

THE ROUGHYEDS

V BATLEY BULLDOGS

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BULLDOGS**

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4TH OFFICIAL: P Stockman

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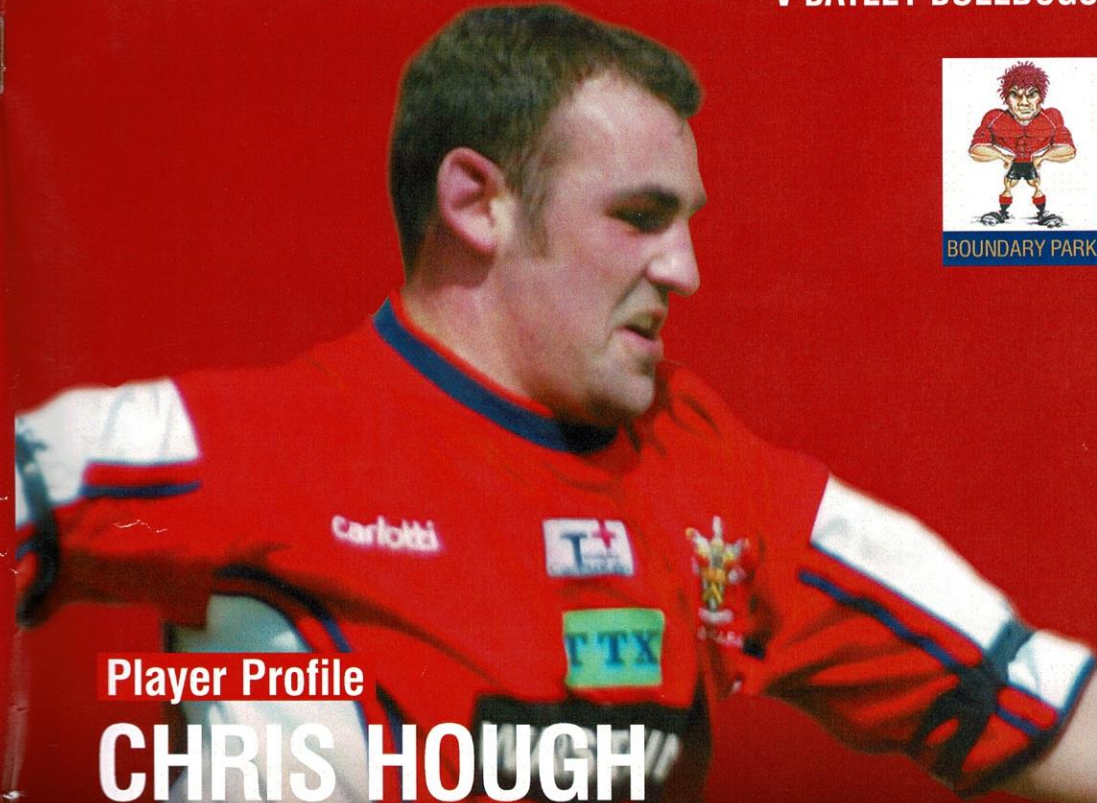
SUNDAY 21st AUGUST 2005
KICK OFF 3.00pm

THE ROUGHYEDS

V BATLEY BULLDOGS



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Player Profile

CHRIS HOUGH

A look at Oldham's new Half-back - Page 17

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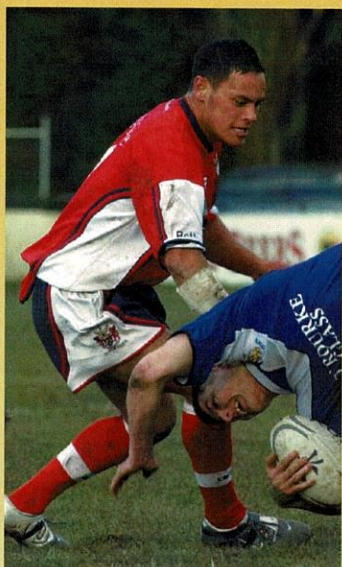
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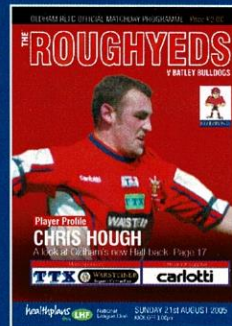
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Joe Ferguson 1899-23
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Frank Stirrup 1950-62
Bernard Ganley 1950-61
John Etty 1954-56
Derek Turner 1955-59
Bob Irving 1964-74
Martin Murphy 1966-82
Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

The views expressed in this matchday magazine do not
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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.

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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 - Jan 1st 2001

at Huntington Stadium
v Queensbury (amt), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001
RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park

www.roughyeds.co.uk



The Chairman's Thoughts

with CHRIS HAMILTON

Well, after last weeks efforts more of the same will do today please!

It is always good to beat your nearest rivals but to do the double in what has, without any shadow of doubt, been a traumatic season is even better!

What really came across last Sunday was the superb atmosphere and the support the team got was absolutely fantastic - thank you to everybody who made the effort to go and support the lads - I think you could see how much they appreciated it with the way they greeted the final hooter!

There was a real cup-tie feel to that game and if that was brought on by our supporters knowing that we had to win to stay in with a chance of making the top six then more of the same please!

You can see that the players respond to it and today in that respect is no different. Batley will arrive hoping to do their own double after our disappointing loss at Mount Pleasant and like us they are desperate for points.

There are certainly no "end of season" games in the normal sense and nine of the ten National League One clubs are still battling for every point for a variety of reasons.

Despite picking up the two points last week it goes without saying that we also picked up more injuries and that has been one of our main reasons for struggling this season.

We are not alone in that respect however and I would be interested to know if a survey was conducted amongst clubs if they also felt the same - I think you would be surprised at the findings of that.

Off the field we have been working hard with some successful fund raising place since the Hull KR game and again if anybody has any ideas please let us know.

