at Whitehaven after our own Academy game they are a solid side who compete for the full match.

Injuries are taking their toll on our squad as we all thought would happen, but the lads will buckle down and you will see a competitive game tonight.

By all accounts Dewsbury were a different class to any other team we have entertained at Derwent Park, and it must now be a case of putting that behind us and moving on.

It was pleasing to get the Academy win last Sunday, although I suspect Ben will not be happy until the lads become more ruthless and dominate other teams for the full eighty minutes. They are certainly capable of doing that when they turn their minds to it.

Moving on to the subject of off the field matters. I would just like to once again put on record the club's thanks to Frank and Nigel Peck for their help over the last few years. Frank and Nigel have now left the Briery at Stainburn and will be having a well earned break. Their sponsorship has been greatly

appreciated.

Also "off the field" again as Gary Charlton who at the time of writing has a three month ban, subject to any appeal

he may make.

Whilst the game cannot condone any abuse of officials, I find it sad to see Gary in this situation and you have to wonder whether his reputation has a lot to do with the attention he receives.

We certainly don't want Paul lost to Cumbrian rugby league.

The subject of Cumbrian rugby league brings up the subject of a potential merger which again has had an airing in the local press. Our coach Gary Murdock, has made his own views known. It would be interesting to hear the

opinions of supporters generally. One thing which could now be said is that the positions of the two clubs is now just about equal, which probably wasn't the case on the last two occasions the subject was raised.

My view, and it is a personal one, is that it could happen but probably needs a totally independent figurehead to get involved and be the catalyst to spark it off.

...Is there another Sir. John Hall out there?

*The subject of
Cumbrian rugby
league brings up
the subject of a
potential merger
which again has
had an airing in
the local press.*

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Divisional Premiership Winners: 1993/94, Runners Up: 1992/93

Lancashire Cup Winners: 1977, Runners Up: 1976, 1978, 1979

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Wigan Sevens Winners: 1978 National Sevens Winners: 1958

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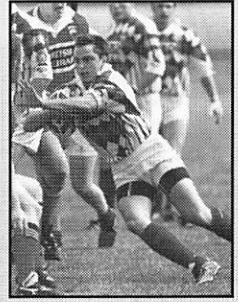


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Lee Allen
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Match Day Stewards



'Ram raiding' took up a new meaning for me on Sunday. I was gob smacked by it all to be honest. I had said in the programme of how I had recently "found my voice again" at Town matches only then to be stunned into eighty minutes of silence by the Dewsbury blitz. It was in truth a fine showing by the rampant Rams. But behind the scenes, prior to the game, I did notice we were destined to field team that probably contained too many 'walking wounded'. And, despite those players creditable commitment, that cannot have aided our effort by any means. The midweek news of an 'injury crisis at Derwent Park' was patently not scare mongering and some players were obviously carrying a burden which affected their performance, and consequently Dewsbury unceremoniously capitalised on it. The May schedule was always considered as a testing time on the horizon by the Town hierarchy. Even with all fit and well it was bound to become an examination of the clubs reborn achievement level. Seven fixtures set within 28 days would be a difficult agenda to surmount successfully for any full time pro club, never mind little old NFP members. It therefore seems crazy to me that those at RLHQ couldn't manage to spread the burden throughout the season with more uniformity, while avoiding overloading one of Summers traditionally hottest months. Incidentally, and sadly for us Townies, Sunday's encounter once again provided a reminder of how cruel this game can become when the going gets unbearably tough, with silly tries conceded as the heat became intolerable. So then we need once more to take stock and lift up heads and hearts. I believe some of those wounded troops took further knocks on Sunday and this game tonight may have come too early for full recoveries. Now then approx two weeks ago I would have held little fear of today's visitors upsetting Gary Murdock's Marauders recent charge to respectability. The

