

THE ROUGHYEDS

V CASTLEFORD TIGERS

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V

**CASTLEFORD
TIGERS**

Played

Jon Goddard		Michael Platt
Gavin Dodd		Waine Pryce
Will Cowell		Damien Reid
Alex Wilkinson		Jon Hepworth
Nick Johnson		Michael Stenton
Damien Munro		Brad Davis
Simon Svabic		Andrew Henderson
Marty Turner		Frank Watene
Dana Wilson		Aaron Smith
Gareth Barber		Byron Smith
John Hough		Tommy Houghey
Ricky Bibey		Jordan James
Simon Haughton		Steve Crouch
Tere Glassie		Dominic Brambani
Carlos Mataora		Craig Henby
Mark Roberts		Leigh Cooke
Ian Hodson		Shaun Lunt
Danny Nanyin		
James Kirkland		
Andy Gorey		

Match Officials:

REFEREE: M Dawber TOUCH JUDGES: G Towey, M Worrall
4TH OFFICIAL: P Wroe

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THE ROUGHYEDS

V CASTLEFORD TIGERS



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Player Profile

GARETH BARBER

A look at Oldham's record holding scorer- Page 17

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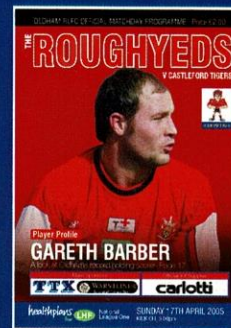


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Frank Stirrup 1950-62
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John Etty 1954-56
Derek Turner 1955-59
Bob Irving 1964-74
Martin Murphy 1966-82
Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

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

We would like to express our thanks to the Oldham
Evening Chronicle, League Publications Ltd,
Phil Burdge and all concerned for the use of
photographs.

17th **APRIL** 2005

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Club Records - 1998-2004

Trans-Penine Cup
Finalists - 1998

Northern Ford Premiership
Club of the Year - 2000
Grand Finalists - 2001

MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, 189 - Jan 1998 - September 2004

CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farrel, 67 - *April 2nd 2000 - March 15th 2002
*John Hough was on the team for every match February 1st 1999 - April 16th 2001 (82)

TRIES IN A SEASON: Nick Johnson, 25 - 2004

GOALS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 146 - 2000-2001

POINTS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 320 - 2000-2001

DROP GOALS IN A SEASON: Neil Roden, 7 - 2001-2002

TRIES IN A CAREER: Mark Sibson, 60 - 1999-2002

GOALS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 254 - 1999-2001

POINTS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 576 - 1999-2001

DROP GOALS IN A CAREER: Neil Roden, 18 - 2000-2003

TRIES IN MATCH: Mark Sibson v Wigan St. Judes, 4 - Feb 8th 2000 at Boundary Park

Mark Sibson v Queensbury, 4 - Jan 28th 2001 at Boundary Park

David Gibbons v Chorley Lynx, 4 - Jan 30th 2001 at Boundary Park

James Bunyan v Featherstone Rovers, 4 - Apr 12th 2004 at Boundary Park

GOALS IN A MATCH: Simon Svabic v Swinton Lions, 10 - Apr 6th 2003 at Boundary Park

POINTS IN A MATCH: Gareth Barber v Dewsbury Rams, 26 - Apr 2nd 2002 at Hurst Cross

(7 goals, 3 tries)

DROP GOALS IN A MATCH: Neil Roden v Workington Town, 2 - Dec 17th 2000 at Derwent Park

John Braddish v Hull KR, 2 - Dec 16th 2001 at New Craven Park

HIGHEST SCORE/WINNING MARGIN: v Yorks Wasps, 70-6 - Apr 1st 2001

at Huntington Stadium

v Queensbury (am), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001

RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park

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The Chairman's Thoughts

with CHRIS HAMILTON

Here we are again for the third Sunday in a row. How welcome this run of home matches has been given the difficult times we are currently experiencing.

With the visit of Castleford Tigers today we will be entering new territory as this will be the first time we have played them in a competitive match since 1997.

Their travelling support has apparently been excellent in their matches so far and we will be hoping that it continues today!

There is no doubt that it will be a big ask to win today's game against a side who are full time but we have met this challenge before in the shape of Huddersfield and Salford and we know what to expect.

We must be ready to meet that challenge head on and not look for any excuses.

Gary Mercer, as you will know, was at Castleford last year and so this will be a big game for him and I am sure he will be itching to get on the field this afternoon.

With regards to the off field problems we currently have we are continuing to work hard on this front and although at the time of writing the Revenue has rejected our initial request for more time to forward a repayment plan we are hopeful that the intervention of Phil Woollas, Labour Parliamentary Candidate, will enable this request to be granted.

The object of that exercise is to give us a period of time where we can fully utilise all the good ideas

that you the fans have for raising money as well as formulating our own with the end result being that we still have professional rugby in the town.

Our aim is to come up with a series of fund raising ideas as well as various schemes that will cater for all sizes of pocket.

This fight is not about myself and Sean Whitehead it is about YOUR club and if you want it, without being too blunt, you have to do your bit or it will be too late.

I would also like to thank all the people who have attended events, donated money, assisted in bucket collections etc so far. Please continue the good work.

Enjoy the game.

Christopher Hamilton

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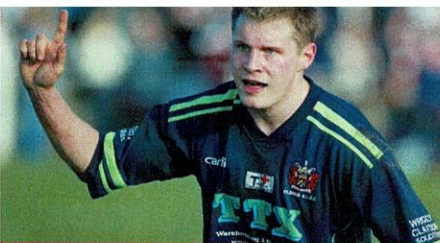
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From The Touchline

with Gary Mercer

When I walked into the Sponsors' Lounge after the game on Sunday I was really down.

To see it bursting at the seams and full of supporters who are so positive and supportive bucked me up for a while, but in the end, as Head Coach, I can't get away from the fact that we should have won our last three games and actually have one draw and two defeats. By this I mean that, in my opinion, despite our weakened squads in these matches, through injury, we should still have won the football games.

Nigel has just asked me if I don't think I was a little harsh with the boys last week and pointed out to me the lack of size on the bench which, with the early injury to Danny, the blood binning of Ian Hodson and the yellow card shown to Tere left us with a pack of Haughton, Hough, Kirkland, Carlos and Barber. No I was not too harsh because size on a rugby field is not the be all and end all. Marty Turner's tackling proves that. But most importantly it was not in the second half that we lost the game but in the first half when we let Doncaster in for three soft tries.

