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OLDHAM LOSE 22-6

Football Results

ATHLETIC	1
BRADFORD	0
ST. HELENS	5 4-22
OLDHAM	3 0-6
HORNETS	2 4-16
BATLEY	2 0-4
DONCASTER ROVERS	1
ROCHDALE	1

DIVISION ONE
 Nottingham Forest 3, Newcastle 0

DIVISION TWO
 Barnsley 1, Middlesbrough 0
 Brighton 3, Fulham 0
 Bristol Rovers 1, Ipswich 1
 Cardiff 1, Bristol City 0
 Charlton 2, Huddersfield 1
 Lincoln 0, Sheffield W. 1
 Swansea 4, Derby 4

DIVISION THREE
 Bournemouth 1, Colchester 1
 Halifax 0, Accrington 2
 Mansfield 1, Hull 1
 Southend 3, Stockport 1
 Wrexham 3, Chesterfield 4

DIVISION FOUR
 Barrow 2, York 3
 Chester 0, Millwall 0
 Darlington 3, Hartlepool 1
 Exeter 3, Crewe 0
 Northampton 4, Gillingham 2
 Torquay 1, Coventry 1

SCOTTISH LEAGUE (Division One)
 Celtic 3, Clyde 1.
 Dundee 3, Falkirk 2.
 Dunfermline 3, Hearts 3.
 Stirling A. 2, Raith 1
 St. Mirren 1, Queen of South 1.
 Third Lanark 2, Rangers 3.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE (Division Two)
 Arbroath 3, Montrose 0.
 Ayr 4, Stranraer 4.
 Brechin 3, Forfar 3.
 E. Stirlingshire 1, Dundee United 1
 Hamilton 0, Cowdenbeath 0
 Stenhousemuir 3, Queen's Park 2.
 St. Johnstone 2, Berwick 0

RUGBY LEAGUE
 Bramley 9, Liverpool C. 8.
 Dewsbury 3, Keighley 15.
 Featherstone R. 9, Hull 5.
 Huddersfield 6, Bradford N. 31.
 Hull K.R. 5, Widnes 21.
 Hunslet 19, Workington T. 12.
 Leigh 15, Wigan 25.
 Salford 19, Barrow 10.
 Wakefield Trinity 9, Halifax 18.
 Warrington 5, Swinton 15.
 Whitehaven 8, Leeds 0
 York 16, Castleford 7.

OTHER MATCHES
 Swindon 3,
 SSV Reutlingen (Germany) 0.

DEFEAT without any arguments was Oldham's lot at St. Helens today. Although they held the Saints during the first half, and were only 7-4 down at the interval, they cracked afterwards and were outplayed to a final score of 22-6. At Boundary Park, Athletic won by the only goal in a match of some staggering misses played under atrocious conditions.

Huddart proved a real matchwinner

OLDHAM were still without Dick Cracknell and Jack Keith for the game at St. Helens. Vin Nestor played on the right wing and Peter Goddard was the hooker. Also out of the side was Sid Little who was replaced by Des McKeown. Geoff Kelly returned to the second row.

ST. HELENS: Moses; Van Vollenhoven, Greenall, Smith, Prinsloo; Rhodes, Murphy; Terry, Rose, Briggs, Huddart, D Karalius, V Karalius.
 OLDHAM: Ganley; Nestor, Davies, Ayres, ETTY; Kellett, Pitchford; Rowbottom, Goddard, McKeown, Kelly, Winslade, Turner.
 Referee: Mr. A. E. Durkin (Dewsbury).
 Oldham won the toss and played with a strong wind at their backs. Winslade took the ball from a kick-off and passed for Pitchford to kick into the St. Helens quarter.
 St. Helens took the ball and held it for a spell, but they could not break out. Play was stopped while Vincent Karalius received the trainer's attention.
 Oldham won the scrum and Pitchford broke through to send Kelly close to the line. Winslade was keeping up the pressure when St. Helens were penalised for off-side.
 GANLEY was brought up from

