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OLDHAM

IN THE HOT SEAT

with
Christopher Hamilton



LAST weeks victory over Chorley was a welcome relief to everybody connected with the club.

The weeks leading up to the game had been ones where myself and the players had done a lot of soul searching and we had a meeting prior to training on Friday which was very positive.

The performance last week was very encouraging and the relief the players felt with that victory was plain to see. What was particularly pleasing was that the team showed, once again, what character and determination they have.

It was also good to register the attendance that we did bearing in mind the circumstances and the weather on the day and once again I would like to thank you for getting behind the team in the manner in which you did.

Today we embark on our Challenge Cup quest which this year will end at Murrayfield and whilst we will be a long way down the list of favourites to win the cup it does not in any way take away the appeal of the competition.

It is also particularly pleasing to have a new sponsor on board for this year's competition in the form of Kelloggs Nutri-grain and we hope that their association with the game will be a long and fruitful (!!!) one.

Our opponents today - West Hull - will provide stiff opposition as they are the top amateur team in the country and we welcome all the officials, players and supporters from Humberside to Hurst Cross.

As most of you will be aware West Hull asked us to switch the game to the Boulevard. You will no doubt imagine my reply and hopefully today the players and you, the fans, will show them exactly why our 'home' advantage is so special.

Thank you once again for your support.
Enjoy the game.

Chris



The Roughyeds
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Front Cover:

*Left: Lee Doran, Sponsors Man of The
Match against Chorley Lynx.*

Right: Lee Moreton of West Hull.

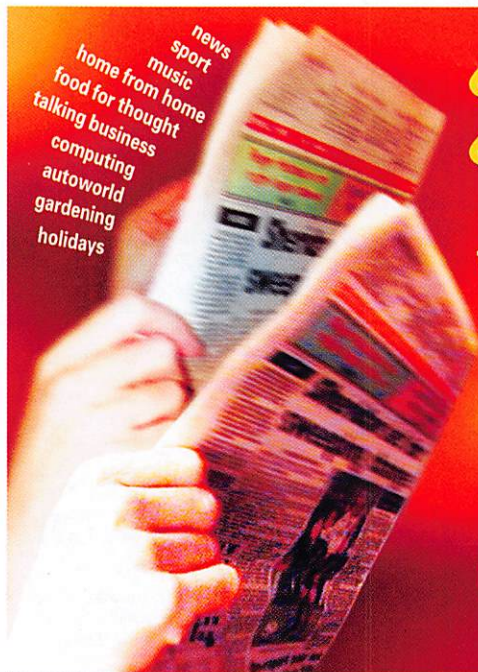
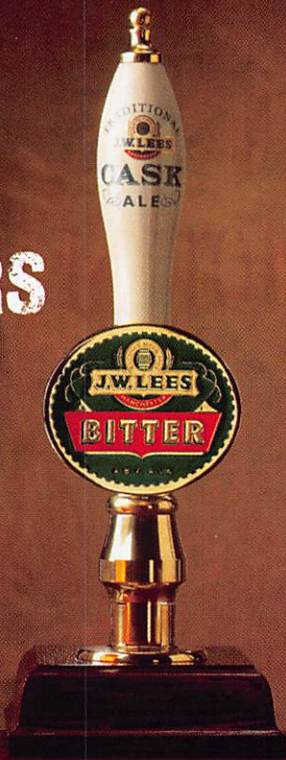
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COACH'S COMMENTS... with Mark Knight



THE result against Chorley last week was obviously much more satisfactory than the week before. To be fair the players held up their collective hands after the Dewsbury game and vowed to put things right. I knew on Friday that things would be different just by virtue of the atmosphere at and after training. We took full advantage of Chorley's mistakes at the start of the game and within a few minutes were 10-0 up. It was obvious then that we would take some beating. It was especially pleasing that we kept our try line intact. The players had set this as an objective and even late in the game you could hear them calling to each other 'no tries, no ties'. As the game wore on the pitch got heavier and stickier and it was difficult to open the game out, but we are gradually getting used to the slope at Hurst Cross and our attacking play will improve as we learn. Fortunately we came out of the

game with no significant injuries so I can pick from the same squad for this week's cup tie.

The whole coaching team went to watch West Hull a week last Saturday and we are fully aware what a good side they are, probably the best in amateur football at the moment. We will not underestimate them. Our preparation for the game will not vary. We accord all our opponents the same respect whether they are NFP sides, Super League sides or, as in this case, National Conference sides. We know West Hull will bring a good few followers with them so we are expecting a cracking atmosphere. We have been well pleased with the atmosphere our own crowd has created so far at Hurst Cross: it's a bit like the atmosphere used to be at Watersheddings. Here's hoping that as we all get used to Ashton we can make it a really intimidating place to visit.

I hope you enjoy the game. Cheer us on to victory.

Mark



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In Yer Face



TODAY the road to Murrayfield begins for the NFP clubs in the Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Challenge Cup. Not that any of the NFP sides will make it to the Final unless by some freak of the draw or by virtue of playing at least one match with Super League opposition reduced to about 10 men. Nevertheless for the BARLA and NFP clubs today represents one of the highlights of the calendar especially since, for the first time, the amateur sides can enjoy home advantage and several will consequently fancy their chances of defeating professional opposition. Recent years have produced occasional upsets: for instance Leigh Miners Rangers defeated Bramley; Thornhill Trojans overturned Sheffield Eagles; and Woolston Rovers upset Chorley Lynx. So where are the banana skins for the NFP clubs this year?

Well one of them could be right here at Hurst Cross where Oldham will have to be on their mettle against West Hull, as good an amateur club as there is.

Woolston could cause an upset for the second year running with a home tie against Hunslet Hawks. Having done his homework on Chorley last season John Fieldhouse will have his side well prepared for this one.

Castleford Lock Lane will fancy their chances against Doncaster though I fear they will be disappointed with the physical power of the Dragons seeing them through.

Ellenborough Rangers will give Hull K.R. a run for their money but the Robins should come through in the final quarter when their fitness and skill should prevail.

As good a bet as any to turn over a pro side are Milford against York. However, I fear they have got the draw a year too late as, on the evidence of their display at Hurst Cross, the Wasps are a much tougher proposition this time around. Similarly, once vulnerable Chorley Lynx will be too good for Redhill.