I had players lacking focus at vital times in that first half when we were playing the better rugby and should have been dominating the situation. This lack of focus leads to tiny turning points that in the end win or lose the match for you. As an example last Sunday Doncaster took a harmless kick over the top, Jon Goddard and Doddy weren't decisive enough. This led to Jon passing to Doddy who knocked on. From the resulting scrum they scored a converted try.

Once again I will be working on this and defence all week. Hobbsy came out with a good comment on GMR on Sunday when he said a good rugby league player "loves" to defend well. That is what I have got to get some of our lads to take on board. Giving away those three soft tries in the first half handed the game to Doncaster. We must stop playing in patches; we need two consistent 40 minutes.

We were, by far, the best footballing side last Sunday despite the injury situation and I must get the lads to realise this as they are selling themselves short and not recognising their own capabilities and the capabilities of this Oldham side. Talking about injuries, Wilkinson has a badly bruised back, Cowell's shoulder has gone again and the extent of Danny's knee injury is not known as I speak.

I have to admit I felt really sorry for Danny Nanyn on Sunday. We had talked before the game and he was up for a big match. This lad is all heart, he really cares and at half time he was inconsolable, believing he had let the lads down. It took some time for Hobbsy and I to console him. It is this kind of attitude that is so good to see.

There is no doubt that if I had a fully fit squad of 26/27 players there would be a lot of changes being made and the sooner we can move away from the situation where players have the luxury of having a poor game and still being in the squad the following week the better. Obviously there aren't a lot of players around and our present financial situation doesn't help but, as you can see with the loan signing of Ian Hodson, if the opportunity arises the club will move in and secure extra players one way or another.

Today we meet Castleford, most people's tip for the top and a club I know well. It will be difficult as they have a full time squad. I require every player from 1 to 17 to perform and give their all in effort and concentration for 80 minutes. If that happens, the next time I write this column, I promise you I will have no complaints.

Please get behind the lads and thanks for all your support,

Gary



Marty Turner

Doncaster

10/04/05

Played **80 mins**
27 tackles
1 miss
8 hitups
41m gain
3.9 av metre gain
4 kicks (2 positive)



Tere Glassie

Doncaster

10/04/05

Played **80 mins**
(10 mins sin bin)
9 tackles
0 misses
13 carries
58m gain
4.7 av m gain



John Hough

Doncaster

10/04/05

Played **65 mins**
21 tackles
2 misses
6 Hit ups
32m gain
4.3 av m gain
1 positive off load

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As Ian Sees It!

There was recently a suggestion (in the mailbag of League Express, in fact) that National League One should become a full-time competition.



There were basically two arguments put forward : that a situation such as that currently being experienced by Leigh would be much less likely to occur; and that the competition itself would be of higher quality, not dominated by a side just relegated from Super League which happened to be able to retain its full-time status.

It would clearly be good news, from many angles, if NL1 clubs were all full-time - and why not NL2 as well? The quality of rugby played would increase. The two leagues would be more competitive. Clubs which were promoted should be much more likely to compete at a higher level reasonably successfully - though let us not forget that the experience of Leigh so far this season, and indeed of Keighley last year, and perhaps of Barrow too this year, when promoted to NL1, has not been the universal fate of sides moving up a division. You only have to refer to the current performances of Huddersfield, Salford and Wakefield to establish that. Even in the pre-Murdoch era, when there was much criticism of the yo-yo club scenario under a Two Division set-up, there were plenty of instances of promoted clubs performing very well - what about us 1982-86, for example, when we finished consecutively 8th, 10th, 5th, 9th, in a 16-team First Division when there was a 4-up, 4-down system?

I would add a further benefit. Full-time RL throughout the professional game would considerably increase the number of quality players available for international selection, and it would not be long before genuine prospects of competing with Australia were present.

Of course, there is a slight snag. Where is the money going to come from? Even the suggestion seems quite laughable, at first sight. You only have to look at our

present financial situation, not to mention the outcome of our only previous attempt at a full-time set-up 1996-97, to take the view that the proposal is completely crackers. There are apparently lots of other clubs at the moment with serious money problems, too, in all three RL divisions, not to mention amongst the non-Premiership soccer fraternity. So is the suggestion a complete non-starter?

The answer is probably : yes! But I, for one, would not rule it completely out of court, at least for some time in the future. It seems to me to be, first, an issue of long-term vision, and then one of management. Let us take the vision aspect as a given; let us suppose (dream?) that the game were to be run by a group of people who had this as their long-term objective, with the ability to plan ahead, with a clear goal for the game as a whole at the forefront of their decision-making. What then would be the management issues to be addressed?

Finance, it is hardly necessary to stress, would be what it would be all about. Income and expenditure would need to be in balance. This is not a difficult principle to understand, one would have thought, even though it does not always seem to be quite so straightforward to put into practice. So it would be necessary to establish clear projections for likely spending - the costs of running grounds, administering clubs and paying the players; and then of generating the revenue streams which are sufficient to cover these costs.

It sounds simple, of course, put like that. Perhaps I may be permitted to return to the subject in a programme later in the season to suggest why it may not be quite such an impossible vision as first responses might suggest!

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In Yer Face!

with GEOFF COOKE

Like a lot of Oldham Rugby followers I am incensed by Oldham Athletic requiring the rugby club to vacate Boundary Park for remedial work yet again this year.

Oldham Athletic's recent help regarding the rental charged for the use of Boundary Park is most welcome but it still does not excuse the annual disruption caused to Oldham R.L.F.C.'s fixtures. I am not party to when exactly these decisions are arrived at but I remember that Rochdale Hornets were able to get the R.L. to arrange their fixture list so they did not have a home game during a six to eight week period while Spotland was being re-seeded. Clearly, on this precedent, if the R.L. is informed before the fixtures are drawn up a solution is possible. The matter is obviously critical in view of the Chairman's statement that the key to Oldham's financial predicament lies in having to take matches out of town. Equally obviously, Oldham's annual predicament highlights the problems, firstly of not having your own stadium and, secondly of summer rugby (which is when the grass grows). Incidentally, if I were a Director of Oldham Athletic, having released information that remedial groundwork would not be required again for three years, I would be asking questions of the contractors who laid the pitch and carried out the work last year as to why another course of work is required now. It seems to me that the job is not as good as it might have been. As Wigan, Hull, Huddersfield, Doncaster, Rochdale and Halifax have not encountered the problems that Oldham have it begs the question whether the £500,000+ spent on Boundary Park was a sound investment.

