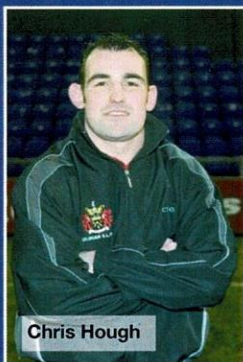


ALL CHANGE IN A NEW-LOOK RESERVES SET-UP

BY ROGER HALSTEAD
MAJOR activity behind the scenes has resulted in considerable change in the Roughyeds Reserves camp in the past few days. We have waved farewell to assistant

coach Leo Casey and to full-back Anthony Bingham and we have placed down the welcome mat following the signings of two half-backs in Chris Hough and Matty Ashe.



Chris Hough

Leo has worked side by side with head coach John Hough since the Reserves were re-formed at the start of last season, but it has now emerged that he has not been enjoying coaching for some time.

He confirmed his departure this week and said: "I've been coaching for six or seven years and I'm not enjoying it any more. I've decided it isn't for me any longer. Rather than banging my head against a brick wall I felt it was the time to move on and find something in its place that will give me some enjoyment."

"I've been thinking about it for a while, but I didn't want to leave John on his own. Now that Chris has arrived to give him a lift, it is opportune for me to slip away."

"I have no axe to grind with anybody or anything. I've just lost interest in coaching." Chris Hough arrived just in time to play for the Reserves at Dewsbury a fortnight ago and to lead them to a 23-6 win, their first of the season. Luke Sutton, Jamie Knight, Shaun Robinson and Gary Sykes scored tries; Mark Smith kicked three goals; and Austin Barraclough dropped a goal.

The plan was for Chris, who has now signed to the end of the season, to come in and use his experience to guide the youngsters around the park --- and he did that again at Sedgley Park last Saturday when league leaders Barrow were beaten 52-10.

Matty Ashe, a New Zealander whom we have signed from Swinton on a month's loan, made his debut in that game and scored one of the side's nine tries. Winger Michael Ward helped himself to a hat-trick and the other tries were scored by Ross Coates, Todd O'Brien (2), Luke Sutton and Jamie Knight with Mark Smith kicking beautifully to land eight conversions from nine attempts.

Team: Coates; Ward, Foy, J Knight, Robinson; Ashe, Hough; Sutton, O'Brien, Kerr, Clarke, Smith, Heaton. Subs: Lowe, Mansfield, D Knight, Arrowsmith.

Full-back Bingham, meanwhile, has left the club after picking up a few injuries this year and now taking a new job which stops him getting to training.

This coming Saturday's scheduled home game with Keighley is postponed because of pitch work at Sedgley Park and the Reserves next game is up at Whitehaven on Saturday, June 20.

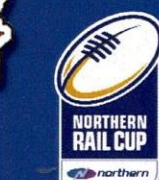
Oldham

ROUGHYEDS

RLFC



The official programme of Oldham Rugby League Football Club (1997) Ltd



v Featherstone Rovers

Northern Rail Cup Quarter Final at Leigh Sports Village

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Rugby Oldham backing for Reserves

STILL on with the Reserves, the Rugby Oldham Supporters' Trust is sponsoring the Oldham-reared members of the second team squad as follows:

Chris Clarke, Alex Eyres, Danny Knight, Jamie Knight, Dale Lowe, Scott Mansfield, Matty Moores, Simon Moores, Michael Arrowsmith, David Orwell, Shaun Robinson, Michael Ward, Chris Hough.

In addition to backing each of these players individually, Rugby Oldham has also made a donation towards the cost of providing training tops for the Reserves, as they did last year.

RODEN TRIES PLACE HIM WITH THE CLUB'S ELITE

Neil 17th in all-time list of Roughyeds scorers

by ROGER HALSTEAD

NEIL Roden can walk tall tonight in the knowledge that he is the Oldham club's all-time second highest try-scoring half-back.

Of all those who have worn Oldham's No 6 and No 7 shirts since statistics were first recorded, only the legendary Frank Pitchford in the 1950s scored more tries in his career than rock-steady Roden's 88... or is it 90?

My personal records show Neil on 93, but they include two Law Cup tries and another in a pre-season warm-up game at Whitehaven in 2004 and for purposes of "official" records those do not count.

That takes him down to 90 - two more than the current total allocated to our long-serving stand-off half by Michael Turner, trusted historian of the Oldham club and the Heritage Trust's record keeper.

Either way, only Leigh-born Pitchford's 105 touchdowns better Roden's total, and Frank needed 305 appearances to become one of only 14 players to top the century, whereas Neil is hot on his heels in only 218 outings.

Now in his eighth season with the Roughyeds - he

was away from the club in 2005 and 2006 - Roden has (my records) played in 218 games out of a possible 248 and has scored 93 tries and 20 drop goals for a total of 392 points.

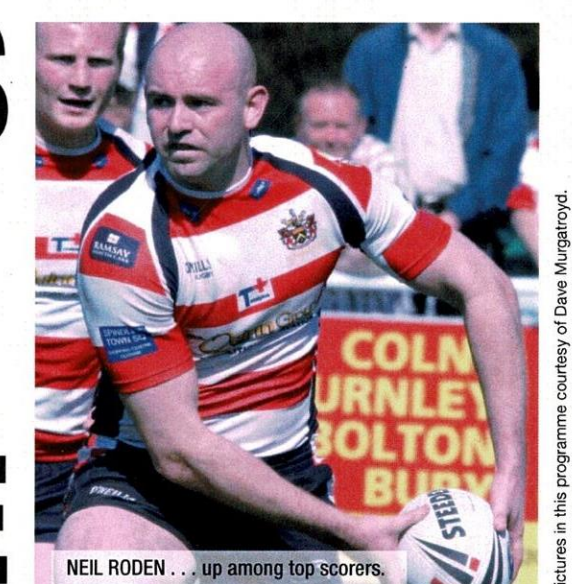
However, for purposes of comparison, and as all other players' records in this study are kindly provided by the Heritage Trust, we will stick with Michael's 88 to show the full merit of Roden's achievement when placed against the try-scoring records of other leading Oldham half-backs across the years.

Nobody ran 'em in quite like stand-off Wilf Briggs, who rattled up an astonishing 44 tries in only 73 games in the late '60s and early '70s, but he didn't stick around long enough to become a member of the elite.

Pitchford led the way, but second comes Roden - still going strong - and he has already surpassed the totals of several half-back stars of yesteryear, including Vinny Nestor, Alan Kellett, Ray Ashton and, way back, Alex Givvons.

Indeed, only 16 Oldham players in total, going back to the early 1900s, have scored more tries for the club than Roden and with the exception of Pitchford every one of those was either a winger or a centre.

Top of the pile was the incomparable Alan Davies with a magnificent 174, but to see Roden in 17th



NEIL RODEN... up among top scorers.

Pictures in this programme courtesy of Dave Murgatroyd.

place and bearing down on players like John Etty (90) and Des Foy (96) puts into real perspective Neil's contribution to the Roughyeds cause over the past few years.

He was the club's leading try scorer in 2002 with 20 and he wasn't far off claiming top spot again in 2004 when he chalked up 18.

These days, at the age of 29, he is just as happy making tries for others as he is going over himself. But next time he crosses the whitewash raise a special cheer for the man who, over the years, has made try-scoring look easy. Well done, Neil Roden!

TOP-SCORING HALF-BACKS		
	App	Tries
Frank Pitchford	305	105
Neil Roden	218	88
Vinny Nestor	232	86
Alan Kellett	206	76
Ray Ashton	212	72
Alex Givvons	241	54
... AND THE REST		
Alan Davies	174	
Sid Rix	155	
Mike Elliott	153	
Johnny Noon	126	
Dick Cracknell	119	
Sam Williams	119	
Reg Farrar	114	
Phil Larder	111	
George Tyson	111	
Joe Corsi	107	
Terry O'Grady	105	
Frank Pitchford	105	
Evan Davies	102	
George Smith	100	
Des Foy	96	
John Etty	90	
Neil Roden	88	

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- Wednesday ~ news and views from the Roughyeds
- Thursday ~ all the news from the amateur clubs

More Rugby in your Chronicle

View from the inside...



Tonight sees another first in the new Oldham club's history with our "on the road" show visiting the fantastic surroundings of the Leigh Sports Village stadium

Since the club was reformed in 1997 we have had more homes than seen on an MPs expenses sheet and once the match against Featherstone was chosen for broadcasting by SKY television we had to move quickly to find a suitable venue.

We also made a conscious decision to move the match to ensure that it remained a live TV game and hopefully

that decision will be justified tonight. At the level we currently play at the opportunity to expose the club to a national TV audience is one which no club is in a position to reject and I am sure that every Oldham fan would understand that.

Once again everybody working at the club, either on a paid or voluntary basis, has pulled together and shown what is now fast becoming typical Roughyeds resilience by making sure that the game will go ahead without any hitches. It would also be remiss not to thank all the staff at LSV but particularly Simon Toon, Chief Executive and James Ditchfield, Operations Director of LSV who have been very helpful and accommodating from day one and who have been a pleasure to deal with.

A special mention must also go to all the supporters who have made a the effort to come and support the team away from its usual home. We appreciate all your support and occasions like this - which other clubs don't face - underline just how much you care for your club.

As far as on the field goes tonight we will face the team who we haven't played since the 2007 Grand Final at Headingley and we all know what happened that day!

We are not naive enough to think tonight's match is about revenge or anything like that but it will provide a timely reminder to those of us who were involved with the club at that time exactly just what we missed out on.

Featherstone, to their credit, have developed their club in many areas since that time and they now have what is a very competitive squad which is

more than holding its own in the Championship as well as, like us, harbouring thoughts of success in the Northern Rail Cup.

This is only the second time we have reached the quarter finals of this competition and the first time we have had a "home" tie so we will be looking to grab the opportunity that is in front of us.

We have always been supporters of the Northern Rail Cup and as such we are desperate to go as far as we can in this season's competition where a change in the fixture format for this year will not see us penalised as we were somewhat last year when we had to go down to London Skolars midweek after reaching the quarter finals.

The Northern Rail Cup is becoming harder and harder each year and with the introduction of the 9s competition on the weekend of the final I have no doubt whatsoever that every club will be looking to get its hand on one of the 2 trophies available!

I would also like to thank tonight's match sponsors who have also shown extra commitment by supporting us on "foreign" territory and hope you all enjoy your night with us.

As always I would ask that you get behind the lads in what, after all, is a game where we are the underdogs with Featherstone in the division above but yet an opportunity, if we play to our potential, could see us in the semi final of the competition.

Your encouragement could make the difference.

Enjoy the game.

Chris Hamilton

Chief Executive

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5 ALIVE

We would like to thank the following 5 Alive members for their continuing support.

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Five Alive members are reminded that the next three quarterly lunches will be held on Fridays, 24 July, Oct 16 and Dec 4. More details nearer the time. **To join Five Alive, please ring the Roughyeds office on 0161 628 3677.**

SPONSORSHIP OMISSION - SORRY

In a recent programme I thanked the kit and programme sponsors and commented that the player sponsors and matchday sponsors were acknowledged now in the Game On magazine that accompanies our own programme. I was sure this covered everybody, but I had forgotten one company who generously have supported us for years. Shirley and Keith Mullaney, owners of H Mullaney and Son Ltd (Skip Hire) 01457832870 who support the Roughyeds home and away, are our Goalkicker sponsor. Unfortunately this has not been included on the Game On credits and I aim to put that right. So apologies Shirley and Keith, but with the number of tries scored this season and Andy Ballard's success rate I reckon H Mullaney and Son is the most mentioned name at any home game and long may it continue.

TODAY'S SPONSORS

The club would particularly like to thank the following sponsors for today's game. With the game being played at Leigh Sports Village it must have been much more difficult for sponsors to get their friends, customers, colleagues to the match. Their dedication and the time and effort they have put into this sponsorship is much appreciated by the club.

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We would also like to thank **Atlantic Executive Travel Ltd** for their terrific gesture in providing free transport for today's game.