That leaves Wigan St. Patrick's versus Dewsbury as an outside bet for amateur triumph. However, given Oldham's inability to hold the rampaging Frank Watene and his powerful pack, I can't see the Rams succumbing.

The two French sides pose intriguing questions. On their recent form Keighley Cougars will lose to St. Gandens and while I

think Workington will be too strong for Toulouse I can't say it with confidence. Spacers have had an injury or two lately, but with a full strength side they are a formidable proposition.

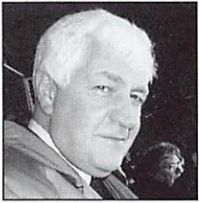
I think all the other ties - bar one are predictable so here goes: Huddersfield to beat Wath Brow Hornets, Sheffield to defeat Leigh East, Barrow to overcome Oulton (though the Raiders are a handy side sitting near to the top of the Conference League), Swinton to overpower Skirlaugh (that'll have the Hull supporters here today spitting feathers), Rochdale to run up the biggest score of the day against Farnsworth, Leigh not to be far behind in beating Halton Simms Cross, Batley to overcome Heworth, and Whitehaven to account for Dewsbury Celtic.

And the bar one? That's the professional tie between Gateshead and Featherstone. And after their 12-12 league draw there's little to choose between them. So what price a replay. But if I have to go for a winner it's Fev. Don't blame me if you lose money on it though.



TWO sad events to record this week. The first is the retirement of Oldham's popular prop forward Leo Casey. Leo has been one of Oldham's best ever signings and servants (twice) in recent times. Never one to take a backward step and always prepared to lead from the front, Leo has been a magnificent servant to Oldham in particular and Rugby League in general. We wish he and all his family all the very best for the future.

The second sad situation is the criticism being mounted against Swinton Chairman Malcolm White. Now Malcolm is a man of strong opinions and is capable of causing an upset or two, but for commitment to his club and the game you'd go a long way to meet someone more dedicated. He has been a model of enthusiasm and his financial input has been enormous. Whatever may be wrong at Swinton I would suggest to their more vociferous 'supporters' that driving out Malcolm White will not improve their lot. Indeed driving out Malcolm White could sound the death knell for the Swinton club.



'THE DON'

ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to January 27th yesteryear

THE rather audacious suggestion made by West Hull, indicating that they were prepared to host today's cup-tie was, not surprisingly, turned down by Oldham. Not only are the Roughyeds well satisfied with the hospitality shown by Ashton United FC, but also they would be foolish to surrender ground advantage to arguably the strongest amateur team in the land given recent performances by other amateur clubs against professional opposition.

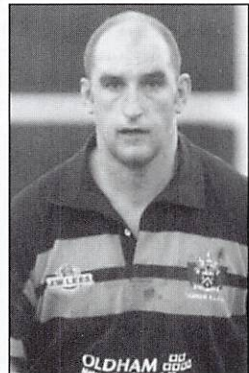
Fifteen years ago Fulham had no option but to travel up to Cumbria when they were drawn away to Kells in the preliminary round of the Challenge Cup. That tie, played at the Recreation Grounds, Whitehaven, ended in a 4-4 draw and so was replayed at Chiswick on Tuesday 27th January 1987. Kells overcame the vast inconvenience of travelling the length of the country for a midweek match to take an 8-6 lead shortly after half time. Unfortunately the exertions of the amateurs told on the hour when Fulham scored three tries in an eight minute spell that enabled them to go on and win 22-14. To make matters worse, Kells made little financial profit from a crowd of 370.

Two years previously on Sunday 27th January 1985, heavy snow and frost caused the postponement of all but two matches. One of the matches that did go ahead was the Challenge Cup, preliminary round tie between Leeds and Bridgend that was staged at Headingley. The under soil heating did the trick on the pitch but the frozen crowd of 3,692 were less than impressed when told that the kick-off would have to be delayed because the visitors were struggling through the snow to reach the ground. They arrived over an hour late!! The frustration of the crowd seemed to spill over onto the pitch and when the match did eventually get under way Bridgend were well and truly walloped

to the tune of 68-6. Incidentally, the other match which beat the weather that day was a Second Division encounter at Roots Hall, Southend where Invicta lost 27-2 against Blackpool Borough. The attendance at that match was 86 and it was not Southend's smallest crowd of the season!!

On Sunday 27th January 1991 three amateur clubs were involved in the preliminary round of the Challenge Cup with two of those drawing home advantage. The odd club out were Cutsyke who travelled over to Salford, lost 44-4, but were rewarded with a lucrative share of the 1,788 gate. Leigh East moved their tie with Bradford Northern from Grasmere Street to Hilton Park, all of 50 yards, and the amateurs put up a superb performance against the First Division outfit before losing 24-12. Three weeks later Bradford met the professional Leigh club in the next round and put 50 past them. Hensingham amateurs of Whitehaven would have liked to have staged their tie against Dewsbury at the Recreation Grounds but with the professional club at home that day they moved seven miles up the coast to Workington. Once again the amateurs put up a brave show before losing 24-7. The

man-of-the-match award for that tie went to the young, tough tackling Hensingham centre who later made two appearances at Wembley with Bradford Bulls. His name - Simon Knox, now one of the stars of the Oldham pack although likely to be absent today because of injury.



Simon Knox

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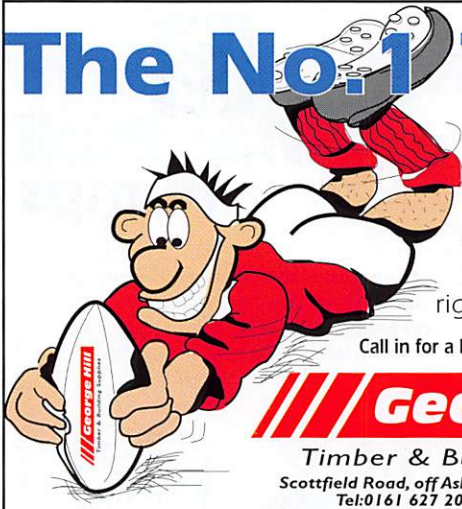
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..... with Shaun Gartland and Mark Knight

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Saturday 2nd February

Workington Town (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Thursday 14th February

Dewsbury Rams (A) At Ram Stadium 7.30 ko

Saturday 2nd March

Rochdale Hornets (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Saturday 9th March

