

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS AT ASHTON U.F.C. SUN 24TH MARCH 2002 KO 3.30PM Official Matchday March 2002 KO 3.30PM

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IN THE HOT SEAT

with Christopher Hamilton

WELCOME back to Hurst Cross for today's game against a Featherstone Rovers side currently lying fourth in the table.

Featherstone have been consistent play off contenders for the past 3 years so their present position is one they have worked hard for.

Whilst knowing that today's game will be another 'toughie' our lads go into it full of confidence after recent performances which culminated in what was probably one of our best attacking display in a long time in the first half at Sheffield, and they coupled that with an excellent defensive display throughout the game.

The support, once again, at Sheffield was excellent and remained vocal all the game. Please keep up that support as I have said on many occasion it is greatly appreciated and does make a difference.

We also have another new addition to the squad in Steve Molloy. We are delighted to have Steve back at the club on a permanent basis and are obviously hoping that he will help significantly to the teams progress on the field.

I am sure that you will all be glad to see him back in an Oldham shirt and will give him a real Roughyeds' reception.

Over the last 2 or 3 weeks the squad has increased significantly in size and we are now approaching the number we want to be at to mount a serious challenge in the league. Darryl Lacey has also re-signed with us and I'm sure it won't be long before you see him in first team action.

John Harbin will also be happy that his major concern each week is who to leave out and as I have said before his influence on the playing side is growing each week and is there for all to see.

Today is the last league game for a few weeks as we start the National Cup Programme, which with the team in our section, will be just as intense but it is important that we sign off with a win.

Please keep up your support it is vital to the existence of the club and if possible encourage others to come with you.

Enjoy the game.

Chris

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLDHAM RLFC (1997) LTD.

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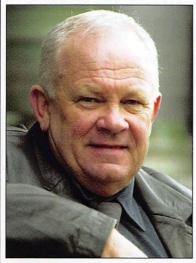


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COACH'S COMMENTS... with John Harbin



AT THE game at Sheffield last Friday I thought the first 40 minutes were the best rugby we have played all season. I was very pleased that much that we had practiced on the training field came off. We are not, however, getting carried away there is still along way to go in this long season. I was certainly pleased we made a better start and hadn't to play any catch up rugby.

Everybody played well - there was no weakest link - and I was particularly pleased with our defence. The other major plus for us was the number of supporters from Oldham in the Don Valley Stadium and the vocal support they gave to their team. I sometimes think the fans don't realise how much the players appreciate the fans getting behind them and it certainly helped on Friday.

I was very fortunate to have an excellent relationship with the fans at Wakefield and from what I have seen so far I am sure that is going to continue here at Oldham. I have always found that rugby league fans in general appreciate commitment and you certainly know we're giving you that here.

This week we welcome Featherstone - another tough task for our lads. Featherstone have only lost 2 games all season and certainly look good for a top 5 place. We will have to ensure that we go out with the same enthusiasm and commitment that we did against Sheffield last week.

Finally can I take this opportunity of welcoming Steve Molloy, Anthony Murray, Dave Foster and Chris Campbell to the club. I am certain they will enjoy their time here and I'm sure, the first time they step out onto the pitch, they will receive a typical Roughyed's reception.

John





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AS THOSE of you who read the programme from our last home game probably already knew Geoff Cooke, who has edited this programme since the formation of the new club has been forced to give up the job for the time being. Taking over from him will be very difficult as he has a far wider knowledge of the game than I have, but we will do our best.

Geoff and his wife Majorie are at present watching England's cricket team in the Test Matches against New Zealand. Certainly, if the First Test is anything to go by, they will be having a great time and probably more than making up for missing their beloved rugby here at home. It was while writing these introductory paragraphs that I decided on my subject for the first IN YER FACE I shall put my initials to - VOLUNTEERS.

Geoff and Majorie are typical of the many fans, without whom a modern rugby league club, in this day and age, would not be able to exist. They support the club at home and away are always willing to give of their time freely to assist the club. This must however not be seen as blind agreement to all the club does. Anybody who knows Geoff must realise he has strong opinions, not always in line with club thinking, which he is not afraid to voice. He does not, however, spend his time knocking the club on websites but gives his opinion and then gets on with helping the club he loves so dearly.

This whole programme is testimony is others like Geoff, a willing and informed group of volunteers and fans, who eagerly give of their time to write articles week after week to entertain and inform spectators with what is surely one of the most professionally produced programmes, not only in rugby league but in sport in general.

This attitude, I have discovered since joining the club six months ago, is typical of many unsung heroes, whose love of the club and game in general, is such that they give up hours of their spare time to assist the club in times, which there is no doubt, are very hard financially.

I have supported the club for forty eight years but have to admit had absolutely no idea of what it takes to run a club and put on a rugby league game until I became part of it. My eyes have been opened and I realise how naive I have been in the past in some of my criticisms and grumbles. I suppose I must have thought it was rather glamourous to be concerned with the backroom team of a rugby league club and, I suppose, even more glamourous to be a DIRECTOR. That view is soon corrected when you see Sean Whitehead putting up the rugby posts at Hurst Cross in the face of a raging gale and hail and sleet before a game. Or Chris Hamilton packing his car with all the paraphernalia required for a home game, delivering it to Hurst Cross and then having to return it all to the Union Street offices when everyone else has gone home at 7.00pm on a Sunday night.

All this is done because of an inherent love of the game, nothing else surely, could persuade people to make the personal sacrifices they do whilst, at the same time, receiving personal abuse and criticism from fans who are not happy with things.



We all know this has been a relatively disappointing start to the season, after the excitement of last year's Grand Final. The problem of the ground, Mike Ford leaving, the loss of Simon Knox to Leigh and the long term injury to Tommy Hodgkinson (our two main close season signings) would have floored a lesser club than Oldham. But we are strong; we have survived. There is still a long way to go, but we have an excellent new coaching set up after the performances at Huddersfield and

Tommy Hodgkinson

Sheffield, I for one am optimistic. This optimism was enhanced when I saw how comprehensively Huddersfield beat Hornets this weekend.

The way ahead for me is clear. We need less negative knocking of the club. Instead we should all follow the example of the real supporters I have talked about and this will, I am confident, lead to another successful season and, we all hope, a permanent home in Oldham CNM



HE DON ON THIS DAY Don Yates looks back to March 24th yesteryear

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS travel across the Pennines today exactly fifty seven years after making a similar trip to face Oldham. This afternoon the clubs meet at Hurst Cross in the Northern Ford Premiership but on Saturday 24th March 1945 they met at Watersheddings in the second leg of a wartime Challenge Cup, first round tie. The Roughveds had won the first leg 18-4 at Post Office Road and they coasted through the second round by winning again, this time 8-7. Winger George Aspinall scored both Oldham tries that afternoon and prop forward Harry Ogden landed a goal. Yorkshire County second-row forward Ernie Wright scored the Rovers' try whilst fullback Irving Barraclough and standoff Dick Allman each landed a goal. Unfortunately the Roughyeds crashed out in the second round against Keighley.