WHERE AND WHEN WE PLAY



Date	Comp	Opponents	V	Time	Res	Score	Att
Fri, Feb 13	NRC	Widnes Vikings	A	7.30pm	W	22-20	2,783
Wed, Feb 18	NRC	Rochdale Hornets	H	7.30pm	W	54-4	1,028
Sun, Feb 22	NRC	Sheffield Eagles	H	3.00pm	L	22-34	1,173
Sun, Mar 1	NRC	Hunslet Hawks	A	2.00pm	W	32-14	582
Sun, Mar 8	CCC3	Sharlston Rovers	H	3.00pm	W	26-8	800
Sun, Mar 15	CC1	Blackpool Panthers	H	3.00pm	W	36-18	880
Sun, Mar 22	CC1	Keighley Cougars	A	3.00pm	L	26-34	1,021
Sun, Mar 29	CC1	Workington Town	H	3.00pm	W	66-14	819
Sun, April 5	CCC4	Lézignan	H	3.00pm	W	60-30	863
Fri, April 10	CC1	Rochdale Hornets	A	3.00pm	W	26-18	1,249
Sun, April 19	CC1	Dewsbury Rams	H	3.00pm	L	12-36	1,147
Sun, April 26	CC1	Swinton Lions	H	3.00pm	W	52-36	1,010
Sat, May 2	CC1	London Skolars	A	3.00pm	W	78-10	273
Sat, May 9	CCC5	Gateshead Thunder	A	3.00pm	L	16-34	929
Sun, May 17	CC1	Hunslet Hawks	H	3.00pm	W	22-16	1,136
Sun, May 24	CC1	Swinton Lions	A	3.00pm	W	44-26	705
Thurs, June 4	NRCQF	Featherstone Rov.	H	7.30pm			
Sun, June 21		NRC (Semi-Final)					
Thurs, June 25	CC1	York City Knights	A	7.30pm			
Sun, July 5	CC1	Workington Town	A	3.00pm			
Sun, July 12		NRC Final (Bloomfield Road)					
Sun, July 19	CC1	Keighley Cougars	H	3.00pm			
Sun, July 26	CC1	Dewsbury Rams	A	3.00pm			
Sun, Aug 2	CC1	Rochdale Hornets	H	3.00pm			
Thurs, Aug 6	CC1	London Skolars	H	7.30pm			
Sun, Aug 16	CC1	Blackpool Panthers	A	3.00pm			
Sun, Aug 23	CC1	York City Knights	H	3.00pm			
Sun, Sep 6	CC1	-Hunslet Hawks	A	3.00pm			

Play-offs start Friday, Sept 11
Grand Finals Day Sunday, October 4

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'OUR GOAL WAS, AND STILL IS, TO FINISH TOP', SAYS CLASSY ALLEN

PLAYER PROFILE

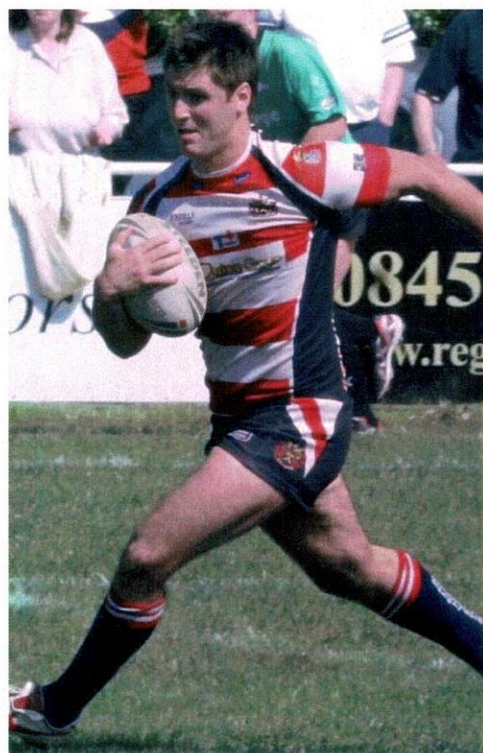
No 10 DAVID ALLEN

Roger Halstead talks to a player who is ambitious to move up the rugby league ladder.

DAVID Allen, our second-row forward, is convinced that Roughyeds can still finish top of

the pile in Co-operative Championship One this season and win promotion automatically.

Having been beaten by Keighley away and by Dewsbury at Boundary Park, Roughyeds accept that the Rams are favourites to go up the 'easy' way and to collect a cool £50,000 in prize money along the way.



Favourites, though, are there to be knocked off their perch -- as Roughyeds know only too well --- and 23-year-old Allen feels sure that, come July 26, there will be a lot more than pride riding on Oldham's return clash with the Rams in Yorkshire.

"Our team goal was, and still is, to finish top," said David when I spoke to him this week ahead of tonight's Northern Rail Cup clash with Featherstone Rovers, who launched themselves into the higher division by beating Roughyeds in the 2007 Grand Final at Headingley.


He added: "We suffered a setback when we under-performed against Dewsbury in April, but we are still only half way through the season and a lot can happen yet. Obviously, we've got to beat them at their place and hope they slip up somewhere else as well, but we still believe we can do it."

"We've got a great bunch of lads here at Oldham and we seem to be getting it together nicely now."


"I'm reasonably pleased with my own form and it was good to receive the Spindles player-of-the-month award." David Allen was a precocious talent. Mum and Dad, Karen and John, already had a three-year-old daughter, Carly, when David arrived on the scene in 1985. Dad had played as a professional for Swinton and he was keen to make sure that his boy didn't start too soon and suffer burn-out while still at junior school.

"Dad wouldn't let me play at


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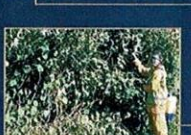
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first," recalled David, "and I must have been nine or ten before I went along to Widnes Tigers and later to Halton Hornets, where I was to stay for a few years."

It didn't take long for the pro clubs to be alerted. There was talk of Warrington being interested while David was still at primary school, but Wigan did more than talk ---they took him under their wing at the age of 11. The boy was on his way.

With one foot already in the Warriors camp, the youngster continued to shine for Halton Hornets in the North-West Counties Youth League and it was no surprise when, in 2001 at the age of 15, he was picked to captain a huge 42-strong under-16s NW Counties squad to tour the southern hemisphere.

There was a lot of talent on that tour. You might have heard of some of them: Andy Ballard, Adam Bibey, Ryan Collins, Wayne Corcoran, James Coyle, Carl Forber, Harrison Hansen, Tim Hartley, Gareth Hayes, Paul Prescott, James Roby, Michael Rowe, Adam Sharples and Ian Hardman.

At the end of a gruelling, month-long tour which took in Fiji, New Zealand and Australia, James Coyle and Ryan Collins were named "players of the tour" and David Allen and Wayne Corcoran were among three "men of steel".

David hadn't been back home in Widnes long -- and back to school at Fairfield High --before Wigan put their cards on the table with the offer of a four-year full-time contract.

The youngster and his family had a major decision to make: was it to be higher education at college or sixth form, or was it to be as a full-time pro with Wigan.

"I was playing Academy under-17s while in my last year at school," he recalled, "and then I was given the chance to join one of the best and biggest club sides in the world as a full-time professional at the age of 16.

"In the circles I moved in, everybody wanted to play for Wigan and here was I with the chance to do just that. Most of the boys who were signing were Wigan lads. There were only a couple of us from out of town and I felt really proud that, as a Widnes lad, Wigan wanted to sign me."

For the first three years of his contract everything went smoothly. He got his first taste of senior rugby at the age of 16 and he was still in his teenage years when, in 2005, he played in most of the Warriors' Super League matches that year.

Said David: "My family was always the biggest influence on me, but at Wigan I owed a lot to Dean Bell and Denis Betts. They kept pushing me and pushing me on the one hand, but with the other they always made sure I kept my feet firmly on the ground."

"James Coyle, Andy Ballard and Gary Sykes were in the same year as me throughout our time at Wigan, and we really did enjoy it there."

Imagine his surprise and disappointment therefore when, with 21 Super League appearances behind him aged 19, he was told with a year left on his agreement that Widnes Vikings wanted him and he had to go.

It was a decision governed by salary cap restrictions. He was encouraged to go and in the end was left with little option.

He was a first-team regular at Widnes in 2006, but he was to suffer a major blow when he tested positive for a recreational drug and was banned by the RFL for two years.

"That made me grow up, and grow up fast," said David. "To be out of the game for so long, and at my age, was awful. You take things for granted, like rugby, and it is only when it isn't there for you that you fully appreciate what you had."

When the ban was up a few clubs offered him a way back into the sport he loved, but he chose Oldham and he has never regretted it.

"Deaks (former Oldham coach Steve Deakin) showed a lot of interest in me," he recalled, "and he really sold the club to me.

I never did get the chance to play for him. I was also impressed when I spoke to Chris (chief executive Chris Hamilton) and I was happy to sign a one-year deal in November last year."

When announcing the signing, Chris said Roughyeds had acquired an "immense talent" and a player who was totally committed to playing well for his new club after a difficult period in his life.

"We are talking about real talent here," he said. "You don't play for Wigan at the age of 16 unless you are a bit special."

No pressure then on David Allen's young shoulders. In actual fact, in his 14 games for Roughyeds, he has fully lived up to high expectations and has demonstrated clearly on numerous occasions that the chief executive was pretty much spot-on with his observations.

So what's the future for David Allen? He was as positive in his reply as he is when making a break out wide or slipping a clever pass round the defender.

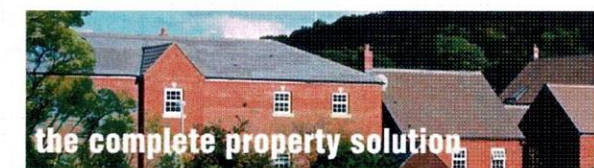
"I want to get back into Super League," he said. "That's got to be my goal. Nobody can foresee the future. It might be next year, the year after, the year after that or not at all. But that's my aim. Ideally, it would be with Oldham but as far as the future is concerned I guess we just have to wait and see."

In the meantime David Allen will continue to display his skills in the Roughyeds cause. Sit back and enjoy.



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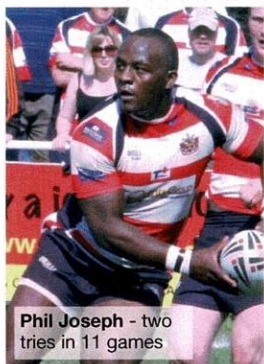
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AT this half-way stage of the season - half way in that we have played nine of the 18 Co-operative Championship One games - it is interesting to look at the campaign's statistics so far.



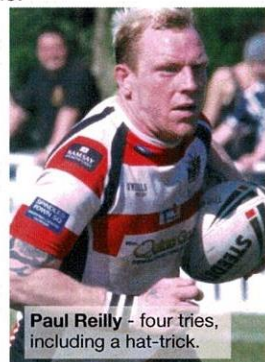
Phil Joseph - two tries in 11 games

We have also played four Northern Rail Cup group games and three Carnegie Challenge Cup ties, making 16 games in total, and only two players have appeared in all 16 - full-back Paul O'Connor and stand-off James Coyle.

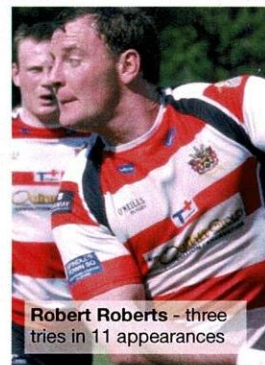
A total of 25 players have been used - 11 backs and 14 forwards - and of the 105 tries scored 74 have been recorded by the backs and 31 by the forwards.

Three wingers have shared 29 tries; three centres have totalled 19 tries; three half-backs have scored 21 between them; and O'Connor has chipped in with five from the back.

Andy Ballard's record-breaking scoring achievements have been well documented in the press and in previous match-day programmes - and well may they continue - so suffice



Paul Reilly - four tries, including a hat-trick.



Robert Roberts - three tries in 11 appearances

to say here that with 84 goals, 16 tries and 232 points to his credit Andy is the leading points scorer among players at Co-operative Championship and Championship One clubs.

The Coyle brothers, James and Thomas, each with nine, come joint second to Andy in the list of Oldham try scorers, while Tommy Goulden and Dave Allen, each with five, share the distinction of

topping the list of Roughyeds' forward try scorers.

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TELL-TALE STATS

	App	G	T	Pts
(16 appearances possible)				
J Coyle	16	-	9	36
O'Connor	16	-	5	20
Baines	15	-	2	8
Ballard	15	84	16	232
Allen	14	-	5	20
T Coyle	14	-	9	36
Halliwell	14	3	7	34
I'Anson	14	-	3	12
St Hilaire	13	-	8	32
Greenwood	12	-	6	24
Highton	12	-	1	4
Reilly	12	-	4	16
Joseph	11	-	2	8
Kerr	11	-	3	12
Roberts	11	-	3	12
Goulden	10	-	5	20
Mervill	9	-	1	4
Roden	9	-	3	12
Sykes	9	-	1	4
Gibbons	7	-	3	12
Menzies	7	-	-	0
Robinson	7	-	1	4
Boults	6	-	1	4
Onyango	6	-	7	28
Littler	2	-	-	0

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OCL OLDHAM COMMUNITY LEISURE
For a community more active, more often

Northern Rail and Roughyeds described as "outstanding successes" their recent visits to two local primary schools, Alt and Littlemoor.

They were part of the Momentum Tours programme delivered by Northern Rail in partnership with clubs, combining the excitement of playing and watching rugby league with more serious rail-safety messages. Firm favourites with the children at the two Oldham schools were Robert Roberts and Jamie I'Anson, who both stressed the importance of playing sport and of healthy living.

Children were also advised on rail safety and told all about this evening's Northern Rail Cup quarter-final tie featuring Oldham and Featherstone Rovers here at the Leigh Sports Village.

Children from both schools, and their families, will be here tonight to support the Roughyeds and to reserve special cheers for the two players who visited them in the classroom.

"The children at both schools were fantastic," said Robert. "They were really interested in the cup-tie and they had lots of questions lined up for us. We really enjoyed the visits in partnership with Northern Rail and I'm sure the children and the staff at the schools also felt they were very beneficial."

Tony Hargrave, Northern Rail Cup sponsorship manager, said: "I was very impressed with Robert and Jamie, two unassuming young men who were great with the children and did their club proud.

"We placed a lot of emphasis on rail safety and on the dangers of playing anywhere near railway lines - very important for seven to 11 year olds - and we also talked a lot about rugby league, the Northern Rail Cup and the values of sport.