Gateshead Thunder (A) at Bullocksteads Sports Ground 1.30 ko

Saturday 16th March

Batley Bulldogs (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Week ending 6th April Play-off 1 v 4 and 2 v 3

Saturday 13th April Final

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP TABLE 2001-2002

	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Diff	PTS
Huddersfield Giants	7	6	1	0	219	60	159	13
Whitehaven	8	6	1	1	201	82	119	13
Workington Town	8	6	0	2	196	129	67	12
Rochdale Hornets	6	5	1	0	168	78	90	11
Hull Kingston Rovers	6	5	0	1	158	64	94	10
Leigh Centurions	5	4	1	0	180	61	119	9
Barrow Raiders	8	4	0	4	195	150	45	8
Batley Bulldogs	7	4	0	3	109	130	-21	8
Featherstone Rovers	6	3	1	2	141	101	40	7

Sheffield Eagles	7	3	0	4	178	118	60	6
Dewsbury Rams	5	2	0	3	88	98	-10	4
Doncaster Dragons	5	2	0	3	86	108	-22	4
Oldham	5	2	0	3	94	120	-26	4
Chorley Lynx	7	2	0	5	98	164	-66	4
Hunslet Hawks	5	1	0	4	70	178	-108	2
Keighley Cougars	6	1	0	5	78	261	-183	2
Gateshead Thunder	7	0	1	6	62	148	-86	1
Swinton Lions	4	0	0	4	36	115	-79	0
York Wasps	6	0	0	6	46	238	-192	0

NFP Round Up

NO MAJOR surprises last week, although to be fair I had expected Barrow to win at home so all credit to Doncaster for pulling off what is always a difficult task, namely a win at Craven Park. Scrum half Paddy Handley was the star of the show for the Dragons who enjoy a similar record to Oldham.

Huddersfield and Whitehaven cemented their places at the top of the league. The Giants disposed of Batley at Mount Pleasant with Chris Thorman once again in superlative form. Meanwhile, Whitehaven pulled off two wins in a week. On the Wednesday they went to Gateshead and won comfortably 24-2. They followed up with a 32-10 home win against Sheffield, a wider margin of victory than I would have expected. Centre David Seeds extended his scoring run with a try in each game and tops the try scoring chart with 9 tries in eight games.



David Seeds

If you were depressed by Oldham's performance at Dewsbury it might be as well to keep an eye on the Ram's form. The side has settled down after close season rebuilding and is showing good form. Although they lost at Hull KR it was by a margin of only 12-10 and Rovers wingman Alastair McLarron had to pull off a try saving tackle at the death to earn the points.

Rochdale pulled off the biggest win of the day with a 54-0 drubbing of York. A hat-trick here for scrum-half Latham Tawhai.

Workington won more easily than forecast at Swinton. The Lions have ended a stop-start season and are out of sorts. Despite criticisms of the refereeing a 41-6 scoreline suggests a case of burying your head in the sand. Surprisingly Karl Kirkpatrick didn't score any of Workington's points!

That leaves Hunslet who secured their first win of the season against Gateshead. And a distressed Keighley who went down at home to Featherstone, 36-16.

Next Sunday sees the usual crop of intriguing fixtures. Featherstone entertain Whitehaven in a game which will be a real test of the Cumbrians' aspirations. The Rovers have a superb home record and are not often bested

on their own midden: if Paul Cullen's men can pull off a result to match fellow Cumbrians Workington Town they will surely be laying down the gauntlet to all and sundry.

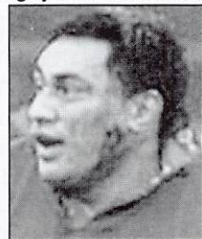
Rochdale's visit to Dewsbury is another top class encounter and the Rams will be keen to show that their re-building is bearing fruit. However, Rochdale these days are a class act and I would be surprised if the Hornets do not come away with the points.

Doncaster will be tested by a resurgent Batley at Belle Vue. The Bulldogs have more quality and resilience this season but I would expect the Dragons to win at home.

Gateshead could add to their points tally with the visit of Swinton. The Lions don't seem able to settle into any sort of rhythm, although they do have the team - on paper at least - to do some damage.

The clash of Sheffield and Barrow at Don Valley is yet another well balanced encounter. Barrow have improved a lot but, then, so have the Eagles. Once again home advantage plus the kicking of Gavin Brown should prove decisive.

Oldham go to Workington and in recent seasons Derwent Park has been a happy hunting ground for the Roughyeds. However, this time the visitors will need all the forward fire power they can muster to match a big home pack on what is sure to be a heavy ground. Keeping Martin Wood and Tane Manihera quiet will also be a tough proposition so I would lean slightly towards a home win in this one.



Tane Manihera

Chorley, meanwhile, will be looking for another home win, although on this occasion I suspect Hull K.R. will be too aggressive and well organised for them. The Robins followers will probably outnumber the home fans, too, and their vociferous support will be a big morale booster for the visitors.

Finally, the other two games should go to form. Hunslet Hawks will have to be at their best to keep down the score away to Huddersfield. And York will do equally well to stay within twenty points of a Leigh team which shows no signs of letting up from the table-topping success of last year.

IN Town TODAY



WEST HULL

IN 1972 Bird's Eye A.R.L.F.C. changed their name and moved from the Hull Works League to the Hull and District League as West Hull A.R.L.F.C. 1974-5 was the club's first major cup winning season when the side won two Yorkshire Cups, the League title, the Council Cup, the South Yorkshire Shield and two 7s competitions.

In more recent times West Hull, now competing in amateur rugby's flagship the National Conference have lifted the Championship Trophy in 1996-7, 1998-9, and 1999-2000 and are currently on course at the top of the Premier League to repeat their success. A complete record of West Hull's exploits can be found on their excellent website at: www.westhullarfc.karoo.net.

The current team is coached by ex-West Hull and Hull F.C. half back PHIL WINDLEY and his assistant ADRIAN HART. The side has been considerably re-built since 1999 largely thanks to the quality of the club's own junior development system. Captain of the side is fullback PAUL WATTS recently recovered from a fractured ankle and probably appearing today off the substitutes bench.

In Watts' absence LEE MORETON has seized his chance having returned to the club after a spell with Norland. A regular tryscorer and a reliable last line of defence.

