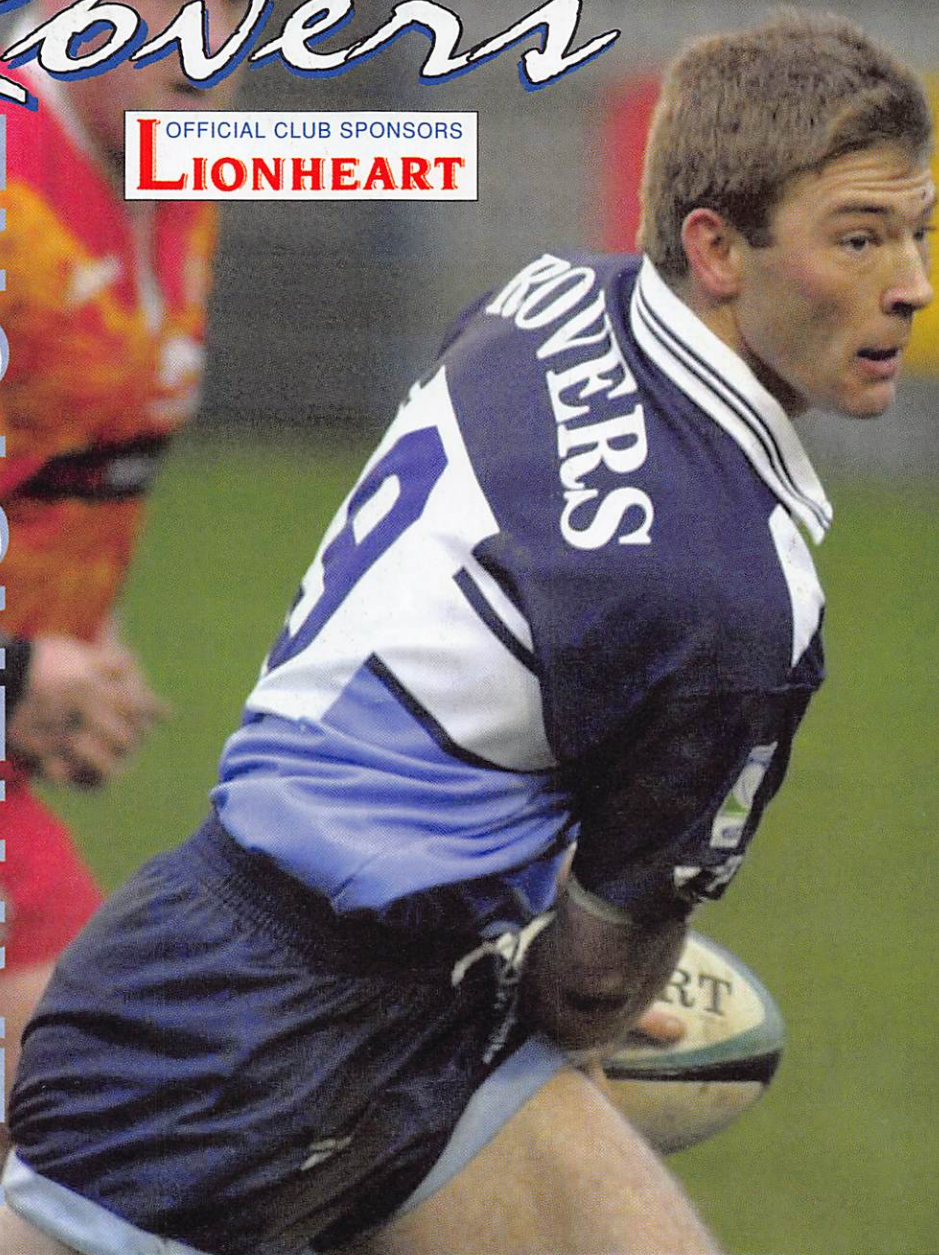


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Rank and File



... by Glyn Robinson

FOLLOWING our disappointing defeat at Swinton over the weekend, which was due to a workman like Swinton team and a very poor performance by Rovers, there has been a good deal of criticism from some of our supporters, some of which are contained in other notes within this programme.

The Board, the Coaching staff and above all the Players were very disappointed with the performance, and these matters have been addressed by the Coaching Staff this week, so let's hope that we can turn in a performance that we know that the team is capable of against Oldham and also with the forthcoming home games.

The criticism that has been made by some spectators is valid, but under the present circumstances there is no short term **quick fix**, which the club could come up with to address the present situation. We need to look at the club in an objective manner and in the following comments I deliberately pull **no punches**. Regarding this as the main priority of the Board, over the past number of years and for the present time is **stability**. The Coaching Staff and Steve Lingard, (The Football Chairman), are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the squad and on a regular basis we are in communication with other clubs and players regarding strengthening the team. Many hours are also spent by Steve Lingard and Ernest Wilby (Chief Scout), looking at potential new signings, both junior and experienced players.

Any player wishing to come to the club, and can I say players themselves contact the Club regarding the possibility of joining us, will not be signed on large contracts and playing terms which Rovers cannot afford. We have learnt the lessons of the past and contracts and playing terms will be offered within the budgeting requirements of the Club, and all playing personnel, both with us and potential, are made fully aware of this.

As described in previous notes we are also determined to keep three teams going on the basis of bringing young talent through the Academy and into the Alliance and hopefully then into the First Team. We at Featherstone believe that it is essential to have this system so that players can progress through the different teams to give them the best opportunity for development and to gain experience and also then to become a good asset for Featherstone Rovers.

We need only to look at the Rugby League scene; both in Super League and the Northern Ford Premiership, to see where Clubs are in trouble both on a financial and playing point of view. The alternative to what has been described is to have a situation, (and I use the following Clubs just as examples as there are other Clubs who are in the same situation), that if we were to pay excessive

contracts and playing terms which we clearly could not afford then we would have to disband either the Alliance Team, the Academy Team or both. Do the spectators at the Club want a Widnes situation where we are reliably informed that a player was on a £65,000.00 contract per year, has played 10 games this season, mostly from the bench and has departed to join another club. Taking into account the amount of money that Widnes have spent over the last 12 months in a bid to achieve Super League status are the results going their way? Widnes do not run an Academy Team so do not have the opportunity of signing young talent and therefore developing them into professional players of the future. Our near neighbours Dewsbury have gone one further and now do not have an Alliance or Academy Team and have therefore to be content with playing experienced players with a very limited opportunity for any young talent within the club to come through. What advantages are there to young players joining Dewsbury if there is not an Academy or Alliance Team and if they are not regularly in the first team squad then what are these players doing? Another example also is that if there are injuries to a squad player he does not have the opportunity of playing in the Alliance Team to test that injury out and also gain match fitness.

My final point in these notes is addressing the financial situation of Clubs in Super League and the Northern Ford Premiership, some players in the past have left this Club or not come to this Club because they were offered better playing terms, and after a very short time we find these Clubs are then going into administration and tearing the contracts up of those players and offering them reduced terms. We even have the extreme situation where clubs owe players a large amount of money and are allegedly in breach of contract and the players in redress are having to take the club to an Industrial Tribunal. The contracts we have at Featherstone and the playing terms fall below those which are offered by some other clubs, but putting hand on heart this Club makes sure that the players are paid what they are due to.

I would therefore ask all spectators, who I know have Featherstone Rovers at heart, and quite rightly give valid criticism, to keep their nerve because we believe that the path which we have dedicated ourselves to is the right one. I can finally assure you that all concerned with the running of Featherstone Rovers will continue to monitor the situation and make improvements where we are able to and that these improvements will be for the benefit in the medium and long term and not affect the stability of this great club.

Get behind the team, as I know you will today and enjoy the game.

Coach's Comments

... by Peter Roe



Our performance last Sunday at Swinton was the worst since my arrival here in May 1999. Our completion rates on attacking sets of six were those of a losing team and totally unacceptable at this level of football. We were all pretty

miserable at the end of the game and coaching staff and players alike all endured the statutory 24 hour feel sorry for yourself period.

Life goes on and the positive thing which comes out of adversity in sport is that there is always another day.

Oldham have become a force in the

Northern Ford once again and under the stewardship of Mike Ford they present tough and skilful opposition today.

How much ambition my players have has been recently brought in to question, several (for varying reasons) appeared in the reserve team at Oldham on Thursday.