"Jamie made his debut for his previous club, Celtic Crusaders in South Wales, in the Northern Rail Cup so it will always be a special competition to him."

More schools will be targeted for the Momentum visit,

which includes a DVD on the dangers of playing near railway lines and another one on the Northern Rail Cup, ahead of the semi-finals.

Meanwhile, children at under-9s level from the junior sections of three Oldham amateur clubs, Waterhead, Saddleworth Rangers and St Anne's, will take to the pitch here at Leigh this evening to showcase the hard work that continues to be done at grassroots level in the town.



NORTHERN RAIL SEMI-FINAL DRAW

The draw for the Northern Rail Cup semi-finals will take place at 5.30pm on Sunday, June 7, live on BBC Radio Leeds.

"Other quarter-final ties are as follows: Barrow v Dewsbury, Saturday, June 6 (6.30pm kick off);

Widnes v York, Saturday, June 6 (6.30pm kick off);

Halifax v Leigh, Sunday, June 7 (3.00pm kick off).



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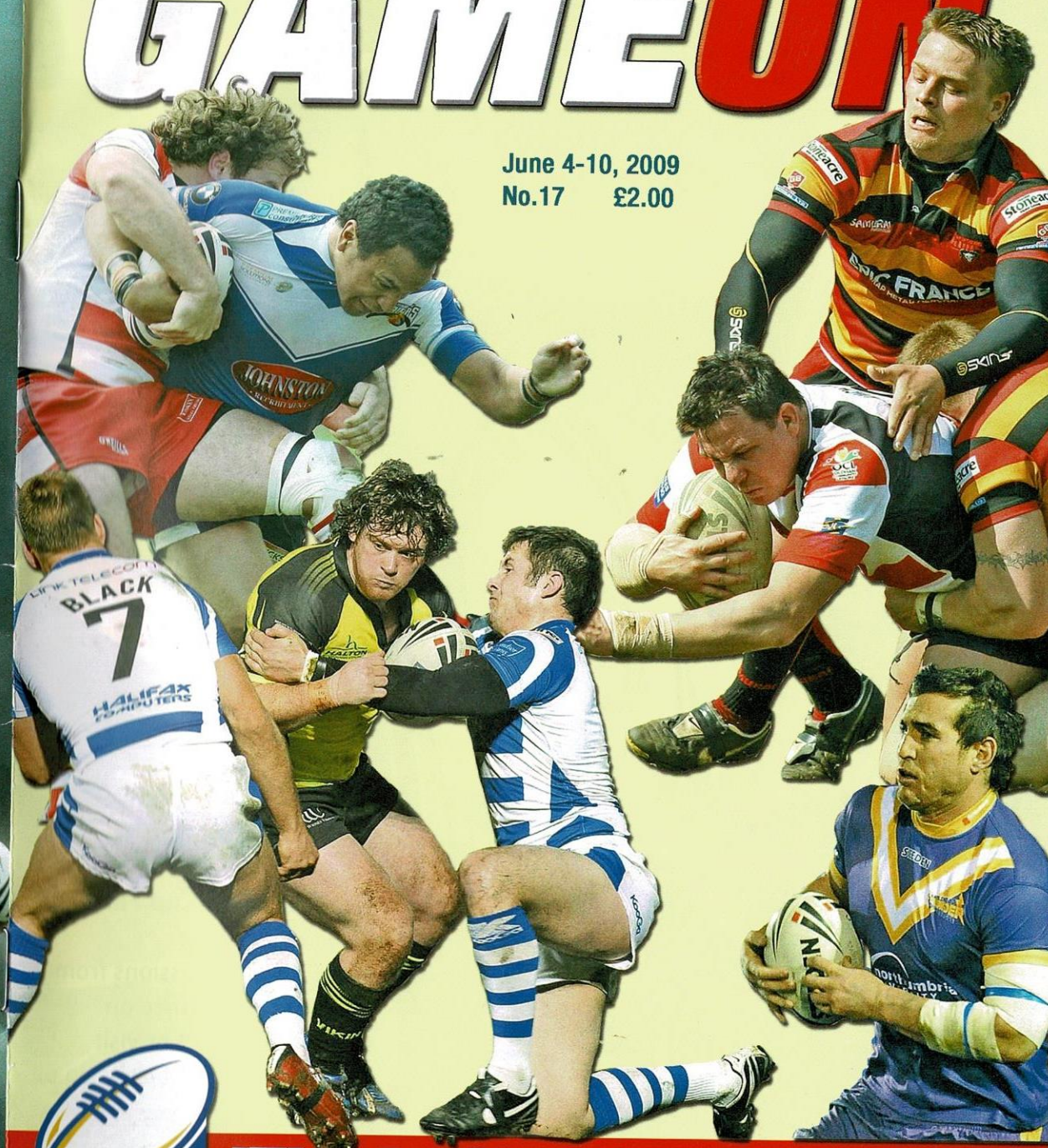
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Rhino stamp on Bulldogs

They say you can't keep a good man down and if that is true Batley coach Karl Harrison is the surely one of the leading pieces of evidences for adhering to that theory.

Rhino, as he is fondly known to all and sundry, was one of those players who never took a step back when he could take two forward.

And as a coach he enjoyed great and quick success, rising to the ranks of England coach, albeit in the days when the top job was running Great Britain.

When he has not been coaching Harrison has kept himself very busy with his own business and also doing a bit of punditry on the side.

And whether on the TV, radio or in print he comes across as someone who knows EXACTLY what he is talking about.

Until he took over at the Bulldogs he had been linked with many other posts but, it was the pull of the club he supported growing up as a boy that got him back into coaching.

And every rugby fan should know he is doing it for love o the game. I am sure, whatever he gets paid at Batley, it is peanuts compared to the majority of his fellow Co-operative Championship coaches.

Yet, with virtually the same squad as he inherited, Harrison hasn't so much breathed new life into the Bulldogs as attached an industrial fan and pointed it in the direction of Mount Pleasant.

His predecessor Gary Thornton did a fantastic job on limited resources but admitted by the end it was the right time to leave.

And how Harrison has taken up Thornton's mantle of perpetually surprising the big boys, culminating in a stunning victory at home to Widnes.

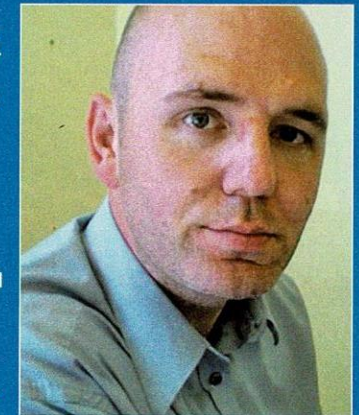
In baking heat and trailing 16-0, the part-timers of Batley turned it around to win 40-34. Seven days earlier they had stunned Whitehaven 48-24.

All of a sudden the team everyone thought were certain to pass through the trap door have become a free-scoring, enterprising team holding their own.

The Bulldogs have picked up Paul Handforth from Doncaster but surely it is more to do with some amazing work on the training ground from Harrison.

So while the fans of the Vikings and Haven may not agree, it is great to see a good man making his mark again.

You can never have enough of them in your sport.



MARK FLANAGAN, EDITOR

RFL – official notes

RESPECT

Rugby League is passionate and prides itself on being a family game. Please behave responsibly at all times.

family sport and, with this in mind, action will also be taken against spectators who use foul and abusive language.

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The RFL's 'Tackle It' policy states it will not tolerate racism of any kind and will take specific action against spectators who engage in racist chanting, abuse or intimidation. Rugby League is a great

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The RFL requests that spectators do not venture onto the pitch during or after the game. Such action is against ground safety regulations and the RFL reserves the right to take action against any person infringing these regulations.

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the world according to **WILKO**

In this instalment of 'The World According to Wilko' read about the Challenge Cup victory against Co-operative Championship team Gateshead Thunder, the Challenge Cup semi-final draw and Jon's fun day out at Oulton Park.

I HAVE got to pay tribute to the Gateshead fans and Saints' away support following our victory in the quarter final last weekend.

The atmosphere in the stadium was fantastic - it was a real Cup clash! It was great for me personally to be back on the field - I missed running out on the pitch when I was injured so it was great to feel the grass under my boots again.

It was a difficult fixture for us, as people were fully expecting us to cruise to a simple victory.

We knew that if we turned up thinking it would be an easy game for us then it most certainly wouldn't be.

Naturally we are pleased to get through. We did some good things and some pretty average stuff too.

The pitch at Gateshead is narrow, which means we couldn't really put a Super League game-plan in place.

Both teams played up the middle and around the ruck and we were lucky that we had some big players to do that successfully.

You have to give Gateshead massive credit though. They have come a long way in the last few years in an area of the North East that isn't associated with rugby league.

It is good to see they are making strides to further the game.

I also thought the fans were great. It looked like they had a good day out and enjoyed themselves in the sun.

We enjoy the support of both sets of fans and it was good to see so many people on the terraces.

The draw for the semi-finals looks an interesting one with four Super League teams lining up against each other.

Huddersfield will be no easy game for us as they are having a great season and playing the match on a neutral ground means that in our clash there is certainly no favourite.

The Wigan versus Warrington tie is another big one with both teams nestling in the same area of the engage Super League table at the moment.

Both of those clubs will be absolutely desperate to get to Wembley come August 29th and will be hoping to stick to their game-plan come match day.

Following the quarter final match against Gateshead I got a call early on the Sunday morning to go to the British Touring Car Championship at Oulton Park.

The guys from Airwaves BMW invited me along as a guest and I have to say it was a fantastic day out.

I was interviewed on the grid by ITV which should hopefully spread the rugby league message to more people, and even did a draw live on air with Steve Rider!

It was a great day out and I'd recommend it to anyone as the racing was so exciting.

Many thanks to the Airwaves BMW team for making it such a special day.



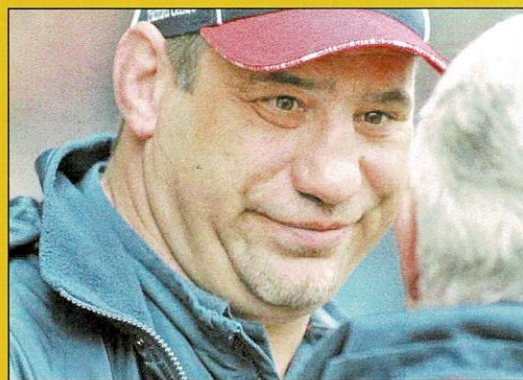
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To vote for your Co-operative Championship player of the month for June email the name of your nominated player to playerofthemonth@generatesponsorship.com including your daytime contact details and favourite team. You will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win VIP Grand Final tickets!

ACTIONREPLAY

Rhino works wonders with rallying Bulldogs



Karl Harrison has lifted Batley out of the relegation zone



Hooker Jack Lee on the charge in Featherstone's 30-24 home win over play-off rivals Leigh Centurions

BATLEY BULLDOGS climbed out of the Co-operative Championship relegation zone with a stunning 40-34 victory over WIDNES VIKINGS.

A remarkable second half fightback sent the majority of the 1,087 Mount Pleasant crowd home jubilant and raised real hopes that the Bulldogs can survive the drop.

Batley had looked doomed until former Salford City Reds and England boss Karl Harrison took the reins – but their third win of the campaign, which had looked unlikely at 34-16 down mid-way through the second half, took them above Gateshead Thunder on the ladder.

Half back Paul Mennell was the star of the show for the home side, orchestrating their attacking play and scoring a try and four goals for himself.

But it was the Vikings who were in control early doors, taking the lead through Iain Morrison after six minutes and the back rower added a second soon after to establish a 10-0 lead.

Paddy Flynn added a third for 16-0, but the Bulldogs rallied through Jermaine McGilvary, Danny Maun. Morrison then claimed his hat trick but Mennell's try reduced the gap back to just six points at the break.

Anthony Thackeray and Richard Varkulis seemed to have wrapped up the three points for Paul Cullen's men, but the plucky Bulldogs stunned the Vikings to claim the spoils.

First, Kris Lythe scored to give Batley a glimmer of hope and then Jack Watson crashed over with 15 minutes to go.

Ian Preece scored almost straight from the restart to put the Bulldogs within four points

and they claimed an unlikely 36-34 lead when Mennell converted David Toothill's score.

Preece then added his second of the game to rub even more salt into the Vikings' gaping wounds.

At the other end of the table, BARROW RAIDERS claimed top spot with a 26-18 home victory over SHEFFIELD EAGLES.

Forward Chris Young claimed the man of the match accolade after making a huge impact off the bench and it was his 65th minute try which swung the game back in the Raiders' favour.

The Eagles, who had beaten Halifax and Toulouse in previous weeks, threatened to cause another upset with Alex Szostak's 56th minute try put them 18-10 up.

But winger Chris Larkin sparked the Raiders three minutes later and then Young gave his side the lead before veteran half back Darren Holt secured the points for Dave Clark's side.

Barrow's Cumbrian rivals WHITEHAVEN eased to a 50-12 win over bottom-of-the-table DONCASTER at the Recreation Ground.

Prop forward Kyle Amor further enhanced his budding reputation with a brace of tries in his man of the match display, though on-loan Celtic Crusaders winger Paul Ballard also grabbed headlines with his four-try haul.