Wingmen will be STUART LEAKE and GLYNN JONES. Leake has graduated from the Under 18s while Jones is fast and strong and difficult to stop near the line. In the centres Windley recruited STEVE FLETCHER from Norland but today we are likely to see him in the second-row, opening the way for an appearance by local lad TERRY LYNN, a recent star for BARLA GB in the Emerging Nations World Cup. Alongside will be ex-Royal Navy centre CARL MOORE, big and strong and a constant headache for the best of defences. Although also available could be the powerful ex-Doncaster & Hull K.R. player JOHN OKUL, a Papua New Guinean.

At halfback WAYNE HARRIS returns to Wests after a spell away to partner his younger brother MARK HARRIS who has previously been

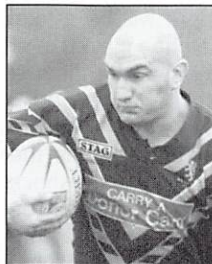


Mark Harris

on the books at Hull F.C. Mark was last season's Player of the Year but he could be about to make his last appearance in the green and gold as he is going to play in Australia for Charters Towers.

In the pack West Hull have always had lots of fire-power and this continues today. Veteran prop DAVE ROE is the best known name in amateur circles, a BARLA tourist to Australia in 1998 and captain of GB against France in 2000 a richly deserved honour for a three time championship winner with Wests and a single season member of the Skirlaugh side which was promoted to the Conference Premier division.

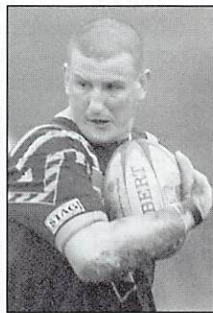
Fellow prop GAVIN LAST is another recruit from Norland and will be a big presence on field today as will another front-rower in MARK JOHNSON a capture from Beverley East Hull whose consistency of performance is a model for aspiring youngster to follow.



Scott Fletcher

With brothers SCOTT and STEVE FLETCHER in the second-row last man down will be CHRIS VERITY a former BARLA tourist and briefly on the books of Doncaster Dragons. Verity is a classy ball-handler whose move from stand-off to loose-forward has benefited both club and player.

Others available for selection are former Featherstone Rovers forward LEE HORSFIELD, who was West Hull Player of the Year in 1998-9; tough tackling DANNY MARQUEZ LAYNEZ; running second row IAN KIRK, the club's longest serving player; ex-Hull K.R. man STEVE RICHARDSON; and nonsense forward MARK COOK.



Chris Verity

And just to put West Hull's quality into perspective remember that they have twice defeated professional opposition in cup competition in the form of Highfield and York!

Walkerbouts

... with Brian Walker



A WARM Oldham welcome to everyone, especially those who have made the trip from Humberside for, this, the third round of the Kelloggs Nutri-Grain sponsored Challenge Cup. We have had many cup tussles with the Hull clubs over the years with occasionally the winner (usually the Hull side) gracing the final.

Weather permitting there will be a total of eighteen third round matches played over this weekend all of which have one thing in common, come April 27th none of the 36 participating clubs will have won through to the final at Murrayfield. And as far as the anticipation of a cup shock the only shock would be if one of the amateur sides FAILED to topple one of the part time professional Northern Ford Premiership clubs.

The expectations of any club competing in the early rounds should be no more than a boost in match takings and possibly a slice of the compensatory prize money and, obviously in the case of the amateur side, the kudos of beating a 'pro' club.

In 1990, Oldham, then a second division side failed at the last hurdle to reach Wembley losing narrowly in the semi to premier side Warrington having earlier topped World Club Champions Widnes. But because of the formation of Super League and its embracement of full time professionalism the occasions when the part timers have toppled the elite have now become almost as rare as hens teeth.

Back in 1996, the very first season of

Super League, those changes hadn't been in place long enough to be as effective as they are today and so the Challenge Cup that season continued to throw up the unexpected, with lower division sides Dewsbury, Widnes and Salford claiming the scalp of Super League's London, Workington and Wigan. Alas, in the fifty seven ensuing inter-division Challenge Cup encounters Super League clubs have suffered just one reverse, Leigh beating Salford during last seasons competition.

Recent fourth round results of the ilk Leeds 106 Swinton 10 and Wigan 98 Whitehaven 4 have further served to highlight the ever widening gulf in playing standards, so its high time then that the RFL re-thought not just the structure of the competition but the future for the competing smaller clubs.


The anticipated restructuring of the sport into five divisions for season 2003 will have a bearing on which clubs are invited into the Challenge Cup but surely every club that enters any cup competition should have some reasonable level of expectancy of reaching the final so a sensible idea (which means it probably wouldn't stand a cat in Hades chance of consideration) would be to let just Super League clubs compete for the Challenge Cup and the rest compete for a Challenge Plate with both finals to be played on the same day at the same venue similar to the format of the Championship finals of the late eighties and early nineties. Or is that too simple?

One final point: The Chairman of the RFL and Chairman of Wembley Stadium Ltd Sir Rodney Walker has announced that almost certainly the final will be back at Wembley in time for the 2006 competition and arrangements are now advanced to play the 2003 and 2005 finals at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff so that leaves the decision of which venue for just 2004. The possibilities seem to be between Dublin or the new Commonwealth Stadium, Manchester. A weekend in the Fair City or an afternoon in Ardwick? Some choice.


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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we offer a warm welcome to the players, officials and supporters of the West Hull club who come with a current reputation which is second to none in the amateur game. No doubt their spirits will be high and today's match is much anticipated. On one previous occasion the "Roughyeds" played hosts to a Humberside amateur outfit in the Challenge Cup and that match is the subject of our feature today.

The date was Wednesday February 28th 1979 when, after several postponements, Oldham agreed to play the Ace amateur club at Salford while Watersheddings was still frost-bound. Indeed this was the first match for the club since Boxing Day such was the ferocity of the weather conditions. In the event less than a thousand hearty souls made the trip down to the Willows. Since the draw was made Oldham resolved not to under estimate their opponents and after a Pete Jewitt try converted by Eric Fitzsimons on nine minutes, the visitors gave as good

as they got for the next half hour. However, two tries each just one minute either side of the interval virtually settled the tie. Full back Martin Murphy had been the pick of the Oldham players but just before the break he had to retire injured to be replaced by Geoff Munro. Within seconds the substitute had scored after good work from Bob Blackwood and Jimmy Arnold and it was Blackwood again who set up Fitzsimons for the third try in the first minute of the second half. The same player converted his score and when six minutes later Mike Elliott finished off a sweeping move to score in the corner the match was always going to be beyond the amateurs. Nevertheless they plugged away and were rewarded with a try from scrum half John Robinson converted by his half back partner Geoff Kealty after 56 minutes.