aforementioned 'crack' puts a different perspective on things however. Having said that I am 'quietly' confident that Town can get back into winning ways tonight. I saw Oldham at Whitehaven a week gone Sunday, having been at the Recre to watch 'Bens Boyz' slaughter the young Warriors. Town Academy Director, Barry Earl, and I stayed on to watch the main event. Considering it would serve us as a guide to Oldham's capabilities, and I was hoping for the Roughyeds to further sicken the home fans following our crushing Academy display. Sadly the Oldham effort was very below par. Haven had set off like the proverbial train going 18-2 up in no time. A lead, as I recall, they also raced into on Easter Monday, only to be left pointless that day. Oldham did wake up and clawed the arrears back somewhat. But despite enjoying copious possession the Roughyeds were too tamely tackled out of it by a less than awesome Haven outfit. But that must surely have been just a 'bad day at the office' for the Yeds, I mean a bad team don't proudly sit in the sixth position they currently occupy in this mega competitive NFP do they? One thing that really did impress me regarding Oldham at the recre was the following from Greater Manchester, the red and white favours were very noticeable in the Stand and on the terraces, hopefully that same travelling commitment will be on show tonight. But yet another 'bad day at the office' from the Oldham staff would also be favourable for us Townies...

.....Keith



The Keith Singleton Column

I am now of the opinion that even the most ardent supporters of Workington and Whitehaven (with one or two exceptions) would now welcome the formation of one professional West Cumbrian side as suggested (yet again) in the press, this time by Town coach Gary Murdoch. Evening Star wag and die hard Whitehaven supporter Martin Morgan believes the time has come to join forces in order to move forward.

Super League and all its ramifications hit Britain early in April 1995, causing the biggest upheaval and controversy in the game's history. The battle for the television rights for rugby league had started months earlier during a power struggle between media giants Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch as they battled for the television rights to cover the Winfield Cup. Packer's Channel Nine station had already won the contract, so Murdoch and his News Corporation company retaliated by planning a new Star League in direct opposition. Murdoch began by buying up many of Australia's top players in order to force Packer to renegotiate the television contract, but when that failed he set his sights on Britain. His plan was for Britain and France to become key players in a £300m worldwide competition that would exclude the official Australian League. Murdoch's initial offer of £77m to share among British clubs seemed like an unbelievable lifeline as many clubs, including Workington and Oldham were in severe financial trouble. But the haste with which the league rushed through the new Super League, featuring the controversial 'mergers' of clubs and summer rugby, caused widespread anger among supporters.

Although it was obvious that something had to be done in order to save the game, and the Super League idea was right in principle, the idea of many clubs being virtually forced to merge led to many anti merger feelings among supporters, not least amongst Whitehaven, Carlisle and Barrow fans who would have been forced into a Cumbria side based here at Derwent Park.

It seems ridiculous now, looking back to see what we could have had here at Workington. Although we had Super League for one season, the 'cash

windfall' was too little too late to save Workington as the club plunged into financial ruin, and two successive relegations.

So, five years down the line after turning our backs on the original merger what have we achieved here in West Cumbria? - nothing.

What are we actually playing for? - should we be

good enough to win the NFP next year there's no guarantee that the Super League pot of gold will be waiting for us, quite the opposite in fact, I'm sure the RFL could find any one of several reasons not to admit us into Super League. I cannot help feeling that over the last five years there has been some sort of hidden agenda at the RFL. I mean if you had a spare million and wanted to start a Super League club, where would you take a franchise? The North East, an area that has no rugby league background at all, or Edinburgh,

Glasgow, Wales, Northhampton or Birmingham. The list of suggestions for a franchise seems to include every part of the British Isles except one, THE ONLY area in the country where rugby league, not football is the dominant sport, and where there would be a guaranteed hardcore crowd base of at least 2,500 on which to build! Seems strange doesn't it. Which brings me back to the question of a hidden agenda. Could the RFL be secretly hoping that one of the remaining two West Cumbrian sides goes out of business.

It is only going to be a matter of time before the merger happens, so why not open discussions now. It certainly makes sense, one club, bigger sponsorship deals, and a chance to give our top amateur players the opportunity to play rugby league at the highest level ...on their own doorstep, in front of their own supporters.