In Thursday's televised tie, FEATHERSTONE ROVERS held their nerve to win a scrappy encounter with LEIGH CENTURIONS at the Chris Moyles Stadium.

Ian Hardman's last gasp score ensured a 30-24 victory after Mike Morrison's 72nd minute try had pulled the Centurions level.

Mick Nanyn enjoyed a strong two-try debut in defeat for Paul Rowley's side.



Adam Sullivan scored as the Knights fought back against Dewsbury, but the Rams held on to boost their title hopes

Rams get title boost

DEWSBURY RAMS stayed on course for the Co-operative Championship One title with a hard-fought 24-18 win at YORK CITY KNIGHTS.

It was the Rams' ninth win of the season from as many games and Warren Jowitt's side look almost unstoppable in their bid for a return to the higher division at the first attempt.

Stand off Patch Walker was the man of the match for Jowitt's men, who had to hang on to the points late on having established a 24-lead just after half time.

Adam Sullivan's try gave the Knights a 6-0 advantage after 10 minutes but Chris Spurr levelled for the visitors and half back Liam Finn put them ahead 17 minutes in.

Adam Mitchell's penalty reduced the arrears to just four but former Knights flyer Austin Buchanan's try on the stroke of half time put the Rams in command.

York's cause was damaged

further when player-coach Paul March was sin-binned for dissent after disputing the touchdown.

The Rams took advantage of March's absence to register a 47th minute Andrew Bostock try and the game looked almost secure at 24-8.

But the Knights launched a fightback just after the hour mark as Tom Haberecht crossed, with Danny Ratcliffe following in the 68th minute to ensure a tense finale.

Third-placed KEIGHLEY COUGARS romped to a 58-6 win over ailing WORKINGTON TOWN at Cougar Park.

Close season signing Carl Hughes made a mammoth impact on his return from injury, scoring four tries as Dave Rotheram's men were torn to shreds by the unforgiving home side.

Winger Gavin Duffy and centre Darren Potter both bagged braces while James Feather, Oliver Pursglove and Danny Jones also got in on the act with tries of their own.

SWINTON LIONS edged a tough derby contest with Rochdale-based HORNETS RL, running out 23-22 winners thanks to a late Graham Holroyd drop goal.

Holroyd was sent off just moments later, meaning a tense finish for coach Paul Kidd although his side hung on for the points.

HUNSLET HAWKS piled more misery on lowly LONDON SKOLARS with a 34-18 win at the New River Stadium.

Charlie Wabo scored twice and claimed the man of the match prize, while Matt Thomas bagged a brace for the Skolars, who are at least showing some signs of improvement.



Hero and villain ... Swinton's Graham Holroyd

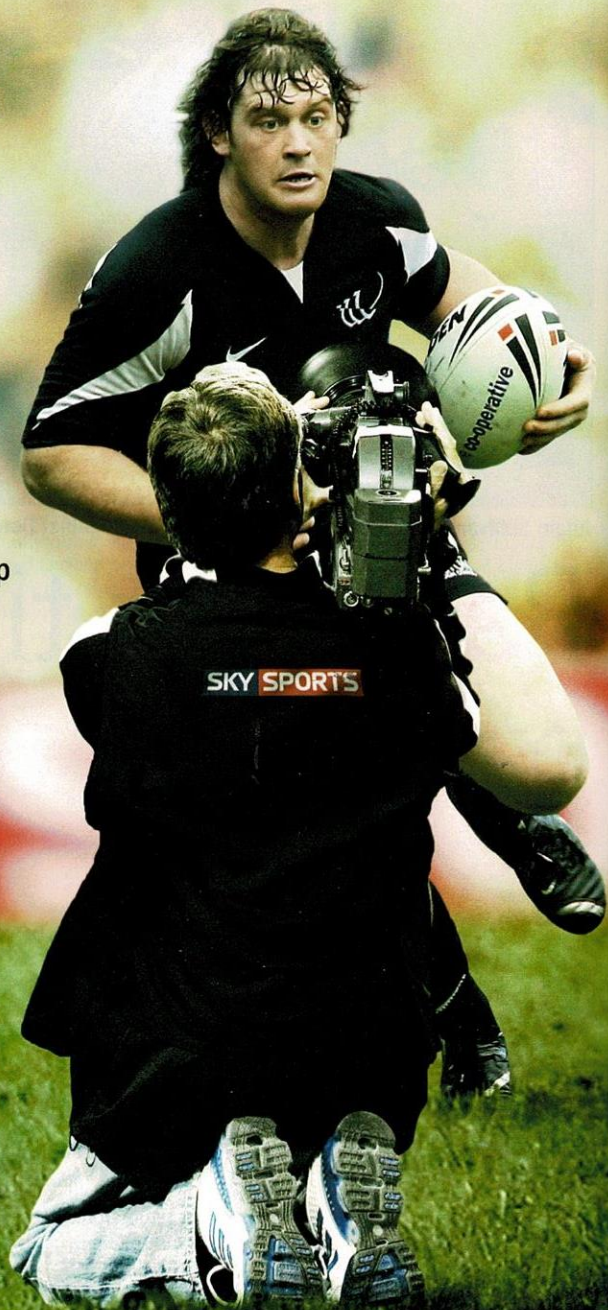
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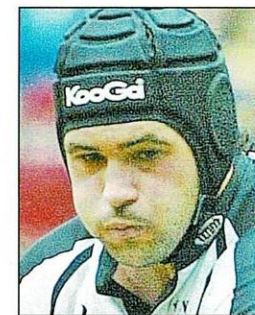
MICK NANYN made a big impression on his Leigh debut at Featherstone last week, although his two tries weren't quite enough to help the Centurions to victory.

The big centre returned to Championship action after agreeing a month-long loan deal from Super League club Harlequins.

Nanyn is a proven points scorer in the lower leagues, being prolific at Whitehaven and Widnes before going on to score 21 tries and 139 goals for Oldham last season before switching to Quins.

- HALIFAX have confirmed they will run a side in the new under 20s competition from 2010. Fax scrapped their under 21 side at the end of last season to save around £40,000 a season but say they will reintroduce their academy team.

- DEWSBURY RAMS last week signed amateur prop



Loan move ... Mick Nanyn

James Lockwood after the 23-year-old impressed coach Warren Jowitt and his scouts with some storming performances for Charlston Rovers.

Lockwood was attracting interest from Super League side Wakefield.

In other movements, HUNSLET signed stand off Craig Fawcett from KEIGH-LEY after they agreed to release him so he could get more first team rugby.

- HORNETS RL swooped for trio Mark Hobson, Tommy Brindle and Stephen Roper after they were released by Workington Town.

Meanwhile, the Spotland outfit parted company with both Janan Billings and Chris Hough "by mutual consent" after they fell out of favour.

Town also released half back Carl Forber.

- SWINTON are asking hardcore fans to bankroll the club's bid for a new stadium.

Chairman John Kidd and the club's other three directors have each pledged £1,000 towards the £50,000 needed to fund phase one of the development whilst the Lions' supporters trust has also pledged £1,000.

And fans were told at a public meeting last week that if 200 supporters each donated £250, or multiples thereof, then the club could get the project off the ground immediately.

Sunday draw for NRC semis

THE draw for the Northern Rail Cup semi finals will take place at 5.30pm on Sunday June 7, live on BBC Radio Leeds.

Tickets for the final, which takes place on July 12 at Bloomfield Road, Blackpool are now available from £12 or £5 for concessions by calling the RFL ticket office on 0871 226 1313 or at www.rugbyleague.tickets.co.uk

Weekend tickets for the Northern Rail 9s event which runs on July 11 and 12 at Fylde RUFC are only available from Co-operative Championship clubs and are priced at £9 for adults and £5 for concessions.

Meanwhile, to help fans source accommodation in the town over the weekend of rugby, Visit Blackpool have set up a website portal specifically for the Northern Rail Cup and Northern Rail 9s which can be accessed via www.conferencebookings.co.uk/delegate/BCTRUGBY2009

Northern keep kids on right track

YOUNGSTERS in Barrow, Oldham and Halifax recently got their hands on the Northern Rail Cup as part of the train operator's Momentum Tour.

Visits to primary schools gave pupils the opportunity to hear what it would mean for their team to make the trip to Blackpool to play in the Northern Rail Cup final as well as learn about the dangers of playing near railway tracks.

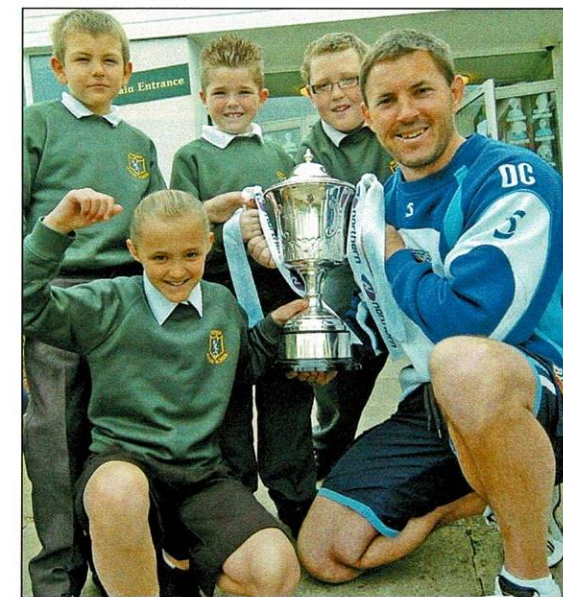
"Working in partnership with the clubs and the players is a fun way of communicating a serious safety message to children," said Clare Conlin, Northern media manager.

"Giving young people the opportunity to take part in sport allows them to train and develop new skills in a safe environment rather than risking their lives on the tracks."

The children were also given the chance to win family tickets to see their team in the quarter finals by writing a poem or designing a rail safety poster.

Caroline Vernon, head teacher at Victoria Junior School, Barrow said: "The visit proved a huge hit with our pupils. The presentation was pitched at exactly the right level, mixing the very serious message of rail safety with the excitement of seeing the Northern Rail Cup and learning more about the competition."

Barrow coach Dave Clark and kids from Victoria Junior School with the Northern Rail Cup
Picture courtesy of North West Evening News





Barrow v Dewsbury



Saturday June 6, 2009. Kick off 6.30pm. CRAVEN PARK

BARROW RAIDERS

DEWSBURY RAMS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Advance Roofing Supplies	1 Gary Broadbent
Johnston Recruitment	2 Mike Backhouse
	3 -
Premium Solutions	4 Liam Harrison
Furness Heating Components	5 James Nixon
Jimmy Redfern Associates	6 Liam Finch
The Infield Hotel	7 Liam Campbell
Saunders Transport	8 Brett McDermott
The Marine Travel Company	9 Andrew Ellis
Mike Sear	10 Lee Dutton
Estuary Electrical	11 Andrew Brocklehurst
E.P. Access	12 Martin Ostler
R.F. Miller Accountants	13 Andrew Bracek
Shaun Anderson Osteopath	14 Paul Noone
Abbey House Hotel	15 Chris Young
Larry Hunt, Cross Keys	16 Jamie Butler
Coniston Holidays	17 Scott Kaighan
Jimmy Redfern Associates	18 James Finch
Kevin Hodgson	19 Chris Larkin
Paul Turner (NWEM)	20 Nicky Beach
Larry Hunt, Cross Keys	21 Joe McKenna
Optec Fibres	22 Ned Catic
BAE Global Combat Systems	23 Waisale Suka
SITA (UK) Ltd	24 Alipate Tani
E.P. Access	25 Sevania Koro
Jimmy Redfern Associates	27 Darren Holt
S & M Leisure (kit)	28 Michael Darby
Nigel and Alison Atkinson	32 Ruairi McGoff
Alastair McGregor	35 Matt Storey

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange 1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

SCORERS

Tries

Conv

Pens

DGs

No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
1 Tom Colleran	Herbal Life
2 Morgan Starkey	
3 Lee Lingard	John Sawyer
4 Craig Bower	Joe G Fitness
5 Andrew Tillotson	
6 Ryan Smith	Sue Walford
8 Jimmy Elston	Ken & Elizabeth Crabtree
9 Mike Emmett	
10 Luke Haigh	The Three Gs
11 Adam Robinson	Subway
12 Taron Wildey	
13 Pat Walker	Mount Tabor Church
14 Ian Tonks	Peter Brooke/David Kirby
15 Bryn Powell	Peggy & Sam Hill
16 Austin Buchanan	The Buzz Room
17 Alex Bretherton	Steve Johnson
18 Chris Spurr	The West Riding
19 Liam Finn	John Calvert
20 Rob Spicer	Jack Addy/Pat Heywood
21 Andy Bostock	The Grayson Family
22 Kane Epati	The Crown, Leeds Road
23 Keegan Hirst	
24 Simon Cook	Rams Cheerleaders
25 Gary North	
26 Jake Wilson	
27 Chris Grice	
28 Liam Crawley	
30 Chris Hall	Lauren & Lucy Hall
32 Martijn Woodhead	KBSP Associates
33 James Walker	Ken & Pat Humphrey
34 Josh Tonks	
35 Adam Hayes	Elaine & Peter Holyoake

COACH: WARREN JOWITT

COACH: DAVE CLARK

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWLWW
 LAST SIX HOME: LLWWWW
 TRIES: James Nixon 17, Andrew Ellis 8, Liam Finch 7, Liam Campbell 7, Liam Harrison 6, Chris Larkin 6, Ned Catic 5.
 GOALS: Paul Noone 39, Darren Holt 27.
 DGs: Darren Holt 2.
 MAN TO WATCH: Chris Young

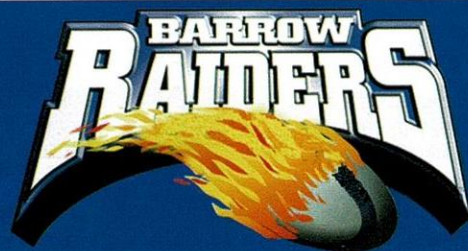
MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: R Hicks
 Touch: B Armstrong, P Wharton
 Fourth official: S Kilpatrick

BENNETT'S BET

"Raiders to inflict Rams' first defeat of season ... just - Barrow by 2"

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWWWW
 LAST SIX AWAY: WLWWWW
 TRIES: Andy Bostock 14, Kane Epati 13, Alex Bretherton 9, Liam Finn 9, Bryn Powell 8.
 GOALS: Pat Walker 81, Liam Finn 14
 DGs: Liam Finn 2.
 MAN TO WATCH: Pat Walker



CLUBCALL

Barrow v Dewsbury

Northern Rail is our best bet



THEY say it is a sign of a good side if you can play below standard and still manage to get the points.