We have a further payment to make to the Crown before the end of this month in the sum of £75,000 which we are striving to meet and if we do so it will mean that our biggest repayment will have been met and that will be an achievement in itself.

Once again, thank you to all of you who support us in so many different ways - please continue to do so in order for us to provide you with the club you love - remember how good last week felt - we don't want to lose that feeling do we?

Enjoy the game

Christopher Hamilton

Happy Birthday on Monday to Amy Holt, from Mum, Chris, Grandma & Grandad, all your friends and all at ORLFC

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Q&A

WITH GARY MERCER

Old Man asked:

I thought Ricky Bibey played better for having a 10 minute break during the Hornets game. Have you changed your policy of playing him for 80 minutes and do you agree he played better?

Gary says:

The reason I have been playing Ricky for 80 minutes is that I have been disappointed during the last four games with the impact I have been getting from players entering the field of play from the bench. I have told the lads about this and hopefully they will now respond. I prefer to give Ricky a ten minute blow before half time but haven't been able to do of late. Yes, I do agree he is better for that break. I would also, for instance, have liked to do this more often with Tere Glassie as it means they can both give their all rather than having to think about conserving energy for the full 80 minutes.

Owdam supporter asked:

Do you still think we can get in the top six and what will your attitude to the last three matches be?

Gary says:

Most certainly. The win at Spotland means we are still in the hunt for a play-off spot. Unfortunately, it is not just in our hands as we have to depend on other clubs losing. We are looking at one thing, and one thing only, and that is to win our next three games. Only then will we look at the final league table.



From The

with Gary Mercer

Sunday was a fantastic all round performance from

Gavin Dodd is quite rightly perceived as a very exciting attacking player, although on Sunday he had a relatively quiet game in attack but won us the match as a result of two great defensive efforts. Firstly, late in the second half, he managed to knock down a pass from Anderson, which, if it had gone to hand, would have certainly resulted in a try under the posts. This would have meant Hornets gaining the lead late in the second half. Minutes later he magnificently prevented Bowker's 40-20 from going into touch. If Rochdale had got the head and ball at that time it would have been very difficult to keep them out as we had already defended four sets of six on our own line. We must also remember that "Doddy" has been carrying a bad ankle injury for over two weeks. (We wrapped him in cotton wool and he didn't train at all of the previous week). He richly deserves credit both as a professional player and as an individual. That attempt to save the ball going into touch meant he had to leave the field as he had gone over on that already injured ankle, although he must be congratulated for going through the pain barrier for so long.

Those seven out of eight successful goal kicks from all over the field from Marty Turner were very important. I said at the start of the season we needed a quality overseas player and I have no hesitation in saying that in Marty we have the best quota player in NLI.

Rick Bibey also shone. He is a natural leader and the players will follow his lead. When Ricky plays well the team play well. I can't leave out mentioning Chris Hough who has now formed a formidable partnership with Marty. He is both a live wire and an excellent director of play on the field who is never short on enthusiasm. We must also remember that Chris has been playing with a calf injury for three weeks. Finally, I have to pay tribute to the leadership qualities of Gareth Barber. He is so important in the middle of play and he is often involved in the little things that can often turn a game on its head. His charge down of a kick on Sunday was an example of just such a situation and exactly what I want from my captain.

On the injury front we again suffered. Martin Elwood, injured in the incident that was put on report, was kept in hospital overnight for observation as he was vomiting after the match, always a danger sign of concussion. He must be in doubt for today's match, as is Dana Wilson, who has picked up what appears to be a potentially serious knee injury, which is a pity, as he is one of the few 'ever presents' in a season strewn with injuries. On the plus side, however, we look forward to the possible return of Simon Houghton, Jimmy Kirkland and Danny Nanyan.

During the next three games we must not only concentrate on victory, but also on our defence. Points 'for' and 'against' could be vital. I have no worries that we will score points but we need to avoid giving them away needlessly during our run-in. It will be tough today, Batley are in a similar season to ourselves but with Neil Roden, Dane Morgan, Martin McLoughlin and Iain Marsh returning to last season's 'home ground' it will add even more bite to a game that is vital to both clubs. I am confident that if we don't show complacency we can achieve three straight victories. Get behind the lads and enjoy the next three games. And after that - who knows?

Gary

As Ian Sees It!

Something of a Jekyll and Hyde fortnight since our superb performance and win against Hull K.R.



The game at Whitehaven demonstrated the worst aspects of the side in 2005, but then the local derby saw another remarkable turn-round. How they must hate playing us when it really matters! Although our defence was at its worst when we conceded two tries on Rochdale's first two attacks, thereafter I thought we were superb, and although they came back dangerously at the end, it would have been a travesty if we had not gone home with the points.

So how do things now look? We have surely now banished any thought of automatic relegation, and with 3 points in hand over Batley, and with their two games after today being at Whitehaven and at home to what must be an increasingly desperate Cas, 8th. place too, and participation in the Div 2 play-offs, should also be ruled out. However, the likelihood of a place in our play-offs still seems a bit remote, with us being 4 points behind Rochdale and 5 behind Doncaster with just 6 points still to play for. Rochdale do have to go to Doncaster, though, as well as play Hull K.R. and Whitehaven at home, so we could still just make it - if, of course, we can finish with 3 more wins. We shall see!

It was an awful performance when we visited Batley earlier this year, but quite an eye-opener to see the further development of their smashing little ground and the superb party atmosphere around the playing area during the afternoon. I have always had a soft spot for them as a club; if only we had had people with similar vision running the club in days gone by, we would surely not have had to face the crises we have over the past few years. After having seen off Doran and Farrell last Sunday too, it will be good today to welcome back at least some of Roden, Morgan, McLoughlin, Marsh and Sibson!