John Patterson was now running the show from the base of the scrum and further unconverted tries, a second for Jewitt and a beauty from Phil Larder stretched the Roughyed's lead before a late, long range, drop goal from Fred Hall concluded the scoring to leave Oldham winners by 23 - 5.



Martin Murphy and Geoff Munro both turned in impressive full back displays against the Ace amateur club of Hull in 1979.

Oldham Team v Ace Amateurs

February 28th 1979

M Murphy,

M Elliott, P Larder, S Lund, E Fitzsimons,

J Arnold, J Patterson,

B Connor, R O'Mahoney, F Hall,

A Forster, R Blackwood,

P Jewitt.

Subs: G Munro, C Hawkyard.

Attendance: 865

Referee: Mr R Moore - Wakefield.



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A Chance to Meet . . .

. . . JON GODDARD

with David McGealy, Radio Cavell 1350AM



Where were you born and when?

I was born on 21st June 1982 in Pontefract General Infirmary, Yorkshire lad, born and bred?

Yep, I've always lived in the Pontefract and Castleford area. That's what I've been brought up with, Castleford rugby league and that.

What about your family? Who is in your family?

I've got a sister, mum and dad. My dad's always been a big influence on me from an early age with the rugby league.

I was going to ask you about that, your first memory of rugby league and where does the RL contact come from. Is it in the family?

It's not in the family at all. My dad's never ever been interested in rugby league until I first started playing it and his friends then got him into watching Castleford. Then we went down to watch Castleford play on a weekly basis every home game and I got into playing for a local amateur

side.

How old were you?

Nine years old, I think. Since then because I've got into it my dad's shown an interest so that he could help me. He's been good like that. Of course he has to get interested because he had to ferry you everywhere, that's what dads do. Yes he's the one who's always taken me everywhere, and my mother as well, so they've been really supportive of me.

So if it's not in the family what's your first memory of rugby league?

My first memory must be watching a game down at Castleford when I was about seven or eight before I started playing proper myself. I was really enthusiastic as far as I remember.

What about the first game that you played?

First game that I played? The first game was when I played for Smawthorne Panthers in Castleford and I think I scored. Well that's the one I remember. I don't remember the others.

How old were you then?

I think I was just turned ten.

A big lad now, just turned ten!

I used to play prop then and now I'm playing wing, centre, full back, so it's a bit of a change!

Let's go through your career. Who did you first sign for?

I signed for Castleford, I played for the Academy and I must have impressed them because they then signed me. Then I came to Oldham on 'loan' for the rest of the season, unless obviously Cas' want me back.

Why did you come to Oldham?

First of all it was suggested to me by Graham Steadman, the coach at

Castleford who knows Mike Ford really well from playing with him at Cas, and I remember him from when he used to play for Castleford. Graham guaranteed me that he was a really good coach and I trusted him on that. I came down here training and right away at the first training session I knew exactly what he was like and how good a bloke he was and that he's have a good influence on me. So I knew straight away that I wanted to play for Oldham.

Trouble is he's moved on! I'd better ask, have you any Irish connections and you don't fancy rugby union do you?

Well I've got no Irish connections whatsoever, but I did play rugby union when I was at school. I used to captain the school side, I wasn't a bad rugby union player but I think I just enjoyed the rugby league a lot more. I think we'd better be thankful you've got no Irish connection.

Who's been the greatest influence on you in the game of rugby league?

I think the first big influence on me was my dad, for supporting me for all those years. A big influence has been Allan Agar from Castleford as he coached me for the Academy and I can tell Mike Ford would have been a big influence if he'd have stayed with us. But hopefully this season can be the season for me to become a better player and for me to improve on all the things I've wanted to improve on in the past.

What's was the most memorable moment so far in your rugby league career?

It's a really personal moment but I think it was when I played for the Academy for Castleford when I scored three tries, the winner as well and got Man of the Match. It was just one of those games that you'll never forget because you know you did everything and you couldn't have done any more. Do you know what I mean? I got all the limelight and it was a really good game. That's when I realised how good it was to be a rugby player and why I

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wanted to do it. 'Cloud Nine' was alright that day? Yes, "Cloud Nine" for all that week until the next week came and we played someone else.

If that was your best moment, what was your worst moment in rugby league, and don't tell me it was when Fordy said "I'm off to Ireland"?

No, no, definitely not. I'm pretty lucky I've never had a moment that stand out as being that bad. I've had lots of good moments in rugby and I think I've made a good decision coming to Oldham so hopefully this will be another good moment for me.

Who's the biggest character you've come across in the game?

One of my close mates at the moment is a 'big character' down at Castleford. Wayne Godwin. Not only is he a really good rugby player but he's an example when he's on the rugby field. But off the field he's always got a story to tell and he's always in the thick of everything. So I suppose he's the biggest character by far!

What's your ambition in rugby league? Where do you want to go?

Well I'm with Oldham this year but, no offence to Oldham, my ambitions are a lot higher than NFP. I'd like to be in Super League and this time next year I'd like a full time contract and be in the Castleford side. My ambition is to go a lot further than that. It's just a matter of time to see how capable I am of achieving those goals isn't it? It doesn't stop at being in the Super League side at Castleford. Once I'm there I'm sure there'll be another goal I'm heading for.

Final question, tell us a secret about one of your team mates at Oldham or at Castleford?

I think there's a lot that I couldn't tell you because they're too bad! So I'd better not say anything.

This interview will be broadcast in full on Radio Cavell - 1350AM Oldham's Hospital Radio next Friday during 'Sports Preview' between 5.00 and 6.00pm.