WD REPORTS

20 yards and opened Oldham's score with a goal.
 St. Helens were in trouble again from a kick-out and Briggs was cautioned following a tackle on Winslade. Ganley used the penalty chance to find touch.
 The Saints won the scrum but again play was stopped while the referee took the name of Rowbottom and V. Karalius.
Saved by Davies
 A great thrust by Dennis Karalius took St. Helens from their own quarter up to the line. Davies just got a hand to him from behind and the Saints' man lost the ball as he went over.
 Play stayed on Oldham's line, where from a scrum a minute later, MURPHY shot through for a try. RHODES kicked the goal.
 Play moved back into the St. Helens quarter, where it was held up while Rowbottom was cautioned for a tackle on Vollenhoven.
 A minute later St. Helens were penalised for off-side at a scrum. From 30 yards Ganley failed with the goal kick.
 Oldham were piling the pressure on the St. Helens line and, led by Pitchford, both Kelly and Turner went within a yard of scoring, but this advantage was lost when Goddard tried a dive from a play-the-ball and was held. St. Helens won the resultant scrum.
 After Vollenhoven had almost got free he was brought back for a forward pass. St. Helens were penalised at the scrum and Ganley tried for a 55-yard goal but sent wide.
 Now St. Helens, back in Oldham's half, twice were awarded penalties for off-side. The second time Rhodes tried for goal but his effort went wide.
 After a long spell of defending, Oldham finally got the ball from a St. Helens mistake. Davies tried a break on the right and from him the ball went to the left, but Ayres could not hold the pass.
 Two minutes later Ayres was in the play again. He baffled the defence, but ETTY was unable to take his attempted inside pass. In the 32nd minute and following a mistake by D. Karalius, Pitchford combined with Winslade to send McKeown over the halfway line.
 Huddart made a flying tackle.

CITY GET THREE IN 33 MIN.

MANCHESTER CITY discarded their deep centre-forward plans for the visit of Birmingham at Maine Road today, and it quickly brought dividends.
 After seven minutes Barnes beat two men before sending along the right to McAdams whose low cross was tapped home by HAYES to give City the lead.
 The game was full of incidents and after 22 minutes Gordon, the Birmingham inside-right attempted a pass back to Merrick, and HAYES, in an off-side position, promptly flashed the ball past Merrick for City's second goal.
 In the 33rd minute McAdams sent in a stinging drive which Merrick could only parry down and BARLOW rammed home City's third goal.
 Half-time:
 Manchester City 3
 Birmingham 0
 City were soon back on the attack and McAdams laid on an ideal pass to Barlow, whose first-time shot was finger-tipped round the post by Merrick.
 Larkin missed three easy chances of scoring for Birmingham.

'Bundle' goal gives win to Athletic

INJURED in yesterday's clash at Park Avenue, Athletic's new signing, Ray John, cried off with an injured foot. Peter Stringfellow made his League debut. A further change in the side saw Kenny Chaytor at outside-right.
 ATHLETIC: Teece; Naylor, Taylor; Hobson, Murphy, Hall; Chaytor, Robinson, Duffy, Stringfellow, Phoenix.
 BRADFORD: Routledge; Suddards, Lawton; Brims, Williams, Dean; Devlin, Atkinson, Dick, Ward, Byrom.
 Referee: Mr. E. R. Hill (Chester).
 Conditions were almost near impossible on the waterlogged pitch, and both goalkeepers had a couple of shaky moments. Twice Teece collected at the second attempt as Bradford swept into the attack, and then Routledge was lucky to collect a chip inside by Chaytor.
 Athletic were playing against a strong wind, and as they swept into the attack again Routledge dropped a Phoenix header but fell on the ball to gather safely.
 Under these conditions it was soon obvious that there would be little football, but Stringfellow broke through well and with an accidental hands Williams turned his shot behind for a corner.
 Then Duffy and Stringfellow combined to put Phoenix away, but he skidded and lost control just in