On a different subject, finally, having just ordered my tickets for

the end-of-season representative games, my mind turned to the possible make-up of the GB side. With several old campaigners out of contention - Farrell, Sculthorpe and Radlinski in particular - I would hope that Brian Noble takes the opportunity to go the whole hog and pick a squad for the future. We have tried and failed at the top level for many years now, so I would also say thanks and goodbye to such as Long, Cunningham, Newton, Harris and Deacon, for example. Let us go for the younger generation, so that the 2005 Tri-Nations also serves as invaluable experience for the 2008 World Cup, which to me is objective number one. How about the following as a first and a shadow 17:

Wellens
Carney
Gleeson
Senior
Pryce K.
McGuire
Horne
Fielden
Diskin
Bailey
Morley
Peacock
Sinfield
Subs: Walker, Burrow, Thackray, Ellis.

[Shadow: Mathers, Calderwood, Pryce L., Yeaman, Reardon, Thorman, Robinson, Griffin, Alker, Carvell, Westwood, Tickle, Cooke. Subs: Graham, Crabtree, Whiting, Smith L.]

I can't wait!



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In Yer Face!

with GEOFF COOKE

The Railway Inn at Greenfield is within spitting distance of Saddleworth Rangers' ground. So, on Saturday 30th July I was surprised that their advertised Big Screen broadcast was the 20/20 cricket finals day. Why? Because it was taking precedence over the Hull v. St. Helens Challenge Cup semi-final.

Yes, I know Lancashire were in the cricket finals but Greenfield is in Yorkshire. Besides Lancashire played the first semi and then the final in the evening which would have left time for R.L. while Leicester met Somerset. I don't for one minute blame the proprietor of the Railway Inn which is a terrific little pub but it doesn't say much for the profile of R.L. in its heartland when a cup semi-final is less of an attraction than Leicester v. Somerset.

A lot has been written about the spontaneous gesture of St. Helens fans applauding the Hull spectators back to their coaches after the cup semi-final. It may have been unusual but it is not out of character for followers of 'the greatest game'. I hope the bonehead I wrote about in a previous programme who was trying to cash in on imaginary 1970's hooliganism was paying attention. Perhaps he might like to devote his literary abilities to acts of generosity in the R.L. community in future because such acts are

legion and occur on a regular basis.

I don't see what sacking Darren Abram as Leigh Coach is supposed to achieve. Hailed as a bright, young talent a year ago former Oldham player Abram operated from the outset with one arm tied behind his back as regards player recruitment for a season in Super League. It's hardly his fault if the players he had were just not up to it. And since every pundit going had Leigh going back down before a ball had been passed I don't quite see where he failed. I hope the same fate does not befall another young coaching talent in Steve McCormack should Whitehaven stake their claim to a crack at Super League this year.

Last week's remarkable win at Spotland means Oldham are still there battling for a top six spot. I bet to an outsider it looks like mission impossible. But all credit to Oldham's coach and players who, despite every setback you could possibly imagine, continue to believe in themselves and to produce positive results against all odds. Those of us who watch the Roughyeds every week take inspiration from them. How do we get the rest of the town to sit up and take notice?

In view of Paul Sculthorpe's withdrawal by injury from the upcoming Tri-Nations series do you think Coach Noble might eat humble pie and nominate another Oldham born talent - one Kevin Sinfield - as captain in his place? As leader of the best side in Super League at present he surely deserves the accolade, especially after his unjustified omission from the squad last year.



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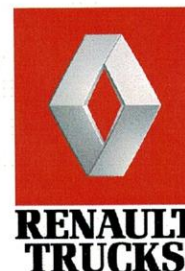
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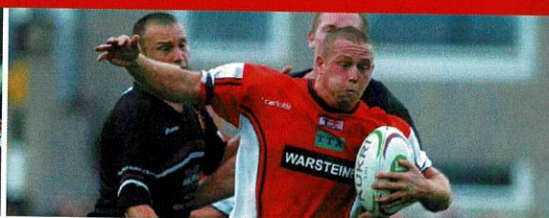
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In The News



What a tremendous result at Spotland on Sunday. I don't know about anyone else but somehow at 25 - 10 I knew they would come back at us. It's the nature of derby games against the old enemy. They really are two evenly matched teams and this was shown with just three points difference between them in the two league games. It's probably wrong to single out one player but "Doddy" was magnificent in defence as has been explained in Gary's column. These were match-winning incidents in the true sense of the word.

A top six place is still on but unfortunately it's not entirely in our own hands. We are dependant on Hornets or Doncaster slipping up in the last three games. All we can do is ensure we win the last three games and that is now a distinct possibility.

Can I thank all the people who supported the Bernard Manning evening and the Whitehaven trip which together raised over £3000 for the club. We are not yet out of trouble so anything you can do to help the club will be appreciated, especially as we get to the end of the season where the club is dependant on non-rugby income.

Another high scoring round in the Prediction League, Paul Norman and Sean Whitehead had perfect scores in one match and most people got the results correct as they went generally according to plan. With just three games remaining it's still competitive at the top and despite a good score last week I'm not counting my chickens just yet.

PREDICTION LEAGUE ROUND 15

1	Nigel Marland	229	(25)
2	M Ackroyd	202	(11)
3	T Boycott	196	(22)
4	Chris Hamilton	192	(12)
5	Brian Walker	186	(17)
6	Ashley Baxter	182	(15)
7	G Cooke	177	(17)
8	D Schofield	176	(17)
9	P Gough	173	(11)
10	Paul Hulbert	171	(17)
11	Paul Norman	161	(16)
12	Nick Henry	160	(16)
13=	R Halstead	158	(13)
13=	G Cheetham	158	(17)
15=	S Whitehead	155	(18)
15=	D King	155	(13)
17=	J Davies	153	(12)
17=	S Jackson	153	(20)
19	Michael Kivlin	147	(10)
20	D Stevens	145	(17)
21	David Lord	143	(14)
22=	S Somerville	137	(8)
22=	S McDonagh	137	(4)
24	D Else	134	(6)
25	Susan Kivlin	126	(15)
26	Ann Marie Kivlin	114	(10)
27	John McAndrew	108	(8)
26	S Hague	103	no entry
29	S Crossley	89	no entry
30	Janet & Carole	66	no entry

() Last week's score.