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breaking

17.577

Oldham's hopes

at

defeats

1934

in

appearing

Wembley have ended

at the semi-final stage

on no fewer than

seven occasions. The

occurred on Saturday

Road, Swinton where

Widnes defeated the

were



Thomas Rees

Roughyeds 7-4. Second-row forward Albert Ratcliffe scored the only try of that tie. A couple of penalties from fullback Tommy Rees were all that Oldham could muster.

Although the Roughyeds have never appeared at Wembley, several lads from the town have. One such player is the former St. Annes junior Matt Calland who made a couple of appearances beneath the twin towers during his spell with Bradford. It was

on this day in 1991, Sunday 24th March, that Calland made his senior debut after joining Rochdale Hornets from junior rugby. He later moved to Featherstone and made 45 appearances for the Rovers between 1993 and 1995 when he scored 27 tries. Calland then joined Bradford and later moved on to Hull before returning to Rochdale where he still plays.

Several outstanding players have enjoyed careers in which they have played for both Oldham and Featherstone Rovers. They include Billy Stott, the first winner of the Lance Todd Trophy, international prop David Hobbs, and another couple of outstanding and well travelled front row forwards, Terry Clawson and Terry Ramshaw. Both began their professional careers with Rovers. Clawson, a Featherstone junior, made 216 appearances and scored 41 tries and 487 goals between 1957 and 1964. Ramshaw, from nearby Castleford,, made exactly 100 appearances and scored 27 tries between 1961 and 1966. Their careers at Oldham were not so successful. Clawson made just 22 appearance, scoring a try in his 33 appearances around two years later. In between times they both did the rounds. meeting eyeball to eyeball on Saturday 24th March 1973. The occasion was the Players Trophy Final on the old Fartown ground. Huddersfield where Leeds met Salford. Clawson lined up with Leeds, Ramshaw lined up with Salford. The two clubs had won their respective county cups earlier in the season and, with both having a reputation for fast, open rugby, an entertaining match was predicted. Unfortunately for the 9,932 spectators, the match failed to live up to expectations. Salford began well and took a 5-0 lead but by half time Leeds led 10-5, Clawson having landed a penalty and conversion. The only scored in the second half were a penalty to each side so Leeds held on to win 12-7.



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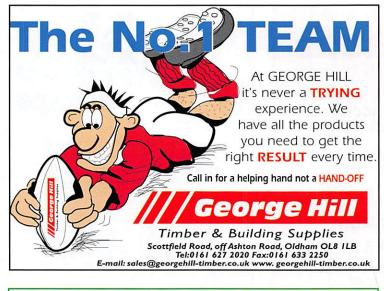






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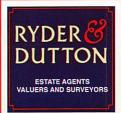
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with Shaun Gartland and Mark Knight

ACADEMY

OLDHAM will compete in the eleven team Academy U19 First Division which kicks off the weekend of the 4th of May whilst the Academy U19 Championship Division consisting of 14 teams will commence their league programme the weekend of the 6th of April. There will be a top six play-off in both competitions but no knockout cup.

Fixtures will be published shortly.

	S	pring	1 C	up				1
	Ρ	W	D	Ĺ	F	Α	DP	TS
Rochdale Hornets	4	4	0	0	109	32	77	8
Batley Bulldogs	4	3	0	1	113	52	61	6
Oldham	2	1	0	1	28	44	-16	2
Workington Town	3	0	0	3	26	86	-60	0
Dewsbury Rams		0	0	3	30	92	-62	0



Try Scorers in the Alliance win at Dewsbury, Gareth Barber, Paul Bennett and James Kirkland.

Gareth Barber





Paul Bennett

James Kirkland

U21 ALLIANCE SPRING CUP FIXTURES (After Withdrawal of Gateshead) 18-12 Thursday 14th February **Dewsbury Rams** (A) Won Saturday 2nd March **Rochdale Hornets** (A) Lost 32-10 Saturday 22nd March Workington Town (At Manor Park) To be arranged: Rochdale Hornets (H) and Batley Bulldogs (H) Saturday 13th April Semi Finals Saturday ALLIANCE SPRING CUP FINAL 20th April (Played on ground of the competing club who has the highest league position)

AS OLDHAM and Doncaster slogged out a 22-22 stalemate in a mudbath at Hurst Cross it left me wondering if I had ever seen a game played in such terrible conditions. I am not known to give a great deal of credit to the opposition but I had to admit that Doncaster deserved their share of the spoils. On a brighter note I though Neil Roden earned his Man of the Match award for the terrific break that created the first try for David Gibbons that started the Roughyeds fightback. I also thought that the contribution of Phil Farrell was huge.

On the same day I tipped in the club office that the best bet by far on the weekend coupon was the four points Chorley Lynx were giving to poor old York who have had all sorts of problems on and off the pitch, needless to say I blew my cash as York cruised to a 34-22 victory. I felt a little better when everyone except Mark Knight admitted they would have put their money on Lynx as well.

Rochdale came up against a determined Gateshead Thunder side who refused to lie down, scoring 4 tries and going in 14-14 at the break, before Dale ran riot in the second half winning 58-24 with ex Oldham Bear second row forward Paul Davidson getting a brace of tries. Huddersfield Giants continued to pick up the points, but only just scraped home with a typical low scoring affair at Craven Park against title challengers Hull Kingston Rovers. An interesting statistic in this match was all the game's points came from penalties.

Swinton Lions still prop up the table and only drew in a crowd of 437 for the game against Sheffield Eagles. The Eagle's aim is to end the season with a top nine finish, but any sort of finish will be welcome by Lions fans and the rest of Rugby League who surely are fully behind Swinton in their battle for survival.

Leigh have had their thoughts firmly on the Kelloggs Nutrigrain Challenge Cup with coach Paul Terzies fancying his Centurions to cause a few surprises. More realistically the club may have to wait until the end of the season for any real chance of silverwear. Talking about Leigh they were made to battle all the way by a strong looking Workington Town team who appear to be travelling better this season and are putting together a real challenge along with fellow Cumbrians Whitehaven who are also nicely placed to mount a challenge.

Hunslet and Keighley look sure to have a tough season ahead with both clubs looking shadows of their former selves and neither have had any results to note in recent weeks. Mid table Batley are to put Mount Pleasant forward to host new year's NFP Final. The stadium is set to get a new stand and have the capacity raised to 10000.