Along with a lot of other Oldham fans I have been monitoring the Roughyeds's website and I must say I am impressed by the wealth of ideas and the enthusiasm of those posting. Although progress may appear slow I believe there are proposals in the pipeline which will, hopefully, bear fruit. The problem that Oldham faces -and they cannot be alone in this if you look at the attendances of other N.L.1 and 2 clubs- is that not enough people are active in their support whether that be in attending matches or helping funds in other ways. The degree of passive support, those who follow the club's fortunes in the press and talk in the pubs is enormous and, for the future, some way has to be found to tap into this latent support. I know a lot of people feel let down by the various initiatives of the past and that many shareholders lost money as a result of the failure of Oldham Bears. None of the failures of the past are, however the fault of the current Directors. At the moment the bucket constantly goes to the same well of about 1,200 people, yet greater Oldham is a town of 250,000. As an adopted son of the town I would have hoped that many more would show some pride in their borough and its flagship sporting organizations but leadership in this direction has been sadly lacking. In the nineteenth century civic pride and big business gave us the buildings of the town we see today. Although there are some notable achievements in the last quarter century, in the world today what keeps the name of the town on people's lips nationally are the achievements of its professional soccer and rugby clubs who probably generate more media attention than all other projects put together. Would that our civic leaders recognized this.

I note that League Weekly believes that Keighley have successfully settled their financial problems with the Inland Revenue. The paper then goes on to say that a third club is having problems and quotes a Director of that club: "Until we have had time this week to assess where we can raise the funds and take advice, I do not want to bring our debt into the open". A third club, eh? Well, I stand by my story that altogether there are seven clubs in trouble with the Revenue. Time will tell.



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In The News

Well as you all will know by now we were unsuccessful in our attempt to get a CVA. But still the situation is far from clear as we now wait to see if the powers that be will give us some time to try and rectify the situation.



As I write this column the situation has not yet been resolved. Hopefully Chris might have more to add in his column as we are able to give him until Wednesday morning, in this time of crisis, for his copy. There is a lot of support and some great ideas for raising money but Chris wants us to wait until we know the exact situation before we start setting up committees etc. This makes sense as we really need to know what our target actually is and how long we have got to raise it before we can make realistic and meaningful plans.

Already, however, certain events have been planned and the closest one is next Tuesday when we will hold a Sportsmen's Dinner (ladies welcome) [Does that make sense?] with the Guest Speaker Alex Murphy O.B.E. This will be held at the Social Club, Alfred Street, Oldham. 7.00pm for 7.30pm. Tickets are £35. There will be a comedian, MC, raffles, auctions etc. Please contact Ashley 01616283677 for details.

The Prediction League has 4 new members including our first player, Paul Norman. It would be nice if we could get some more players and supporters and can I emphasise again that it is still possible to join with a real chance of winning as we are still accepting new members who will begin with the average points scored by members in the games already played. Eg at the present time somebody joining would begin with 20 points. On the right is the full league as it stands at the moment.

1	Nigel Marland	34	(6)
2	M Kivlin	29	(15)
3=	Chris Hamilton	25	(10)
3=	David Lord	25	(10)
3=	P Gough	25	(14)
6	T Boycott	24	*
7=	John Davies	23	(6)
7=	Michael Ackroyd	23	(10)
9=	Ashley Baxter	22	(10)
9=	Brian Larad	22	(6)
11=	Damien King	21	(6)
11=	Sara Jackson	21	(8)
11=	Paul Norman	21	*
11=	John McAndrew	21	(10)
15=	Sean Whitehead	20	(8)
15=	Paul Hulbert	20	(10)
15=	Brian Walker	20	(12)
18	Stuart Mc Donagh	19	*
19=	D Stevens	18	(10)
19=	S Somerville	18	(8)
21=	G Cheetham	16	(6)
21=	S Kivlin	16	(6)
21=	A M Kivlin	16	(10)
24	S Crossley	15	*
25=	Janet & Carole	14	(4)
25=	D Schofield	14	(4)
25=	N Henry	14	(4)
28=	Sam Hague	12	(8)
28=	Roger Halstead	12	(6)

* New member
() This week's score.

Mike Kivlin was the top scorer this week with P Gough and Brian Walker scoring well but last week's high fliers especially yours sincerely did less well. Our Chairman is as consistent as ever and as for the greatest rugby league writer of all time? -Least said soonest mended.

Nigel

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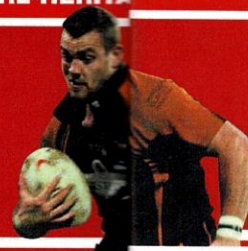


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Walkerbout

With Brian Walker



Walkerbout



OLDHAM RLFC

Oldham is a proud club with a great tradition. Founded in 1876 as a rugby union side, it grew rapidly and during just its third season John B. Rye became the first of many of its players to gain representative honours when he was selected for Lancashire. Oldham were the first Lancashire team to lift the Challenge Cup when Hunslet were beaten in 1899, the beginning of a truly golden era in the history of the club. For the next thirty years it would never be far away from the honours and this period included a sensational spell during the 1920s when it appeared in four consecutive Challenge Cup finals.

The skilful side of the 1950s is still fondly remembered, the names of Davies, Cracknell, Ganley, Winstlake, Jackson, Little and Co. etched into the memory of those supporters who were amongst the 62,000 crowd at Oldham Stadium to watch the Roughyeds' best full 15-14 and lift the 1952 Championship.

Remarkably, the team from the old cotton town has not won a major trophy since, despite, in 1996, being a founder member of Super League and the following year playing in Australia in the World Club Championships. Unfortunately, in 1997 pressing financial problems forced the club into liquidation.

Professional rugby league was not allowed to die in the town, however, and due to the efforts of a group of enthusiasts a new Oldham club was formed and entered into the Second Division Championship of 1998.

The story continues right up to the present day. With over 200 photographs, many extremely rare and dating back to the club's formation, this book brings to life once again many of Oldham's heroes. This is a timeless record of a famous rugby league club that boasts over eighty international players, and is a must for any supporter, young or old.