Rugby Oldham

A Rugby League Community Trust



Quite a lot has happened since our last update, culminating in a number of decisions and actions. At the public meeting, we gave people the opportunity to have an immediate input into key issues such as deciding the Trust name, how much the membership fee should be and also generally feedback on the Trust's strategic goals. That guidance has been critical in making sure that we represent everybody's views.

Following Terry Flanagan's passionate speech at the Public Meeting, the concept of Rugby Oldham has really taken off. We have therefore named the Trust: Rugby Oldham. We feel that this, along with sub-heading - 'A Rugby League Community Trust', encompasses what we are trying to achieve - this is about the whole community getting involved in making RL a success in Oldham.

Our immediate priority has been to get the Trust up and running and to do this we needed to legally register the Trust with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as a non-profit Industrial and Provident Society (IPS). This involved our legal team drafting a legally binding constitution, having it reviewed by a Solicitor and then submitted to the FSA. This process would normally cost somewhere between £500-£600 in legal fees. However, Jacqui Forster, a Solicitor employed by Supporters Direct has kindly done this for free.

However, there is a fee for registration with the FSA which has been covered by a touching cash donation from an ex-Oldham player - a fantastic gesture and typical of the kind of support we have received to date. Speaking of fantastic gestures, we must also say a big thank you to Waterhead ARLFC who followed the club's lead in offering to stage our second Trust meeting last Thursday.

Once registered, the Trust can open a bank account and start our membership drive in earnest. We hope to be able to announce details of our launch at the final home game against Barrow.

In respect of Trust membership fees, it's vitally important that we attract a large membership and are as inclusive as we can possibly be. Supporters Direct's advice is to target 10% of home gates as an initial membership number but we believe that we can easily beat that. Large numbers will put real weight behind us

achieving our objectives.

We will shortly publish a membership fee structure that falls shy of the prices people suggested at the public meeting. This is because we want to make membership easily affordable, but also offering the facility to make additional contributions for those that wish to. There will be concessionary, family and corporate rates and we will announce the details soon.

Our marketing team are also busy developing a Trust Logo and Website which has already been registered and should be up and running within a matter of days. You will be able to find us at www.rugbyoldham.org where there will be details of how to become a member, news and events and of course we will keep you up to date on our progress on the ground developments. Work is still ongoing behind the scenes and by the time you read this we will have met with David Jones, Council Leader and outlined our plans. We are then planning one or two crucial meetings after which we are hoping to be able to give you more details of our plans.

In terms of the people that are now moving the Trust forward, whilst we are perhaps slightly overloaded with Ian's, the calibre and enthusiasm of those involved with the Trust gives us great heart. In fact despite having far too many Chartered Accountants, Bank Managers and Business men and women, we still believe that, with lots of hard work, we can achieve our goals!! However, one thing is for sure is that we can't do that without you. So whether we sign up with our families as members or actually get involved in the running of the Trust, we all have a crucial part to play. The door will always be open to those that want to get involved as together we make all the difference.

Simon Winard



“Following Terry Flanagan's passionate speech at the Public Meeting, the concept of Rugby Oldham has really taken off. We have therefore named the Trust: Rugby Oldham.”

TODAY'S OPPONENTS

Batley Bulldogs

Joe Berry – Utility Forward. Injury kept Joe out of the team for much of last season as he was just hitting top form. Joe has made 37 appearances (including sub appearances) and scored 6 tries prior to the 2005 season. Scottish International.

Will Cartledge – Second Row. Squad player who has never let the team down when pressed into duty. 108 appearances have seen Will score 13 tries for the club since his signing from Knottingley Rockware.

Barry Eaton – Scrum Half. Team captain and record holder supreme. Played and scored in every Batley game since his signing in 2003. Broke the club's goal kicking record for the second consecutive season in 2004 and fell 2 points short of equalling the club's points in a season record. Holder of world record for consecutive successful goal kicks. Formerly with Wakefield Trinity, Doncaster, Dewsbury Rams and Widnes Vikings.

Adrian Flynn – Wingman. In his second season with Batley following previous service with Featherstone Rovers, Wakefield Trinity, Castleford, Dewsbury and Keighley Cougars. Scored 14 tries in 2004.

Paul Harrison – Assistant Coach, Second Row. Ever present in 2004, scoring 10 tries. Used mainly as an impact player from the bench. Leads from the front.

Steve Hill – Prop. Former Castleford and York front row man. Made 26 appearances in 2004 scoring 5 tries.

Ryan Horsley – Loose Forward. Former Featherstone and Wakefield utility player. 23 appearances in 2004 scoring 9 tries.

Adie Leek – Utility. Fringe player who made 7 appearances in 2004.

Craig Lingard – Fullback and club captain. Injury cut short the 2004 season for Craig, although he did register his 100th try for the 'Bulldogs' and is hot on the heels of Glen Tomlinson's Batley career tries record.

Aiden Lister – Fullback. Signed during season 2004 from Batley Boys, having also represented Huddersfield Under 21's. Earned a place in the 'Bulldogs' first team squad for 2005.

Kris Lythe – Hooker. 7 appearances yielded 5 tries in 2004, including an hat-trick against Leigh Centurians. One for the future.

Iain Marsh – Utility. Close season signing from Oldham. Formerly with Barrow. Raw boned player who can play centre or second row.

Dane Morgan – Prop / Second Row. Australian signed in the close season from Oldham. Formerly played with North Sydney, West Tigers and Melbourne Storm in the NRL.

Martin McLoughlin – Prop / Second Row forward who was also signed from Oldham and previously had a spell with Barrow. Irish International.

Chris North – Wingman. Back in the reckoning after a season out through injury.

Gary O'Regan – Fullback/ Wing. Young prospect who formerly played for Salford City Reds and Chorley Lynx. Should provide good cover for the fullback spot.

Sean Richardson – Second Row. In his second season after joining from Leigh Centurians. 29 appearances yielded 12 tries in 2004.