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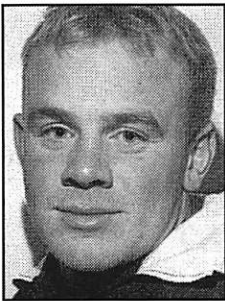
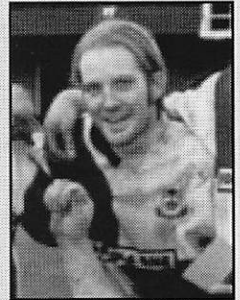
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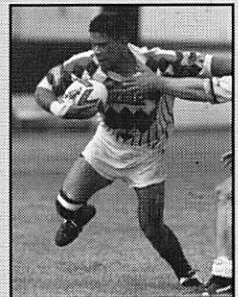
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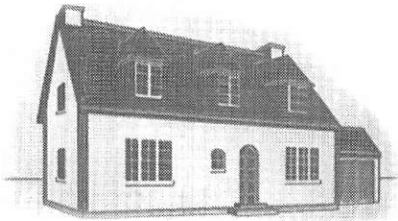
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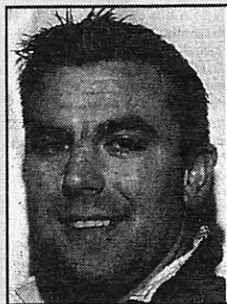
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MIKE FORD - a scrum-half who has been making all the right sort of headlines all his sporting life. Played for Wigan at Wembley when only 19. Also starred for Leigh, Oldham, Castleford, Warrington, Wakefield and South Sydney Crushers. Toured Down Under with Great Britain in 1988. Coached Bramley to mid-table respectability in 1999 before landing his dream job of coaching his home town club. Still a key player with an excellent kicking game.

MARK CAMPBELL

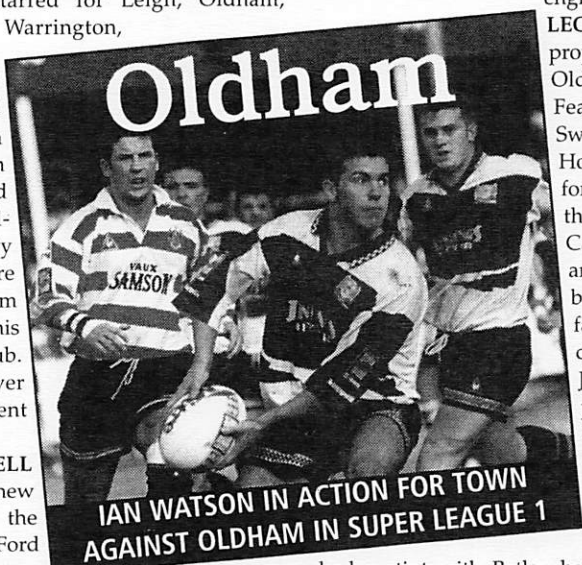
- One of the 16 new boys brought to the club n\by Mike Ford during the first two months of the player-coach's reign. Formerly

with Leeds and Keighley Cougars, this 21 year old hardworking back-row forward is studying at Leeds University for a degree in chemical engineering.

LEO CASEY - A tough prop who played for the Oldham club, Featherstone Rovers, Swinton and Rochdale Hornets before signing for the Roughyeds for the 1999 season. Captained the side and, at the age of 32, became a firm favourite of the crowd.

JASON CLEGG - A product of Littleborough RL Club, this heavyweight prop turned pro for the Bradford Bulls and

had a stint with Batley before signing for the Roughyeds shortly after the club was formed.



Dave Watson

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Travellers Rest

Made a first team place his own property in 1999 and earned selection for the West of Pennine side against an East side coached by Mike Ford. In superb form this season and was voted Oldham player of the month for February.

ANTHONY GIBBONS - One half of the twin combination which played for Leeds Rhinos and Bramley before joining Oldham at the start of the 2000 season. The 23 year old is playing consistently well at centre but also helped out at scrum half against Rochdale in the Cup.

DAVID GIBBONS - The other twin. Became a household name at Headingley and played more than 20 senior games, including several in the first Super League season of 1996. Formerly captain of Bramley, David will be a key figure for the Roughyeds at stand-off half.