We have a thin squad here at Fev and any youngster showing signs of readiness will be given an opportunity. Several have and will be on show today. Steven 'Corporal' Jones at 17 is progressing well as is Richard Thaler. I am willing to bleed many more if necessary.

Thanks once again to our away support last week we hope to put today, a right to many wrongs on show against Swinton.

Enjoy the game.

Peter



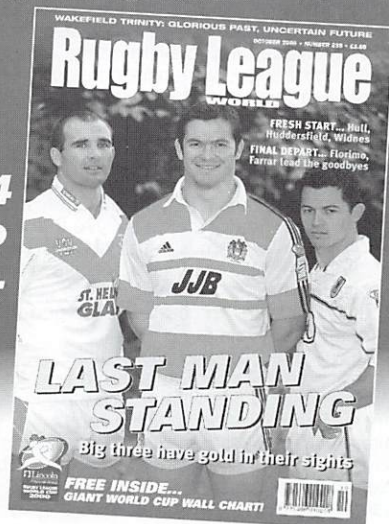
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MAGAZINE



Featherstone Rovers RLFC



... Season 2000/2001

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Elected to NR FL: June 1921

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REPRESENTATIVE PLAYERS

Great Britain:
T Askin, C Bibb, J Bridges, T Clawson, M Dixon, S Evans, Deryck Fox, Don Fox, D Hobbs, G Jordan, S Molloy, A. Morgan, S. Nash, P. Newlove, P. Smith, J. Thompson

Tourists
T Askin, C Bibb, J Bridges, G Cooper, C Dooler, S Evans, Deryck Fox, Don Fox, D Hobbs, S Nash, P Newlove, I Smales, J Thompson

World Cup Tourists:
A Morgan, P Smith, J Thompson
England:

J Bridges, I Butt, M Dixon, S Evans, V Farrar, J Hirst, D Hobbs, A Morgan, J Mullaney, P Newlove, P Smith, R Stone, J Thompson, A Wood

Wales: P Banner, H Box

Ireland: L Casey, L. Child

Scotland: N. Lowe

France: D Divet, F Banquet

New Zealand: B Tuuta

Great Britain U21s:
C Bibb, P Bonson, Deryck Fox, P Lyman, P Newlove, M Pearson, I Smales

Great Britain U24s:
K Bell, S Evans, D Fennell, V Farrar, M Gibbins, J Gilbert, D Hobbs, T Ramshaw, P Smith, V Thomas, J Thompson, L Tonks

Academy Tourist: Jamie Stokes
Academy Internationals: J Stokes, N. Lowe, K. Pratt & S. Dickens
U21/Academy Representative:
D. Hunt

CLUB HONOURS

Championship Runners-Up: 1927/28
Division One Champions: 1976/77
Division Two Champions: 1979/80, 1992/93
Division Two Premiership Winners: 1992/93
Division Two Premiership Runners-Up: 1987/88
RL Challenge Cup Winners: 1966/67, 1972/73, 1982/83

RL Challenge Cup Runners-Up: 1951/52, 1973/74
Yorkshire Cup Winners: 1939/40, 1959/60
Yorkshire Cup Runners-Up: 1928/29, 1963/64, 1966/67, 1969/70, 1970/71, 1976/77, 1977/78, 1989/90
Captain Morgan Trophy Runners Up: 1973/74
Yorkshire League Runners-Up: 1928, 1962
1st Division Grand Finalists Runners Up: 1998

RECORDS

In a Match:

Goals: 13 by Mark Knapper v Keighley - 17 Sept 1989
Tries: 6 by Mike Smith v Doncaster - 13 April 1968
6 by Chris Bibb v Keighley - 17 Sept 1989
Points: 40 by Martin Pearson v Whitehaven - 26 Nov 1995

In a Season:

Goals: 163 by Steve Quinn - 1979/80
Tries: 48 by Paul Newlove - 1992/93
Points: 391 by Martin Pearson - 1992/93
Appearances: 46 by C Woolford - 1959/60
















In a Career:

Goals: 1,210 by Steve Quinn - 1975/88
Tries: 162 by Don Fox - 1953/66
Points: 2,654 by Steve Quinn - 1975/88
Appearances: 440 by Jim Denton - 1921/34
Highest Score: 86-18 v Keighley - 17 Sept 1989
Highest Score Against: 70-2 at Halifax - 14 April 1941
Attendance: 17,531 v St Helens (RL Cup) - 21 March 1959
Yorkshire Cup: 10,700 v Leeds - Sept 1959
League: 14,990 v Wakefield - January 1962

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<p>Andy Bastow FULL KIT 1 - 4 HORACE PRICE</p>	 <p>Danny Evans FULL KIT 1 - 4 GRAN CANARIA SUPPORTERS CLUB</p>	 <p>Jamie Stokes 1 J. HALL 2 J. HALL 3 J. HALL 4 K. VICKERS</p>
<p>Craig Booth FULL KIT 1 - 4 JANET & MALCOLM HAWES</p>	 <p>Ricky Helliwell Full Kit 1 - 4 JON THATCHER & SHARON WRIGHT</p>	<p>Gavin Swinson Full Kit 1 - 4 DOUG & BARBARA WILFORD</p>
 <p>Matt Bramald 1 STEPHEN PARKER 2 LEE SLATER 3 HENRY WILLOUGHBY 4 PETE & JACKIE ASQUITH</p>	<p>Gavin Morgan Full Kit 1 - 4 FERRY CARS</p>	<p>Richard Gibson FULL KIT 1 - 4 PICTURE HOUSE WEDDING VIDEOS TEL: 01924 864613 OR 0410 613822</p>
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 <p>Micky Clarkson 1 HELEN WAGSTAFF 2 HARBOUR PROPERTIES 3 HARBOUR PROPERTIES 4 HARBOUR PROPERTIES</p>	 <p>Michael Rhodes Full Kit 1 - 4 KAREN, DARRAN & THE FIVE JS</p>	
<p>Paul Darly FULL KIT 1 - 4 PAUL COX</p>	 <p>Jamie Rooney Full Kit 1 - 4 M. TENNANT-KING</p>	
 <p>Stuart Dickens 1 S. CLARKSON 2 STEPHANIE EDWARDS 3 MARTIN OVERTON 4 MARTIN OVERTON</p>	 <p>Nick Simpson Full Kit 1 - 4 T. KING</p>	

Appearances & Scorers



SEASON 2000/0

TOTAL SENIOR RECORD

	Apps.	Sub.	T	G	DG	Pts.		Apps.	Sub.	T	G	DG	Pts.
GARY BARNETT	2	7	0	0	0	0		2	7	0	0	0	0
ANDY BASTOW	14	1	1	0	0	4		39	2	8	0	0	32
CRAIG BOOTH	3	1	0	0	0	0		9	14	0	5	0	10
MATT BRAMALD	15	0	10	0	0	40		75	4	40	0	0	160
RICHARD CHAPMAN	15	0	13	1	0	54		101	41	66	128	2	522
MICKY CLARKSON	4	5	1	0	0	4		21	42	10	0	0	40
PAUL DARLEY	12	0	3	0	0	12		12	0	3	0	0	12
STUART DICKENS	14	1	1	3	0	10		83	19	14	48	2	154
STEVE DOOLER	11	1	1	0	0	4		44	23	13	0	0	52
DANNY EVANS	10	5	1	0	0	4		77	49	25	1	0	102
RICHARD GIBSON	3	3	1	5	0	14		7	11	1	5	0	14
RICKY HELLEWELL	4	10	0	0	0	0		7	14	1	0	0	4
STEVE JONES	0	5	2	0	0	8		0	5	2	0	0	8
GARY LORD	3	1	0	0	0	0		3	1	0	0	0	0
NEIL LOWE	15	0	5	0	0	20		86	41	25	1	0	102
GAVIN MORGAN	6	9	5	0	0	20		6	9	5	0	0	20
MICHAEL RHODES	11	0	2	0	0	8		39	0	13	0	0	52
JAMIE ROONEY	12	0	9	51	3	141		61	4	33	247	22	648
NICK SIMPSON	12	2	4	0	0	16		12	2	4	0	0	16
CHRIS SPURR	5	0	1	0	0	4		8	4	5	0	0	20
JAMIE STOKES	14	0	12	0	0	48		85	7	60	0	0	240
WAYNE SUTCLIFFE	0	1	0	0	0	0		0	1	0	0	0	0
GAVIN SWINSON	4	7	2	0	0	8		15	13	7	0	0	28
RICHARD THALER	3	1	4	0	0	16		3	1	4	0	0	16
MATT TURNER	3	0	0	0	0	0		4	0	0	0	0	0