Dewsbury who also sit in mid table report that

Davide Longo and Robin Jowitt have recovered from thumb and knee injuries and are ready to return to action as the Rams attempt to climb the table. Barrow Border Raiders are to get some coaching off none other than Dean Bell, whose father Cameron is the current gaffer at Craven Park, he has asked his Wigan based son to travel north and put the boys through their paces.

Jamie Coventry has rejoined Featherstone Rovers after leaving 18 months ago and then quitting before deciding to go back to the Lionheart Stadium or Post Office Road as it will always be to me.

* * *

In round two of Super League a few eyebrows were raised when the result from the Jungle came through. Is this a sign of things to come from the Vikings this season or will they come down to earth with a bump? Only time will tell.

Hull made a great start against a poor Leeds outfit and lead the pack in what could be one of the tightest finishes for years both at the top and bottom of the table. Despite this poor start I still expect Leeds to be concerned in the shake up come the end of the season.

Bradford made a winning start at home against Warrington who must be contenders for the wooden spoon. Wigan defeated London in the capital after being 6-2 down at the break, but a one man show from Andy Farrell earned the Pie Eaters the points.

Saints easily beat Salford who will find thing tough this season but I guess they are used to that.

As I'm into predictions today here's my end of season table

1501	lable	
1.	Bradford	Castleford
2.	Hull	Warrington
3.	Wigan	9. Salford
4.	St. Helens	10. Widnes
5.	Leeds	11. Halifax
6.	London	12. Wakefield

Back again to the fixed odds coupon I am writing this on Thursday 14 March and will attempt to give my predictions for the weekend games of 15 and 17 March. As you read this you will be able to tell whether I pocketed a few bob or as usual gave my money to the bookie.

> Oldham to beat Sheffield by 12 Dewsbury to beat Chorley by 28 Featherstone to beat Swinton by 42 Huddersfield to beat Rochdale by 10 Keighley to beat Hunslet by 14 Whitehaven to beat Batley by 16 Workington to beat York by 36

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS

THE current Featherstone Rovers club was founded in 1902 and accepted into the Rugby Football League in June 1921.

TOWN TODA

Despite being located in a small town, Featherstone's achievements since then have been nothing short of remarkable. League Champions in 1977, Challenge Cup winners at Wembley on three occasions, they have appeared in the final of 17 other cup competitions and have provided numerous players for representative selection including sixteen who have gained full test recognition. The town is a hotbed of rugby league.

In April 1999 Oldham were scheduled to meet Featherstone Rovers at Boundary Park but the match was postponed because of a waterlogged pitch. When news of the postponement came through in mid afternoon I decided to travel over to Featherstone and watch Featherstone Lions versus Dudley Hill Conference League encounter. After the match I called in the Railway Hotel, once the Featherstone Rovers headquarters, for a stiff whiskey before catching the 9.32pm train to Wakefield. Whilst ordering my drink I noticed that the television in the taproom was showing the Manchester United European Cup semi final live from Old Trafford. From my position in the lounge I was unable to read the score on the top of the screen so I said to the barmaid, 'How's the match going?' I was hoping that she would tell me that United were losing 3-0 but her reply was even better than that. As she handed me my drink she glanced at my grey hair and gave me a half smile which barmaids reserve only for pensioners in advanced state of dementia. 'There you are love. That'll warm you up', she said, 'The match? It's off love. It was off at teatime.'

Rugby League is the only game played in Featherstone.

The season 2001-02 started suggesting that Featherstone might struggle. Not a bit of it. IAN FAIRHURST has produced a winning combination.

Hub of the team is scrum half JAMIE ROONEY, a prolific points scorer and top quality play maker.

ANDY BASTOW a product of Stanningley ARLFC who came to Rovers via Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and is maturing into a fine all round footballer. Wingman JAMIE STOKES possesses exceptional pace and is a Great Britain Academy International.

Centre or wing MATT BRAMALD was signed from Dewsbury. He has already proved a regular scorer and can often create chances out of nothing.

Also back in contention is JAMIE COVENTRY, quick and elusive and with experience of Super League at Castleford and Huddersfield. CHRIS SPURR is a local lad coming through the ranks of Academy and Alliance but, unlike father Bob, Chris is a back rather than a hooker.

Behind this young and talented back line is regular full back Nathan Graham. He is providing an excellent acquisition, sound in both defence and attack.

In the forwards prop STUART DICKENS is making a name for himself and is a former Academy International able to kick goals if if required. Fellow prop CRAIG BOOTH was bought to provide experience. He returned to Featherstone from York, but has also seen service with Oldham and

London Broncos.

RICHARD CHAPMAN is a top quality hooker or loose forward. Possesses great ball handling skills Chapman was lured to Sheffield in Super League before returning to Fev. One to watch out for today.

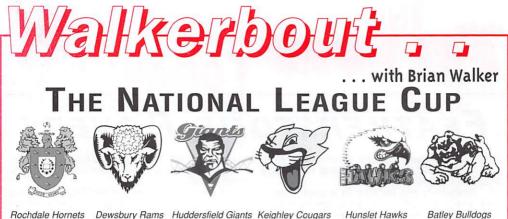
An alternative at hooker is ANDY HEPTINSTALL, yet another local lad busting onto the scene and able to open the defence unless kept on a tight rein.

DANNY EVANS has followed his father and grandfather into Rovers colours.

NEIL LOWE, a powerful young talent capable of running amok if given half a chance. Has represented Scotland.

Also likely to appear is STEVE DOOLER, a young loose forward bearing a famous Featherstone name.

Richard Chapman



OLDHAM'S OPPONENTS IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE CUP

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE CUP kicks off this coming Friday with Oldham hoping to make an early impact with wins at Rochdale Hornets (ko 3pm) and at home to Dewsbury Rams the following Tuesday 2nd April (ko 7.45).

The nineteen NFP sides now cease league action for two months, the whole of April and May, and, in Oldham's case, unless there happens to be the rescheduling of a previously cancelled league fixture, the next home league match isn't until the visit of Whitehaven on the 9th June. League action is replaced with cup and the Roughyeds now have six preliminary matches, three home and three away, before the play-off series commences on the 12th of May.

At the end of this season the Premiership top nine play off for the right to contest the Grand Final but also by finishing in this group the clubs will automatically claim a place in next seasons National Division One. So it's perhaps not to be unexpected that the National League Cup has received some criticism as being un un-necessary distraction from a league campaign that is proving a dogfight for most clubs.