ISBN 0-7524-3466-7



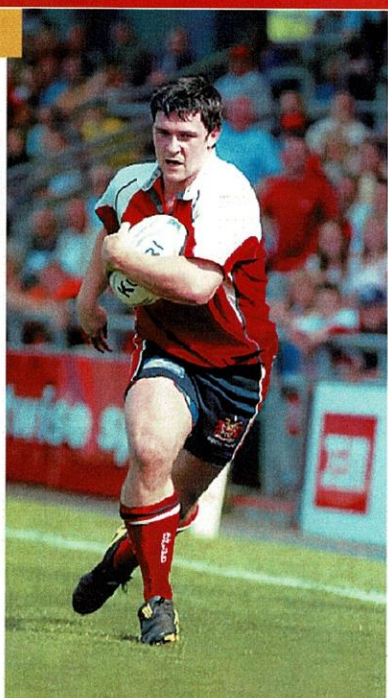
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TO BE PUBLISHED IN MAY

There have been many rugby league books published over the years, (albeit a small number when compared to union), some fans being in the envious position of having as many as a dozen or so relating to their club. Well known publishers Tempus have four excellent collections of league books; Images of Sport: 100 Greats: 50 Finest Matches and Rugby Voices. Many of our clubs are

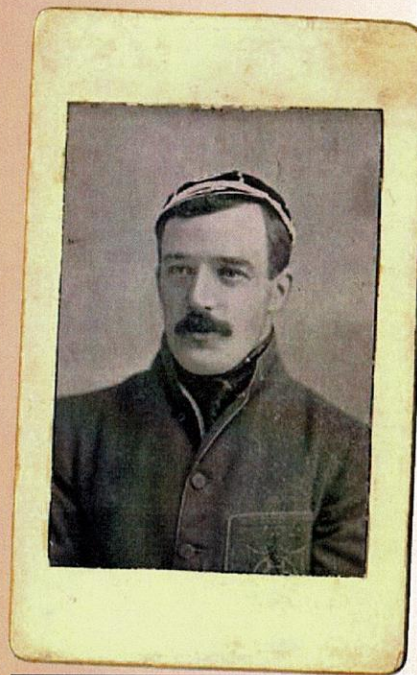
represented in one section or another, some in all four. For the first time Oldham RLFC will feature in the Images of Sport series. This pictorial history, featuring over 200 photographs, will be published during May, the exact date soon to be announced!

Susan Stell of Delph, whose great-grandfather, Welshman, **Frederick William Davies** played for the club at the end of the nineteenth century, has recently donated these two historic rugby caps to the Oldham RL Heritage Trust. Davies, a forward, played for the crack Newport rugby union club, and, like many other players of the period, took the road north to try to escape the drudgery and misery caused by unemployment.

Seeking fame and fortune in the newly formed Northern Union (later renamed the Rugby Football League), Davies joined the Roughyeds at the same time as fellow Newport forward Ted Porter. He was also instrumental in introducing to the club the young and talented Newport fullback Richard 'R.L.' Thomas, all three making their debut against Morecambe in the opening fixture of the 1897/98 season.

Around this time there was a large Welsh contingent at Oldham including former international threequarter Bill McCutcheon and Glamorgan threequarter Tom Davies, a player who would prove to be one of the most exciting backs ever to grace Watersheddings. During this period the Roughyeds were one of the strongest clubs in the Northern Union and in 1899 became the first Lancashire side to win the Challenge Cup when they beat Hunslet in Manchester.

Fred Davies, who was in and out of the first team, played 35 matches at the top-level before joining the Oldham Borough Police in 1901. He continued to live in the town until his death in 1957.



Fred Davies wearing the Oldham cap presented to the Trust



His Oldham and Newport club caps

TODAY'S OPPONENTS

Castleford Tigers

DEON BIRD

Experienced and well-travelled centre who is one of the many new signings made by the Tigers for 2005. A very solid performer, Deon can make the breaks himself and open them up for his winger.

DOMINIC BRAMBANI

Promising young half-back who made his senior debut in 2005. Dom has good hands and an eye for the opening and is expecting to be a regular this year.

LEIGH COOKE

Promoted from last year's highly successful Tigers under-18's side, Leigh made his senior debut in round one of the National League Cup. A big second rower who looks to have a big future in the game.

STEVEN CROUCH

Steve joined the Tigers towards the end of the 2004 campaign but unfortunately was ruled out through injury after just a handful of appearances. However he made a big enough impression to be invited to return and his experience in the pack at the very highest level in Australia is expected to be a key factor for the Tigers in 2005.

BRAD DAVIS

Very experienced half back who returned to the Tigers last year after three years away at Wakefield and then as player-coach to Villeneuve in France. Brad has a great kicking game and is very skilful at opening up tight defences.

GRANT EDWARDS

Very promising youngster who has graduated through the Tigers Academy set up. Captained the under-18's to victory in the 2004 Junior Academy Grand Final.

LANCE HAMILTON

No nonsense prop Lance Hamilton had a very solid season with the Tigers Senior Academy side in 2004. Lance trained full time with the squad in the off season and made his senior debut in the pre-season fixtures where his strong running marked him out as a possible first team squad member.

PAUL HANDFORTH

A major signing for the Tigers, Paul turned down the chance to stay in Super League with Wakefield in a bid to claim a regular starting place at the Tigers. Paul has a very good kicking game and can kick goals, as well as creating many openings for his team mates.

TOM HAUGHEY

A strong running back rower who made a big impression in the National League last year with Featherstone. Tom opted for the Tigers and has made a very impressive start with some strong running and tackling.

ANDY HENDERSON

Club skipper, Andy is a very influential player who does a tremendous tackling stint and leads his side 'from the front.' A regular with the Scotland international squad, although born in Torquay but with a Scottish father. Andy has stepped up from NL2 and looks to be a top capture for the Tigers.

JONNY HEPWORTH

A Castleford product, Jon first made his mark as a BARLA international and then with the Leeds Rhinos Academy. He joined his hometown club on loan from Leeds in 2003 before making a permanent move last year. Jon came has a half back, moved to full back and this year has gone well in the threequarters.

CRAIG HUBY

Very promising prop forward who made his Tigers debut at Headingley days after his 16th birthday. Craig has represented the GB Junior Academy team Down Under and many good judges feel that he will go on to win senior representative honours. He is also a fine goalkicker.

JORDAN JAMES

An ex-marine, Jordan was captured in the 2004 off season after impressing last year with the Eagles in NL2. A tall strong runner, Jordan knows his way to the line.

ANDY KAIN

Very promising young half back who was much sought after when he turned professional. Andy made his senior debut in 2004 and has already staked a strong claim for a regular spot this year.