2000/2001 Northern Ford Premiership as at 13/03/01

Pos	Team	Pld	Won	Drn	Lst	For	Agst	Diff	Pts
1	Leigh C.	12	12	0	0	538	106	432	24
2	Keighley C.	12	10	1	1	475	154	321	21
3	Dewsbury R.	12	10	0	2	380	161	219	20
4	Widnes V.	12	7	1	4	321	185	136	15
5	Featherstone R.	13	6	2	5	373	183	190	14
6	Oldham	10	7	0	3	251	145	106	14
7	Doncaster D.	11	7	0	4	221	153	68	14
8	Hull K.R.	12	6	2	4	208	181	27	14
9	Workington T.	11	7	0	4	252	238	14	14
10	Sheffield E.	13	6	0	7	264	228	36	12
11	Rochdale H.	11	6	0	5	227	201	26	12
12	Whitehaven W.	12	5	1	6	166	154	12	11
13	Batley B.	12	5	0	7	150	274	-124	10
14	Barrow B.R.	11	4	1	6	197	264	-67	9
15	Swinton L.	11	4	0	7	168	242	-74	8
16	Hunslet H.	12	3	1	8	168	343	-175	7
17	York W.	12	1	1	10	107	499	-392	3
18	Chorley L.	12	1	0	11	188	546	-358	2
19	Gateshead T.	13	0	0	13	88	485	-397	0



More than a game

... with Alan Brookes

ROVERS v OLDHAM Our last encounter here at Lionheart Stadium 26th March 2000

OUR last encounter here at the Lionheart saw us up against a much stronger Oldham side than the one who were somewhat thrashed here 61-6 in 1999. The revived Oldham outfit were on the fringe of a top eight place against our third position but under Mike Ford they were rapidly making progress.

This was our twelfth game of the season and we were looking for our eighth successive league victory, not having been beaten (cup match apart) since losing out at Doncaster back in mid January.

Oldham took Rovers by surprise as early as the third minute when some clever interplay between Gibbons and Ford made the space for Mark Sibson to score the first try of the game. A fine conversion by Pat Rich and Rovers were six points down with the game barely underway. However Rovers hit back immediately and only four minutes later Bastow had touched down for Rooney to level the scores with the resultant conversion – albeit bouncing off an upright. From this point the Rovers' attacking machine got into gear. First Stokes picked up a loose ball and showed his speed in an unassailable sprint for the line. Almost from the restart Dooler drove in strongly and set the platform for some superb handling – eventually Chapman found Jamie Stokes, who had popped up on his opposite wing, to carry on the movement and a neat inside pass to Martin Law was enough to secure Rovers' third try. With Rovers now sizzling another try – this time to Matt Lambert – was not long in coming. And so it continued, next was

Richard Chapman as Rovers showed just how well they could attack.

With Oldham looking in deep trouble Mike Ford produced a gem of a pass that paved the way for Sibson to collect his second try and keep them in with a shout. Only minutes later the Oldham player coach was again the driving force behind a further score, this time wingman Joey Hayes going on the score sheet following neat handling by the Oldham three-quarter line. The first half's closing moments saw a Jamie Rooney drop goal followed by a towering bomb from the young scrum half which, after a cruel bounce, enabled Ian Thompson to extend Rovers' lead. With the half time score line showing 33-16 in Rovers' favour we all felt the game was surely safe.

Anyone who thought different must have been finally convinced by the time the second period was two minutes old. With the taste of oranges surely still in their mouths, one of Chapman's classic outrageous dummies paved the way for Rooney to score Rovers seventh try.

Although Oldham persisted and indeed added ten more points to their total thanks to tries by David Gibbons and his brother Anthony, the enormity of the task was too great. Rovers finished off in fine style. A second Jamie Stokes' effort brought the house down, fielding a chip through by David Gibbons, virtually under his own posts, he raced down field in spectacular fashion for the try of the game. Lowe and Rooney added further late tries, as Rovers went on to notch up exactly the same number of points as in the corresponding fixture in 1999. This victory the eighth consecutive, put Rovers in second position, their highest of the season.

RESULT
ROVERS 61 · OLDHAM 26
HALF TIME 33 – 16

TEAMS
ROVERS
RHODES; STOKES (2T); COVENTRY; LAW (T);
THOMPSON (T); BASTOW (T); ROONEY (2T, 8G, DG);
DICKENS; CHAPMAN (2T); DAVID; DOOLER;
LOWE (T); LAMBERT (T);
Subs: GIBSON; BRAMALD; EVANS; HEPTINSTALL :

OLDHAM:-
SIBSON (2T); HAYES (T); A GIBBONS; RICH (3G);
BARROW; D GIBBONS (T); FORD; CASEY; HOUGH;
CLEGG; HOLLAND; McMENEMY; CAMPBELL :
Subs: DORAN; FARRELL; GUEST;
not used - RODEN

Referee: Mr John Connolly (Wigan)
Attendance: 2,071

ROVERS V OLDHAM PAST RESULTS

HOME					
1999/00	ROVERS	61	OLDHAM	26	
1999	ROVERS	61	OLDHAM	6	
1994/95	ROVERS	36	OLDHAM	14	
1993/94	ROVERS	30	OLDHAM	24	
1992/93 (2)	ROVERS	52	OLDHAM	14	
1992/93 (1)	ROVERS	24	OLDHAM	20	
1990/91	ROVERS	28	OLDHAM	20	
1988/89	ROVERS	18	OLDHAM	14	
1987/88	ROVERS	8	OLDHAM	8	
AWAY					
1990/00	OLDHAM	32	ROVERS	0	
1999	OLDHAM	18	ROVERS	25	
1994/95	OLDHAM	10	ROVERS	20	
1993/94	OLDHAM	22	ROVERS	8	
1992/93 (2)	OLDHAM	24	ROVERS	22	
1992/93 (1)	OLDHAM	4	ROVERS	24	
1990/91	OLDHAM	18	ROVERS	20	
1988/89	OLDHAM	40	ROVERS	18	
1987/88	OLDHAM	15	ROVERS	18	

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WELCOME this afternoon one and all. Oldham visit today as one of NFP success stories. Things are going well on the field after starting from scratch and crowds are on the up. This lends weight to the argument that supporters want to see a winning team no matter what level it is played.

The Rovers players and supporters are in for a tough afternoon. Injuries to Rovers' already small squad have hit hard, but the youngsters of Richard Thaler, Matt Turner and Steven Jones haven't looked out of place or let anyone down. Us supporters have been getting carried away with our lofty position with dreams of 5th or better when in reality making the top eight will be an achievement. After finishing 5th for the last two seasons surely we should be looking to build on this and go forward, but Rovers are standing still. Other clubs like Oldham, Keighley, Widnes, Hull KR and Rochdale have steadily built their squads and are stronger. The board kept the core of last season's squad and have to be commended on that, there are also more talented youngsters coming through but without building on them Rovers are not progressing. The next wave of youngsters will just replace the existing ones and Rovers will be no better off. Proven NFP players like Gary Lord are just as important as the 'stars' like Jamie Rooney if Rovers really want to progress.

At the shareholders meeting Richard Evans again reiterated Rovers' intent of reaching Super League but in my eyes the light at the end of the tunnel is turning into the gold at the end of the rainbow. Of course throwing money around we don't have is out of the question but if funds can't be raised for Peter Roe to strengthen the team by supporters coming through the turnstiles, other ways have to be found. Losing a 'star' player and Peter Roe getting none of the money is unthinkable but if he has all the money to sign four or five proven NFP players like Gary Lord or Paul Darley to make the squad bigger would this be better? No one, least of all me, wants to see our best players leave and every supporter will have their own views on how Rovers should progress, but progress is a must. The wheels appear to have fallen off Rovers' bus and no matter how long the journey, without wheels the destination can't be reached.

This is the first of three home fixtures on the bounce. The League table shows Rovers as fifth but other clubs have games in hand, we could find ourselves as far down as tenth. Rovers have to win our home fixtures starting this afternoon. It won't be easy. Lets get behind the lads, enjoy the match and have a safe journey home.