AGW REPORTS

the area. A skirmish in the Athletic penalty area saw Taylor receive attention from the trainer; as he resumed, Phoenix broke away with a spirited run down the left but again lost control.
 It was real hit and miss football with the players skating all over the place. When Dick ran on to a long through ball, Murphy coolly intercepted to put it out of danger.
 A grand run by Bradford's new signing, Ray Byrom, left Naylor and Hobson sprawling in the mud, but from just inside the area he ballooned his shot over the top. A Stringfellow header almost put Robinson through but Dean came across and whipped the ball away at the last minute.
 Stringfellow was in the picture again as he beat three men and tried to find Phoenix, only for his final pass to stick in the mud. Hobson then pushed Robinson through but a two-man tackle halted the inside man ten yards out.
 Despite the strong wind against them, Athletic were generally on top, and another fine run from Stringfellow almost saw them take the lead. Cutting in from the right

after receiving from Hobson, he let loose a stinging shot which struck Williams and flew inches outside.
 Then there was another let-off as Phoenix flicked a header inside to Duffy. Before it reached the Athletic leader, Williams again deflected the ball right into Routledge's hands. With the ground conditions worsening every minute, the players were still skating about and Routledge slid right across his goal-mouth to hold yet another deflection at the foot of the post.
 A Chaytor corner-kick dropped right at Phoenix's feet, but from 10 yards the winger blasted well wide. Then, after he had been fed by Stringfellow, Athletic's outside-left did crack in a shot from the wing, but Routledge went down well to smother the ball.
 In an isolated Bradford raid, Taylor was forced to concede a corner as Dick darted through. Athletic's skipper almost turned the ball into his own net—but it rolled just a couple of inches outside the post.
 Half-time—
 ATHLETIC 0
 BRADFORD 0
 Both sides earned a generous round of applause for the way they had set about their task on the quagmire. Generally speaking, Athletic had been on top with the young forwards working tirelessly—especially Stringfellow, who was the star of the Athletic line.
 Robinson tried his luck with a curling shot on the turn after

● Continued on Back Page

Oldham Youth Clubs League—
 Platts 2, Falksworth 1; St. Mary's 5, Townfield 0; St. Cuthbert's Res. St. Cuthbert's 3.
 Bardsley 1, Chloride 3.

DIVISION I
 Arsenal 1, Luton 0
 Aston Villa 0, Manchester U. 2
 Bolton 0, Everton 3
 Burnley 3, Leicester 3
 Chelsea 0, Blackburn 2
 Leeds 0, West Brom A. 1
 Manchester City 4, Birmingham 1.
 Wolves 7, Portsmouth 0

DIVISION II
 Sheffield United 2, Grimsby 1.
 Sunderland 3, Scunthorpe 1.

DIVISION III
 Bradford 4, Notts County 1.
 Reading 3, Norwich 1.
 Southampton 3, Newport 3
 Tranmere 4, Bury 0

DIVISION IV
 Crystal Palace 4, Aldershot 1.
 Watford 1, Walsall 2.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE (Div. I)
 Airdrie 2, Aberdeen 1.
 Hibernian 4, Kilmarnock 3.
 Partick Thistle 4, Motherwell 0.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE (Div. II)
 Dumbarton 1, Alloa 1.
 East Fife 5, Albion 1.

3-15 KICK-OFFS
 Liverpool v Rotherham
 Stoke v Leyton Orient
 Queens Park Rangers v Plymouth
 Workington v Carlisle
 Workington 0, Carlisle 1.
 Stoke 3, Leyton Orient 2.
 Liverpool 4, Rotherham 0.
 Queens Park R. 2, Plymouth 1

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Rochdale Athletic's cup HAGGATE LOSE THE FINAL

ROCHDALE ATHLETIC won the Rochdale Amateur League's Benevolent Cup for the third time in four seasons when, on Christmas morning, they defeated Haggate Lads by four goals to one on the ground of A. and A. Crompton's, at Shaw.