With due respect to our opponents that was certainly the case against Featherstone Rovers last week when a below par Barrow Raiders side stuck in and ground out the win.

It is testament to the fitness and attitude of the guys out on the field that we were able to do so but I would much rather that we played somewhere near our best and made life a little easier for ourselves.

The game did give me one problem and that was the form of hooker Nathan Mossop who was called into the side due to Andy Ellis crying off with illness.

He has had some time out on the field spelling Andy as an interchange player but on this occasion played for the full 80 minutes and was possibly our best player on the day.



Today we welcome Dewsbury Rams who are riding high at the top of the Co-Operative Championship 1.

They are as yet unbeaten in the league and can boast of a very healthy points difference which indicates that they know how to score at one end and defend at the other. One thing is for sure and that is that we will not be taking them lightly.

There are still a large number of clubs who can reach the Grand Final but after today there will only be four still with an interest in the Northern Rail Cup.

It is our best chance of silverware and we will be looking to put in a performance which will see us through to the semi-finals.

Coach Dave Clark

Andy Ellis will hope to return after missing last week

Competition for fans is hotting up

THIS evening we take a break from the Co-Operative Championship and welcome Dewsbury to Barrow in the quarter finals of the Northern Rail Cup.

Let's hope we get a good crowd in to witness the spectacle. The attendance last week was not bad, but not what we had hoped for. It had been a really hot day with the soccer cup-final in the afternoon and this probably had a bearing on numbers.

To get the best from summer rugby it needs to be a dry day, but not so

BY DAVID SEAR VICE CHAIRMAN

nice that people stay home for a BBQ. We are also into the busy months in the Lake District, which means that our nearby tourist hot spots are putting on events to attract visitors.

It does not help that the supporters can no longer count on their team being at home one week and away the next. It can be several weeks between games and a number of people have told me that they elected to

go to other events because they had not realised the rugby was at home.

The best way of getting fans into the habit of coming to the game is for them to know the fixtures follow a simple pattern.

For the ardent fan a break of a few weeks serves to sharpen the appetite for the next home game but what about those who say I haven't been for four weeks and have found something else to do?

Food for thought and something I feel must be addressed next season.

Match Sponsor: Robert Wade Cars



Halifax v Leigh



Sunday June 7th, 2009. Kick off 3pm. THE SHAY STADIUM

HALIFAX RLFC

LEIGH CENTURIONS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Halifax Independent Supporters Trust	1 Miles Greenwood
Laura Fairbank	2 Lee Paterson
Duncan Mitchell	3 Jon Goddard
Chadwick Lawrence	4 Shad Royston
Chadwick Lawrence	5 James Haley
Neil Lomas	6 Dwayne Barker
Roger & Sue Harvey	7 Ben Black
Megaman Energy Saving Lamps	8 Matt James
Riley & Co Accountants	9 Sean Penkywicz
Liz Smith (Matthew Walker)	10 Dana Wilson
Windsor Yarns	11 Dave Larder
Halifax Past Players Association	12 Paul Smith
Complete Building Materials	13 Bob Beswick
David/Terry Kendall	14 Mark Gleeson
Steve Shurety - EMB Ltd	15 Mark Roberts
Sue Illingworth	16 Said Tamghart
Complete Building Materials	17 Frank Watene
Calderdale Service Area	18 Andy Bowman
Chadwick Lawrence	19 Mick Govin
	20 -
AA Moving Solutions, A Mogford	21 Neil Cherryholme
	22 David Wrench
Elizabeth Posner	23 Rob Worrincy
Calderdale Service Area	25 Anthony Bowman

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange 1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

SCORERS

Tries
Conv
Pens
DGs

No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
1 Stuart Donlan	LISA
2 Dave Alstead	Professor & Mrs Dale
3 Steve Maden	Warburtons
4 Tony Stewart	Super-Leigh Lottery
5 Nick Stanton	Hattons Solicitors
6 -	
7 Ian Watson	C&S Tyres
8 Andy Hobson	David Lloyd, Bolton
9 Dave McConnell	Dr Doublet-Stewart
10 Mike Morrison	O'Neils Sportswear
11 Dave Armitstead	Ask Platt Office Supplies
12 James Taylor	Brick Design
13 Aaron Smith	David Lloyd, Bolton
14 Ian Mort	Professor & Mrs Dale
15 Adam Higson	LISA
16 Chris Hill	Civil Solutions Ltd
17 Lee Marsh	Warburtons
18 Sam Reay	David Lloyd, Bolton
19 Adam Rudd	David Lloyd, Bolton
20 John Cookson	Padken Steel Erectors
21 -	
22 Jamie Smith	
23 Martyn Ridyard	JR's Taxis
24 Dean Hatton	
25 Adam Thomas	
26 Jamie Durbin	Ask Platt Office Supplies
27 Anthony Rourke	
28 Darny Meekin	
29 Lee Wingfield	Hamilton Fabrication

Not allocated a squad number: Andy Ainscough, Danny Jackson, Danny Meekin, James Richies, Macgraff Leualai, Ryan Powell

COACH: NEIL KELLY

COACH: MATT CALLAND

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWWWL
LAST SIX HOME: WWWWWL
TRIES: Ben Black 13, Shad Royston 13, Miles Greenwood 12, Sean Penkywicz 11, Said Tamghart 9.
GOALS: Paterson 52, Govin 24, Black 12. DGs: -
MAN TO WATCH: Miles Greenwood

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: C Halloran
Touch: S Moss, G Wallace
Fourth official: M Kidd

BENNETT'S BET

"Cup favourites will march into final four - Halifax by 10"

LAST SIX RESULTS: LLLWWL
LAST SIX AWAY: WLWLWL
TRIES: Jamie Durbin 10, Stuart Donlan 9, Ian Mort 8, Steve Maden 5, Martyn Ridyard 4, Sam Reay 4, Ian Watson 4. GOALS: Ian Mort 48, Martyn Ridyard 10. DGs: Martyn Ridyard
MAN TO WATCH: Mick Nanyin

Courier
THE VOICE OF CALDERDALE

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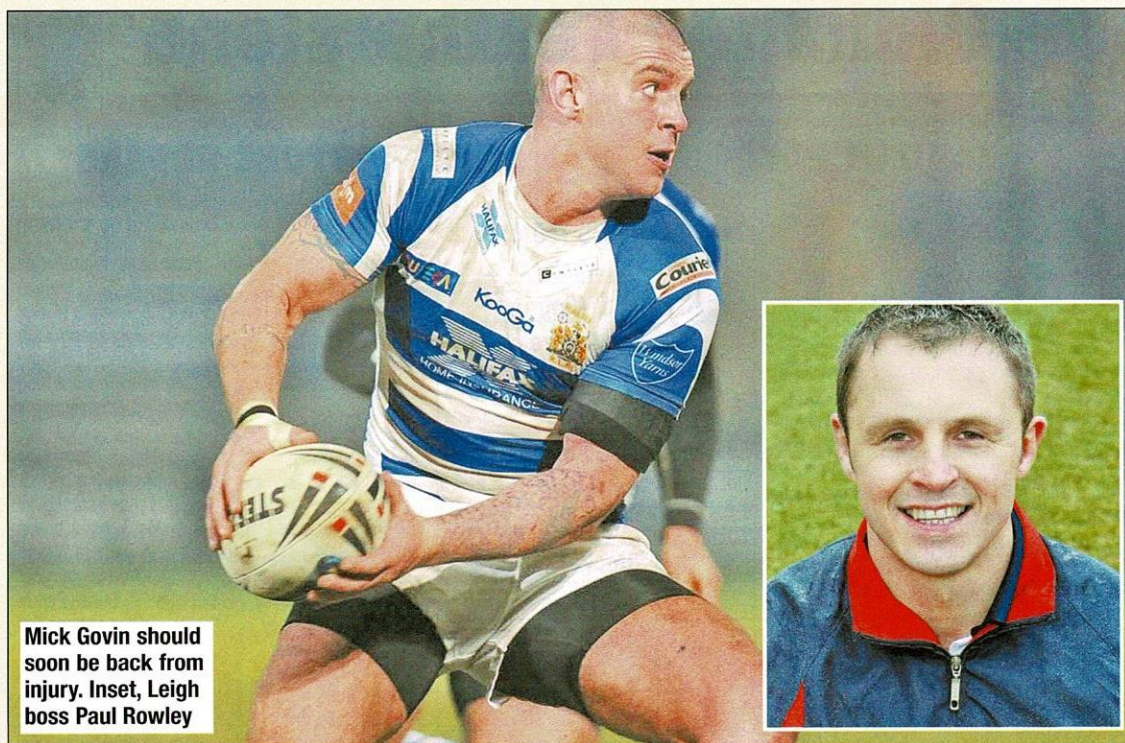
KooGa
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Windsor
Yarns

HALIFAX
HALIFAX HOME INSURANCE

CLUBCALL

Halifax RLFC v Leigh



Mick Govin should soon be back from injury. Inset, Leigh boss Paul Rowley

Leigh provide big test

GOOD afternoon everyone. I'd like to start by welcoming the players, coaches and staff of Leigh Centurions to the Shay this afternoon.

They have a young coach in Paul Rowley, who obviously has strong Halifax connections, as well as several players who have spent time at the Shay during their careers. They will want to come here this afternoon and put on a good performance and we need to be ready for that.

The Northern Rail Cup is an extremely important competition for both teams. In the end, it's one of two trophies that are up for grabs for the Championship clubs and it is a competition we are keen to go as far as we can in.

It's been well documented that our own form has been a bit up and down of late. Certainly, the way we performed against Sheffield in our last home game was well below the standards we have set ourselves.

We were out-played and out-enthused and the Eagles got the result they deserved that day.

We weren't much better in the first half at Doncaster, but we got the win which was crucial for us. We've had a two week break now, which has allowed us to freshen up and get some hard work done on the training field.

As I said in the press, it probably came at the perfect time for us and hopefully we will reap the benefits of that this afternoon.

On a positive note, we might also have Mick Govin and Jon Goddard back from injury sooner rather than later.

Enjoy the game.

Matt Calland,
head coach

THE 11-team Championship means that twice a season each club sits out a round of league games. The first blank weekend for Halifax, this season, was Round 1 of the Co-operative Championship league programme. And with Widnes due in Round 2, it is fair to say that we were not unhappy with that.

Last weekend was the second blank, and sitting out the weekend has cost us the leadership of the league, while gaining a week in hand.

This time, the break was welcome because of a loss of form. The hope is that the break has given the injuries time to settle, and the coaches chance to put right some bad habits which had crept into the side's performance. Time alone will tell.

What is certain is that we will need to be at our best against a Leigh Centurions team which has performed creditably since Paul Rowley became coach, and who are former winners of the competition.

At the beginning of the season, the Northern Rail Cup was a target for this club. We see it as a rallying point for the support which the club needs to progress. And the 'luck' of the draw has given us a tough match in what is undoubtedly the outstanding fixture of the quarter final.

We are fortunate to have home advantage, and the tremendous support that has been given by the 'Blue and White Army' already this season. With that support we hope to move a step nearer to Blackpool.

Our thanks to Northern Rail for the competition sponsorship. We hope their representatives, and all supporters enjoy their day at The Shay.