LINCOLN TRANSFERS TO INTER-ALLIANCE PLC

LAST YEAR we became an authorised introducer of business to Lincoln Financial Group, sponsors of the Rugby League World Cup. As part of this agreement John Helliwell from Lincoln Financial Group became our own dedicated financial consultant available to offer ongoing financial planning advice for anyone associated with the club or introduced to him by the club.

We could see tremendous potential benefits from this agreement; not just for Featherstone Rovers, for it could produce a valuable source of additional income, but also for its members, players and anyone associated with the club who would have access to their very own consultant to provide ongoing professional financial planning advice.

As a result of an agreement between Lincoln and Inter-Alliance PLC, all Lincoln advisers were offered the opportunity to join Inter-Alliance plc who are recognised as being the largest Independent Financial Adviser group in the U.K. Our introducer agreement is now with Inter-Alliance plc.

This is even better than before as John, who will continue to be our consultant, is now an independent financial adviser and therefore able to offer comprehensive impartial advice on all aspects of financial planning.

We want to make everybody aware of this arrangement in the hope that as many people as possible will take advantage of this valuable service.

We feel particularly fortunate with the consultant we have at Featherstone Rovers. John had more than 27 years experience with Yorkshire Bank (where he used to be branch manager at Goldthorpe) prior to joining Lincoln in October 1998. He became fully qualified as a financial adviser within six months and prides himself on his caring, down to earth and professional approach to financial planning. He lives at Thornhill near Dewsbury and already has a number of satisfied clients around Featherstone, Castleford, Pontefract and Normanton areas.

For further information contact Terry Jones or Sue Brookes at the ground (Tel: 01977 702386) or alternatively contact John (Tel: 01924 513139 or 07761 264223) to arrange a confidential no obligation meeting.

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... by Colin Smith

IT APPEARS we have lost the plot somewhat lately. However the injuries we have had to carry, plus the inexperience of one or two players doesn't help the situation. One has only to look at the overall results over the last few weeks to realise that in any match either team can win. We know the lads give 100% and that we have a good coach. I feel that we shall still have a successful season. The NFP is so competitive that it gets harder each season to predict the outcome of the championship. I hope for the sake of all the teams that some sponsor will recognise this high standard of competition and fund the clubs before they are all on the verge of annihilation.

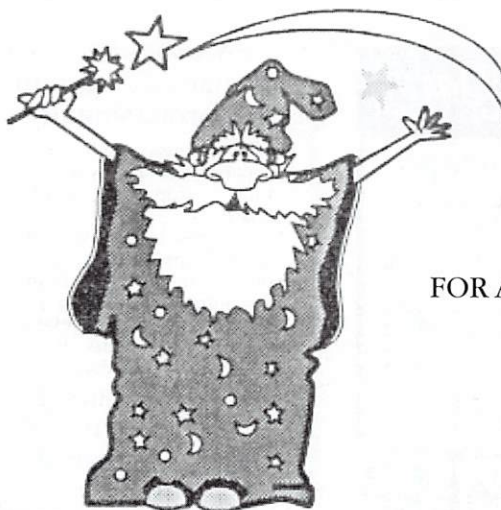
There has been quite a bit of press about the use of a substitute if a player is sent off. I think the idea is ridiculous. The objections with which I agree, feel that coaches would field a hatchet man of poor quality to chop a good player of the other side and then bring on a good player in his (the perpetrator's) place. Anybody who thinks this couldn't happen is in cloud cuckoo land.

The franchise idea took another step forward with the pending application of a South African team consortium applying for Super League status. Another feature is that the proposers are already funding 4 super 12 teams (Rugby Union). So is this another fiasco, or another back door way of getting hold of our young talent? I have no doubt the RL will look at it kindly as they always do, ignoring as usual the requirements of any talent outside SL. If you read any forthcoming event like the Yorks V Lancs teams, or the under 21 tour of the above country the selectors keep saying that there is enough young talent to put on these

events, from the SL. Do we not exist! Is our league being ignored in the hope that it will quietly go away? Surely the RL can find a game or two to give our talented players a platform to represent our league. We need something to stimulate money coming into our competition. But nothing seems to be happening at all.

I was recently passing a charity shop and there in the window was a video 'Scrumdown, Best 101 tries of 1990. price £1.50. On impulse (I was in Pickering, of all places to spot a RL relic), I went in and bought it. Sure enough during it's playback there the Rovers were, playing superb rugby against Cas, Wakey, Bradford, Leeds, and competing with the best. What happened. Well we were sold down the river, and in reality the executives outside the top ten teams took a bit of brass to bugger off; if we were being completely honest. Now that money is coming to an end and the people who didn't want us now have all the power, and I don't see a way back. We have our dreams but without big money backing no team is going far, and I predict that quite a few SL teams will bite the dust in the next few years, along with a number of NFP clubs in their present form. When you see how the amateur game is progressing throughout the country, it could be a signpost for future development. Should we opt out of the rat race and let the rats have their boat to sail it with their RU chums. It might in the end be the best bet. A totally separate competition under our own organisation with the various Conferences. It's a sure as hell the SL and RL board don't want to know us. Have a good game safe journey home.

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Premiership Express

LEAGUE EXPRESS editor
MARTYN SADLER applauds the competitive nature of the Northern Ford Premiership.



LAST Sunday was a bad day for three of the top five clubs in the Northern Ford Premiership.

Dewsbury suffered a decisive defeat at Rochdale; Widnes suffered a shock home defeat by Doncaster that cost their coach David Hulme his job (although Dragons fans may claim that, as they are also a top-eight side, that result wasn't really much of a shock); and Featherstone suffered a shock defeat at Swinton, although only by three points.

The fans of each of those three clubs may disagree with me, but I believe that those shock results last weekend meant that it was a great day for the NFP competition.

The point is that a league competition thrives when its results are unpredictable, and when there are plenty of clubs in the running to win the title. And if we look at the league table as it stands today, we can see that there are still probably 14 clubs in the running for the top eight play-off places. York, Chorley and Gateshead are already out of it, and Hunslet only have seven points from twelve games. But every other club is still battling away either to retain its position in the eight, or to climb over its rivals to gain admission to that elite band of clubs.

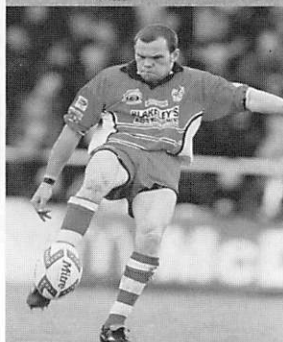
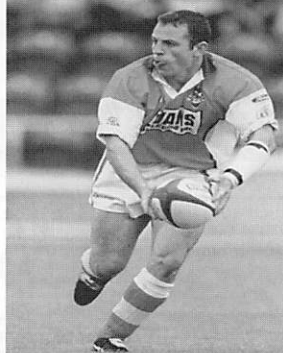
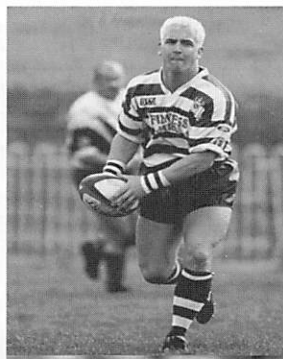
Without any doubt the most improved club recently has been Rochdale Hornets, under their rookie coach Martin Hall. The Hornets gave Dewsbury a lesson at Spotland last Sunday, showing that their recent win at Keighley was no fluke at all. Given their

current form the Hornets must fancy their chances of getting into the eight, and their game this weekend at Hull Kingston Rovers looks to be one of the match-ups of the season so far, with Rovers themselves, who had the bye last Sunday, currently in eighth position.

Before last weekend Whitehaven would have been the other club I would have cited as the big improvers, but that defeat at Batley brought Haven's five-match winning sequence to an end. I'm sure they'll soon get back on track, however, and this weekend their game against the visiting Sheffield Eagles is another to make me drool in anticipation.

I don't know who the fixture compiler is for the NFP, but that person should be given hearty congratulations for the fixtures he or she has produced for this Sunday. Apart from the two games I have already mentioned, there are plenty of other fascinating encounters. Who would want to miss Leigh's trip to Doncaster, or Keighley's visit to Widnes, or Featherstone's game against Oldham. Surely we should see some big crowds and stirring contests. Even the game between Chorley and Batley looks much better than it did just over a week ago, given Chorley's 78-8 defeat of York last week at Victory Park.