Athletic were the superior team and won because they took their chances.

They opened the score after five minutes through Diggle and increased it 20 minutes later through Barlow. After 30 minutes' play Haggate reduced the arrears with a goal by Greaves and half-time arrived with the score 2-1 in favour of Athletic.

After ten minutes play in the second half Barlow had scored twice to complete the scoring, although Hanlon later saved a twice-taken penalty kick awarded to Haggate Lads. The pick of the two teams was Barlow, who played an exceptionally good game. In addition, Bamford, Walker and Diggle shone for the winners, while Haggate's best were Greaves, Harris and Moores.

After the game the cup was presented to H. Bamford, the Athletic captain, by Mr. R. Shackleton, the league president.

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Results of last Saturday's games. Halifax Cup, 3rd Round: Walsden AFC 5, Mytholmroyd FC 0.

First Division: Industry FC 0, Railway Street 3, Turner Brothers 1, Boots Social 4, Gravelhole 0, Haggate Lads 5, A. & A. Crompton 1, Rochdale Athletic 9. Heymain Recs. 5, Tudor Rose 9.

Second Division: Dunlop SC 4, Turner Brothers 2, Rochdale Athletic 4, Highams Ltd. 1, Patterloux FC 3, Ash Mill 6. Shiloh Spinners 5, Industry FC 1.

FIRST DIVISION

Table with columns: P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Rows include Rochdale Ath., Walsden, Railway Street, Boots Social, Haggate Lads, Turner Bros., A. & A. Crompton, Tudor Rose, Whitworth, Industry FC, Gravelhole, Heymain Recs.

SECOND DIVISION

Table with columns: P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Rows include Bay Horse, Rochdale Ath., Ash Mill, Shiloh Spinners, Patterloux FC, Turner Bros., Dunlop SC, E. Clegg & Son, Industry, Highams Ltd.

SHAW RD DISTRICT DARTS AND CRIB

Table with columns: P, W, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include White House, Prince of Wales (S), Halfway House, Hartford, Prince of Wales (B), Junction, Buckley & Taylor's.

CRIB

Table with columns: P, W, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Halfway House, White House, Prince of Wales (B), Buckley & Taylor's, Junction, Prince of Wales (S), Hartford.

Last week's results (crib in brackets): White House 3 (4), Prince of Wales (S) 4 (3), Halfway House 6 (6), Junction 1 (1), Hartford 4 (3), Prince of Wales (B) 3 (4).



Springhead County Mixed School first eleven, area champions in the "Champion School of Lancashire" trophy.

Back row (left to right): K. Jagger, F. Ward, F. Haigh, K. Mills, D. Siddall, P. Cox, Mr. W. Garratt, and R. Smith. Seated: K. Jones, R. Lees, F. Lee, T. Fogarty (captain), M. Formstone, D. Schofield and D. Schofield. E. Stockton, who also played, was not available for the picture.

Oldham area Champion school

Springhead fought back to win

The final of the Oldham area Champion School of Lancashire trophy was played at Greenhill sports field between Hollins Secondary Modern and Springhead County Mixed. The condition of the ground was against really good football, but Hollins were soon a goal ahead following some neat interpassing.

An equaliser by Haigh, of Springhead, the result of a lone raid, was soon nullified by Hollins, who took advantage of a poor pass-back to goalkeeper Mills. In spite of numerous raids on their goal, Springhead managed to keep Hollins down to this one goal lead up to the interval.

On the resumption, Springhead took heart with the slight wind and slope in their favour and the game took on an even aspect. A penalty was missed by Hollins, and Springhead immediately took the lead through Fogarty, who plodded after a long pull down the middle and avoided last-ditch tackles by Hollins defenders to press home the goal.

The same player repeated this manoeuvre twice more and the defence held out manfully against the Hollins attack, which never ceased in attempts to save the game.