SHAUN LUNT

Another star with the Tigers Junior Academy in 2005, Shaun had a spell with the St Helens Academy before his switch to the Tigers. A Cumbrian product, Shaun has already played for his County and will be pushing for a senior place this year.

DOMINIC MALONEY

Promising young forward and another who was in last year's junior Grand Final winning team. Dom is another on the verge of making his senior debut.

MICHAEL PLATT

Last seasons NL1 Young player of the year, Michael is a Salford Academy product who is very keen for another crack at the top flight. He has plenty of pace and is looking to score a lot of tries this season.

WAINE PRYCE

An England international who has represented his country on two tours, Waine was a regular scorer in the Super League. Waine's season was badly interrupted by injury in 2004 and he is looking for a big season this year. A big favourite with the fans.

DAMIEN REID

Damien has had a number of clubs at a young age but is looking to make his mark at the Tigers. A pacey centre, Damien is a strong defender as well as a dangerous attacker.

ALEX ROWE

Former Broncos Academy star, Alex won a string of representative honours at that level. Was a regular with the Under 21's last year and will be hoping to clinch a senior start in 2005.

MICHAEL SHENTON

Tipped for a big future, Michael has started the campaign as a first team regular and is scoring plenty of tries. Played at centre for the under-18's and although starting his senior career on the wing he may well move inside with more experience at this level.

AARON SMITH

Captain of the Bulls very successful Senior Academy side in 2004, Aaron was a new signing who was looking for a regular spot at the senior level. Can also play at hooker and is already showing himself to be a very good footballer.

BYRON SMITH

Another promising young forward who is in his second year at the Tigers after joining the club from Halifax. Byron drives in hard and has a tough defence.

FRANK WATENE

Already a big favourite with the Tigers fans, Frank is a strong runner who takes a lot of stopping when he is on the break. Has had plenty of experience in the National League and that will hopefully be required if the Tigers are going well at the business end of the season.

Player Profile by Roger Halstead

GARETH BARBER

GARETH Barber has the distinction of holding a Roughyeds record that is unlikely to be broken for a long time. It doesn't seem five minutes ago, but it's exactly three years and 15 days since he rattled up 26 points at Hurst Cross in a 47-12 win against Dewsbury.

His scoring contribution that day, in a National League Cup group game (the equivalent of this year's Northern Rail Cup competition), was seven goals and three tries. Nobody had scored so many points in a single game for the Roughyeds since the club was formed for the start of the 1998 season, and nobody has repeated or surpassed the figure in the three seasons since.

Simon Svabic got close to it with ten goals and a try -- 24 points -- in a 68-14 win against Swinton in the Arriva Trains Cup at Boundary Park one year and four days later, and his ten goals in one game is another club record waiting to be bettered.

But back to Barber, or "Barbs" as he is popularly known in and around the Roughyeds dressing room.

Oldham-born, and a close lifelong friend of Kevin Sinfield, the Leeds Rhinos captain, Gareth first cut his rugby teeth at Waterhead.

He and Kevin went through the various stages together -- school team, Oldham boys, Lancashire Boys and England boys.

A professional career was always on the cards for both of them and it was no surprise locally when Sinfield signed for Leeds and Barber went the other way to Warrington on a route well used by previous Oldham kids such as Iestyn Harris, Paul Sculthorpe, Ian Knott, the Roughyeds' own John Hough and several others whose names escape me right now.

He progressed well in a sound, structured youth set-up at Wilderspool, but nowhere more than in the world of professional team sport -- soccer and rugby league particularly -- can you look at a young player's prospects and appropriately apply that well-known Biblical expression: "Many are called . . . but few are chosen."

For every player who makes it at the highest level there are scores who don't. Many and varied factors come

Cont over...

Player Profile

GARETH BARBER

“ Gary saw, in Barber, a player with good, quick hands and a player who could quickly size up a situation and make a decision “



Cont...

into play and it doesn't mean a youngster does not have a lot to offer his sport merely because things have not worked out as he might have hoped when he was a small fish in a big pond during those formative years on the first rungs of an exceedingly high and twisting ladder.

In Gareth's case he chose to concentrate on his higher education, to seek the relative security of full-time employment in a sports-related profession and to play part-time professional rugby one level down from Super League.

So it was that, while studying for a degree in sports management at Edge Hill College, Ormskirk, he signed for his hometown Oldham club in the early days of Mike Ford's stewardship.

Ford had been with the Roughyeds for one season when Barber "came home" from Warrington on a one-year contract, initially, to cover the 2001 season. He spent most of that first season working his way up in the academy and the alliance sides, but he made seven senior appearances in total – four of them at stand-off in the early part of the season and three more as a substitute later on.

It wasn't easy to break into a Roughyeds team that, in that 2001 campaign, finished fourth behind Leigh, Widnes and Rochdale in a 19-club Northern Ford Premiership and then went on to reach the Grand Final, in which they were pipped by Widnes.

Another one-year deal followed and it was in the 2002 season that "Barbs" really started to make his mark. Ford resigned after a handful of games to take up work with the Irish Rugby Union, John Harbin did half a season before leaving to cross the great sporting divide into soccer with Oldham Athletic and Steve Molloy completed that campaign in a player-coach capacity.

Despite all the behind-the-scenes upheavals a clutch of Roughyeds youngsters came through, and Gareth was among them.

I wrote in my end-of-season summary: "A glance at team statistics underlines the huge contribution of young players in a long and demanding season.

"It was sink-or-swim time for 21-year-old Gareth Barber, 20-year-old Lee Doran, 20-year-old Jon Goddard and 21-year-old Gavin Dodd, who soon became battle-hardened

professionals after starting the season with only a smattering of first team or NFP experience behind them.

"Stand-off Barber made four starts in the early part of the previous season, but spent the rest of 2001 in the reserves.

"He went better as the 2002 season progressed. And his willingness to take on goalkicking duties when he was no more than a novice at it demonstrated that, like any half-back worthy of the name, he was not afraid to accept responsibility."

In fact, Barber played in 38 of the team's 39 games that year, scoring 80 goals, one drop goal and 17 tries for a total of 229 points.

In 2003 he had 27 games, 35 goals, 13 tries and 122 points and in 2004 he played in 30 out of a maximum of 33 games, scoring 18 goals, eight tries and 68 points and passing, on the way, his 100 appearances target.