Michael Steele, chairman



Oldham v Featherstone



Thursday June 4th 2009. Kick off 7.30pm. LEIGH SPORTS VILLAGE

OLDHAM RLFC

FEATHERSTONE ROVERS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Sporting Image 07894 122315	1 Paul O'Connor
Premier Signs UK 01706 649267	2 Andy Ballard
Totalplus Communications	3 Danny Halliwell
Totalplus Comms 0161 3438181	4 Paul Reilly
Tech Doors 0161 6265049	5 Lee Greenwood
Office Supplies Now 0845 8333001	6 James Coyle
Nigel Marland	7 Thomas Coyle
John Barrett	8 Paul Highton
	9 Gary Sykes
Rudy Wilkes and Bev Mayall	10 Jamie l'Anson
Greentree (Oldham) Ltd	11 Dave Allen
Mack Video Services	12 Tommy Goulden
John and Lynda McAndrew	13 Rob Roberts
	14 Richard Mervill
Clayton Green Brewers Fayre	15 Jason Boults
Karen & Paul Gough	16 Wayne Kerr
	17 Craig Robinson
	18 Neil Roden
	19 Craig Littler
Cagney and Lacey	20 Simeon Hoyle
Rob The Gardener	21 Lucas Onyango
Maureen & Peter Woodhead	22 Phil Joseph
	23 Chris Baines
Totalplus Communications	24 Marcus St Hilaire
	25 Luke Menzies
	26 Luke Sutton
H. Mullaney & Sons 01457 832870	Goalkeeper

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange 1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

SCORERS	
Tries	
Conv	
Pens	
DGs	

No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
1 Tom Saxton	Peter Smith Motorcycles
2 Waine Price	Bev Coleman
3 Ian Hardman	Patrick & Gemma McNeil
4 Andy Kirk	The Buccaneers Club
5 Jon Steel	Mark Hutchinson
6 Iestyn Harris	Maureen Tennant-King & Emily Harris
	Shindigz
7 Andy Kain	Terry King
8 Tony Tonks	Charlie Robinson & Lynne Whitehouse
9 Jack Lee	Vic & Sue Johnson
	Doug & Barbara Wilford
10 Stuart Dickens	Blue Lagoon Bar
11 Matt Dale	Susan Parker
12 Jamie Field	Blue Lagoon Bar
13 Richard Blakeway	Study Rovers
14 Tommy Haughey	Gary Crompton
15 James Houston	Howard Lawton
16 Joe McLocklan	John Lycett
17 Joe Hirst	Peter Smith Motorcycles
18 Tim Spears	Rovers Scholarship
19 Sean Hesketh	Hollie Bennett
20 Stuart Kain	Charlie Watson
21 Steve Dooler	
22 Matt Handforth	Capro Contracts
23 Gareth Swift	Chelsey, Charlie & Megan Large
24 John Fallon	
25 Scott Wilson	
Kyle Briggs	
MASCOT Bluebeard	Lorne Mosley

COACH: TONY BENSON

COACH: DARYL POWELL

LAST SIX RESULTS: LWLWLL
 LAST SIX HOME: WWWLW
 TRIES: Andy Ballard 16, James Coyle 9, Thomas Coyle 9, Marcus St Hilaire 8, Danny Halliwell 7, Lucas Onyango 7. GOALS: Andy Ballard 84, Danny Halliwell 3. DGs: -
 MAN TO WATCH: Marcus St Hilaire

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: G Hewer
 Touch: J Cobb, P Meadows
 Video referee: R Hicks

BENNETT'S BET

"Rovers' Championship class ought to show through - Featherstone by 8"

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWLWLL
 LAST SIX AWAY: WWWLW
 TRIES: Andy Kain 14, Jon Steel 10, Tommy Haughey 9, Tommy Saxton 8. GOALS: Stuart Dickens 46, Iestyn Harris 19, Joe McLocklan 9. DGs: -
 MAN TO WATCH: Tommy Saxton

CLUBCALL

Oldham v Featherstone

We're rested and ready for Rovers

A BIG welcome to all the players, directors and fans of Featherstone Rovers to our "home" game at the Leigh Sports Village.

Giving up home advantage is eased a little when you get to play at this great venue.

The game tonight is a repeat of the 2007 Grand Final, which for a lot of our lads does not hold the best of memories.

I would like to think that tonight we can put those to bed and come up with the result.

We have had an extended break since our last game, which has given a few of the lads time to get over their bumps and bruises.

Training has been full-on



even though we have had a break with our conditioner Martin Roden getting fully utilised by Tony Benson, much to the delight of the guys.

On a lighter note I would like to say a big hello to all the children from Alt and Littlemoor Primary Schools who are here tonight. They recently had a visit from Northern Rail and all did really well taking part in the session



and the competitions.

Hopefully I won't be getting too much stick from them after tonight.

Enjoy the game

'Two Bobs' and Jamie

l'Anson with kids from

Littlemoor Primary School

Rob Roberts, captain

We fancy our chances

Tony Benson is confident Oldham can give Rovers a run for their money



WHAT a difference a week of sunshine makes. It may have been our second win of the season against Swinton but the mood at training this week has been very positive and a lot sharper as we head into our sudden-death encounter with Featherstone. Fev may be near the top of the division above but in Cup rugby anything can happen, and usually does.

I'm not delusional but can't help being a little optimistic about our chances here today. Yes, Featherstone are a very good team right across the park, they have a good strong go-forward and a very tight defence and, if they are allowed to get away with it, they have the ability to slow any attack down to the point where the species have been known to nod off.

We would have to turn up ready to play out of our skins, and play a very clever game to create some momentum, but when we do that on our day we'd match them anywhere else on the park.

I guess we'll just have to see - and that is what you pay to come and watch, a true battle of mind and might.

I'd like to thank everybody who has made the extra effort to come and support us tonight.

Although we are not at our true home of Boundary Park we need your help to give the Rovers a warm Oldham welcome and make it clear to everyone that the Leigh Sports Village is our place tonight.

Enjoy your night

Tony Benson, head coach



Widnes v York



Saturday June 6th 2009. Kick off 6.30pm. STOBART STADIUM HALTON

WIDNES VIKINGS

YORK CITY KNIGHTS

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
John Mather & his many sons!	1 Loz Wildbore
Barbara Spence	2 Dean Gaskell
Widnes Supporters Club	3 Richard Varkulis
Widnes Supporters Club	4 Toa Kohe Love
Kath Filkin	5 Danny Mills
VIQI	6 Anthony Thackeray
VIQI	7 James Webster
Museum Visitors	8 Iain Morrison
R J Lewis	9 Mark Smith
Widnes World	10 Jim Gannon
Swavesey Newsagents, Cambridge	11 Lee Doran
Widnes Supporters Club	12 Richard Fletcher
Robert Johnson	13 Lee Paterson
James Owen	14 John Duffy
Marcus Booth	15 Tim Hartley
The Dennett Family	16 Gavin Dodd
Uncle Jack	17 Ben Kavanagh
Fraser Family	18 Matt Strong
Halton Borough Council	19 Michael Ostick
Leam Fox	20 Sam Thompson
SDP Landscapes	21 Scott Yates
Reg & Lesley Warner	22 Paddy Flynn
West Bank Bears ARLFC	23 Shane Grady
Riverside College Sports Dept.	24 Josh Simm
Mullally's Barbers	25 Anthony Mullally
North West Contracts	26 Steve Bannister
SDP Landscapes	27 Brett Robinson
	Kevin Penny (loan)

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
	Full back	
	Right Wing	
	Right Centre	
	Left Centre	
	Left Wing	
	Stand off	
	Scrum half	
	Prop	
	Hooker	
	Prop	
	2nd row	
	2nd row	
	Loose forward	
	Interchange 1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

SCORERS

Tries

Conv

Pens

DGs

No. PLAYER	SPONSOR
1 Danny Ratcliffe	The Raylor Centre
2 Steve Lewis	Jinnah Group
3 John Oakes	Rodney Gee
4 Dave Clayton	Team Electric Services
5 Johnny Waldron	James Dixon
6 Adam Mitchell	Smith Wilson
7 Paul March	Delta Training & Consulting
8 Danny Ekis	Millers Famous Fish & Chips
9 Paul Hughes	Stabler International
10 Adam Sullivan	Ken Walker & Co Accounting
11 Rob Kelly	Pam & Martin Calvert
12 Tom Haberecht	Cue Ball Snooker Club
13 Richard Knight	Sheard Packaging
14 Tom Hodgson	Chris Heard
15 Chris Clough	British Thornton
16 Jordan Ross	ASL Specialist Garage Services
17 Scott Woodcock	Evolution Tattoo Studio
18 Steve Grundy	Yorkshire Building Society
19 Kris Peacock	Claire & Steve Harbron
20 Adam Jones	D & M Building & Paving
21 Dave March	Julie's Bakery
22 Tom Stancliffe	
23 Adam Endersby	Balfour Beatty
25 Garry Green	Acupuncture For Health
26 Luke Watling	HC Engineering
27 Danny Grimshaw	Brian Watson
28 Mike Mitchell	Mrs Watson
29 Mark Applegarth	Laura Dixon
30 Carl Barrow	
34 Wayne McHugh	Monk Bar Model Shop

COACH: PAUL MARCH

COACH: PAUL CULLEN

(sponsored by CMS Intelligent Banking)

LAST SIX RESULTS: WLLLWL
 LAST SIX HOME: WWLWLW
 TRIES: Paddy Flynn 10, Gavin Dodd 7, Jim Gannon 6, James Webster 6, Mark Smith 5, Loz Wildbore 5.
 GOALS: Scott Yates 33, Tim Hartley 24, Gavin Dodd 12. DGs: -
 MAN TO WATCH: Kevin Penny

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: J Child
 Touch: J Page, C Waywell
 Fourth Official: S Barrie

BENNETT'S BET

"Patchy Vikings should still have enough to see off Knights - Widnes by 16"

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWLWL
 LAST SIX AWAY: LLLWLW
 TRIES: Paul Hughes 10, Danny Ratcliffe 10, John Oakes 9, Paul March 9, Tom Haberecht 9. GOALS: Adam Mitchell 38, Wayne McHugh 13, Richard Knight 11. DGs: -
 MAN TO WATCH: Tom Haberecht



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE VIKINGS



HATTONS
SOLICITORS



CLUBCALL

Widnes v York

Cup run vital for SL bid

Paul Cullen, Head Coach

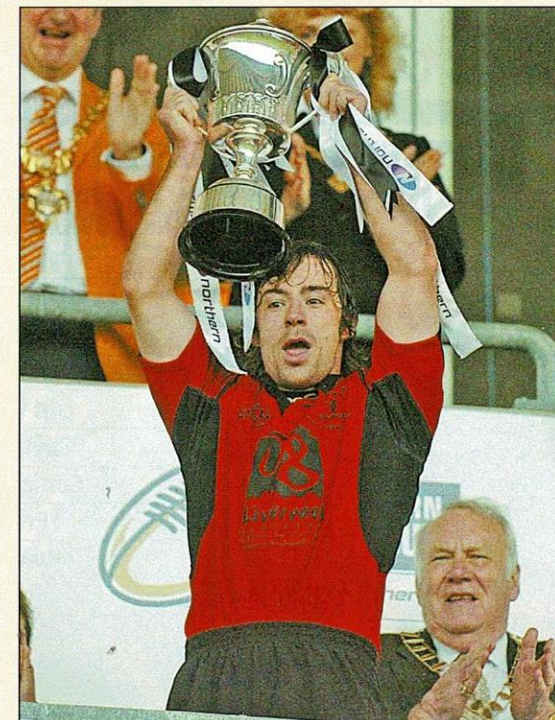
TONIGHT'S Northern Rail Cup quarter final with York City Knights gives us the ideal opportunity to bounce back from last Sunday's defeat at Batley.

We worked hard for the bonus point but weren't smart enough to take all three points, which was our goal before the game. Defeat wasn't a disaster but it certainly felt like it after the game.

York have shown this season that they compete with the best and narrowly went down to league leaders Dewsbury Rams last weekend and with the March twins to the fore we are sure to be tested this evening.

One of the problems I have encountered here at Widnes is that the number of part-time players outweighs the number of full-time and this presented numerous training problems. Hopefully we are starting to address this issue with evening sessions and, whilst there will not be an overnight improvement, the longer the season goes on the better we will get.

The Northern Rail Cup is an important part of our season



The 2007 Northern Rail Cup final win was great for the club - and Paul Cullen wants to win it again this time

and I know how much it meant to the fans to lift the trophy at Blackpool in 2007. Given our Super League aspirations the competition has added significance this year and victory today will leave us just 80 minutes from a return to Bloomfield Road in July.

Despite the setback last Sunday I still believe this team has the ability to perform as well as any other in the Co-operative Championship. A while at times we make things hard for ourselves I am confident that we will be in the mix come the play-offs.

Northern Rail can help us get back on track

IT'S back to Cup action this evening and we welcome the players, officials and fans of York to the Stobart Stadium Halton as both teams battle for a place in the last four of the Northern Rail Cup.

The profile of the competition has certainly been enhanced in 2009 with the advent of the licensing implications for Super League and although no firm criteria have been laid down by the Rugby Football League for applications we know that by winning this competition we will have met one of the initial requirements.

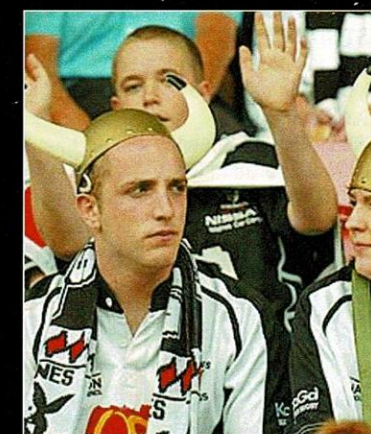
It was great to see more than 5,000 people here at the Gateshead game and I know some 'first timers' have bought tickets for tonight and hopefully we will

Alex Bonney Chief Executive Officer

witness another entertaining game, but not one where we give our opponents a 24 point start!