DANNY GUEST - This 22 year old, 18 stone prop was an up and coming youngster with the Bears. Also played for Keighley and Lancashire Lynx before returning to Oldham. Has been playing mainly as a substitute this season but has been a consistent performer, as shown when scoring with his first touch of the ball in the recent rout of Lancashire Lynx.

JOEY HAYES - A young winger who has crammed a lot into his relatively short spell as a pro. Made his name with St. Helens but also played 11 Super League games for Salford City Reds last season. Turning into a real crowd favourite at Oldham and certainly must be one of the most exciting wingers in the NFF.

CHRIS HOLLAND - Aged 21, Chris has played for England and Great Britain Students and took the man of the match award in England's defeat by New Zealand at Hull in the last World Cup. Equally at home at centre or in the back row.

JOHN HOUGH - Will go down in local RL history as the first player to sign for the new Oldham club when it was launched in the autumn of 1997. Has had two cracking seasons in 1998 and 1999, when he took the clubs player of the year award. Played more than 30 senior games for Warrington before returning home to Oldham. Been in tremendous form again this season which was encapsulated in a superb match winning try in the defeat of Widnes Vikings.

KEVIN MANNION - 22 year old Kevin is a ball playing

Today's Teams

WORKINGTON TOWN

Coach: Gary Murdock

Dave Watson	1
Craig Stalker	2
Stephen McGrady	3
Leigh Smith	4
Anthony Hudardt	5
Paul Cook	6
Mick Horner	7
Matt Sturm	8
Craig Fisher	9
Tau Liku	10
Jamie Beaumont	11
William Blackburn	12
Anthony Samuels	13
	14
	15
	16
	17

OLDHAM

Coach: Mike Ford

Mark Sibson
Joey Hayes
Anthony Gibbons
Pat Rich
Warren Barrow
Dave Gibbons
Neil Roden
Andy Procter
John Hough
Jason Clegg
Phil Farrell
Mark Campbell
Kevin Mannion

TOWN

OLDHAM

SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

PENS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

PENS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24

Today's Match Sponsor:

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Referee: R. Laughton Fourth Official: I. Crabtree

Touch Judge: B. Sharrock, G. Wallace

loose forward, who made his senior debut wit Rochdale Hornets when only 16. Played for England and GB Students, for whom he has toured Australia and played in France. Has put in some good performances so far this season, but was unlucky in picking up a serious knee injury in the victory over Widnes Vikings.

ANDY PROCTER - Named Captain of the club by Ford for the 2000 season. This former Saddleworth, Wakefield Trinity Oldham and Bramley prop-forward, now aged 30, won man of steel award while with Trinity, as the club was then called, and has built a reputation as a player's player, who performs well above his weight.

PAT RICH - Another of the younger signings, 21 year old Pat is a native of the North East. Played regular rugby for Keighley in 1999, while studying for a law degree at Leeds. Can play centre or back row and recently achieved the new clubs points in a game record when scoring 18 in the win over Widnes.

MARK SIBSON - An exciting full back and goal kicker, this 23 year old played for Loughborough University for four years before turning out for Castleford's Alliance side. Recommended to Bramley and became an instant hit, going out on loan to Super League Huddersfield Giants. An elusive attacker has been a key player so far this season for the Roughyeds.

IAN SINFIELD - Local lad, Ian signed for and briefly played Super League rugby with Salford before joining Roughyeds in 1998. Had a brief stint in France in the early part of 1999 before returning to the club, finishing the season and re-signing for 2000. A back row forward who tackles hard, runs strongly and uses the ball intelligently wide out.

WARREN BARROW - Signed recently from St. Helens. Spent some time on loan with Workington under coach Ross O'Reilly.

PHIL FARRELL - Recently signed for the club after a successful loan period. Hard working back row forward who has the right pedigree, as he is the younger brother of Wigan ace Andy Farrell.

NEIL RODEN - Signed for the club from Wigan at the same time as Phil Farrell. Young half back who impressed in the Alliance before making his debut against Hunslet at Boundary Park. Looks like one to watch for the future.