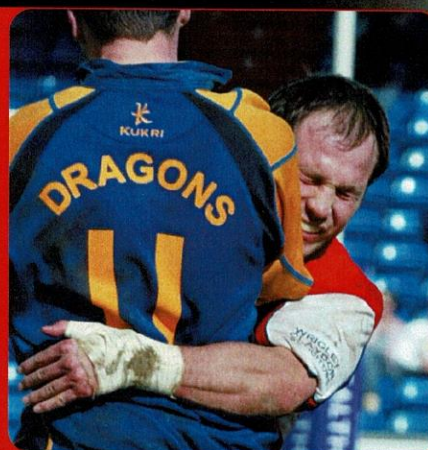
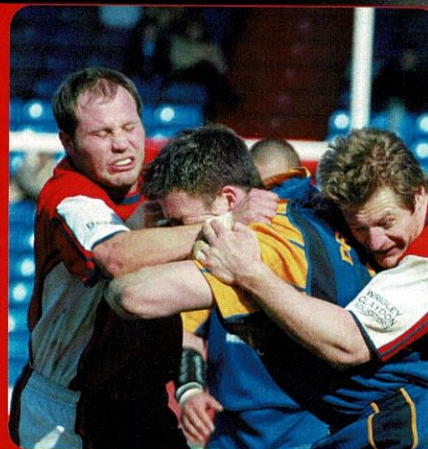
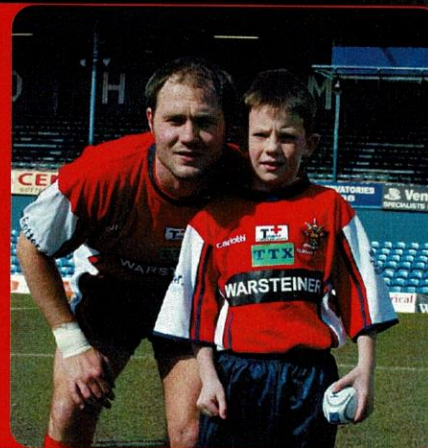
He is a versatile player, who has been used variously by several different coaches at full-back, centre, wing, stand-off and scrum-half. Stand-off is his preferred and recognised position, but he has a nice turn of pace allied with an inborn ability to read a game and those qualities, together with his instinctive knack of sniffing out tries and anticipating breaks enable him to make a good job wherever he is asked to play in the backs.

This season, of course, Gary Mercer saw something else in him and, perhaps to the surprise of a lot of people, he tried him with a great deal of success in the hooking role. Hookers ain't what they used to be in the days of Edgar Brooks, Jack Keith, Kevin Taylor, Alan McCurrie and many others who have worn the Oldham No 9 jersey with distinction.

These days they don't "hook" --- their main job is to specialise in the skills and expertise required of a dummy halfback at the play-the-ball. Gary saw, in Barber, a player with good, quick hands and a player who could quickly size up a situation and make a decision.

He threw him in at No 9 and was so delighted with the job he did there that he was soon speaking publicly of him as a player who could progress to a higher, bigger stage.

That's Barber . . . a player of many parts and one with the skill and vision to make things happen.



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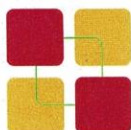
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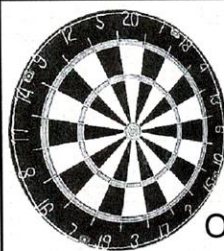
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On this day

Don Yates looks back to April 17th yesteryear



Exactly twenty-two years ago, on Sunday 17th April 1983, Oldham entertained Castleford in a crucial First Division match between clubs jockeying for positions in the end-of-season Premiership play-off.

Castleford won that match 22-10, their point scorers being players who all figured prominently in the Castleford success story of the 1980s. Centre Tony Marchant, stand-off John Joyner and hooker Kevin Beardmore (2) scored tries with scrum-half Bob Beardmore adding five goals. Centre Colin Hawkyard and substitute Ashley McEwan scored tries for Oldham with stand-off Mick Parrish kicking a couple of goals. As a result Castleford finished seventh in the table and Oldham eighth but both had their Premiership ambitions crushed the following weekend on Humberside where Hull beat Oldham and Hull Kingston Rovers beat Castleford.

Easter 1995 was the period in the game's history when the administrators forced summer rugby and Super League onto the statute book. They also suggested a series of club amalgamations, suggestions which brought howls of disapproval from the fans. It was during this period of discontent, on Easter Monday 17th April 1995, that Castleford entertained Wakefield Trinity, one of the two clubs with whom it was suggested they amalgamate. Castleford were as fired up for this one as their fans and they registered a club record 86-0 victory over their neighbours. The margin of victory would have been greater but for some poor goal kicking because Castleford ran in no fewer than seventeen tries that afternoon. Their try scorers were Ritchie Blackmore (3), Chris Smith (2), Andy Hay (2), Simon Middleton (2), Tony Smith (2), Tony Kemp (2), Lee Harland, Tawera Nikau, Richard Goddard and Graham Steadman. Steadman also landed six goals and Tony Kemp three.

Sunday 17th April 1977 was another record breaking afternoon for the Castleford club, despite the fact that they were beaten 14-10 at Rochdale that afternoon.

Second-row forward Sammy Lloyd landed two goals for the Tigers in that match. His first goal was his 149th of the season and equalled his own club record for goals in a season which had been established the previous year. His second goal, obviously, broke that record and he went on to land 158 goals during that 1976-77 campaign. The new record remains intact 28 years later.

On Thursday 17th April 1969 the Wheldon Road ground in Castleford, now called 'The Jungle', was the scene of an under-24 international between Great Britain and France. A crowd of 5,111 saw Britain record a comfortable 42-2 victory. There were two Castleford players included in the British line-up that evening and both got themselves on the scoresheet. Winger Alan Lowndes scored a try and second-row forward Mick Redfearn landed four goals. The Workington Town winger Keith Davies scored three tries and his clubmate, centre Ian Wright, touched down twice. Other tries came from full-back Stan Gittens (Batley), centre Bernard Watson (Leeds), loose-forward Kevin O'Loughlin (Wigan) and the Bramley stand-off John Wolford who also landed a couple of goals.

Two Oldham players figured prominently in the Welsh team which defeated a Northern Rugby League XIII by 15 points to twelve at Brough Park, Newcastle on Saturday 17th April 1937. They were second-row forward Norman Pugh and loose-forward Alex Givvons who scored two decisive tries. A try scorer for the League XIII was centre Jim Croston of Castleford, the only Castleford player to have played for Lancashire and a player who never played in a losing side in eight county appearances.