This cleanly-fought game was excellently controlled by Mr. Collier, of Alexandra School.

Emilio Marconi (Italy) won the vacant European welterweight boxing title in Milan last night when he outpointed Jacques Herbillon (France).

ROCHDALE SS LEAGUE

Leading Positions

Table for Rochdale SS League, A Division and B Division. Columns: P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts.

RESERVE DIVISION

Table for Rochdale SS League, Reserve Division. Columns: P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts.

TWO GOALS BY DEAN DECIDED

Lancashire inter-town competition: Rochdale 0-0, Oldham 2-0.

THE ground at Firgrove was in a shocking condition, ankle deep in mud and water, and great credit must be given to the teams for the way they battled through this bog.

The sides were well matched and tried to open out the game on every occasion. Had the going been in decent condition this would have been a great game. Byrom, the Oldham full-back played a very sound game, saving his line on several occasions by going down to smother the ball.

Dean gave Oldham the lead with a goal after 10 minutes, and increased it by another goal after 30 minutes.

This was the whole of the scoring, and Oldham pass into the second round for the first time since this competition started.

Oldham SS and Institutes Billiards League STRUGGLE FOR LEAGUE TITLE HOTS UP

AS a result of last week's matches, the struggle for the leadership of the first division became more intense, Deaf Institute losing ground when narrowly defeated after an exciting match, by three points when visiting Waterhead.

OICS maintained their challenge by defeating visitors Greenacres by 49 points due to a good win by H. Cutler (100-29) and Heyside also keep in the running by an easy home victory over J. Bright's by the big margin of 291 points, good wins coming from G. Martin (100-30), R. Fitton (100-32) and F. Frost (100-44).

Another easy victory occurred at St. Stephen's, where the home team defeated Healds Green by 179 points, getting off to a good start in the first two games with wins by C. Heginbottom (100-29) and J. Clarke (100-16).

A close game resulted from the meeting of Bardley and Westwood, when visitors Westwood won by 19 points, thanks to E. Rothwell (100-29) win. A rather surprise result was the home defeat of OCPY by St. Mark's, who won five of the six games and the match by 123 points.

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In the second division, Healds Green could not overcome the handicap of 40 points they had to concede, and lost by this margin to visitors St. Stephen's. Deaf Institute had a comfortable home victory over Waterhead, good wins coming from H. Travis (100-40) and L. Reece (100-40).

St. Ambrose, with wins by H. Garnett (100-41) and S. Dex (100-46) coasted to an easy victory when visiting Honeywell Lane.

Greenacres had an easy home win over OICS, the final margin being 123 points. A rather unexpected result was at Westwood, where visitors Bardley won by 116 points.

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In the third division, St. Mark's followed up their first win of last week by visiting J. Bright's and emerging victors by 27 points, the decisive factor being S. Bentley's (75-9) win.

Deaf Institute continued their undefeated run with an away victory over OICS, good wins coming from J. Creighton (75-33) and D. Dyson (75-37). A close game at Bardley saw the home team emerge victors over Greenacres by the narrow margin of 14 points, G. Kay's 75-27 win being decisive. In the remaining match St. Ambrose overcame Chamber Mill by 32 points.

The knock-out competition and individual handicap have now started and teams and players are asked to note that all first-round games are to be completed and results in the secretary's hands by January 10.

Best wishes and season's greetings to all our members.

FIRST DIVISION

Table for Rochdale SS League, First Division. Columns: P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts.

SECOND DIVISION

Table for Rochdale SS League, Second Division. Columns: P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts.



Oldham Continuation Rugby League team, who beat Rochdale in the Lancashire inter-town competition. Back row (left to right): Mr. Mitchell (league secretary), McBride, Sharples, Whitworth, McHugh, Briscall, Dean, Byrom, Moorhouse (reserve). Front row: Heap, Goulding, Churm (captain), Isaacs, Gerrard, Oddie.