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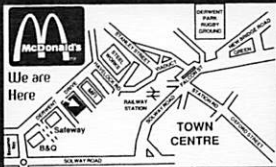
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26th	SWINTON LIONS	L	10-21
January			
2nd	Whitehaven Warriors	L	0-42
9th	BARROW RAIDERS	L	18-35
16th	Dewsbury Rams	L	6-36
23rd	Oldham	L	17-30
February			
6th	LEIGH CENTURIONS	L	6-46
20th	Lancashire Lynx	W	34-12
March			
5th	WIDNES	W	16-10
12th	Rochdale Hornets	L	28-32
19th	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	L	25-42
26th	Sheffield	W	10-18
April			
2nd	Hunslet Hawks	L	8-22
9th	YORK WASPS	W	23-7
16th	HULL K.R.	W	
21st	Swinton Lions	L	
24th	WHITEHAVEN WARRIORS	W	
May			
1st	Batley Bulldogs	W	
7th	Keighley Cougars	L	
10th	DONCASTER DRAGONS	W	23-18
14th	Barrow Raiders	W	24-22
21st	DEWSBURY RAMS	L	6-58
26th	OLDHAM	H	7.30 p.m.
29th	Hull K.R.	A	3.00 p.m.
June			
4th	LANCASHIRE LYNX	H	3.00 p.m.
11th	Widnes Vikings	A	3.00 p.m.
18th	ROCHDALE HORNETS	H	3.00 p.m.
25th	Featherstone Rovers	A	3.30 p.m.
July			
2nd	SHEFFIELD	H	3.00 p.m.



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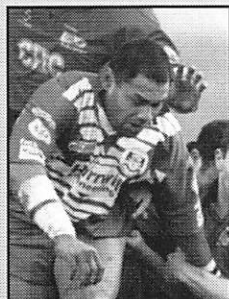
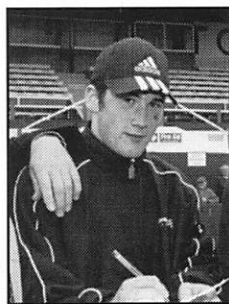
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Look Who's Waiting..

The Alliance Accounts...

The Town Alliance unfortunately put in another rather disappointing eighty minutes last Saturday when they went down at home to Batley. This was a match most followers had marked down as winnable. The performance was rather surprising following the excellent effort made during a close call at the Lionheart Stadium, Featherstone, seven days previous. The young Alliance squad are quite obviously struggling to hit a consistent note, but that will come with the right commitment.

On Saturday the visitors took first blood with a converted try. However encouraging signs flickered when Town slipped into a lead following tries from Lee Allen and Paul McGee, with the latter adding a conversion. The Bulldogs though were having none of it and sniffed victory in the air when notching another ten points. Town's sole reposte being another McGee two pointer, to make it 12-16 at the final whistle. It was hard to single out any player for a big rap following such a lack lustre all round display. On the plus side nonetheless for the Workington cause were the reappearance of youngster Scott Chilton following his lengthy injury lay off, and Academy starlet Kevin Heskett made his Alliance debut in this one.

Town team:- Marc Taylor, Scott Chilton, Jamie Nixon, Paul McGee, Matt Johnson, Lee Allen, Stuart Ackerley, Craig Armstrong, Owen Williamson, Matt Tunstall, Steve Heaton, John Addison, Paul Bell, Tony Huddart, Andrew Melville, David Fletcher, Kevin Heskett;

And 'Bens Boyz'....

The Academy continued on their merry way in last weeks curtain raiser with another comfortable looking win over the young Rams. Certainly a 38-12 result in your favour looks dominant enough, however for a spell in the second half when the visitors had their tails up it didn't feel that 'cushty' to me. Town went behind in fact in the tenth minute to an unconverted try, before 'switching on' to leave the pitch at the interval 16-4 up. Tony Roper, Kevin Wilson and Michael Pickering tries, plus two Wayne Burns goals doing the biz for Bens Boyz. Kevin Wilson's second try early in part two then had us at least looking cosy enough. The Rams then locked horns during a three minute 'purple patch' notching two tries, thankfully their kicker was poor, one vital miss being in front of the sticks. But at 20-12 it was still in the melting pot. A tense fifteen minutes spell ensued until in the final ten at last the Town youngsters clinched it during a three try blitz. Craig Rumney, Wayne Burns and Tony Roper (his second) plus three Bungle conversions had us all breathing rather easier I can tell you. The Town Supporters Club supplied the added 'man of the match donation', and voted Craig Rumney as the deserved recipient of their cheque plus the 'Times and Star' tankard.