The top-eight play-off formula, which I had a hand in devising, is certainly doing its job in making sure there will be plenty of excitement throughout the season. The NFP, in my view, is the most exciting secret in British sport.



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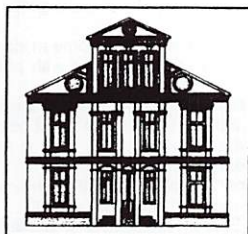
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Oldham Roughyeds

... A Rough Guide

MARK SIBSON Former Loughborough Student who has had spells at Castleford and Bramley. Very elusive runner from full back capable of scoring from long range.

DARYL LACEY Young winger or full back signed in the summer from Wigan. A player with plenty of pace and a safe pair of hands.

ANTHONY GIBBONS Former Leeds and Bramley player with a good step off either foot. Also one of the best defensive centres in the NFP.

PAT RICH Georgie Law Graduate who was previously with Keighley. A very reliable goal kicker he represented England students in the Student World Cup Final.

DANNY ARNOLD Another player with Super League experience playing at St. Helens and Huddersfield. A prolific try scorer who can play wing, centre or full back.

DAVE GIBBONS Twin brother of Anthony he too played at Bramley and Leeds. Very pacy with an eye for the opening. He is an aggressive defender, he also has a good kicking game.

NEIL RODEN A product of the Wigan Academy set up he joined the club last year. Has grown in stature ever since. He is a scrum half with good hands and a sound kicking game.

JASON CLEGG A massive prop with deceptive agility. He gives the team a big go forward and a quick play the ball.

JOHN HOUGH The clubs first ever signing this Oldham

born hooker was the clubs player of the season last year. Very fast out of dummy half he is a regular try scorer.

LEO CASEY Now reaching the veteran stage an Irish international prop with a wealth of experience. Former clubs include Rochdale Hornets.

PHIL FARRELL Second row who joined the club along with Neil Roden. Brother of England captain Andrew he is probably the most exciting young second row in the NFP. A massive workrate and a great pair of hands.

PAUL NORTON Signed in the off season from Chorley, Knockor has been one of the clubs most consistent performers. Very strong defender who can play prop or second row.

IAN SINFIELD Oldham born player equally at home at loose forward or second row. An aggressive defender with pace running out wide.

GAVIN DODD Young full back or winger and a former student international. A very elusive runner with great pace.

ANDY PROCTOR Club captain and a prop with a big workrate. Formerly with Wakefield and Bramley.

CHRIS FARRELL Twin brother of Phil and another summer signing from Wigan. A loose forward with great vision.

KEVIN MANNION Former Student international player a loose forward with good hands. Wigan born and another former Rochdale player.



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Head to Head



... by Alan Brookes

ROVERS V OLDHAM

LAST week's game is without doubt one we must try and put behind us as quickly as possible. There can be no excuses for such a performance, which was a monumental let down for all the travelling fans - who will doubtless feel that they are "owed one".

Lets hope that they will keep faith and turn up once again this afternoon.

The enforced break in our fixture programme together with the injury problems has certainly disrupted our side when only a few weeks ago we were looking a very competent outfit capable of matching the best in our division. Previous performances, particularly those against Doncaster and Keighley prove that we can do what is required although as in any sport consistency is the key to success.

Our recent record has to be described as poor whilst we did put up a good account against Leigh who remain unbeaten after twelve games the reversals at Whitehaven and Swinton were games that you cannot afford to loose if top eight places are to be gained.

Oldham, on the same number of league points as us but with three games in hand, also lost out to

Whitehaven seven days after we did, but quickly bounced back to take the spoils against Sheffield last weekend. Had our team been coming into today's fixture on the crest of a wave the task in hand to beat Oldham would have been a tough one. As it is we are under extreme pressure to get things right so the task is that much harder. It goes without saying that Peter Roe knows the situation and, if they don't know now, by the time the game kicks off the players will certainly be fully aware of what is required this afternoon.

OLDHAM FORM GUIDE - LAST TEN RESULTS

OPPONENTS		RES.	
WIDNES	H	Won	20 - 12
LEIGH	H	Lost	18 - 44
QUEENSBURY	H	Won	64 - 0
CHORLEY	H	Won	56 - 2
HULL K R	H	Won	17 - 6
GATESHEAD	H	Won	52 - 6
WAKEFIELD	H	Lost	6 - 26
DEWSBURY	A	Lost	13 - 18
WHITEHAVEN	H	Lost	8 - 19
SHEFFIELD	H	Won	24 - 16

2000/20001 Match Results (18.03.01)

	Barrow	Batley	Chorley	Dewsbury	Doncaster	FEATHERSTONE	Gateshead	Hull KR	Hunslet	Keighley	Leigh	Oldham	Rochdale	Sheffield	Swinton	Whitehaven	Widnes	Workington	York
Barrow					18-16							16-28				5-4	6-6	28-31	
Batley	10-18				16-19	6-37	24-4	18-16								18-14			12-4
Chorley	24-38						32-54				4-56				12-30		14-48		78-8
Dewsbury		24-12	70-0			21-12	54-10	32-10				18-13							50-2
Doncaster									36-8	17-23				22-2					
FEATHERSTONE			64-6		34-4		68-6		26-14		20-30			12-15					
Gateshead					8-27			0-18	12-26	0-52						4-23	18-30		
Hull KR					0-30	6-6			40-12						32-6	10-10			2-0
Hunslet		4-13		2-34						12-44			20-42	14-0	26-16				
Keighley	60-20	66-12		32-6		22-22		24-8					20-23						
Leigh	19-8	34-8					52-4						48-0		46-4				70-0
Oldham			56-2				52-6				18-44			24-16		8-19	20-12		
Rochdale			52-12	44-26	26-6							6-10						14-24	
Sheffield	40-16	34-1		6-25			38-12	11-12		16-52								26-17	
Swinton	26-24			18-20		28-25							4-8					20-29	
Whitehaven			28-4			19-10					8-30		13-4		4-8				
Widnes					10-18						20-25				16-8	22-14		26-16	90-6
Workington			42-0					60-10	4-32		6-22	18-8	15-12		31-10				
York					8-26	6-37	21-4		20-20	14-48	12-84		6-48						

RON HILL

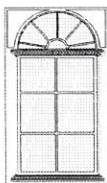
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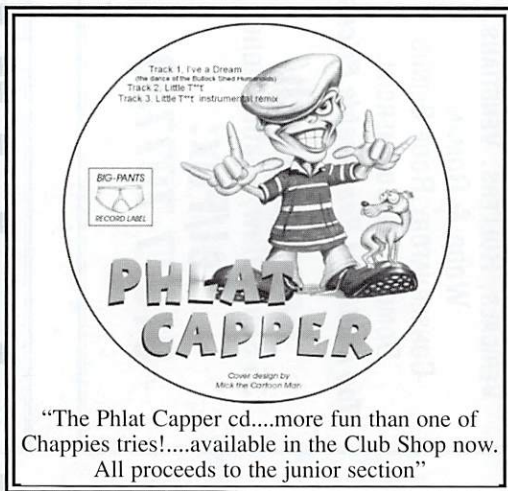
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Match by Match Analysis 2000/2001