ROUGHYED KIDS + CO

Hi Kids

Not much to report on the junior front at the moment as we are all working really hard to try and save the club so that "Roughyed Kids" can keep going, however as soon as the situation is clear we will be up and running with plenty for you to do.

If any of you "Kids" would like to help raise funds for the club Carole & myself would like to do a sponsored walk from the Social Club to Boundary Park. Any member interested in taking part please ring either of us.

Today's mascot is seven years old Charlotte Goodinson. Charlotte has been a "Roughyed Kid" for quite some time and is a regular at all our parties, her favourite player this season is Carlos Mataora.

Once again a big thank you to all our sponsors who now appear under our new heading.

As always good luck to Gary and the Lads.

See you soon

Carole and Janet

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TODAYS MASCOT

Charlotte Goodinson

Age: 7 Favourite Player: Carlos Mataora

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All photos by Phil Burdge / Digisport. For copies of these and other Roughyed pictures see www.digisport.net or email orders@digisport.net or telephone 07974 174422



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For this season the format for this page will be to take a look at players who have represented both Oldham and the opposition of the day.

from the pen of MICHAEL TURNER

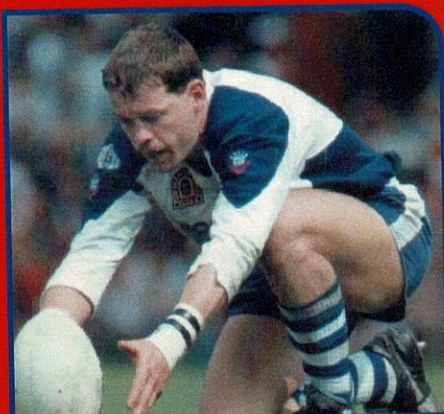
There have been quite a number of players that have represented both Oldham and Castleford going right back to the 1930's when ex-England Rugby Union international Ted Sadler moved over to Cas after first turning pro with the Roughyeds.

A loose forward, Ted played just 25 matches for Oldham in the 1933-34 season before crossing the Pennines. However, he did play a part in the club securing the Lancashire cup that season playing in all the rounds up to the final.

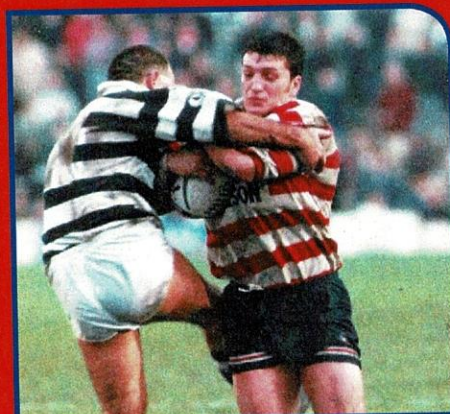
More recently of course Mike Ford was a popular captain at both clubs. The ex Wigan star joined his home town club from Leigh before going on to play probably his best spell of rugby for Cas. Mike twice played a starring role for the Roughyeds in the 2nd division premiership victories over Featherstone and Hull K.R. and helped Castleford to a Wembley appearance against the all conquering Wigan. Later he re-joined the new Oldham club leading them to a Grand Final showdown with Widnes in 2001.

Others to have played for both clubs include:-

Dickie Brown, Ian Birkby, Tony Morrison, Francis Maloney, Richard Russell, Shaun Irwin, Bob Lindner and the two Garys (pictured here) Lord and Hyde.



Gary Hyde at in 1990 against Hull K.R.



Gary Lord gets takes it up against Widnes.

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Rugby Talk

Danny Lockwood
Publisher, *League Weekly*

IT'S a colourful game is rugby league. Well it can be, depending on which game you're at. Last week's Hull-Widnes clash wasn't as much colourful as a thing of wonder. Hull, with their white shirt numbers on a black and white background, against Widnes, a toned fashion statement in prison grey. The poor scribes trying to report who was doing what, to whom, were certainly in a state of wonder. They were wondering whose name to ascribe to which deed.

The rugby might have been vibrant, rosy, florid, a bounteous explosion of colour. But for my colleague Ray French and his friends, trying to make sense of it all from a press box 50-odd rows back from the KC field, discerning the individual players – and the Hull ones especially – was virtually impossible.

"You need binoculars from there anyway," said Ray. "But you simply couldn't make out who was who. Some of the radio commentators were having to make it up, basically."

We can all indulge in a titter when a tv commentator gets it wrong. I wouldn't have their job for a gold pig. Even as a newspaper journalist, rare is the game where, after a try, some hack doesn't appeal: "Was that Smith to Jones to Brown for Green to cross, or was it Smith to Brown to Jones for Green to score?"

"Evans got the last touch," will come the reply. "Green's been interchanged."

"And it was Wood who missed out Smith straight to Jones..." By which time the conversion's been taken, play's re-started, there's been a knock on, another interchange, and the faithful scribes are in a state of mild panic. Because they are supposed to get it right, every time.

I don't know if there is any RFL guidance to clubs about the style of numbering. Certainly the days of a black square patch on the shirt back with a large white number made identifying players a sight easier for both supporters and journalists. It appears that fashion (and club replica revenues) currently dictate the multifarious designs that are paraded before us.

True, it wasn't difficult to discern a Phil Lowe from a Roger Millward when they were on the field together for Hull KR. That was a real 'Little and Large'. But modern Super League teams all seem to sport a dozen blokes who are 6ft and 16 stones, half of whom have shaved heads. Am I the only speccie who can't be sure that the cropped Jamie Langley now playing for Bradford is even related to the mop-haired young fellow who turned out last season? I hope he's had a new passport photo taken. In addition, the play and players are moving at such a pace that instant identification is naturally more difficult.

In the greater scheme of things, it may be a minor issue. But then again a plain back square and large white number is pretty insignificant too. And don't try to tell me that might 'clash' with these pseudo-Versace numbers. Most of this season's Super League 'away' kits look like they've been daubed on a cloth canvas by a pre-school class.