History tends to prove that 'secondary' cup competitions, the Trans Pennine Cup being typical, don't last too long and the RL has made this trophy easy prey by its introduction within a season in which each side does not even play each other in the league on an home and away basis and in which the final league cut is vital.

With the National League Cup time will tell but next season sees the introduction of the five league system Super League. National Leagues One and Two made up from the NFP, National Leagues Four and Five predominantly from leading amateur clubs playing in the National Conference and clubs from outside the traditional heartland playing in the Summer Conference. All but Super League clubs will contest the new trophy and I believe that those clubs will eventually evaluate this competition as equal if not superior to the Challenge Cup which no club outside Super League has a chance of lifting!

This season clubs are split into three groups, WEST, CENTRAL and EAST. There are six clubs in WEST and EAST and seven in CENTRAL. Oldham are in CENTRAL along with Huddersfield, Hunslet, Batley, Rochdale, Dewsbury and Keighley. The top two from each of the three groups go through to the quarter-finals along with the best two performers from the rest. The quarterfinals and semi-finals are drawn from the bag with the first out enjoying home advantage.

At the mini league stage a win at either Rochdale or Huddersfield would probably mean we qualify for the knockout, and with the Roughyeds under new coach John Harbin at last showing some form who's to say we won't be the first side to lift the new trophy.

va Slateloose



CLASSIFIED SECTION

RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY The following vacancies have occurred as a result of restructuring and downsizing:-

1) CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

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The successful applicant will have experience of chairing a professional football club (failed), a stadium company (failed), a World Cup organisation (failed) and as many other companies as can be reasonably expected within the constraints of a 4½ day week. Ability to attend meetings in London, Leeds and Edinburgh on the same day essential. You will also have a talent for putting everyone's back up and will be universally seen to be all things to all men. Ex-directors of Railtrack, Marconi and Enron would be particularly suitable for this post.

2) MARKETING MANAGER. Salary dependant on ability to gain coverage on local radio and in local press, notably the Fylde Evening Gazette, the West Cumbria Chronicle and the Selby Senator.

The successful applicant will be someone who has sold fridges to Eskimos, sand to Arabs or ganja to Jamaicans. Your role will entail selling Rugby League to the London media, to Twickenham and to the BBC, all of which are considerably more difficult than your previous employment. An added advantage will be the ability to get Steven Jones of the Times to say something (anything!) nice about Rugby League.

3) Controller of Referees. Salary: you pay us!

The successful applicant will have a beard and speak with an Australian accent. No previous experience is required as the person appointed will have refereed countless matches from the stand on any one of thirty grounds in the North of England. Londoners need not apply as they are deemed not to know enough about the game. Ability to motive half asleep touch judges is essential. The person appointed must have own dark glasses and white stick.

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A must for every true fan.

N.B. Kurt Sorenson is featured therefore it has been given an 'X' Certificate.



IN WELCOMING the players, officials and supporters of Featherstone Rovers for todays match we recall the second division premiership final held at Old Trafford on May 15th 1988.

Oldham had a dream start. After 13 minutes Mike Ford and Terry Flanagan combined well to put Des Foy under the posts, Charlie McAlister adding the conversion. Five minutes later a good run by Burke was halted just inside the Featherstone "25". Kevin Meadows sped through a gap from acting half back and gave Flanagan an easy try. The next score was probably the best of the match. Hugh Waddell slipped out a pass in the tackle to Colin Hawkyard who raced into the Featherstone half, where "quick hands" between Mal Graham and Peter Walsh sent Foy once more scorching through to the Featherstone posts. Having missed the previous shot, McAlister once more added the goal. Now 16 - 0 down Rovers rallied briefly and were unlucky when Paul Lyman narrowly failed to ground a Deryck Fox kick-through. Oldham roared right back and more slick handling after McAlister had sucked in 3 defenders before releasing the ball, paved the way for Walsh to score. The big New Zealander was again on target with the conversion. Three minutes from the interval Steadman scored in the corner, Steve Quinn banged over the conversion from the touchline and Rovers at least had something to lift them for the second half.

With the advantage of five early penalties to none, Featherstone took the second period by storm. First, Steadman followed his own kick to touch down. Next, some slack defending allowed right wing Bannister to score in the corner. Oldham were now in deep trouble and brought on substitutes Irving and Warnecke for Burke and Sherratt. Rovers meanwhile were growing in confidence. A neat passing move put Lyman clear, and though a fine cover tackle by Warnecke halted his thrust for the line, he flipped the ball out and Sykes was on hand to complete the try. All three of these tries had been converted by Quinn and, after leading 22 - 0, Oldham now found themselves two points in arrears. Still things got worse and when Quinn, whose kicking was a highlight of the final, put over his fifth goal with a 70th minute penalty, the odds were certainly stacked against the Roughyeds.

At last, with five minutes to go Featherstone seemed tire. Oldham made progress into their opponents' to territory, only for Irving to be bundled into touch just short of the line. Both teams were now very tired and something special was needed for Oldham to pull the game out of the fire. The Oldham backs obliged with a move of devastating pace, allied to some excellent support play. From a play the ball near the right touchline at half way, Mike Ford started the manoeuvre with a half-break before releasing a pass to Foy, whose pace off the mark once more proved decisive. Away he went into the Featherstone "25", backed up by the "fresher" legs of sub Warnecke. The Aussie took the ball up to the last defender and turned to find Meadows, who was now playing full back, racing up on the inside. Although falling just short after his ankle was tapped, the momentum was enough for Kevin to scramble over under the posts. The scores were level 26 - 26. The conversion being under the posts, should obviously pose no problem ? McAlister was as drained of energy as the rest of the players. He nervously mopped his brow before taking the kick. The ball just scraped over the bar and Oldham were safe.

OLDHAM: M Burke; P Round, D Foy, C McAlister, K Meadows; P Walsh, M Ford; I Sherratt, I Sanderson, H Waddell, C Hawkyard, M Graham, T Flanagan. Subs: R Irving & G Warnecke.

FEATHERSTONE R: S Quinn; A Bannister, D Sykes, A Banks, R Marsh; G Steadman, D Fox; G Siddall, K Bell, K Harrison, P Hughes, P Smith, P Lyman. Subs: J Crossley & J Bastian Referee: Mr R Whitfield - Widnes



Kevin Meadows is the hero of the hour as he scrambles between the posts to score the match clinching try against Featherstone Rovers at Old Trafford.



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A Chance to Meet JOHN HOUGH

with David McGealy, Radio Cavell 1350AM

Where and when were you born and who's in your family?

I was born on April 14th 1976 in Oldham and I've got a sister.

An Oldham lad born and bred. What's your first memory of Rugby League?