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
DECEMBER 2000																			
3	Dewsbury	L12-21 2608	Rhodes	Stokes	Spurr	Simpson	Bramald	Bastow	Rooney 4G	Dickens	Chapman	Booth	Evans	Lowe 1T	Dooler	Swinson	Barnett	Hellewell	Morgan
10	SHEFFIELD	L12-15 2359	Rhodes 1T	Stokes 1T	Spurr	Simpson	Bramald	Bastow	Rooney 2G	Dickens	Chapman	Booth	Evans	Lowe	Dooler	Swinson	Barnett	Hellewell	Morgan
17	GATESHEAD	W68-6 1717	Rhodes 1T	Stokes 3T	Spurr	Simpson 2T	Bramald 1T	Bastow	Rooney 1T8G	Morgan 1T	Chapman 1T	Booth	Dooler	Lowe 1T	Darley	Swinson	Evans	Dickens 1T	Clarkson 1T
26	Hull K.R.	D6-6 2384	Rhodes	Stokes	Spurr	Simpson	Bramald 1T	Bastow	Rooney 1G	Dickens	Chapman	Clarkson	Dooler	Lowe	Darley	Swinson	Evans	Hellewell	Morgan
JANUARY 2001																			
1	DONCASTER	W34-4 2354	Rhodes	Stokes 1T	Dooler	Simpson	Bramald 1T	Bastow	Rooney 1T5G	Dickens	Chapman 1T	Clarkson	Evans	Lowe	Darley	Swinson 1T	Barnett	Hellewell	Morgan
7	Batley	W37-6 1358	Rhodes	Stokes 1T	Dooler	Simpson	Bramald 2T	Bastow	Rooney 2T6G1DG	Dickens	Chapman	Clarkson	Evans	Lowe	Darley	Swinson	Barnett	Hellewell	Morgan 1T
14	Keighley	D22-22 3269	Rhodes	Stokes 1T	Dooler 1T	Swinson	Bramald	Bastow	Rooney 3G	Dickens	Chapman	Clarkson	Evans 1T	Lowe 1T	Darley	Simpson	Barnett	Hellewell	Morgan
28	ECCLES (SCCC R3)	W56-0 1045	Bramald 1T	Stokes 1T	Dooler	Swinson 1T	Simpson	Bastow	Rooney 1T 3G	Dickens	Chapman 3T	Morgan 2T	Evans	Lowe	Darley 1T	Gibson 5G	Barnett	Hellewell	Clarkson
31	HUNSLET	W26-14 1292	Rhodes	Stokes	Simpson	Swinson	Bramald 2T	Bastow	Rooney 1T 5G	Dickens	Chapman 1T	Morgan	Evans	Lowe	Dooler	Hellewell	Barnett	Clarkson	Jones
FEBRUARY 2001																			
4	York	W37-6 704	Gibson	Stokes 1T	Dooler	Simpson 1T	Bramald 1T	Barnett	Rooney 4G 1DG	Dickens	Chapman 1T	Morgan	Hellewell	Lowe 1T	Darley 1T	Swinson	Evans	Bastow 1T	Clarkson
11	HUDDS (SCCC R4)	L28-6 2527	Rhodes	Stokes	Dooler	Bastow	Bramald	Barnett	Chapman 1T	Dickens 1G	Swinson	Morgan	Hellewell	Lowe	Darley	Simpson	Gibson	Evans	Clarkson
18	LEIGH	L20-30 2683	Rhodes	Stokes	Spurr 1T	Simpson	Bramald 1T	Bastow	Gibson	Dickens 1G	Chapman 1T1G	Morgan	Hellewell	Lowe	Darley	Thaler	Evans	Lord	Jones 1T
25 Silk Cut Challenge Cup 5th Rd																			
MARCH 2001																			
4	Whitehaven	L10-19 927	Bramald	Stokes 1T	Lowe	Thaler	Turner	Bastow	Gibson	Dickens 1G	Chapman 1T	Lord	Evans	Hellewell	Darley	Sutcliffe	Jones	Booth	Morgan
11	CHORLEY	W64-6 1273	Bramald	Stokes 2T	Simpson 1T	Thaler 2T	Turner	Bastow	Rooney 1T8G	Dickens	Chapman 2T	Lord	Evans	Lowe 1T	Darley 1T	Gibson 1T	Hellewell	Jones	Morgan 1T
18	Swinson	L25-28 947	Rhodes	Turner	Simpson	Thaler 2T	Bramald	Bastow	Rooney 1T2G1DG	Dickens	Chapman	Lord	Evans	Lowe	Darley	Dooler	Hellewell	Jones 1T	Morgan
25	OLDHAM	H 3.00pm																	
APRIL 2001																			
8	WORKINGTON	H 3.00pm																	
13	HULL K. R.	H 7.30pm																	
16	Doncaster	A 3.00pm																	
22	ROCHDALE	H 3.00pm																	
29	Gateshead	A 3.00pm																	
MAY 2001																			
6	DEWSBURY	H 3.00pm																	
9	Barrow B.R.	A 7.30pm																	
13	Sheffield	A 3.15pm																	
20	Widnes	A 3.00pm																	
JUNE 2001																			
3	KEIGHLEY	H 3.00pm																	
10	Hunslet	A 3.30pm																	
17	YORK	H 3.00pm																	
24	Leigh	A 3.00pm																	
JULY 2001																			
1	WHITEHAVEN	H 3.00pm																	

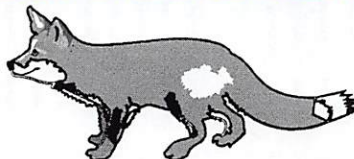


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U.21's Alliance Championship

... with Donald Hunt

DONCASTER DRAGONS 24 v FEATHERSTONE ROVERS 10 8/3/01

THE unprecedented injury crisis that has hit the club reflected back on the Alliance team. Replacements for the first team squad left the coach with innumerable gaps to fill. This necessitated calling upon 9 Academy players, some as young as 16, plus signing Martyn Nicoll from Wakefield. After all these efforts only 16 players formed the squad.

It may have passed through some minds that Rovers could be on a hiding to nothing - far from it. With admirable team spirit the Rovers Alliance side put up a splendid performance, full of pride and team spirit.

The opening encounter found the Dons hammering away at the Rovers line, the tackling was first class and they could find no way through. This resulted in the home side having to resort to drop goals to get on the score board. A couple found the target.

The Dragons proved a physical side as we had witnessed at Featherstone in February. Towards the end of the first half Doncaster

managed to break the line with a good movement and score out wide to leave the score at 8-2 at half time, Tim Williamson having obliged with a penalty goal. During this period Simon Thompson, Carl Sayer and Jamie Maughan had been outstanding.

Further worries occurred for Featherstone when full back Steve Kirk and prop Sayer had to come off injured. Both had showed their mettle up to this point. The team had to be re-shuffled to cope with these injuries.

Chris Roe, son of Peter, made his debut, and was soon in action with a splendid break and with more support a try seemed certain. Errors were occurring in the Rovers attack, causing loss of possession. The Dragons made full use of these mistakes and score a couple of tries to take a lead of 16-2. The hastily put together team could have been forgiven if the floodgates had now opened. Not at all, Featherstone hit back in fine style. Will Jordan (one of the leading try scorers in the division) went over for a good try. Man of the Match, Jamie Tennant, put Ford through a gap only for the latter to lose the ball when he tripped and fell.

Andrew Jackson and Andron Jarrett made good ground for Tennant and Ford to combine well to send Jordan in for his second try. Making the score 16-10.

Rovers threw everything into attack to try and level the score, but a mistake allowed the Dons to score and run out winners.

Viewing the encounter one would never have guessed that this was a hurriedly assembled side. Full credit must go to all taking part and the spectators who made the journey were very proud of their side.

Team:- S. Kirk; M. Nicoll, A. Jarrett, W. Jordan, A. Jackson, T. Williamson, J. Tennant; C. Sayer, J. Ford, C. Potter, S. Thompson, J. Maughan, S. Smallman. Subs: C. Roe, D. Jordan, L. West.

ALLIANCE TEAM FIXTURES

Dec			
9	Whitehaven Warriors	H	2.30
14	Widnes Vikings	H	7.30
20	Batley Bulldogs	A	7.30
Jan			
4	Leigh Centurions	H	7.30
11	Keighley Cougars	H	7.30
17	Hunslet Hawks	A	7.30
Feb			
8	Doncaster Dragons	H	7.30
17	Leigh Centurions	A	7.30
24	Workington Town	H	2.30
March			
8	Doncaster Dragons	A	7.30
22	Oldham	A	7.30
29	Rochdale Hornets	H	7.30
April			
7	Workington Town	A	2.30
19	Rochdale Hornets	A	7.30
May			
3	Oldham	H	7.30
12	Whitehaven Warriors	A	2.30
17	Widnes Vikings	A	7.30
24	Batley Bulldogs	H	7.30
30	Keighley Cougars	A	7.30
June			
7	Hunslet Hawks	H	7.30
23	Top Five Play Offs		
July			
14	First Division Grand Final		

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View from the Lagoon



... Everyone Welcome

'THE GENTLEMAN'S CLUB ...'