Even Teece's brilliance couldn't save the points

BRADFORD 2, ATHLETIC 1

THE Park Avenue supporters went out yesterday to cheer on Manager Galbraith's Christmas Captures Watty Dick and Ray Byrom—but at the end of this Boxing Day thriller their toast went to the "old warriors" Jock Buchanan and Whelan Ward.

It was tiny "Polly" Ward who stabbed the winner home just 15 seconds from the end to send the Bradford fans home highly delighted, but the man behind the dramatic victory was without doubt Jock Buchanan. His goal 15 minutes from time blotted out the early lead which Ray John had given Athletic, and it was he alone who inspired the Bradford forwards to snatch this game out of the fire. Time and again he led the Park Avenue assault waves on the Athletic goal in the second half, and it

Wainwright's goal won the game for Rochdale

GOOD DEFENCE A FEATURE OF RESERVES

Athletic Reserves 1, Chorley 1. THERE was nothing much in the Reserves' Boxing Day game to make the supporters glad they had left their Christmas celebrations. For the most part, the football was scrappy, and although Reserves had slightly more of the play they could not grumble at sharing the points.

For ten minutes after taking a 50th-minute lead, Reserves piled on the pressure to such an extent that it seemed more goals were sure to follow, but then Chorley equalised in a breaway and the visitors recovered just when it appeared they were winning.

Chorley, however, were just a little fortunate to get that equaliser for their centre-forward, WATSON, looked to be offside when he gathered a down-the-middle pass. And that was one of the few occasions when the watertight Reserves' defence sprung a leak.

Good form

Coming in for Norris at the last minute, trialist Howie showed good form in goal, and with centre-half Johnny Booth, the experienced Ted West, and newcomer Harold Fish also giving nothing away, the Chorley attack had few chances to look dangerous.

In attack, most of Reserves' threats came from the wings, and it was from a centre by left-winger Ron Clark that centre-forward JOHNNY MARSH put the home side ahead.

By AGW

was no surprise that he finished the game with his ankle strapped up and sported a three-inch plaster on a gash over his left eye.

It was a match which really lived up to the Boxing Day tag and as he licked his wounds in the dressing-room afterward, Peter Phoenix completely summed it up with, "It was like a Cup tie out there."

Deserved a bonus

Certainly Athletic took a tremendous mauling in the second half and if one man deserved a winning bonus for his display it was goalkeeper Dave Teece. His brilliant display had both the Athletic and Bradford players applauding. In fact, with Teece in such fine form and Athletic doggedly holding a one-goal lead with only 15 minutes left to play, it looked as if the first away win points would be landed.

But the constant battering which the defence had taken had its effect. The Athletic forwards were but a shadow of the line which earned such glowing praise at York a week ago, and after the opening quarter they faded from the picture.

They were well on top in these opening minutes and when Ray John collected his first League goal in Athletic's colours in the 11th minute, Bradford were floundering. JOHN darting through the defence to take Bazley's through ball, from close range hammered a goal past the helpless Routledge.

But gradually this far from clever Bradford side took command. Athletic raids became more infrequent. When they came, the Bradford goals were each from a corner.

Over sea of heads

The first followed a mad scramble in the Athletic goalmouth with Ray John relieving the pressure as he toe-ended the ball away to give Joe Devlin a flag-kick. Over the ball sailed and as it was headed out, BUCHANAN was there to lob it over the sea of heads into the net.

The crack in the Athletic defence had been found and it was "Field Marshal Buchanan" who led his men back again and again in the bid to snatch the winner. With the last seconds ticking away it seemed Athletic had salvaged a point—but then came that final dramatic touch. Just three yards out Buchanan got his head to a perfect Devlin cross and the crowd were roaring "goal" as the ball sped for the corner. But, with a save-in-a-million, Teece launched himself right across the muddy goalmouth and finger-tipped the ball round the post.