First memory? Goes back a bit. Probably will either be when we (Oldham) beat Wigan in the Challenge Cup and Paddy Kirwan scored the winning try or when we played the Australians and just lost by 19 - 10, I think.

How old were you then?

I think I was about six or seven, something like that.

You were one of the young lads that ran round Watersheddings?

Yes I certainly was. I did all that. The Ball Boys bit and watching every week.

Now the Paddy Kirwan try, I think just about every Oldham supporter remembers that one don't they?

Yes everybody does, I think it just went down in Oldham folklore. I think Paddy will always be remembered for it.

Now that's your first memory of watching the game, what's your first memory of playing it?

Well I started when I was knee high to a grasshopper. I played rugby union at first, at Oldham Rugby Union, and then I went on to play for Waterhead and other local amateur teams. They're my early memories of playing.

Why, or how, did you get involved in Rugby? Was it at school or in your family?

In the family. My uncles used to play at Keb Lane for Oldham Rugby Union so I went along and got interested in the game.

When did you sign for Oldham and how old were you?

I signed for Oldham in 1997. I was the first player to sign for the 'new' club and I was 21.

What had you been doing before that? I played for Warrington Wolves.

How did that come about?

I played in an Oldham Town Team Cup Final against Wigan up at 'Sheddings and we beat them. I got asked to go for trials at Warrington and it just started from there. I went into Super League and played twenty Super League games. Then I signed for Oldham.

Warrington have always been one of the 'big' clubs, when they came along and were interested in you what were your thoughts? Was it an ambition to sign for Oldham, or was it that the bigger the club the better?

Well, it's always nice to sign for your 'Home Town' club, but I think at the time Warrington were one of the biggest teams. I think Oldham were interested in me, but I went for Warrington because of players like lestyn Harris, Paul Sculthorpe and Jonathon Davies who were there at the time.

Not a bad trio that was it?

No definitely not! No. Then I signed for Oldham my Home Town club.

Who's been the greatest influence on you in Rugby League?

My greatest influence is probably my dad. He helps me all the time. Criticises a lot but that's what dad's do as well.

In all your career what was your most memorable moment so far in rugby league? The most memorable moment was my first ever First Team game for Warrington which was played against Wigan at Central Park in front of 19,000 people. I got 'involved' in a collision with Tuigamala and I ended up on the 'wrong end'!

Like hitting a double decker bus? Yes it was really.

Warrington against Wigan, that means a lot to both sets of supporters.

Yes a local derby that both want to win. One of the biggest derbies around.

Do you remember the final score?

Yes, we got beat thirty six - nil. Ouch!

If that was the most memorable moment, what is your worst memory of rugby league?

That's not hard to recall. I played in the infamous Warrington v St Helens match when Warrington got beat 80 - 0 in the Regal Trophy Semi Final.

How did John Hough play that day?

Ha, ha, ha, no comment. (more laughter).

How did Warrington play?

Well obviously Brian Johnson got sacked after that, so Mike Ford played in the same team that day.

A memorable day then.

What's the most amusing incident you've ever seen?

Well there's nothing I can recall at the moment, probably something will jump to mind later.

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

Easy. Probably Cleggy. More than anybody. He's always laughing and joking. Cleggy all the time.

Funny that, everybody says Jason Clegg. My memory is of him singing last year

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outside the Civic Centre.

Yes. American Pie. God he can't sing!

Yes I was going to say he's a lousy singer!

What's your ambition in Rugby League? What would you like to achieve? You've played Super League is it an ambition to get back?

Yes definitely. There's no point in olaying if you don't have ambition. At the moment we want to finish as high up as possible for a chance in the Play-offs. Then like we did last year, anything can happen. Hopefully, Lady Luck will be on pur side again and we'll try and get to the final.

've got to ask about John Hough's game. One of the most noticeable eature is your quick reactions and pace rom 'dummy half', the ability to see a gap and be through it before the oppositions realised that there's anything going on. Where and when did you develop that skill?

It's just natural. I've done it from schoolboy. I always played in that position so it just comes with time and experience. That's the only way I can sum it up really.

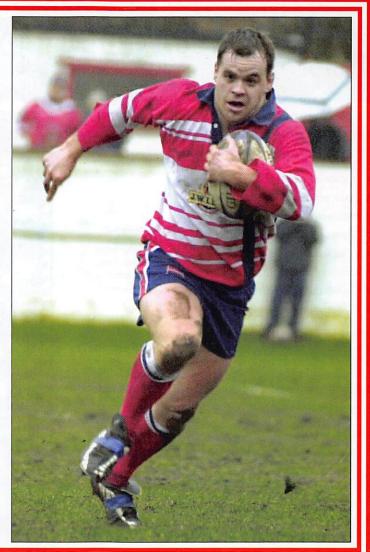
When did it come off best for you?

Probably, not last season, but the season before when we played Widnes away and I scored a try there which I quite enjoyed. But there's lots of occasions that you can think back on.

Final question. A team mates secret?

Oh, I can't reveal. A closed secret, closed quarters. Have you all agreed that none of you are going to tell me anything? Yep. No. No comment. (laughter)

This interview will be broadcast in full on Radio Cavell - 1350AM next Friday Juring "Sports Week" between 5-00 and 6-00pm.





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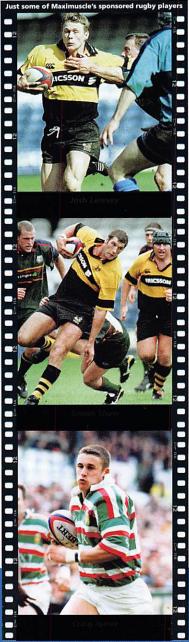
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NOW THAT we have played 10 of the designated 28 NFP league fixtures this season and most other sides a few more - I thought it might be time to have a look at the situation, and assess the season's prospects.

After the Huddersfield game, the position was fairly clear cut, at least as far as we were concerned - 5 games, all away, against top 8 sides, all lost; and 3 games, all at home, against bottom 5 sides, all won. That put us firmly in the group of teams below the play-off cut off, needing to increase the percentage victory rate to make the end-of-season shake out.

The last two games, then, were crucial, as is today's - home and away against sides similarly placed to us, and the first at home to a top eight side. The draw with Doncaster was probably the correct result on the day, even though a win would obviously have been preferable. And the win at Sheffield was a vital one, as well as being, certainly in the first half, probably the best rugby we have played since the end-of-season thriller at Rochdale last July.

Looking at the league as a whole, I think it is safe to assume that Huddersfield and Leigh will finish first and second, and that Rochdale, Hull KR and the two West Cumbrian clubs will also be up there at the end. Similarly, York, Swinton, Gateshead, Hunslet and Chorley are bound to be destined for division 3, one would think, and probably Batley, Keighley and Barrow are likely to join them. That leaves five clubs to battle for the other three top nine places - us, Dewsbury, Doncaster Sheffield and Featherstone.