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Iva Slateloose



The Roughyed in his blindness wants to know:

1. Who ordered the clearing of Greg McCallum's office at Red Hall? (The initials NW spring to mind).
 2. Who does Maurice Lindsay mean when he refers to 'detractors from within the game' and 'people who are just there for a free ride or a junket'? (the initials RW could be appropriate, but I think there might be a few others, too).
 3. Which Leeds players missed the flight to South Africa because their passports were out of date? [Okay I know – Karl Pratt (aptly named or what?) and Jamie Jones-Buchanan (now to be known as Jamie nice-but-dim, perhaps?)].
 4. Which Swinton fan doesn't like Malcolm White? (there aren't many to pick from and even fewer who can operate a computer!)
 5. Who said: "for Featherstone to become a flamboyant club it needs someone with freshness and energy to take over?" Now there's two words you don't often see together. Featherstone and flamboyant!
 6. How can Rugby League World have a Player of the Month for January with three weekends still to go?
 7. Who said, "in 1999 Huddersfield Giants finished bottom of Super League and APPLIED FOR RELEGATION?" Now there's a novelty, actually applying to go down. (Oldham Bears should have tried that because a temporary merger and a handout follow and a year later, hey presto, you keep your identity and sail on as usual).
 8. Who said: "As a troubleshooter, Sir Rodney Walker is in the Clint Eastwood class"? If only he WERE the man with no name!
And who do you see in the Lee Van Cleef role? Is it Greg, Chris or Maurice? Or Eli Wallach? Gary, Nigel or – gender change – Kath?
 9. Whose knickers were in a twist when he came out with: "These NFP overseas coaches should think themselves very lucky. They have got full-time jobs, and then come and criticise those of us who have to work, either by running businesses or working for someone else, and they still grumble when things don't go right"? Bitchy, or what? (And it won't be the only time the lights go out on Hull KR this season either!)
 10. What is an Implementation Committee and what does it implement? And if anyone answers 'strategy' I'll stuff the bullshit down their throat!
 11. Who killed Henry the Hornet?
 12. Who was Hurst and who made him cross?
 13. Is there anything Don Yates and Michael Turner DON'T know about Rugby League?
- AND FINALLY: Famous last words – half an hour before kick-off a week last Saturday at Greenfield . . . "I don't know where Rangers' next win is going to come from". Saddleworth then beat Woolston 15-14! (And I'm not saying who said it!)

Wilson's Wisdom

. . . with Ian Wilson

OH DEAR! What a performance at Dewsbury! We lacked aggression in defence, to, an even greater extent than had been the case previously this season - whereas our success last year was surely built on the quality, commitment and whole-heartedness, not to mention organisation, of our defensive effort.

And after yet another poor sixth-tackle kick, and a feeble effort to tackle Dewsbury's full-back as he began to run the ball out. I saw one of the saddest sights I have seen for a long time. Phil Farrell, whose commitment at least could never be doubted, was desperately trying to cover. As he realised he didn't have the pace, he forlornly looked around, only to realise that none of his team mates were making similar efforts, and that a try was about to be conceded.

We know that we do not have the players, yet at least, to dazzle by our flowing and inventive play - but we didn't last season either. However, how can what was basically the same group of blokes who did us so proud in 2001 put in a performance like that?

But then came Chorley, and no tries conceded, against a side with quite a few decent players, and which had already beaten Swinton and Whitehaven this season. Seven tries scored, superb straight line defence, and real commitment to defend the line, for the full 80 minutes. (Incidentally, have we ever put out a side with a lower average age than 17

who wore Oldham shirts v Chorley?).

The reason for the difference? It must, surely be a very small change in attitudes. I understand that the whole club response to the performance at Dewsbury was as constructive, as well as self-critical, as it could have been - and all credit to all concerned for that. It says a lot about the spirit in the whole club.

I make no excuses for going back to three previous occasions on which, for one reason or another, the attitude was less than 100%, and the outcome as depressing as at Dewsbury - 25.3.01 at Featherstone; 29.9.56 at Liverpool City, which the late Dennis Ayres referred to in the excellent piece printed in the Chorley programme; and 19.2.84 at Whitehaven, when we lost heavily to a side which had previously lost every game that season. They all show how narrow a margin there is, in RL as in other professional sport, between the right attitude and something less.

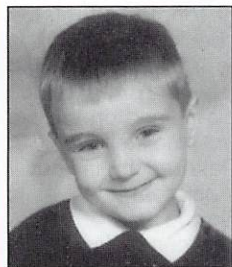
I am not suggesting, of course, that the players on any of those occasions set out to lose - unlike, apparently, in a recent Agen v Ebbw Vale R.U. game! It is just that the difference between competing teams is so small - and probably much smaller than most spectators realise - that if one goes into a match with minds not properly focussed, the outcome is usually as we saw at Dewsbury. It just shows how thankful we should be that such occasions are so rare.

Junior Roughyeds



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HELLO to all the Junior Roughyeds. We give a warm welcome to everyone from West Hull and hope it's an enjoyable game.



Michael Tibbs

Michael Tibbs is the mascot for today's game. It's the first time Michael has been a mascot as he is one of our newest members this season. Michael is 6 years old and goes to Littlemoor Primary School. Michael's favourite player is Bryan Henare. Enjoy yourself Michael.

We go from a newest member to one of our oldest members - **Megan Hartley**. Megan is our mascot for our away game at Workington. Megan is 11 years old and goes to every home and away match and she says her favourite player is Jason



Megan Hartley

Clegg. Her hobbies, as well as rugby, include music, chess and netball - have a good day Megan.

On a sad note the Junior Roughyeds would like to say a fond farewell to one of our favourite players - Leo Casey - Leo has been a regular Junior Roughyed fan and has attended

nearly every meeting and has joined in the fun - remember the swimming party! We decided that Leo enjoyed the party more than the children. The lifeguards in the end got fed up shouting at Leo and let him get on with diving off the monster. Leo said he ached for a week! Thanks Leo and Helen for all your help and we wish you all the best of luck.

Adele Knowles

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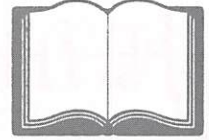
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Club Call continued on page 25

Amateur Album

.....WITH DON YATES



DURING the past twenty-odd years several family connections have shared in the success enjoyed by St.Anne's, The Grimbleys, the Deakins of course, and the Kays have all been prominent, but it is the Grahams, noted for sheer hard work and dedication, both on and off the pitch, who are featured today.