Neil Roden – Stand off / Scrum Half. Close season signing from Oldham. Neil has brought much needed pace to the halfbacks.

David Rourke – Prop / Second Row. Massive season in 2004 where he was voted Batley's Man of Steel and also the Coaches player of the year. 22 appearances saw David register 4 tries.

Shad Royston – Centre. Australian who made a big impact in his first season returning 13 tries from 27 appearances.

Gary Shillabeer – Rangy second row forward in his second spell at the club. Previously with Hunslet Hawks and Gateshead Thunder.

Mark Sibson – Fullback / Wing. Leading try scorer in 2004 with 17 touchdowns from 28 starts. Formerly with Oldham and Bramley.

Tim Spears – Second Row. 17 appearances in his first season with Batley. Formerly with Castleford Tigers and Dewsbury Rams.

Jamie Stokes – Wingman / Centre. Close season signing from Featherstone Rovers. Leading try scorer for 'Rovers' in 2003 and 2004. Jamie will bring much needed pace to the three-quarters.

Mark Toohey – Second Row / Stand Off. 7 tries were scored from 27 appearances as Mark moved between the back row positions and stand off half in 2004. Signed from Batley Boys ARL.

Craig Wright – Prop. Rejoined the club late in 2004 to impress with some strong performances and helped the club move to a position of safety in NL1. Formerly with Castleford, York and amateur club Queens.

Player Profile by Roger Halstead

CHRIS HOUGH

IT isn't entirely coincidental that the Roughyeds' improved form over the past few weeks can be traced back to round about the time Chris Hough joined the club as a free agent at the end of April.

It would be inaccurate, inappropriate and downright embarrassing to Chris to suggest that the side received its wake-up call when he walked into the club.

Nevertheless, it is true to say that one of many reasons for the transformation is the success of the comparatively new half-back combination formed by Chris Hough and Marty Turner.

They have worn No 7 and No 6 respectively for eight of the last nine games, and of those eight games five have seen Oldham victorious -- Rochdale Hornets at Sedgley Park, Barrow at Craven Park, Featherstone at Sedgley Park, Hull KR at Boundary Park and Rochdale Hornets at Spotland.

Chris's enthusiasm for the game, passion for his team and his team mates and dedication to training, preparation and personal performance are second to none. In many ways he is a chip off the old block. His father, Mick, an amateur prop-forward with Waterhead, Lancashire and BARLA Great Britain always oozed commitment.

The cousin of the Roughyeds' longest-serving player and club captain, John Hough, Chris got his release from Blackpool in April and signed initially for his home-town club for one month.

Technically it wasn't a trial as such... but it was for a 'getting to know you' period in which Gary Mercer and the Roughyeds would have the opportunity to take a look at the player while the player would get time to dip his toes into the Roughyeds water to see if it suited him.

A goalkicking half-back, Chris decided to leave Blackpool Panthers when the club hit financial problems and asked all their players to take a pay cut. Contracts were terminated and all players were then offered the same money.

Cont over...

Player Profile CHRIS HOUGH

“Chris's enthusiasm for the game, passion for his team and his team mates and dedication to training, preparation and personal performance are second to none.”



Cont...

Many of them decided to seek pastures new; Blackpool's loss turned out to be Oldham's gain.

Chris had a couple of games as a substitute before celebrating his full debut with a try in the 25-24 defeat of Hornets at Sedgley Park on June 5.

Boosted by their first league win of the season, Oldham moved quickly to tie up his permanent signing and he ended his week-to-week arrangement by signing a deal to the end of the season.

After surrendering his free-agent status in talks with club chairman Chris Hamilton, he said: "I'm settled now and looking forward to a good run as we bid to climb the table. I'm sure we are on the right track. That first league win has given everybody a boost and now we have to build on it."

And build Oldham did.

So where has 23-year-old Chris been all these years since he left Waterhead as a boy in the pursuit of a professional career following in the footsteps of his cousin John, six years his senior?

Well, he started out at Rochdale Hornets and he has also played for Batley, Swinton, Doncaster and Blackpool, all the time making a very special effort to make a nuisance of himself in games against Oldham!

He would love nothing better than to turn in a highly-charged performance against his hometown club and against his cousin John -- even though, off the field, they are very close to each other in the family environment and in many ways are more like brothers.

How appropriate, then, that with their wives and young families they live within close proximity in Littleborough. Chris, in fact, has a lot to thank the Hornets for. He spent four years at Spotland and it

was there that he met Nicola, now his wife and the mother of their seven-month-old twin boys, Lewis and George.

By a twist of sporting irony, he was to make his full debut for his hometown club, Oldham, against his first professional club, Rochdale Hornets, and didn't he love that!

He explained: "Nicola has been a Hornets fan all her life and my in-laws are Hornets mad."

"Whenever I play against them, I get it in the neck. If the blokes at work aren't ribbing me (he works in Rochdale) Nicola's mum and dad give me stick at home. But I take comfort from other Hornets fans who reckon I save my best performances for them." He does, too, judging by what we have seen in Oldham's two derby victories against the old enemy in recent weeks.