... with Ian Wilson

It follows that, as far as we are concerned, any league victories over any of my forecast top six should be regarded as a bonus - and, so far, we have had four away defeats with 7 more such games to come, 5 of them at home. Then, any defeats against my likely bottom 8 are bad news - and, so far, we have had 3 home wins, with 10 more such games to come, 6 away. And, finally, we needed a decent proportion of wins against the 4 'mid-table' competitors to have a chance of securing a top 9 place. Hence the importance of the final three fixtures, including today, of the first phase of the NFP. So far we have lost at Dewsbury. won at Sheffield and drawn at home to Doncaster. Strangely though we have no more of these games to come after today.

Of course, things won't work out exactly to form. There will be some results which don't go according to my forecast league hierarchy. For example, there have already been wins for Chorley, Dewsbury and Batley against Whitehaven, Rochdale and Workington respectively.

Also - and perhaps crucially - not all teams play each other home and away, and it could very well be that some crucial end of season positions are determined by differential advantage gained by some clubs, and disadvantages suffered by others, as a result. For example, we don't play Sheffield, Dewsbury or Hull KR at home, or Featherstone or Doncaster away.

What are the odds? For what it is worth - very little, I realise - I will go for a final total of 35 points, and 5th place. Any takers?



WELCOME to the Junior Roughyeds' page and also welcome to the Junior Supporters of Featherstone Rovers.

Last Friday the Junior Roughyeds arranged a trip to watch Oldham play at Sheffield. Everything was going to plan until we hit serious traffic jams near Mottram. We arrived 30 minutes into the first half and we were already winning 20-0!!! After that we only saw one further try - but, never mind, a good time was had by all. We would like to thank Scott Claber for drinks and crisps, Stuart Gough for the Easter eggs, Levers chippy for a donation and Tesco for competition prizes. The prize was won by 5 year old Jessica Fullalove for her lovely effort – Well done Jessica and we hope you shared them.

The mascot for the Doncaster game was 6 year old Bradley Knowles. Brad goes to Littlemore Primary School and plays for Waterhead U 8's (I know I wash his kit!!). Brad's favourite player is Bryan Henare, because he says "he tackles hard and mean, just like me!" Bradley never misses a game, home or away, and always has a rugby ball in his hands.

The mascot for today's game is 8 year old Michael Gough. Michael goes to Bare Trees Primary School and his favourite player is Jason Clegg. Michael's other hobbies include computers. Have a really great day, Michael.

Enjoy the game.

Adele Knowles

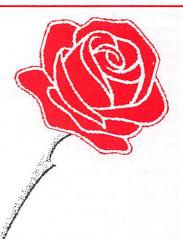
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23



NEXT Sunday morning Rugby League returns to Boundary Park when St. Annes and Waterhead meet in the final of the Standard Cup Competition.

This season is the 98th staging of this most prestigious of amateur competitions and, as usual, has involved a good deal of



controversy. Most of the controversy has centred on the timing of fixtures and the availability of pitches. No fewer than seven ties have postponed been because of waterlogged or frozen pitches and. as a result, Milnrow eventually withdrew from the competition after being instructed to a play a quarter final tie on a date which did not suit

Standard Cup

them. St. Annes were not happy about playing their semi-final on the ground of their opponents just four days before a demanding National Cup quarter final. They won the semi-final but players and officials of the club are convinced that the timing of that match cost them a first ever National Cup triumph.

The competition began mid October when Spotland Rangers proved much too strong for Hollinwood under the Saddleworth floodlights. Spotland ran in eight tries which, together with Andy Livesey's seven goals, gave them a 46-0 victory. Seven days later the Shaw Hall Bank Road pitch was under water, causing Saddleworth's home tie with Langworthy to be put back to mid November. When the match was played, Rangers put their disappointing league form behind them to win 22-16. All four guarter finals fell foul of frozen pitches just before Christmas. On consecutive nights in early January, however, first Saddleworth Rangers and then St. Annes eased their way through to the semi finals. Rangers beat Higginshaw Eagles 32-12 thanks mainly to a 22 point

scoring burst during a ten minute spell either side of half time. Twenty four hours later, St. Annes' Australian fullback Nick Leonard scored 22 points at Manor Park where Saints defeated Shaw Rhinos 46-4. Later in the month both other quarter finals were postponed because of heavy pitches. Stoneleigh Park was still unplayable a couple of weeks later SO the Watersheddings Wanderers-Spotland Rangers tie was switched to Hollinwood. Spotland ran in another eight tries, one from Andy Livesey who also landed five goals, as Rangers went through 42-4. The other Rochdale outfit, Milnrow, withdrew at that stage giving Waterhead a walk over into the semi finals.

Hollinwood staged the first semi final, a close match which saw Waterhead end Spotland's fine run. Tries from Terry Fitzpatrick and Lee Sculthorpe plus a Sculthorpe conversion gave Waterhead a 10-0 interval lead. That man Andy Livesey put Spotland back in contention with a try and goal but Waterhead held out to win 10-6. The Saddleworth-St Annes semi final proved a close encounter but just when Rangers looked capable of causing an upset, late tries by Lee Charlesworth and Jason Best enabled Saints to win 20-7. The final then, throws together St. Annes and Waterhead. It is their third meeting in a Standard Cup Final. In 1982 Waterhead won 9-6 before St. Annes evened things up with a 16-12 triumph in 1993.

Last season these two clubs met in a first round tie which was shrouded in controversy. Pitch problems caused Waterhead to surrender ground advantage but they won 20-18 at Higginshaw Road despite falling 10-0 behind after only five minutes. St. Annes later protested that Waterhead had fielded an unregistered player. The League Executive Committee exonerated Waterhead over that matter but were less pleased with contents included in their match programme. Cup tie rugby is all about incident, excitement and controversy and there promises to be plenty of that about at Boundary Park next Sunday. Don't miss it. The match kick off at 11am.



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HULL v HULL K ROVERS First Round R.L. Challenge Cup 3rd February 1974

ANY visit to the Boulevard to referee was always intimidating, but a local derby was like going into the lion's den.

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Workington 9	8	0	1	215	98	16
HULL 11	8	0	3	214	\$9	16
Batley 11	7	0	4	148	105	14
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A	6	0	5	131	105	12
Halifas 10	5	0	5	150	134	10
Hucklor:field 11	5	0	6	201	203	10
Swinton 9	4	0	5	137	125	8
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Huyton12	0	0	12	88	256	0
Doncaster	0	0	13	82	397	0

Hull, at this time were only 4th in the second division with the likes of Bradford, York, Halifax, Workington, Huddersfield, Swinton and New Hunslet, but this was a cup-tie with a lot at stake.