It was also heartening to see so many fans at Batley last Sunday and with a crowd of 1,089 at Mount Pleasant I'm sure more than half were travelling fans who unfortunately would have left disappointed as this time it was our turn to concede 24 points without reply.

However, tonight is a new game and with a Cup semi-final on offer I'm sure, with your support, the players will respond accordingly.



Fans have turned out in numbers



Thunder v Toulouse



Sunday June 7th, 2009. Kick off 3pm. GATESHEAD INTERNATIONAL STADIUM

GATESHEAD THUNDER

TOULOUSE OLYMPIQUE

SPONSOR	No. PLAYER
Accent Magazine & North East Times	1 Ben McAlpine
Lady Cross Quarries	2 Danny Wilson
Schooner Inn	3 Kevin Neighbour
The Wheatsheaf Pub	4 Dylan Nash
James & Matthew Wells	5 Stewart Sanderson
Brack Office Solutions	6 Neil Thorman
Rob & Jackie Gardner	7 Luke Branighan
	8 Jason Payne
	9 Andrew Henderson
	10 Tabua Cakacaka
	11 -
PCL Travel	12 Michael Knowles
	13 Russ Aitken
Thunder Storm	14 Ryan Clarke
David Spencer Ltd	15 Matt Barron
	16 Puna Rasaubale
The National Blood Service	17 Chris Parker
Peters Super League Pies	18 Robin Peers
	19 Nick Youngquest
	20 Dave Vernon
O'Brien Sandwiches, Team Valley	21 Ryan McBride
	22 Jamie Russo
	23 Jonny Scott
La Gabbia Restaurant	24 Paul Franze
The Hilton Hotel	25 Kris Kahler
Lesley Gosling PR	26 Crawford Matthews
Dean Taxis 0191 444 4 444	27 Scott Woods
	28 Mark Dack
CLA Risk Solutions	29 Rhys Clarke
	30 Stephen Welton
	31 -
	32 Jamie Cording (loan)
	33 Sam Crowther (loan)
	34 Dean Andrews (trialist)

COACH: STEVE McCORMACK

LAST SIX RESULTS: WLWWLL
 LAST SIX HOME: LLWWLL
 TRIES: Stewart Sanderson 15, Luke Branighan 13, Ben McAlpine 9, Dylan Nash 8.
 GOALS: Michael Knowles 48
 DGs: Neil Thorman, Rhys Clarke
 MAN TO WATCH: Nick Youngquest

No.	TODAY'S TEAM	No.
Full back		
Right Wing		
Right Centre		
Left Centre		
Left Wing		
Stand off		
Scrum half		
Prop		
Hooker		
Prop		
2nd row		
2nd row		
Loose forward		
Interchange 1		
2		
3		
4		

SCORERS

- Tries
- Conv
- Pens
- DGs

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: J Maxwell
 Touch: J Roberts, B Robinson
 Fourth official: M Craven

BENNETT'S BET

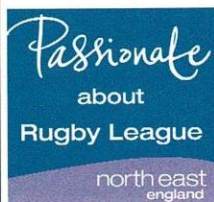
"Thunder to earn vital win in battle to beat drop - Gateshead by 4"

No. PLAYER	SN Diffusion
1 Rory Bromley	Dynadoc
2 Sebastien Payan	Ermes Prestations
3 Sebastien Planas	Demathieu et Bard
4 Damien Couturier	France Boissons
5 Joris Canton	Prosecur
6 Constant Villegas	Copy Sud
7 Nathan Wynn	Immodulair
8 Brendan Worth	Gentlemen du Déménagement
9 Martin Mitchell	Groupe Cailleau
10 Mathieu Griffi	Groupe Carrère
11 Timothy Wynn	SNC Latitudes - Golf de Seilh
12 Mathieu Almarcha	Aux Docks du bureau
13 Eric Anselme	Transports Sarrazain
14 Antoni Maria	Renault Etats-Unis
15 Jerome Gout	Citroën Etats-Unis
16 Olivier Pramil	Océanis
17 Yohan Barthau	Siemex
18 Adrien Viala	Inovans
19 Nicolas Delgal	Airbus Cimpa
20 Sylvain Houles	Leroy Merlin
21 Bruno Ormeno	IFB
22 Nicolas Faure	Force Distribution
23 Cedric Gay	La Dépêche du Midi
Clement Bienes	La Mutuelle du repart
Jean-Christophe Borlin	IPS Publicité
Teli Pelo	

COACH: GILLES DUMAS

LAST SIX RESULTS: WWWWWL
 LAST SIX AWAY: LWLW
 TRIES: Rory Bromley 6, Nathan Wynn 4, Damian Couturier 4, Constant Villegas 4.
 GOALS: Nathan Wynn 45, Couturier 1
 DGs: -
 MAN TO WATCH: Brendan Worth

Getting behind Gateshead...



Gateshead v Toulouse

Saints challenge was a great experience for us

WELCOME to the Gateshead International Stadium for our Championship game against Toulouse. It is good to get back to the league campaign after last week's quarter final of the Challenge Cup.

The effort put in by everyone at the club last week was fantastic. It was great to see the supporters coming back to the stadium in numbers to watch the game and hopefully we have retained a good number of them today.

Throughout last week the backroom and office staff worked exceptionally hard and were rewarded with a tremendous crowd of over 4,000. It has been a long time since the Gateshead Thunder club has had that many people through the turnstiles and it just goes to show that the North East has bags of potential for the future.

Although we didn't win the game, in my opinion, the players can take out a lot of positives from their performance. We came up against the best team in the country last week and for large periods of the game, competed well. The St Helens team are capable of scoring lots of points against most sides in Super League therefore our result was far from a disaster.

Overall, the club has come through its Challenge Cup adventure with flying colours but now we have to improve our performances in the league. Over the last month we have shown glimpses of what we are capable of, the challenge now is for the players and coaching staff to step up to the mark.

Finally, welcome to the players, coaching staff, directors and supporters of the Toulouse club. They have made a good contribution to the competition and have started the season well.



St Helens and England hooker James Roby scores a try in the Cup holders' 66-6 win at Gateshead International Stadium last week

Steve McCormack, head coach

Cup crowd a real sign of progression

ROD FINDLAY

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOT many people would have put money on Thunder to beat St Helens last weekend and unfortunately the predictions came true and Thunder exited the Challenge Cup at the quarter final stage.

However, it was the furthest the club has ever got in the competition and Thunder were the last Championship team left in the competition.

Also, we drew a crowd of 4,325 - the vast majority of which were local Thunder fans and hopefully this is a sign of things to come. Average crowds are up on last season and are also climbing with each match this season.

The performance of the Thunder players was tremendous on Saturday and, despite going down 6-66, lots of people have been in touch to congratulate the club on the players' performance.

If they can learn from the experience of playing against one of the best clubs in the world and can repeat that level of performance week in week out then Thunder will have a good second half of the season.

Today, I would like to welcome Toulouse to Gateshead International Stadium and to the North East of England.

Having worked with Toulouse when they submitted their Super League application when I was working for the RFL, I know they are a very professional club and have real potential to develop the sport in France.

Finally, all of the thoughts of the club are with Andrew Henderson and family after the loss of Andrew's father.

Andrew will miss this match to be at the funeral.



MONOPOLY

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when
leeds
met
monopoly

Play Monopoly with Leeds Met and you could win a fabulous holiday in St Lucia...

Leeds Metropolitan University has launched the Leeds Met Monopoly Challenge, and is attempting to break a world record in support of local and international volunteering initiatives.

Take part in this Monopoly tournament and have a chance to win a £6000 holiday for four at the Coconut Bay Resort & Spa in St Lucia!

Heats begin on 28 February 2009, and we want as many people to register as possible...

Register a team of 5 and you'll receive a limited edition Leeds Monopoly board.

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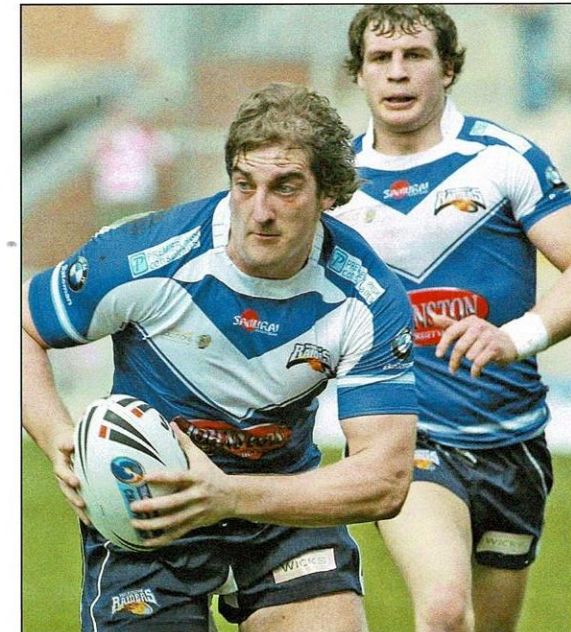
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ON THE MONEY!

Rail Cup calls for some smart betting

This week's Northern Rail Cup action is a mixed bag for the eager punter, explains **MIKE OXLEY**



In-form Barrow Raiders are a decent bet to win the Northern Rail Cup – get on them now at 6/1

I HOPE some of you were on Batley at 7/2 against Widnes last week. Karl Harrison's men showed plenty of character coming back from 16-0 down to gain a deserved win.

This week it is down the last eight of the Northern Rail Cup competition, which finishes with a great weekend in Blackpool for all fans.

This week's four games start with the match on Sky between Oldham and Featherstone, it must be noted that the game is at the neutral venue of Leigh Sports Village. The game being where it is will affect the handicap by four points.

When handicapping a game, the general rule for an odds compiler is to add four points on to the home team's rating, this accommodates for home advantage.

Oldham, even though they have only lost two games so far this season, have not been the team that most people expected to dominate the division.

Featherstone are the dark horses in the Championship having recruited some good players pre-season, including Iestyn Harris from Bradford.

The blow of Harris possibly being out for the season might set Featherstone back, but I can see them beating Oldham quite comfortably.

The handicap will be Oldham receiving around a 14 start.

The game I think should be punted in running, I think Oldham will compete for the first 30 minutes or so and the handicap in running might come down to around eight. I think Featherstone's fitness and class will tell in the second half and the eight should be punted.

Widnes are amazingly as low as 11/4 with some bookmakers for this competition.

On recent form they should be double those odds. They have a home tie against York, who are just an average mid-table Championship 1 side. But Widnes beware, York showed that they are not far off a decent side with a six-point loss to high flying Dewsbury.

That said, and Widnes low on confidence with last week's defeat against Batley probably still playing on the players' minds, I still expect Widnes to get through to the semi final stage.

The handicap will be around a 20 start to York, personally I

would leave this game alone from any sort of investment.

Of the remaining two games, I expect the two home sides to make it through.

Barrow take on Dewsbury at Craven Park and as well as fancying them to cover the handicap of around 16, I would advise taking the 6/1 with Ladbrokes for them to lift the Cup in July.

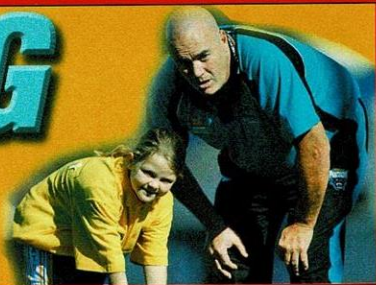
I can only see Halifax being the danger side to them and Barrow in the final against Halifax will be a lot shorter than 6/1. Halifax take on Leigh at the Shay, and based on what I have seen in recent weeks from Leigh I give them a chance against a Halifax team who have not been firing on all cylinders.

The handicap I think will be set at around a 16 start to Leigh. I think that is too much and I would advise a small bet on Leigh with any start around 16.

With only one Championship game this week between Gateshead and Toulouse, I think it is a leave alone game. I can see bookies giving Gateshead around a four start, but with Toulouse now seemingly struggling with a couple of injuries to key men, I would not be investing any of my ISA money.

Contact Mike at michaeloxley@msn.com

SPREADING THE WORD



Roughyeds vital to health of community

THE Oldham club's work in the community, under the direction of Sean Mellor, is as interesting and diverse as it is innovative.

It ranges, and has done for the past 18 months or more, from working with children in schools and amateur clubs to raising funds for adopted charities and to forming strong links with local health organisations.