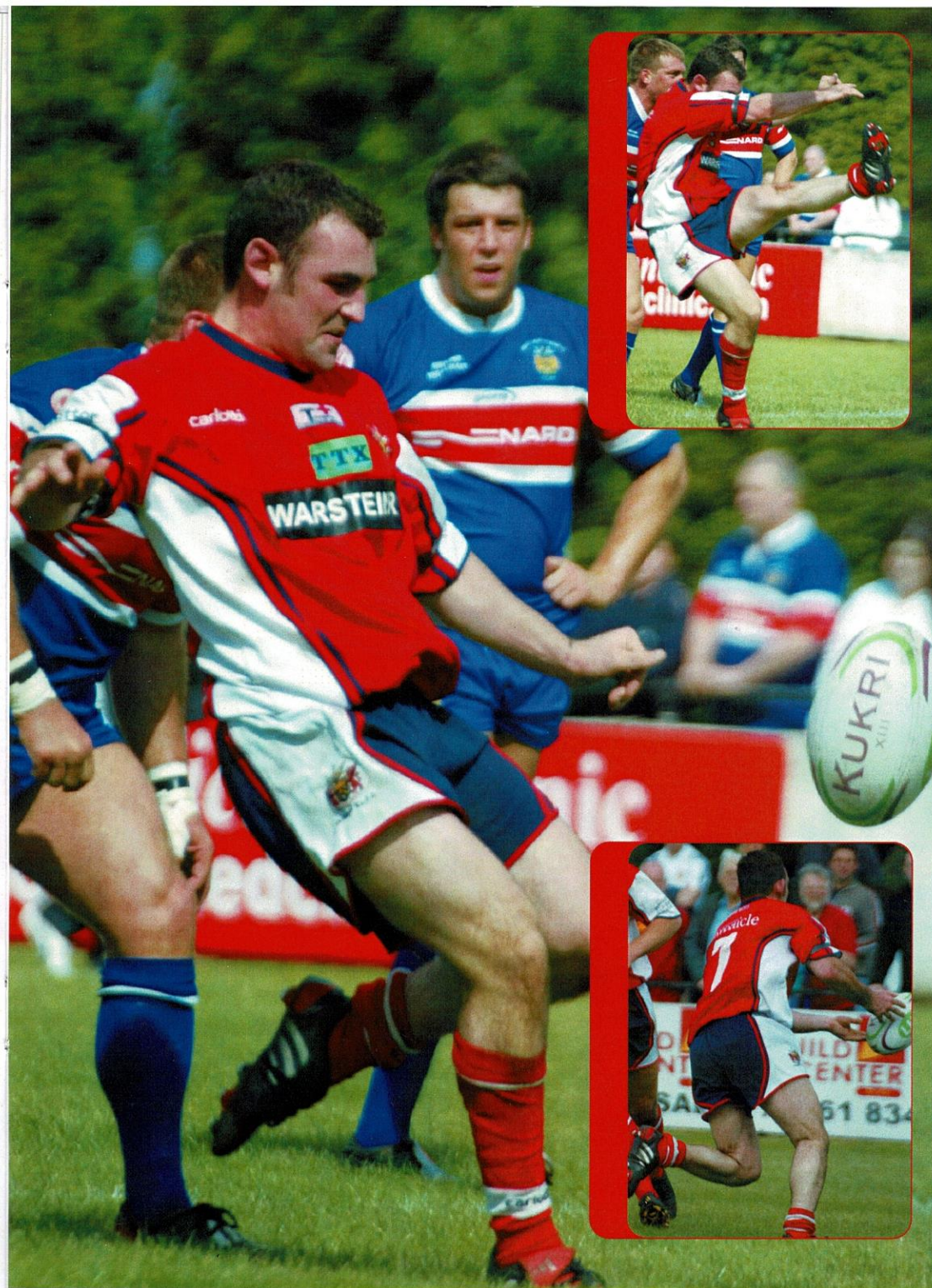
He added: "I feel very much at home at Oldham. The twins were born when I was at Blackpool early in the year and at that time they had to take priority."

"Now, it's great to be playing for a club near home. Team spirit is first class and there is a great set of lads here. I get on well with everybody, including Gary (Mercer) and Keith Brennan (his No 2) and I am just glad that I can do my bit for the Roughyeds at this time."

He works for a Rochdale potato wholesaler, who sponsors Bradford Bulls, but who used to back Hornets. And he rises at 4.30am on work days to open up and get the show on the road.

He has also contributed significantly to the way in which the Roughyeds have got their show on the road in the last couple of months.

Roger



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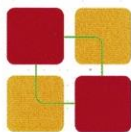
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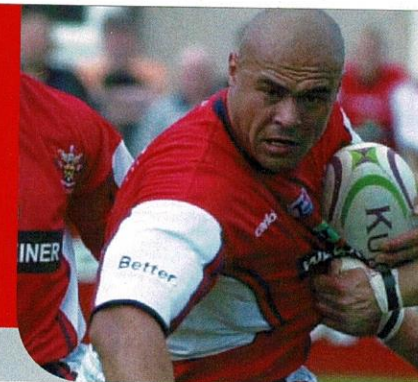
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On this day

Don Yates looks back to August 21st yesteryear



This afternoon Batley visit Boundary Park to take on the Roughyeds exactly 51 years to the day after these two clubs met in a league encounter on the old Watersheddings ground.

Oldham made a great start to that 1954-55 campaign, winning thirteen of their opening fourteen matches including the match against Batley on Saturday 21st August. Oldham's winning margin that afternoon was 16-3 with the Roughyeds scoring four tries to the solitary touchdown of Batley, which was claimed by centre three-quarter McDonald. Tries for the Roughyeds were scored by centres Peter Fearis and Alan Davies together with a couple from young winger Harold Lomas, later to find a more settled position in the second-row. Peter Fearis and full-back Bernard Ganley each landed a goal. On the wing for Batley was a player who later became a big favourite here in Oldham, John Etty.

It was on this day in 1979, Tuesday 21st August, that Oldham signed back-row forward Mick Worrall from the Warrington based Crosfields amateur club. During the following eight years Worrall developed into an international class forward who made 173 appearances for the club and scored 31 tries and 61 goals. He also played three times for Great Britain at under-24 level and in three senior test matches. Worrall was one of five Oldham players who toured Australia, New Zealand and Papua-New Guinea with the 1984 British Lions. In October 1987 Worrall was transferred to Salford for £55,000. He rejoined the Roughyeds in May 2004 as coach to the academy squad but left the club at the end of the season when the coaching staff was restructured and the academy set-up disbanded.