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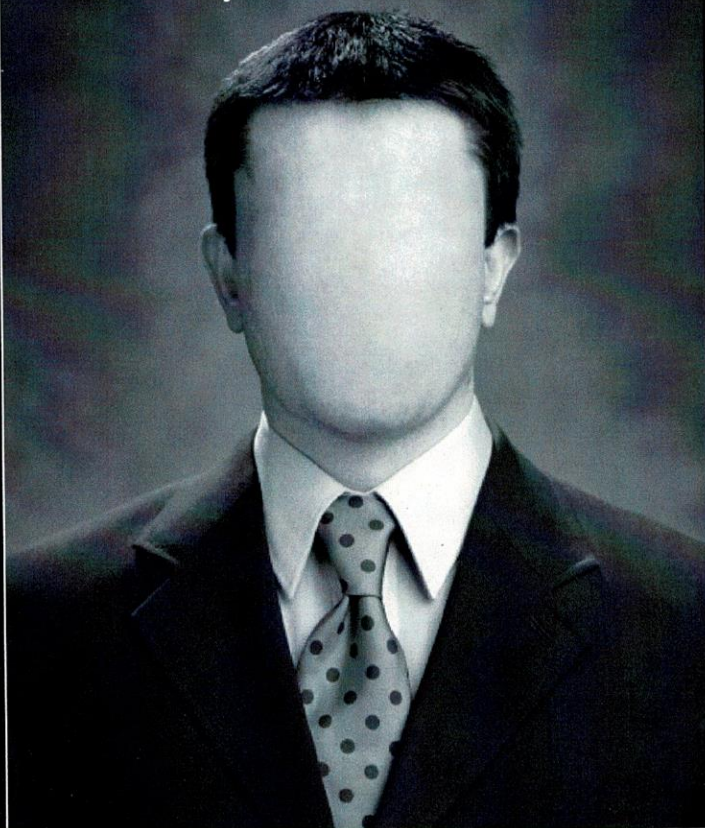
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NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



TIME TO SWITCH?

AS coach of Leigh Centurions, Darren Abram should know better than most what a difficult task the side promoted from National League One has - and he believes he has the solution.

Abram has consistently stressed the trials and tribulations the Centurions have gone through since their Grand Final victory over Whitehaven last October - understandably so.

Leigh were behind the rest of the top flight in terms of recruitment right from the start. The deadline for talking to out-of-contract players is now set at September 1 - but by the time the Centurions, promotion had been confirmed in mid-October, almost all of the best player had already been snapped up.

As a result, Leigh have found the going tough at the higher level. They lost their first seven Super League matches before getting off the mark against London Broncos, and face an uphill struggle to stay in the elite competition.

Their situation is somewhat different from the two sides promoted immediately before them - Salford and Huddersfield - because they were running full-time squads in NL1, with several of their Super League players remaining with them.

Following Leigh's difficult start to the year, we started to hear the predictable - and unhelpful - voices calling for an end to promotion and relegation.

So what would Abram do to help bridge the gap?

In a recent report, former Oldham and Rochdale centre Abram stated he feels it would be beneficial to switch the National League seasons around, so that the league campaign kicks the campaign off and precedes the Northern Rail Cup.

That way, the winners of the NL1 Grand Final (which Abram suggests should be held in June) would have much more time to prepare for life at a higher level - and crucially, be able to compete for those out-of-contract players.

It would also, Abram added, give the promoted side a longer pre-season in order to be ready for the step up in class to full-time Rugby League.

On the face of it, Abram's idea has plenty of positives. As well as the ones already mentioned, it would also ensure the league season starts with a bang - instead of the somewhat awkward scenario of beginning on Easter Monday, with most squads fatigued after their Good Friday matches.

There will always be those wanting to shut off promotion and relegation from Super League - but those involved at National League level know the importance to the game of maintaining it.

Switching the season round at this level could provide the promoted NL1 club with a massive boost.

Read the best match reports from all today's matches in Monday's Rugby Leaguer & League Express

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Oldham RLFC fully support the Let's tackle Racism in Rugby League campaign and welcomes all players and spectators irrespective of their ethnic or racial origins. Racism has no place in our game and racist chants are totally unacceptable.

Allow everyone to enjoy the game.

Fixtures 2005

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
09/01/05	Rochdale Hornets	Law Cup	Away	15.00	24-8	L	1,404
21/01/05	Leeds Rhinos	Testimonial	Away	20.00	22-10	L	5,196
30/01/05	Halifax	Friendly	Away	15.00	34-12	L	1,443
13/02/05	Blackpool Panthers	NT Cup	Home	15.00	22-20	W	1,446
27/02/05	Swinton Lions	NT Cup	Away	15.00	46-14	L	1,101
06/03/05	Swinton Lions	NT Cup	Home	15.00	30-37	L	1,116
13/03/05	Sharlston Rovers	Powergen CC 3rd Rd	Away	19.30	14-46	W	852
16/03/05	Rochdale Hornets	NT Cup	Away	19.30	68-26	L	1,161
20/03/05	Blackpool Panthers	NT Cup	Away	15.00	16-35	W	250
25/03/05	Rochdale Hornets	NT Cup	Home	15.30	10-54	L	1,544
28/03/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Away	19.30	20-20	D	1,463
03/04/05	York City Knights	Powergen CC 4th Rd	Home	15.00	28-32	L	1,282
10/04/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Home	15.00	22-44	L	1,266
17/04/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Home	15.00			
24/04/05	Hull K R	NL1	Away	15.00			
01/05/05	Northern Rail Cup Play Offs	NT Cup	TBA	TBA			
08/05/05	Powergen Cup 5th Rd	Powergen CC	TBA	TBA			
15/05/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Home	15.00			
29/05/05	Northern Rail Cup	NT Cup	TBA	TBA			
22/05/05	Batley Bulldogs Quarter Finals	NL1	Away	15.00			
05/06/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Home	15.00			
12/06/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Away	15.00			
19/06/05	Northern Rail Cup Semi Finals	NT Cup	TBA	TBA			
26/06/05	Halifax	NL1	Home	15.00			
26/06/05	Powergen Cup Quarter Finals	Powergen CC	TBA	TBA			
03/07/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Home	15.00			
10/07/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00			
17/07/05	Northern Rail Cup Final	NT Cup	TBA	TBA			
24/07/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Away	15.30			
31/07/05	Hull K R	NL1	Home	15.00			
07/08/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Away	15.00			
14/08/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00			
21/08/05	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Home	15.00			
04/09/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Home	15.00			
11/09/05	Halifax	NL1	Away	15.00			
18/09/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
25/09/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
02/10/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
08/10/05	Grand Final	NL1	TBA	TBA			

Key

NT Cup – Northern Trains Cup

Powergen CC – Powergen Challenge Cup

NL1 – National League Division 1

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