HANDS UP who takes a more than passing interest in the travelling circus that is 'Super League'. Not me, I hear you say. Come on, who in their right mind can ignore the daily shenanigans that masquerade under that exclusive banner? Yes, the formation of 'Super League Europe' (That's a laugh, when the farthest you can get is a day-trip to the smoke to watch the Australian cast-off 13) has undoubtedly brought together the massive egos of Caisley, Hetherington, Lindsay and Cohorts to run the game how they see fit, and to protect the nauseating self-interest of the 'big-four' and to hell with anyone else that gets in their way.

A sort of 'members only massage parlour' in effect, but the only thing that's getting rubbed-up is the poor old NFP, the second class citizens of their arrogant little world.

Take this for an example of certain individuals' total hypocrisy. Hetherington has at the moment chucked the teddy out of the cot over the RFU's stalling over automatic promotion from Division One to the Premier Division of the 'Rah-Rah's'. Apparently, if his alter-ego, namely Leeds Tykes, who, oddly enough, reside at Headingley and whose crowds have risen this season from one-man-and-his-dog to two-men-and-their-wives-and-two-dogs, are not guaranteed promotion should they top the division. 'Unfair and un-sporting' he wails, 'if we top the League, promotion should be automatic'. Did he echo those sentiments to the Chairmen of Hunslet and Dewsbury? Did he b*ll*cks. The arrogance of him and the rest of the gang is astounding, and the longer it goes on and the more I hear about their cosy little set-up, the more I want to throw-up. I genuinely believe although life is a daily struggle in the NFP, we are in the short term, better off where we are, instead of trying to gatecrash somewhere where the 'likes of us' wouldn't be welcome.

Super League is a monster spinning out of control, where the 'big-four' are devouring the rest, who, every season vainly attempt to catch-up, paying out brass none of them can afford. Just look at the Wildcats. If they are unfortunate enough to finish bottom of the pile, my guess is they'll (SLE) kick them out so quick their feet won't touch the floor, as they seem to be a bigger embarrassment than Mandelson is to Blair! A message to all NFP clubs - don't give up hope. If a debt-ridden club with a ramshackle 'stadium' can hang on in there like Wakey, then there's hope for us all!

That's enough politics, but it makes the old grey-matter tick-over,

doesn't it? On to our favourite subject, Fev ... It all set off okay with every seat on the coach taken for the first time this season. We even turned a couple away and boy, were they the lucky ones, as Rovers managed to conjure-up an appalling performance against a team I can best describe as average (and that's being diplomatic). We watched stunned, as Rovers served up an error-ridden, and at times, passionless performance against opposition that had actually lost their previous eight league games!, and which left the Rovers' fans (who as usual made up the majority of the crowd) rendered speechless by the sheer mediocrity of it all. This column in the past has had nothing but praise for previous performances, as injury-hit sides went out and gave it their best shot, which did not go unappreciated by the Rovers' faithful, and we'll leave the necessary verbals to Peter Roe, who knowing Peter's passion and commitment to Rovers will have been dismayed and angry to see a team of his respond in such a manner. I have stated before, and I will say it again, Peter Roe is a top coach and a top man. In my humble opinion he is one of, if not the, most approachable coaches in Rovers' proud history, and deserves better. Which leads us nicely on to another sore point.

At the Shareholders meeting (12.3.01) the question was tabled as to what would be happening to the monies raised by the share issue. The answer to the floor was, I suspect, not what they wanted to hear, as the Chairman indicated it would probably be used in conjunction with more ground improvements. All very noble. But considering we already have adequate facilities for the standard of rugby we are involved in at present, bearing in mind some of the dumps we visit over the course of a season, I really think this time we've got our priorities all wrong. I can, along with a few hundred loyal fans, think of a much more popular way to distribute the lolly, like two quick, experienced centres, and a bone-headed lump of a prop-forward who can't even spell his own name, but will run through a barn-door when instructed, and not stop until he comes out the other end. Yes, I'm all for blooding the young 'uns, but not at the rate we're doing. You've got to get the balance right, which we aren't doing, and teams we should be walloping are picking us off. The message is simple, forget the 'new fence' and the fancy bogs for the time being. People don't want to pay eight-quad-or-so to have a cosy slash, they pay it to see a good, passionate Rovers team, who, even in defeat, display the proper qualities. Mr Chairman, can we have a slice of the cake?

UP THE ROVERS !!!

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School: Moorthorpe Juniors
Fav Player: Jamie Stokes

SWINTON - AWAY CRAIG S. MURPHY



Age: 10
School: Sacred Heart R.C., Goldthorpe
Fav Player: Danny Evans
Fav. TV: Simpsons & Popstars
Fav. Food: Fish & Chips
Fav. Band: Eminem
Hobbies: Playing for Fev's U.11s, playing cricket

OLDHAM - HOME DANIEL RAYNER



Age: 12
School: Huntcliff
Fav Player: Danny Evans
Fav. TV: The Simpsons
Fav. Food: Big Mac Meal
Fav. Band: Britney Spears
Hobbies: Football, Karate, Boxing, rugby



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Rovers Reflections



... with Bob Fowler

ALL I can say about the game at Swinton last week is, have they changed the forward pass and advantage laws without telling us? I could say a lot more, but then I would only be whinging and perhaps putting myself into a position of disrepute. Still at least we were all treated to a joke, I mean of course the official in the middle, whose name will never be uttered by me again. I did not have chance to comment on the Whitehaven game except to say we don't seem to get anything good out of that town, (refer to my comments about officials). Still my previous column has evoked some interesting comments, I did wonder about the merits of teams such as York, Chorley, (I know they won a game at last), and Gateshead, and I e-mailed several people to ask their comments about perhaps if they should be playing in a lesser league. The point I was trying to make is that it will not improve the playing standards within the NFP, unless we have 12 to 14 decent sides, capable of beating each other. When a team plays against the likes of York or Chorley, then, it really does no good to players who are trying to improve themselves. Nor is it of any use if one top side plays these three sides twice in a season. I see that there are moves afoot to bring in teams from Super League who have players too old for Alliance, but who are not yet up to playing the standard of rugby required for that particular league. The idea is for them to have teams in the NFP. This I believe will be a kick in the stomach for most fans of NFP teams, as no doubt it will be open to abuse, i.e. using the team for players coming back from

injury or when a loss of confidence is upon the 'poor' little souls. I believe it would be much better to form a league of teams from the bottom of the NFP and allow all teams who can afford it, to sponsor a team in this league. For example should a team like Leeds have a player surplus, then they could sponsor an over age Alliance side NOT under the name of Leeds Rhinos, and whose players would play exclusively for that club until transferred officially and legally. This would give rise to the resurrection of teams such as Bramley and perhaps the saviour of teams such as Hunslet Hawks, who surely deserve better after their input to the NFP. The outcome I believe would be a more creditable NFP league with teams becoming better supported due to an improvement in standards and games. It would also allow young players who might make the grade eventually, the chance to play a professional sport. The idea being that the Yorks, Gatesheads and Chorleys, to compete on a more even keel. (Although after last weeks result for Chorley, who knows?)



FINALLY nice to see that the RFU has found £150 million to spend on bringing league players into union. It's ironic that I was once reprimanded for travelling from my union side in the midlands, to travel to Yorkshire to watch Rovers. Where was the £150 millions then? I had to work (not very hard) at a day to day job to earn my living because we were all amateur!!

Letter from A Far - Wembley '83 (CONTINUED)

THEN, with a few minutes left Fev get a penalty for Charlie Stone 'roughing up' Peter Smith. There's blood everywhere, Quinn comes up to take the kick. Myself and the Fev fan next to me (who I had never met before) bow our heads and cover our eyes with our hands. We cannot bear to look. As Quinn walks up to take the kick I hear everyone around me groan and I look though my fingers, the ball has fallen over before he kicked it. The man next to me, still with his eyes covered asks "what's happened"? I tell him Quinn has miskicked the ball and it has only gone 6 inches. He looks and his face crumbles. The stranger is distraught and wanders off saying "Oh my God, no" Why did I play such a cruel trick. I don't know. Perhaps it helped relieve my tension. I've never forgiven myself and if that man is reading this, I apologise.

As everyone knows, Quinn replaced the ball and kicked the goal. Pandemonium breaks loose. Hull kick off short, Quinn gathers the ball and the match is soon over. We'd won. How? With men like Peter Smith who took down men like lumberjacks fell trees. With Ray Handscombe who outplayed Bridges at Wembley. John Gilbert who'd run riot through the competition. David Hobbs who was unstoppable at Wembley. A pack that ran Hull to ground. Two seventeen year olds (Banks and Hyman) who played like men before their time.