For a split-second the crowd were dumbfounded at the save—and then their roar of applause had just reached its climax as Buchanan again got his head to the ball. This time he flicked it to the size 4 boots of the diminutive WARD, and before anyone had time to catch their breath, the winner was in the net. It was a very disappointed Athletic who left Park Avenue half-an-hour later—but they had only themselves to blame. They began to back-pedal midway through the opening half and found themselves unable to change gear afterwards. The link between half-back line and inside-forward was missing, but, with Ray John nursing a bruised foot, this was not surprising.

BRADFORD: Routledge; Suddards, Bates; Brims, Dean, Atkinson; Devlin, Ward, Buchanan, Dick, Byrom. **ATHLETIC:** Teece; Naylor, Taylor; Hobson, Murphy, Hall; Bazley, Robinson, Duffy, John, Phoenix. Referee: Mr. J. S. Swain (Cleethorpes). Attendance: 9,692.

ROCHDALE 1
DONCASTER 0

SPOTLAND'S battle of the giants yesterday gave Rochdale their fourth victory of the season and the first for eight games. It was a game in which both teams had the obvious fault which has put them where they are in the Third Division table—no punch or finish. One man could be excluded from this general rule. He was Eddie Wainwright, Rochdale's captain, who returned to the side after injury.

Wainwright was always ready to shoot, and the rest of the Rochdale front line were always trying to give him the opportunity. Nimmo, Rovers' goalkeeper, who was in fine form, frustrated Wainwright's scoring attempts for 58 minutes. He even stopped a penalty kick awarded after Spencer had been brought down by Kilkenny.

Thirteen minutes after the interval WAINWRIGHT moved onto a perfect pass from Bill Finney which beat two defenders by its accuracy and Rochdale had their valuable two points.

Rovers seldom looked as though they were capable of equalising. The football from both sides was very often neat and capable in approach, and Finney led the Rochdale attack with considerable skill, but the flank of Spencer and Maguire was not so hot. Wainwright's penalty miss in the 38th minute was followed two minutes later by a Thomson drive which hit an upright. A couple of brilliant saves by Nimmo in the second half from Spencer plus Wainwright's goal were the total goal threats.

Rovers might have been more dangerous had not Jimmy Jones timed his advances from goal very well to cut out the danger before the shots were ever made. Rochdale had the edge throughout the first half but lost their initiative for a spell after taking the lead. It was then, whilst fog made the task of following play difficult, that some strong work came from Aspden, Powell and McLennon.

Bert Thomson had a fair game on his return to right-half in place of McGuigan, and his constructive work was a considerable asset, linked as it was to the craft of Wainwright and Finney, easily Rochdale's best attacking pair.

Van driver sought

Oldham Police would like to interview the driver of a cream and brown van that was involved in an accident on Ripponden Road, Oldham, on Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Walter Johnson (46) of Ripponden Road, was hit by the van as he was crossing the road, and taken to Oldham Royal Infirmary with rib injuries. After treatment he was allowed to go home.

Anyone who saw the accident should contact the police.

Two hurt in crash

After the car in which he was a passenger collided with a stationary vehicle in Dunkerley Street, Oldham, in the early hours of this morning, Ernest Lomax (19), of Highfield Road, Oldham, was taken to Oldham Royal Infirmary with cuts to his face and chin, and bruises.

He was allowed to go home after treatment. The driver of the car, James Mellor (30), of Mayall Street East, Oldham, suffered slight cuts, but refused treatment.

OLDHAM 'A' IN POOR FORM AT HORNETS

Hornets "A" 2 3-13
Oldham "A" 0 2-6

OLDHAM "A" gave a disappointing show in their friendly fixture at the Athletic grounds on Boxing Day. They seldom moved forward in the determined style of Hornets "A" and a shaky defence in the opening half caused ten clear points deficit at the interval.

After only ten minutes RICHARDSON nipped between Noon and O'Brien to punt a loose ball and follow up for a try, and later a triangular effort by Hollis Hilton, and Baxter baffled the defence on the other flank, BAXTER being able to run in uninterrupted.