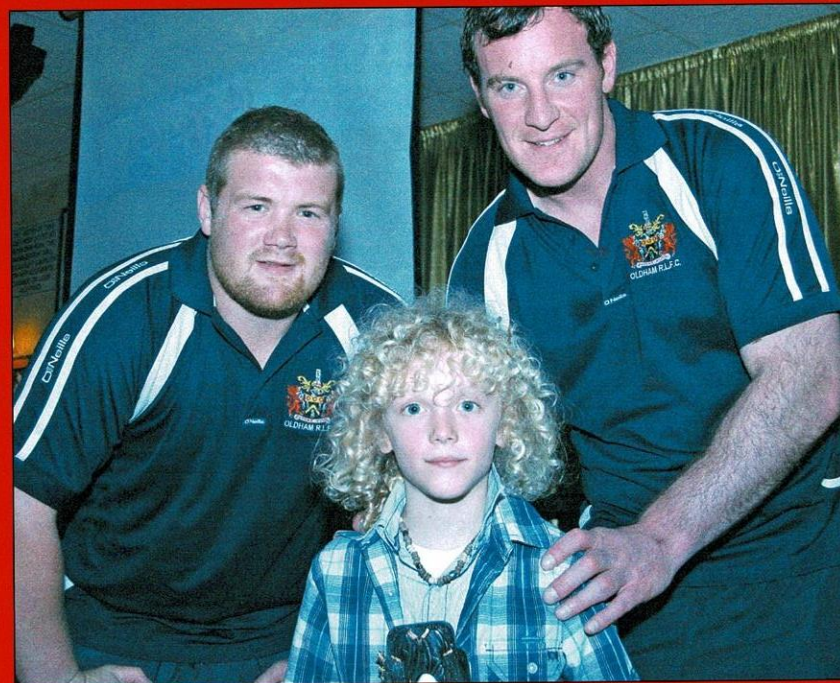
The club's partnership with Oldham Primary Care Trust, which provides health services for people living in the Oldham area, has thrust the Roughyeds into the front line of local initiatives to discourage smoking, to encourage healthy eating and exercise, to kick homophobia out of Oldham and to wage war on the spread of infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

"We have strong links with Oldham PCT and we are proud of the work we do with them on the health front," said Sean, the Roughyeds' Community Development Manager.

"As the Government and the health services seek more and more innovative ways to get their messages across they will find that partnerships with willing sporting organisations can be very rewarding and worthwhile.

"At the Roughyeds we are very active in things like the local stop-smoking campaign – QUIT IT – and we created a little bit of rugby league history at one match last season when we had a curtain-raiser in which our reserve team played a gay rugby union team, the Manchester Village Spartans, in a game of Touch Rugby.

As well as battling for promotion, Oldham Roughyeds are playing a central role in their local community, as GAME ON reports ...



Interaction with local junior sides is a key part of the Roughyeds' community work

"It was the first time a gay team had played at an established professional rugby league venue and it was the centre point of the club's initiative in the local 'Kicking Homophobia out of Oldham' campaign."

The match took place in the presence of the Mayor of Oldham and other dignitaries, and miniature replicas of the

commemorative pink ball were thrown into the crowd at half-time.

For the past 12 months the club has had a local hospice, Dr Kershaw's, and The Genesis Appeal for research into the prevention of breast cancer as its adopted charities and twice in the last two years it has raised thousands of pounds for charity by pro-

moting league games as community matches with admission by £1 donation.

At grassroots level, club captain Robert Roberts and young prop Jamie I'Anson spend most days each week in local primary schools, while second-row man Chris Baines goes into secondary schools on a regular basis to lead coaching sessions.



There is a similar link-up with local amateur clubs. Robert and Jamie presented prizes last week at the Oldham St Anne's junior section's awards night and twice recently players, coaches and parents from the fledgling Fitton Hill and Hathershaw Bulldogs and then Oldham St Anne's have been guests of the Roughyeds at home games.

Other clubs in the town, such as Waterhead and Saddleworth, will be invited to take part in similar initiatives soon. These clubs, and the Saints, are relatively strong and particularly so with the quality of their youth sections.

Roughyeds, though, are mindful that not all clubs in the region are so well blessed and they continue to give as

much help as possible to the Bulldogs, whose catchment area is one that was identified as in need of extra assistance.

Said Bulldogs head coach David Hughes: "We've had a battle, but the help we have received from Roughyeds has been brilliant. We have been going for only four years, but Roughyeds are giving us all the backing they can and our play-

All smiles ... Above, a large contingent from amateur club Oldham St Anne's when they were guests of the Roughyeds at a recent game at Boundary Park.

Left, Oldham skipper Robert Roberts and team mate Jamie I'Anson presented St Annes youngsters with their club awards.

er numbers are going up steadily all the time.

"We have three teams in the North-West Counties Youth League – under-9s, 10s and 15s – and we hope to start an under-16s next season.

"In total we have about 60 players signed on and we get regular visits from Two Bobs (Robert Roberts), Chris Baines and Sean Mellor. We train at Hathershaw School on Wednesdays, 6pm to 8pm, and on Saturdays, 10am to noon."

Roughyeds can be proud of the part they have played in promoting the Bulldogs and helping to spread the rugby league gospel in that side of town.

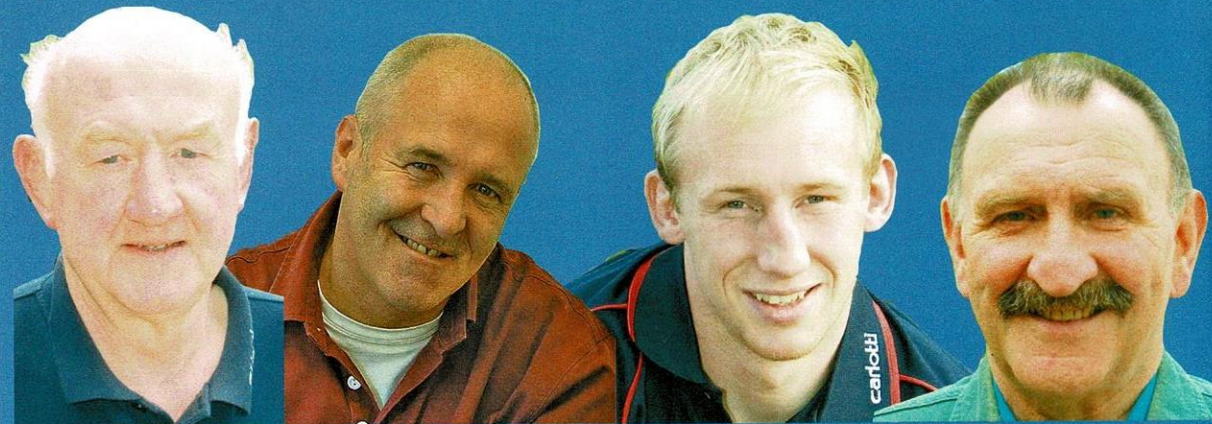
The message has been received loud and clear – so much so that the club's vice-chairman John Hughes, the coach's father and a local amateur soccer enthusiast for years, has traded the round ball for the rugby ball and will soon take his rugby league coaching badge — at the age of 72!

LEAGUE WEEKLY

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PAUL BENNETT gives his slant on life in 'the greatest game'

Hull hardly thinking Long-term with Sean

WELL, Hull FC have really made a statement by signing Sean Long for 2010.

Fair to say that statement ISN'T that they're committed to youth development, given that Longy will also be joined by another 'as old as the hills' signing in Aussie second row Craig Fitzgibbon.

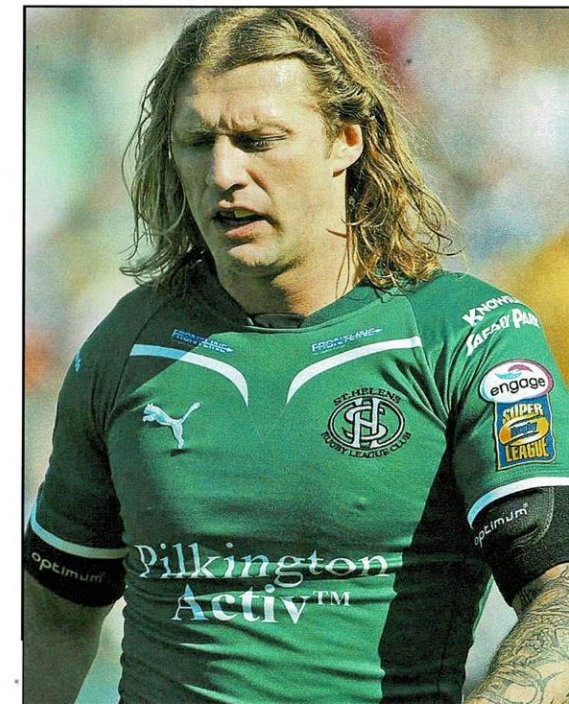
Are the Black and Whites and their chief executive James Rule forgoing long-term planning for the short-term success two such big name signings promise to deliver?

Hull have been looking for a half back to base their game around since Paul Cooke jumped ship for Hull KR. They've struggled to find such a player, but maybe they've just been looking at the wrong type of player.

First came Adam Dykes – old and injury prone, and he didn't last. They brought in Chris Thorman for this season but I never saw the ex-Giants skipper as the type of half back that they needed in all honesty.

Now they've turned to Long and there's no doubting his class – but is it worthwhile bringing him to the KC when you know it's only going to be for two seasons (and when those two seasons are unlikely to be his best?)

Don't get me wrong, I think Long's signature should propel Hull back into the sort of comfortable play-off position that



Sean Long is a class act ... but are Hull sacrificing long-term solutions for short-term success?

the Black and Whites may feel they belong in since winning the Cup in 2005 and then reaching the Grand Final in 2006.

But two years down the line you're having to rethink your whole game plan again and find a brand new pivot.

Continuity is so important in building success. St Helens

have been the dominant Super League force and Long has been there for years, while champions Leeds have enjoyed the stability of having a midfield trio of McGuire, Burrow and Sinfield for a good few years and will continue to do so for years to come.

Hull FC won't be too happy to hear this, but THE up-and-

coming force in Super League right now is Hull Kingston Rovers and in my opinion James Rule could learn a thing or two about recruitment from Neil Huddell and Justin Morgan.

They have made plenty of changes since their promotion to Super League, but their buys – with the exception of Nick Fozzard – have almost all been players with plenty of years left in the tank, allowing them to make fewer and fewer changes year after year and establish that continuity that is so vitally important.

And in Michael Dobson they have arguably the best half back in the division and one who, at 23, has all his best years to come.

If Hull FC are serious about reclaiming their title as Hull's no.1 club (because right now they're not) then I'm just not convinced signing Sean Long is the way to do it – however brilliant a player he may be.

**Paul Bennett is
deputy editor of
League Weekly**

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KNOW YOUR STUFF?

CO-OPERATIVE CHAMPIONSHIP QUIZ

1 For which two Super League clubs has Batley half back Paul Handforth previously played?

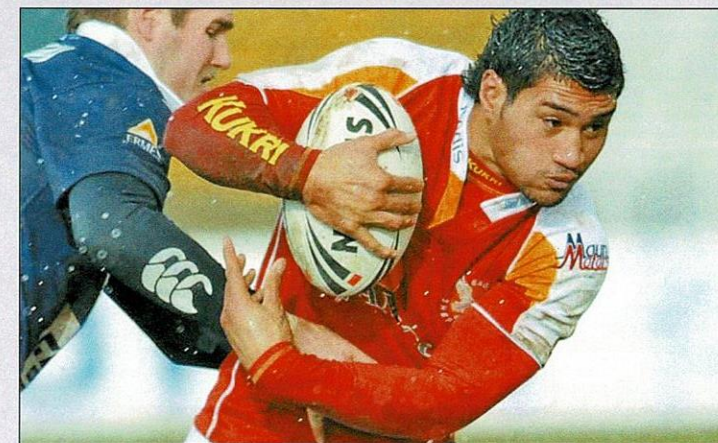
2 Sheffield Eagles centre Tangi Ropati, pictured right, represented which country in the 2008 World Cup?

3 Who is the director of rugby at Doncaster RLFC?

4 Which Toulouse player won the official League Weekly co-operative Championship player of the month award for April?

5 Which Championship One club is currently planning a new stadium in an area known as Agecroft?

6 London Skolars coach Callum



Irving hails from which county?

Whitehaven from which club?

7 Hornets RL new signing Tommy Brindle formerly played with which Super League club's academy?

9 Arthur Thomas is the chairman of which Championship club?

8 Winger Paul Ballard is on loan at Championship side

10 From which club did Frank Watene join Halifax?

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

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RUGBY LEAGUE FANS

1 Former Batley Bulldogs coach Gary Thornton is now reserve team coach at which Super League club?

2 For which club has St Helens star Sean Long signed for 2010?

3 Castleford coach Terry Matterson formerly played with which Super League club?

4 Mick Morgan won the Man of Steel Award in 1982 whilst playing for which now defunct rugby league club?

5 Which individual award was first introduced in 1946?

6 Billy Mallinson is conditioner at which Super League club?

7 Who beat Leeds to win the 1971 Challenge Cup final at Wembley?

ANAGRAMS

Rearrange the following phrases to form the names of three Championship or Championship One stadiums?

1 ANNA TEMPT SOUL

2 RED WET PRANK

3 LAND POST

ANSWERS - CHAMPIONSHIP: 1. Castleford and Wakefield, 2. Samoa, 3. Carl Hall, 4. Nathan Wynn, 5. Swinton Lions, 6. Cumbria, 7. Wigan Warriors, 8. Celtic Crusaders, 9. Leigh Centurions, 10. Dewsbury Rams. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: 1. Wakefield Wildcats, 2. Hull FC, 3. London Broncos (now Harlequins RL), 4. Carlisle, 5. The Lance Todd Trophy, 6. Hull KR, 7. Leigh