Steve Quinn who did what he always did - played quietly and efficiently, whilst at the same time putting the ball between the sticks. And Terry Hudson, a man who I will always have the greatest respect for. He out-fought, out-thought and out-witted Hull. Every ounce of his experience was brought to bear, coupled with the heart of a lion. And, when he lifted the cup, I cried. Cried like a baby.

The right thing had happened. It normally didn't in life. But this time it did. After the match, the Hull fans were magnanimous and a credit to the game. Old Faithful had still not won at Wembley.

My mind went back to 8 years earlier when Ali had fought Foreman in Zaire. Foreman who was a monster, he was world heavyweight champion and unbeatable. Foreman who we all feared might even kill Ali. Ali the aging ex-champion who had no chance.

For the first 6 rounds Ali offered no resistance and took a fearful battering. At the end of round 7 Ali lent forward and whispered to Foreman, "George, you've picked the wrong place to get tired!" He beat Foreman and regained the world title.

And that was it. My mate Roy had known. Hull had picked the wrong place to get tired. Just like Ali, Featherstone had won because they should. Just like Ali they had won because, on the day, they were superior. And, just like Ali we were proud of them.

And, unlike Ali, they had won because they wore that Fev shirt which is an honour that no-one should ever underestimate.



FRISA

... Paul Cox

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION www.frisa.f9.co.uk

THE FRISA STAND POINT

MONEY is ruining football, new UEFA chief Gerhard Aigner said last week in an interview with the *Observer*. The amount of money swirling around the game, he said, and the imbalanced way the money is distributed throughout the football hierarchy, poses the real danger of alienating fans. "Football grew because everybody put in. Now everybody is trying to take out... There are too many vested, competing interests. The common interest is not evident - everyone is trying to protect their own interest..." And I thought, is he talking about football? Or is he talking about the NFP, and where it fits into Rugby League's myriad (and cross-cutting) structures and governing bodies?

Because we have those problems. Even the sums involved are similar. The £32m Leeds United will receive by beating Deportivo La Coruna, for instance, and reaching the semi-finals of the Champions League, is *exactly* what Featherstone Rovers won't earn in a thousand years! The £100,000 Luis Figo is getting (a week) is *exactly* the amount NFP clubs are receiving from News Corp this season! The zilch received by those apprentices offloaded from Lincoln City FC because the near zilch that filters down to the club from the game's controlling bodies is not enough to pay the first team players is *exactly* what NFP clubs will be receiving the season after next!

What's more, we in the NFP have a new chief, too, who's *also* of the opinion that money could be our ruin!

It's uncanny! Unlike Gerhard Aigner, though, Chris Hamilton, (albeit in his capacity as Chairman of Oldham), is sitting in the main stand here at the Lionheart Stadium today. If he's reading these notes (well, someone has to) first of all I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his appointment as Chairman of the APC. Well done Chris. Unfortunately Chris cannot now appear on the Fans Forum Panel due to Oldham's re-arranged fixture. I'll not be able to make it myself, so I'll ask some questions now.

Chris, you spoke, in your interview with *Rugby League World* in January, of the NFP competition's positives - its competitiveness, 'honesty' (what's that mean?), passion, high standard, etc. - and went on to talk about these as selling points, and the success of the terrestrial TV coverage we got at the end of last season. What freedom do you - as

Chairman of the APC - have to negotiate for separate TV rights? Is it not the case that the Faustian pact the game signed with Mr Murdoch a few years ago holds the NFP in a double bind? *Sky Sports* holds the rights to screen the NFP competition, yet chooses not to exercise that right. If the BBC or ITV wanted to show some of our games, they'd have to arrange it with him - or rather with News Corp. In which case wouldn't it be News Corp that would be the main financial beneficiary, rather than the NFP, or even the RFL? And if the APC were, somehow, successful in negotiating separate TV rights, wouldn't that be one step further along the road to complete severance from SLE, and a tacit acceptance that there will be no promotion or relegation? Isn't the edging towards a full return to a winter season for the NFP a similar admission? What are your thoughts on this?

Your chairmanship of the APC gives you a place on the Board of the RFL. Will you be arguing at these board meetings for the abolition of all bodies other than the RFL? That it should be the RFL that negotiates TV rights and sponsorship deals, and that the RFL then distributes the monies accruing to where the game (*the game as a whole* - 1st division, amateur, schools, student, etc., as well as to Super League clubs) most needs it?

Back on Planet Earth, I understand Northern Ford's sponsorship of the Premiership will cease at the end of this season. How far are you towards securing another sponsor? You said in your RLW interview that we need someone, full time, "purely and simply to sell us". How far are you with that? Where will the money to finance this post come from? You also said that with the News Corp money about to run out you worry for the future of at least half a dozen clubs. "We don't want to get to the edge of the cliff with 18 other clubs and find we're all jumping off together. I want us to see the warning signs so we can start to turn around and do something about it." Do you see much evidence that the buffoons in charge are seeing these and doing this when they can't even organise a sensible fixture list, or organise themselves into a single, coherent, governing body; when they've apparently no idea how to sell this great game of ours, games like the one we'll see here this afternoon???

I've run out of space. But that should be enough for you to think about. Good luck!

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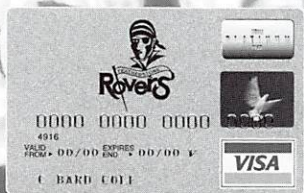
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Winter 2000

Geoff & Jayne welcome all to THE OSWALD ARMS

LARGE SCREEN TV

MONDAY & THURSDAY: GAMES NIGHT

TUESDAY: LADIES DARTS

WEDNESDAY: PRIZE BINGO 9.00PM

FRIDAY & SATURDAY: ADULT KARAOKE

7.00PM - 11.00PM (WITH NIGEL)

VARIOUS HOT & COLD SNACKS

SUNDAY: WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE

PRIORY ROAD, 01977 791744

Jane & Mick welcome all to

The Sun Inn

TRADITIONAL HOME COOKED FOOD

SUNDAY LUNCH BOOKING ADVISABLE

CHILDREN WELCOME

NO SMOKING DINING AREA

FULLY ENCLOSED BEER GARDEN

Tel. 0197 7702055

PLAYERS POSITION SPONSORSHIP

Today's Teams

ROVERS

Coach
Peter ROE

OLDHAM

Coach
Mike FORD

Dransfield Newsagents

R J B Mining

Lionheart

Headland Electric

John & Jackie Murray

Biffa Waste

Ace Precision Engineering

Ace Industrial Engineering

Sharlston Rovers

Biffa Waste

Yorkshire Gears

Dransfield Newsagents

John & Jackie Murray

Headland Electric

Crystal Drinks

Xetra Excl. Ladies Fashions

Costcutter Supermarkets

Michael RHODES

Matt BRAMALD

Nick SIMPSON

Richard THALER

Matt TURNER

Andy BASTOW

Jamie ROONEY

Stuart DICKENS

Richard CHAPMAN

Gary LORD

Danny EVANS

Neil LOWE

Paul DARLEY

Steve DOOLER

Ricky HELLIWELL

Steve JONES

Gavin MORGAN

1

2

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13

Mark SIBSON

Daryl LACEY

Anthony GIBBONS

Pat RICH

Danny ARNOLD

Dave GIBBONS

Neil RODEN

Jason CLEGG

John HOUGH

Leo CASEY

Phil FARRELL

Paul NORTON

Ian SINFIELD

14

15

16

17

Gavin DODD

Andy PROCTOR

Chris FARRELL

Kevin MANNION

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

S. BROOK

M. J. WILSON

S. HAIGH



4th



REFEREE:

NICK

ODDY

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS RLFC
FULLY SUPPORT THE LET'S TACKLE
RACISM IN RUGBY LEAGUE CAMPAIGN AND
WELCOMES ALL PLAYERS AND
SPECTATORS IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR
ETHNIC OR RACIAL ORIGINS. RACISM HAS
NO PLACE IN OUR GAME AND RACIST
CHANTS ARE TOTALLY
UNACCEPTABLE.
ALLOW EVERYONE TO ENJOY THE GAME.

... FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS ... FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS ... FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS ...

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS v WORKINGTON · SUNDAY 8TH APRIL, 2001 KO 3.00PM