I must also add a big thank you to these dedicated workers of the 'Supporters Club' for also contributing to the Academy funds.

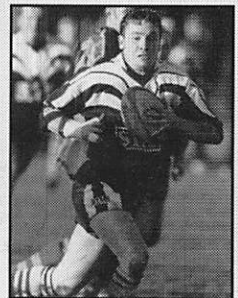
Incidentally rumours of another boost to the funds are unfounded, the 29 million pounds 'grant for the Dome' in the recent news stories was given to the Millennium Dome and not this 'chrome dome', mores the pity....

Town team v. Rams:- Joe Barton, Rickie Bates, Tim Taylor, Kevin Wilson, Greg Rowley, Gary Hine, Wayne Burns, Michael Pickering, Iain Smith, Darren King, Tony Roper, Barrie Murdock, subs. Simon Widdowfield, Neil Rowley, Lee Halbert, Martin Wilson

Michael Dempsey

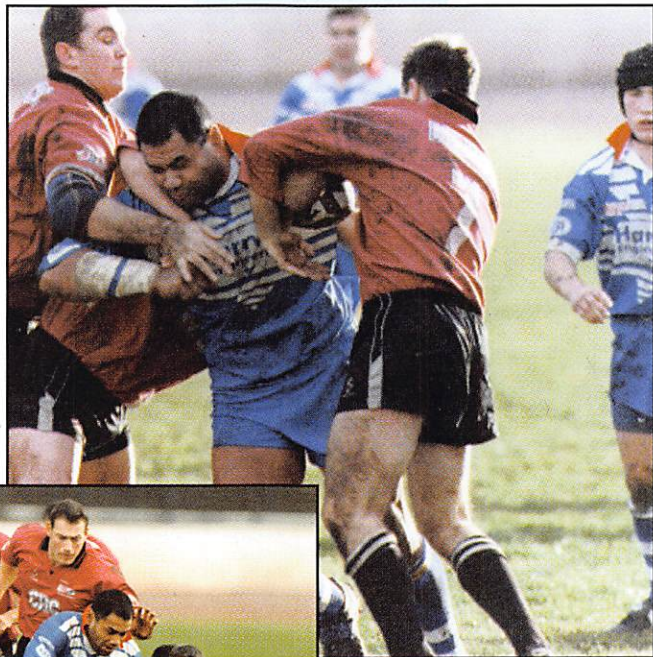
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THE TOWN

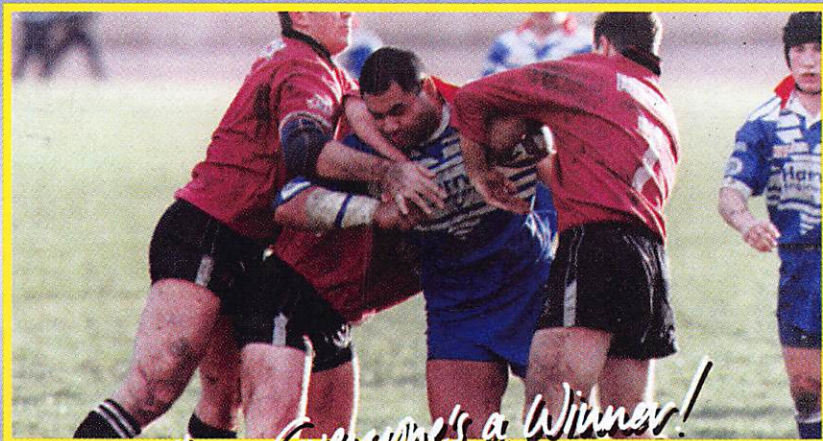
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