On Sunday 21st August 1994 Oldham opened their First Division campaign with a home match against Halifax. It was a disappointing start to the season because the visitors won 40-20. However, one pleasing aspect of the day was the debut at stand-off for Oldham of Steve Gartland who had been signed from Rochdale

Hornets for £25,000 the previous month. He landed six goals in an impressive performance. Unfortunately Gartland was unable to settle with Oldham and made only 30 appearances in the first team, scoring three tries, 24 goals and a couple of dropped goals. He later returned to Rochdale and also enjoyed a spell with Swinton before moving back into the amateur game, first with St. Annes and then with Mayfield where he currently plays.

On that same afternoon, Sunday 21st August 1994, Batley entertained Huddersfield in a Second Division match. A crowd of 2,079 were present at Mount Pleasant to watch Batley win 13-0. Centre Paul Harrison scored the only try of the match with full-back Simon Wilson adding four goals and scrum-half Glen Tomlinson a dropped goal. Batley ended that 1994-95 campaign in second position and so should have been promoted to Division One alongside Keighley. However, the restructuring caused by the introduction of Super League and summer rugby shattered Batley's hopes of playing in the top flight.

The current Leeds team are riding high at the top of the Super League table and preparing to visit Cardiff next Saturday for the Powergen Challenge Cup Final. It was a much different story twenty-two years ago, on Saturday 21st August 1983 when they visited Watersheddings and were beaten 25-16. Leeds led at half-time but a try from second-row forward Mick Worrall, the man-of-the-match, early in the second half, restored Oldham's lead and enabled the Roughyeds to go on and win. Scrum-half Ray Ashton and winger Mick Taylor (2) were the other Oldham try scorers with centre Mick Parrish adding four goals and Ray Ashton a dropped goal.

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What a great game last week against Rochdale, our team played out of their skins and deserved to win. **PLAY OFFS HERE WE COME** (fingers crossed)!!!

Michael Tibbs who was our mascot for that game certainly brought us luck.

Unfortunately at the time we had to submit this programme piece we can not give any details of this weeks mascot but we are sure Nigel will announce our rep over the mike.

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

See you soon

Carole and Janet

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As always good luck to Gary and the Lads.

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First of all, congratulations to all the playing and coaching staff for the manner in which they have turned the season round.

We have recently been treated to some really exciting rugby and the enthusiastic wins against Hull KR and Rochdale have rewarded their fine efforts.

Secondly, can we give special thanks for the goodwill of those fans who are always willing to make donations, both monetary and in the form of prizes, for club functions. Every contribution, however small, helps with much needed funding for the club and is much appreciated.

Finally, the Quiz Evenings will resume in September, following a summer break - watch this space and the Oldham Chronicle for details. In the meantime, please try to support any other events that are being organised.

SMS

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Rugby Talk

Danny Lockwood
Publisher, *League Weekly*

JUST one week to go and for possibly the last time ever, 'Wembley' will be at Cardiff. That's right, 'Wembley' – or the Powergen Challenge Cup final as the rugby league authorities might prefer – has ever been an entity of its own.

"Are you going to Wembley this year?" when asked in the pubs and clubs of the industrial north's rugby league bastion towns, did not require the superfluous differentiation between the round and oval balls. If you'd paid into the kitty, run your share of domino cards, and more importantly been good to the missus since Christmas, odds were that short of a personal calamity or natural disaster, you were 'off to Wembley'. And who cared if Wembley was at Murrayfield, Twickenham or Cardiff? Seen through the beer goggles of those legendary outings, the only notable difference would be the accent of the locals – the strangled och-aye-the-noos of Edinburgh, the pseudo-Indian goodness-gracious-me's of the valleys (at least when I attempt a Welsh accent), the Queen's English of Twickenham, or the Heinz 57 mixture of global accents of north London – Wembley itself.

Heck, in my experience, you didn't have to go to London to go to 'Wembley', even when the final was in the capital. I have stark memories of a weekend in Southend, way out there hanging off the backside of Essex. Half the lads watched the game from the floor – literally - of a pub on Southend prom.

I say 'stark' instead of 'fond' memories, because that would dull some of the manic goings-on of such trips. You got your money's worth of laughs all round though, wherever you ended up.

One 'Wembley' trip from my club that I never actually made involved arriving at the final via Amsterdam. Now that's what you call a jolly boy's outing.

One of the wonders of the Challenge Cup final was always the aura surrounding the event itself. It really didn't matter who was playing. My own first final as a schoolboy was Featherstone vs Warrington, so being a Tyke, obviously it was a Fev flag I flew. But the occasion was the thing, not the teams. And it endures today, to a large extent, with the marvellous rugby league community gathering annually to celebrate its identity.

What we will never see again, I suspect, will be the colourful plethora of teams capable of reaching the pinnacle. Between 1970 and 1980, 12 different teams contested the final. That's unthinkable in the modern game.

The Super League grand final may have overcome the grand old Cup as the ultimate goal in our sport, but I defy Leeds coach Tony Smith to compare any nerve-tingling experience he has had so far – including Old Trafford last October – with leading out his men on that very special Saturday afternoon.

Next year 'Wembley' goes home, and long overdue the return is – though it is safe to say that Cardiff at least will be a friend sadly missed.