Paul Graham receives 1995 Standard Cup Final Man-of-the-Match Trophy

Second-row forward Paul Graham began his career at Waterhead with their under-17s team. At that time Waterhead did not run an under-19s squad so when it was time for Paul to move up to the older age group he moved on to St.Anne's where he has stayed ever since. There is no doubt that Waterhead's loss has been a massive gain for St.Anne's. Since joining the Saints in the early 1980s Paul has rarely had a poor game, indeed many knowledgeable followers of the green and gold claim that he has never had a poor game. Although not the biggest back-row forward of all time, Paul packed plenty of venom and energy into his game. His talents were recognised by town team and county officials but Paul

declined their approaches, he just wanted to play for Saints. He appeared in six Standard Cup Finals, winning the Ben Powell Trophy as man-of-the-match in both the 1990 and 1995 finals. He was also a star performer for Saints in the 1994 Lancashire Cup Final when St.Anne's almost toppled Woolston Rovers, at that time the best amateur club in the land, Paul cancelled a holiday in Benidorm to play that evening in a match that proved to be an epic staged on the old Watersheddings stadium. Woolston won 10-2, a score line which flattered them, but it would have been much different had Saints converted persistent second half pressure into points. Playing in the centre for Saints against Woolston was Paul's younger brother Mark, who is also a veteran of six Standard Cup Finals. After starring for Saddleworth Rangers at under-17 and under-19 levels, Mark was persuaded to join Saints by Paul. An outstanding and versatile back who plays equally well at either centre or fullback, Mark did take up the offer of representative rugby. He played regularly for the town team and in 1991 was selected for the Lancashire open age squad. Unfortunately injury restricted his county appearances to just one cap. Mark has also experienced club rugby in Australia where he played for the Port McQuarrie club, one of the most enjoyable periods of his career. The third member of the Graham family to serve St.Anne's so loyally is Paul and Mark's mother Brenda. She has worked tirelessly in the club canteen for the past ten years, serving players and officials with pre and post match meals that have been the envy of the amateur game.

Unfortunately arthritis has caused Brenda to give up these duties whilst both Paul and Mark have reluctantly stepped down after putting their bodies on the line for the past twenty years. The connection with Saints has not been severed completely, however, for earlier this season, Paul sponsored a Standard Cup-tie when, despite the match being postponed, he and his family enjoyed a superb afternoon. Hopefully there will be many more superb afternoons for the Graham family when they visit Higginshaw Road in the years to come.

CLUB CALL

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Our Club Shop on Union Street is now fully staffed between 9am - 4pm Monday-Friday and between 9am - 1pm on Saturday, where you can buy tickets for all our home games in advance. **The Club Shop number is 0161 627 2141.**

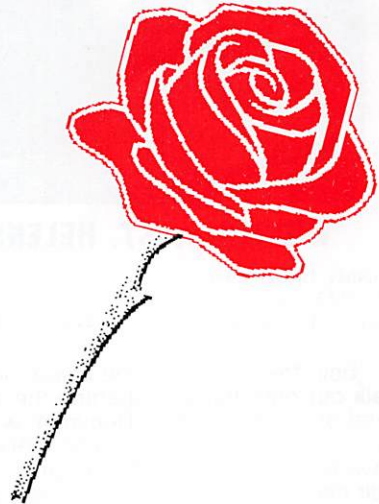
Also we run coaches from Oldham to Hurst Cross for our home games and details are available from our **Club Office** on **0161 628 3677**. Also a ring and ride scheme in which we run a coach from 2 car parks in Ashton.

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The Whistle Blower

..... With Sam Shepherd

Sam Shepherd, perhaps Oldham's most famous International Rugby League referee and assessor, is a new columnist for the matchday magazine.

MONDAY 27 September 1965 saw the arrival of the "Floodlight Era" at Widnes and one of the most bizarre incidents in my refereeing career. The switching on of the new floodlights was to be marked by a game against the old enemy, St Helens, in front of a crowd of 23,000. I was to referee the game which was described by my fellow referees in the area as a "tough 'un".

Vince Karalius, team mates for many years at St. Helens were now in opposition. In the Saints pack, Tembey, Watson, Warlow, Mantle and Laughton would face Karalius, Measures, Gayden and Northey all formerly Saints men. "Mouth watering", some said.

The players were tense; there were a few mistakes in the opening minutes and some bone crunching crash tackles. I awarded the odd scrum and an occasional penalty to keep the teams outside and away from each other. Then a play the ball offence resulted in me awarding Widnes a penalty 15 yards out from the St Helens posts. The Widnes full back came up, placed the ball carefully, took the kick and the ball sailed over the cross bar, plum between the uprights and on into the night. GOAL! - To my horror both touch judges signalled NO GOAL! - There was utter disbelief on the face of the kicker who gave me to understand, in Rugby League language, of course, that he was not going to move until I "gave it". To his horror I told St Helens to play on and they duly kicked off from the "25".

Only a few referees in the crowd could understand my decision and the Widnes supporters certainly told me, in no uncertain terms what they thought of me. In fact a referee cannot overrule the touch judges. He can only intervene if they disagree between themselves; similarly the referee has no jurisdiction on touchline or touch in goal decisions.. Only once in my 15 years experience as a senior referee has a referee disregarded a decision on a goal kick by the touch judges; in a club match against this Australians at Castleford and he went from Grade 1 to Grade 5 overnight!

The end of that game came (not soon enough for me) and my colleagues and I were escorted up the tunnel to the dressing room where we stayed for over an hour to avoid the press.

Widnes had lost very narrowly in a low scoring game and ironically the Widnes full back who had kicked the disputed goal was none other than Robin Whitfield who would later become a top grade referee. Both touch judges were relieved of their duties soon afterwards.

To cap it all - it was my birthday!!!

WIDNES

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PROGRAMME



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MONDAY, 27th SEPTEMBER, 1965
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Both the teams and the officials were to walk out onto the pitch behind the military band of the Lancashire Regiment who had just returned from overseas service in Swaziland. The band was accompanied by their mascot, an enormous goat. We were all to be presented to the Earl of Derby, who at that time was the President of the Rugby Football League.

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TOPIC OF THE DAY

...THE 100 GREATEST RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS - EVER!

(Well, 1951 to 2001) Part II

90 JOHN MANTLE A convert from Newport R.U. in 1965 John Mantle became one of St. Helens best ever forwards, first in the second row and later at prop. Later in his career he appeared for Salford, Leigh and Barrow. A 1966 Australian tourist Mantle declined a second tour in 1970. He accumulated a record six Floodlit trophy final appearances, six Championship Finals and numerous Lancashire Cup Finals. Truly a man for all seasons.