One of my touch judges was on his first big game and quite nervous, more so because a capacity crowd was expected, and again when the police superintendent came to the dressing room to ask if I would delay the kick off so that all the crowd could get in; I agreed to a delay of 15 minutes, which I would have to report to the RFL.

In the Hull line up at No.11 was BARRY KEAR who later would be signing for Oldham and for whom he would make 40 appearances. (More of his story in a later programme).

This cup tie then had. for those watching, all the ingredients of a mouthwatering, take no prisoners contest, and true to form, after the first scrum, both packs broke up and began knocking 'lumps' off each other.

I realised that I had to take firm action so I called up Clive Sullivan and Roger Millward, and read the riot act, with a warning that the next player or players guilty of foul play would be dismissed. (No yellow cards then).

Things went fairly well thereafter - there were plenty of penalties but no violence until 5 minutes from time when a Hull KR prop forward punched an opponent - he went to the dressing room.

I felt that we, the officials had coped well to keep order, despite suffering abuse from both sets of fans.

To show what can happen at the Boulevard I will relate what happened to Eric Lawrinson, (he had refereed the 1972 Wembley Final between St. Helens and Leeds).

Eric arrived at the ground and began his preparation, however he was in a state of undress, trousers round his ankles when the door burst open and 3 Hull players came in with a shotgun, shouting "where is he" in a threatening manner. Why do you think that was? Answer in the next programme.



Now, to all those 'referees' who sit in the stand or on the terraces at Ashton United, a few points of play:

1. Team 'A ' kick off to start the game, the ball goes 10m and is caught by a 'B' player, standing on the touchline?

2. 'A' Team kick off to start the game, the ball goes 10m, is still in the air and lands on the 'B' teams cross bar, and goes dead on the full?

3. An 'A' player, in possession, in wet conditions, runs upfield towards his opponents' line. When he is near the goal posts he slips, the ball shoots out of his grasp, hits an upright and bounces back into his hands, whereupon he grounds the ball in the in goal area? ALLEN MILLS HOWARD & CO. Chartered Certified Accountants & Registered Auditors

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Manchester Road · Mossley OL5 9QW Tel: 01457 839638 / 01457 834169 **TOPIC OF THE DAY**

...THE 100 GREATEST RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS - EVER! (Well, 1951 to 2001)

50 PHIL JACKSON. Barrow centre Phil Jackson was a big, strapping and powerful runner who was Britain's first choice no.3 in the mid 50's. Eight appearances against Australia and a 1954 and 1958 tourist testify to his quality. Although big and strong Jackson was an elegant runner and a superb timer of a pass whether partnering Lewthwaite or Castle at Barrow or Billy Boston for Britain. And what a centre pairing, Jackson and Alan Davies of Oldham!

49 KEL COSLETT. Current football manager at St. Helens Kel Coslett was a complete all rounder. Solid defender, great hands and distribution, phenomenal kicker and points scorer, driving force and leader of men. Apart from his Saints and Britain career it is no coincidence that one of Rochdale's finest sides of recent times was coached by Coslett, Lance Todd Trophy Winner 1972. Record appearances (531) and goals (1639) for Saints in a career. Record goals (214) and points (452) in a season set in 1971-72. Former Llanelli and Aberavon and Wales R.U. international.

48 STEVE NORTON. Anyone called Norton is now 'knocker' but, with due respect, there is only one original. The Castleford and Hull loose-forward was the outstanding no.13 of his day and could unlock any defence with the subtlety of his ball handling. Signed by Cas. at 16 he 'subbed' at Wembley aged 17 in 1970. He toured in 1974 and played in the '75 World Championship. Transferred to Hull in 1978 he toured again in 1979 and made his last GB appearance in the infamous Boothferry Park Test of 1982 when Australia tore Britain apart 40-4. Still a legend on Humberside and down Wheldon Road Way.

47 DOUG LAUGHTON. Signed for St. Helens in 1962, for Wigan in 1970 and for Widnes in 1972. An Ashes winner with Britain in 1970 and tour captain in 1974 and 1979. A 'Man of Steel' and 'Coach of the Year' winner in 1978-79. Won every honour the game has to offer and transformed Keighley into the 'Cup Kings'. Clearly one of the best back row forwards of his, or indeed any, era. A player any club would have wanted had they had the wherewithal to sign him.

46 GEORGE NICHOLLS. Another outstanding backrower Nicholls earned the label 'Mr Consistency' for his displays with Widnes and St. Helens. Unstinting tackling, ball handling skills and dynamic running were the foundation for his 30+ Test caps, including 11 games against Australia who he faced on tour in 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1979. A Lance Todd Trophy (1978) and Harry Sunderland Trophy (1975) winner and 1978 Man of Steel the year before Doug Laughton whom he replaced as 1979 Tour captain when Laughton withdrew because of injury. Also a World Cup winner in 1972. What a back row -Laughton, Nicholls, Norton - three players who were exact contemporaries!

45 DENNIS BETTS. A back-rower of a different era, recently retired Betts has proved himself at the very highest level for Wigan, Auckland Warriors and Great Britain. An automatic Test choice for most of the nineties Betts accumulated 38 international caps and appeared in all Wigan's Wembley triumphs and other trophy winning displays. A real workhorse Betts was a tackling machine but also had the energy to be a line busting runner and a frequent try scorer. One of the outstanding players of the modern era.



44 ANDY FARRELL, 26 year old Wigan loose-forward Farrell has already spent 10 years with his home town club and is the current captain of both Wigan and Great Britain. Like all the greats - and there should be no doubt that he already falls into that category - Farrell leads from the front. In any given game Farrell will always be near the top of any list for tackles executed or hit ups made. In addition he is a wonderful passer of the football and a brilliant field

and goal kicker. An outstanding leader of men Farrell could one day be a brilliant Coach. Hopefully that day is still a long way off. Already the second most prolific points scorer in Wigan's history.

43 TOMMY BISHOP. A little man with a big heart. Scum half Bishop, like his contemporary Roger Millward, was ten feet tall as soon as he dragged a Great Britain shirt over his head. Wily and skillful Bishop was a great playmaker but he was also fiercely combative. Another member of a wonderful mid '60s St. Helens team Bishop was Britain's first choice scrum half in 1966 and 1967 a worthy successor in both shirts to Alex Murphy. Like several others of his era Bishop so impressed the Aussies they had to have him and he enjoyed a successful career 'down under'.