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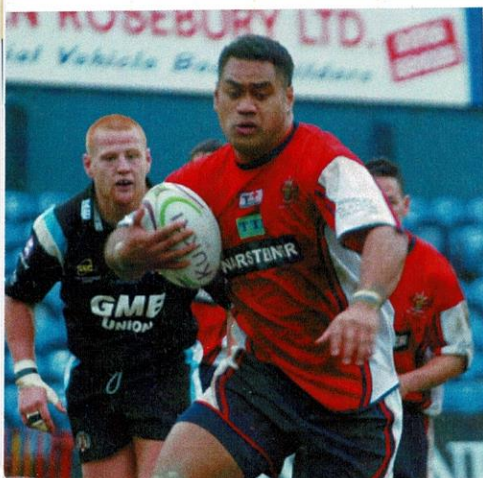
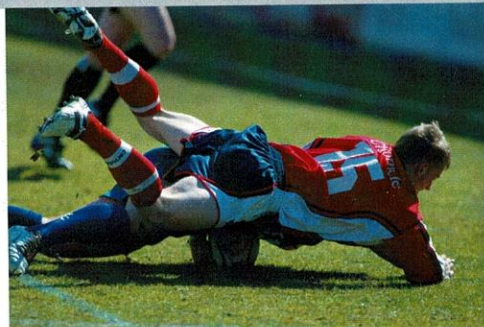
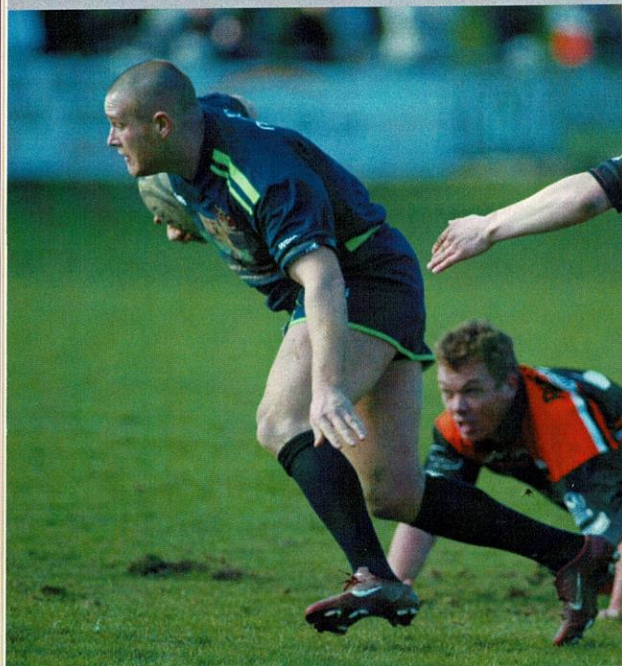
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Highlights Of The Season

Photographs of the previous 6 months



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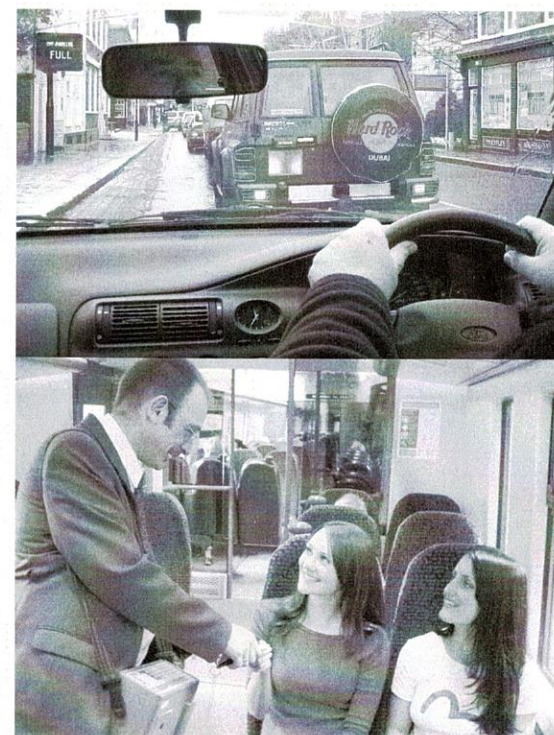
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NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



A MOUTH-WATERING PROSPECT

WITH this season's title heading for a thrilling climax, it seems somewhat premature to be airing the topic - but how good is NL1 going to be next year?

The main reason for people's excitement is that the two teams set to be relegated - Widnes and Leigh, have both indicated that they will operate with full-time squads at the lower level.

If, for example, Castleford fail to make an immediate return to the top flight this season, it is easy to see them remaining full-time with the resources at the Jungle.

And Hull KR are operating on a full-time basis until the end of this season in an attempt to earn Super League status.

It is opening up a whole new dimension to the competition - and one that has to be welcomed.

There are bound to be murmurings among the clubs not able to have full-time squads - but if NL1 is to develop as everyone wants it to, and to close the chasm-like gap with the top flight, then this has to be a good thing.

Providing, of course, that everyone's spending is monitored and no club goes for the old fashioned 'promotion-or-bust' approach that was the downfall of so many.

The current salary cap should help ensure that doesn't happen, though it is still clearly a danger.

But raising the standard of Rugby League being played in NL1 has to be a massive positive. The teams set to be involved next year should ensure some bumper crowds - which will aid those clubs lower down the league not yet in a position to have a full-time squad.

It should also be another step towards making the transition from NL1 to Super League an easier one that Leigh found - though the key issue there remains the timescale given to promoted clubs.

That is something that needs to be revisited in the future, with the idea of staging the league campaign before the Northern Rail Cup (thereby ending in July and giving the Grand Final winners much more time to prepare) being the most sensible.

This year NL1 has been terrific and is heading for a tremendous climax where at least three teams have a definite chance of winning the Grand Final.

But the fact remains that at times crowds are very disappointing, especially outside those top three clubs.

Perhaps the inclusion of three or four full-time teams will be the shot in the arm the competition needs. Those teams will be there to be shot at by everyone and will be beatable by part-timers (ask Castleford), so look at the positives and see how this can help the National Leagues progress.

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

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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	20-32	L	2,054
24/04/05	Hull K R	NL1	Away	15.00	32-19	L	2,474
15/05/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Home	15.00	6-60	L	1,284
22/05/05	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Away	15.00	25-18	L	792
05/06/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Home	15.00	25-24	W	827
12/06/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Away	15.00	22-40	W	1,073
24/06/05	Halifax	NL1	Home	19.45	14-28	L	1,221
03/07/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Home	15.00	38-20	W	928
10/07/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00	34-26	L	896
24/07/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Away	15.30	32-20	L	4,600
31/07/05	Hull K R	NL1	Home	15.00	40-20	W	1,448
07/08/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Away	15.00	36-16	L	1,663
14/08/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00	24-27	W	1,426
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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