89. DAVE VALENTINE Huddersfield's Scottish loose-forward Valentine was the man who captained Great Britain to victory in the first ever World Cup of 1954 despite being given no chance of success. A makeshift British side responded to the Scot's remarkable leadership qualities in an era when Valentine's Huddersfield side were a match for anyone in the league.

88 JOHN HOLMES Originally a full back, John Holmes developed at the height of his career into one of the best ball-playing stand-offs in Leeds' history. A master craftsman GB international Holmes specialised in the short, 'hanging' step-away pass to put his second rows or centres into a gap. Played in the 1972 and 1977 World Cups and masterminded Leeds' Wembley wins in 1977 and 1978.

87 SID LITTLE A convert from Harlequins and Cumberland R.U. Oldham second-row Sid Little won ten Great Britain caps and was a star of the great Roughyeds side of the '50s. Known for his ability to break the defensive line Little notched 40 tries in 249 appearances.



86 GEOFF GUNNEY A 1954 Lion and 1957 World Cup representative Hunslet second-row Gunney had a long and distinguished career. The last man to leave the field at the end of Hunslet's final game at their old Parkside ground in 1973 he was instrumental in the creation of New Hunslet who played at Elland Road. However it was on the field where Gunney's tough tackling and rampaging running did the talking. Appeared for his beloved Hunslet in both the classic 1965 Wembley Final and the 1959 Championship Final in a 22 year career.

85 STEVE HAMPSON Wigan fullback Hampson was the outstanding player in his position for a decade and had all attributes required of a modern number one. Pacy, sound in the tackle and the greatest fielder of the 'bomb' I have ever seen. Like all his colleagues of the '80s and early '90s G.B. fullback Hampson accumulated a string of winners medals.

84 ALBERT BLAN The two divisional experiment of 1962-3 and 1963-4 saw Swinton walk off with the Championship in both years. Albert Blan was the inspirational captain, loose-forward and goal kicker of one of the Lions best ever sides. A classy ball-handler, Blan created countless openings for a Swinton threequarter line which was the best of its day.

83 JEFF STEVENSON Leeds, York and Great Britain scrum half Stevenson was a 'little master' in the days when he had rivals like Alex Murphy and Oldham's Frank Pitchford. When he led Britain out at Wigan against Australia in 1959 he became the only York player ever to captain his country. 20 caps are adequate testimony to his quicksilver skills and opportunism.

82 DAVID TOPLISS Wakefield, Hull, Oldham and Great Britain stand-off Topliss was one of the great playmakers of modern times. He captained Hull to Cup Final success (18-9) in an Elland Road replay in 1982 the club's first such triumph since 1914. He had also led Wakefield at Wembley in 1979 where his performance in defeat won him the Lance Todd Trophy. Unfortunately he could not repeat his feats with Oldham.



81 KEN TRAILL A 1950 and 1954 British tourist Bradford and Halifax loose-forward Traill was one of that long line of ball-players who have graced the number 13 shirt (though in those days Yorkshire sides numbered their loose-forward 14). For some time Traill was good enough to force Dave Valentine into the second-row, a measure of the man's self assurance in guiding his team around the field.

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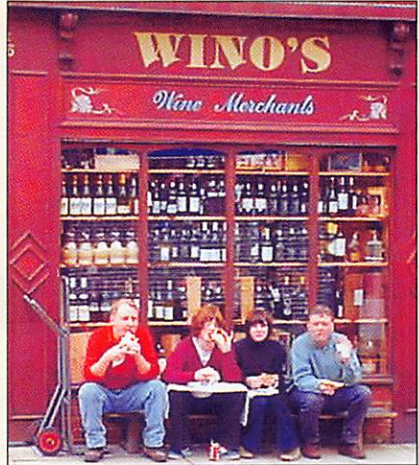
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Fixtures

Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
2	SWINTON LIONS	F - A	
		P	
16	Hull K.R.	10-26	2032
23	ROCHDALE HORNETS	P	
30	Leigh	12-46	3388
JANUARY			
6	YORK	32-16	1130
13	Dewsbury Rams	6-30	1410
20	CHORLEY LYNX	34-2	1114
27	WEST HULL (3rd Round)H		
FEBRUARY			
3	Workington	A	
10	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (4th Round)		
17	GATESHEAD	H	
24	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (5th Round)		
MARCH			
3	Huddersfield	A	
10	DONCASTER DRAGONS	H	
15	Sheffield Eagles	A	
24	FEATHERSTONE	H	
29	Rochdale Hornets	A (Nat Cup)	
APRIL			
1	DEWSBURY RAMS	H (Nat Cup)	
7	Huddersfield	A (Nat Cup)	
14	KEIGHLEY	H (Nat Cup)	
21	Hunslet Hawks	A (Nat Cup)	
MAY			
5	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H (Nat Cup)	
12	National Cup Quarter Finals		
19	National Cup Semi Finals		
26	National Cup Final		
JUNE			
2	Keighley Cougars	A	
9	WHITEHAVEN	H	
16	Barrow	A	
23	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H	
30	Hunslet Hawks	A	
JULY			
7	LEIGH	H	
14	Chorley Lynx	A	
21	Whitehaven	A	
28	HUDDERSFIELD	H	
AUGUST			
4	HUNSLET HAWKS	H	
11	Batley Bulldogs	A	
18	Rochdale Hornets	A	
25	WORKINGTON	H	
SEPTEMBER			
1	York	A	
8	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H	

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Gavin DODD

2

Stuart LEAKE

Gareth BARBER

3

Terry LYNN

Jon GODDARD

4

Carl MOORE

Joe McNICHOLAS

5

Glynn JONES

John BRADDISH

6

Wayne HARRIS

Keith BRENNAN

7

Mark HARRIS

Jason CLEGG

8

Gavin LAST

John HOUGH

9

Pete STEPHENSON

Lee DORAN

10

Mark JOHNSON

Phil FARRELL

11

Scott FLETCHER

Bryan HENARE

12

Steve FLETCHER

Dave GIBBONS

13

Chris VERITY

Neil RODEN

14

Paul WATTS

Andy PROCTOR

15

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