42 PHIL LOWE. Back row forwards seem to dominate this week's selection and big Phil Lowe, a current Director of Hull KR, is another outstanding player of his generation. One of the finest tacklebusting and running forwards ever Lowe is another who went to play in Australia joining Manly in 1973. Before then Hull KR's golden boy had toured in 1970 and played in the 1972 World Cup winning team. He re-joined Hull KR in 1976 and regained his Test place in 1978. A great sight in full flow for the line.

place in 1978. A great sight in full flow for the line. 41 ALAN HARDISTY. Thirteen years at Castleford from 1958 to 1971 saw the Yorkshiremen emerge as one of English rugby's best sides with the Hardisty-Hepworth half back partnership its fulcrum Surprisingly, and disastrously, Cas. let Hardisty go to Leeds on a free transfer in 1971 and there he renewed his partnership with Hepworth leading the Lioners to Wembley and to Championship victory in 1972. A Great Britain tourist in 1966 and 1970 Hardisty played in Australia in 1974 before returning to coach Leeds 'A' and then Dewsbury. 'Silky skills' and elusive running were the hallmarks of his game. In 1966 Bishop and Hardisty were Britain's first choice halfback combination and what a pairing that was!

Stat Attack

APPEARANC					Dowro
PLAYER APPEARANCES S	UBSTITUTIONS		GOALS	DROP GOALS	Points 24
M. SIBSON 12 G. DODD 9	1	6 1			4
D. GIBBONS 12		6			24
J. GODDARD 12		3			12
J. McNicholas 12		9			36
J. BRADDISH 12		3	39	2	92
N. RODEN 9	3	5	00	1	21
S. KNOX 3	U	U			
Ј. Ноидн 12		3			12
J. CLEGG 12		-			
P. FARRELL 12		3			12
B. HENARE 9	1	23			8
L. DORAN 10	2	3			12
T. Hodgkinson 2					
G. BARBER 3	8				
D. GUEST	12				
L. CASEY 1	3				
W. COWELL 2	6				-
K. Brennan 3	2 5	1			4
A. PROCTOR		4			
P. NORTON 5	1	1			4
A. GIBBONS 3 D. FOSTER 1		1 2			4 8
D. Foster 1 A. Murray	1	2			0
A. WURRAY	4				
NORTHERN FORD	PREMIE	BSHI		LE 2001-2	002
Honnie Hone	PW	DL			PTS
Huddersfield Giants	12 11	1 0		94 333	23
Leigh Centurions	9 8	i ŏ		117 233	17
Whitehaven	11 8	1 2	280	122 158	17
Featherstone Rovers	11 8	1 2	320	176 144	17
Rochdale Hornets	11 8	1 2 0 2 0 5	302	217 85	17
Hull Kingston Rovers Workington Town	10 8 13 8	0 2 0 5	244 328	126 118 213 115	16 16
Dewsbury Rams	11 7	0 4		202 121	14
Sheffield Eagles	12 7	0 5		201 93	14
Doncaster Dragons	9 5	$1 \frac{3}{7}$		166 66	11
Batley Bulldogs Oldham	12 5 10 4	0 7 1 5		303 -94 206 27	10 9
Barrow Raiders	11 4	0 7	259	232 27	8
Keighley Cougars	11 4	0 7		391 -207	8
Chorley Lynx	12 2	0 10		358 -152	4
Hunslet Hawks	12 2	0 10		428 -260	8 4 4 2
York Wasps	11 1	0 10		430 -325	2
Gateshead Thunder	11 0 9 0	1 10 0 9		312 -206 356 -276	1
	5 0	0 9	00	000 -210	U



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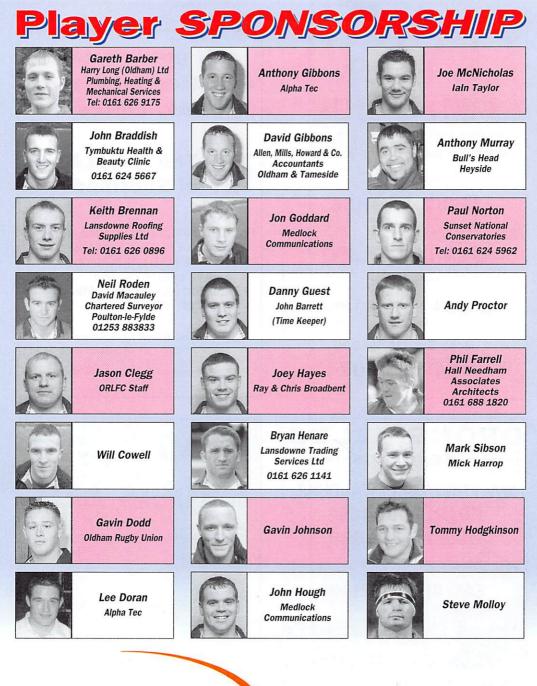
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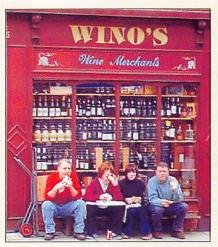
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Date	Opponent		Result	Att
DECE	MBER		F-A P	
2	SWINTON LIONS	H		
16	Hull K.R.	L	10-26	2032
30	Leigh	L	12-46	3388
JANU				
6	YORK	W	32-16	1130
13	Dewsbury Rams	W	6-30	1410
20	CHORLEY LYNX		34-2 38-4	1114
27 FEBRI	WEST HULL (C'Cup Rd3)	w	30-4	1131
3	Workington	L	20-28	991
10	ST HELENS (C'Cup Rd4)	L	6-40	4089
17	GATESHEAD	W	54-2	931
23		H	94-2 P	901
MARC			F	
3	Huddersfield	L	18-28	3191
10	DONCASTER DRAGONS	D	22-22	1067
15	Sheffield Eagles	W	25-6	1007
24	FEATHERSTONE	H	25-0	1035
29	Rochdale Hornets		(Nat Cup)	
APRIL		A	(wat oup)	
2	DEWSBURY RAMS	н	(Nat Cup)	07 45
7	Huddersfield		(Nat Cup)	107.40
14	KEIGHLEY		(Nat Cup)	
21	Hunslet Hawks		(Nat Cup)	
MAY	Thursder Hawks	~	(wat oup)	
5	BATLEY BULLDOGS	н	(Nat Cup)	
12	National Cup Quarter F			
19	National Cup Semi Fina		10	
26	National Cup Final			
JUNE	national oup rina			
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		
AUGU	ST			
4	HUNSLET HAWKS	H		
11	Batley Bulldogs	A		
18	Rochdale Hornets	A		
25	WORKINGTON	H		
	MBER			
1	York	A		
8	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H		

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