RICHARDSON and HOWARTH each kicked a penalty goal. There were signs of a revival when Noon

schemed a good opening for a good try by O'BRIEN and with 15 minutes to go SIMS dived over at the corner. Neither try was improved.

Only four points down, Oldham kept up the attack and were scrummaging near the home line when Hornets broke away and HILTON raced through for another unimproved try.

Apart from Noon's scheming and O'Brien's alert support the Oldham backs were in poor form and the forwards much more heavy footed in the mud than the home set, whose early punch counted for a great deal in the result.

Les Wood played his first game for Hornets.



Rowbottom, the Oldham prop-forward, gets all tied up with Moses in the Swinton game at Watersheddings on Christmas Day.

Flat-footed Oldham can thank Ganley

OLDHAM 4-0-8, SWINTON 2-1-7

GOFF KELLY was the talk of the match. The £200 signing from Rochdale arrived at the ground on Christmas Day, was told hooker Jack Keith was not fit, and asked: "Will you play there?" Second-row Kelly replied: "I haven't hooked for a team so very often, but, all right, I'll play."

And 28-year-old Kelly proved himself one of the few bright lights in Oldham's lucky win. He kept possession figures from the scrums looking reasonably decent—despite the groin injury sustained early in the second half.

A flat-footed Oldham have skipper Bernard Ganley to thank for the £12 Christmas box and two useful league points. With three goals in the first-half and one in the 50th minute, Marksman Ganley gave the side a slim one-point lead.

It was a lead Oldham never seemed they would keep. Their own attack was missing on more than one cylinder, and they never managed to copy the lively breaks of a Swinton team searching eagerly for a win.

Right idea

One man had the right idea. Twice the strong bursts of big Charlie Winslade sent the team hurtling towards the Swinton line, but Winslade cannot come out of their game entirely unscathed.

Several times he neutralised his own brilliance by some surprising fumbles. Obviously the mistakes

By WD

held too long and messed-up an attempted late pass to Quinlan, coming up quickly from the left.

These were just rare breaks from Oldham. Too often they were satisfied to swing the ball from wing to wing, often failing to make an opening and continuously losing ground.

Nice to watch

Swinton were just the opposite. The lively breaks of Norburn and Haynes backed up by half-backs Parkinson and Cartwright, were nice to watch. Always the ball was taken on the move and Oldham had a tough time throughout the game pulling down their man.

It was remarkable that Swinton could not add to a first-half try by CRITCHLEY. He got his chance when a scrum move ended in Blan taking the ball to throw a long pass that beat the cover. GOWERS kicked the goal to add to the penalty he got in the third minute of the game.

But despite some fierce attacking and a desperate bid late in the game, Swinton just couldn't get over the line to take away the lead gained by Ganley for Oldham.

"Our luck was just out," veteran forward Dai Moses told me after the game. "We certainly had our chances to get in front but we didn't seem to be doing the right things at the right time."

Oldham can thank their lucky stars for that, because on their showing it was nothing but the golden boots of Ganley and a lot of defensive work that gave them a win—that after 80 minutes was as big a surprise as Kelly hooking while young deputy hooker Peter Goddard sat it out on the sidelines.

OLDHAM: Ganley; Cracknell, Davies, Ayres, Quinlan; Kellett, Pitchford; Rowbottom, Kelly, Little, Winslade, McKeown, Turner.

SWINTON: Gowers; Critchley, Mather, Blan, Doughty; Parkinson, Cartwright; Thompson, Roberts, Moses, K. Roberts, Norburn Haynes.

Referee: Mr. N. T. Railton (Wigan). Attendance: 15,100.

CHRISTMAS DAY REPORT

sprang from his zest to keep play moving, but this was one day when Winslade's distribution was not over-accurate.

Sean Quinlan played on the Oldham left-wing, and like his fellow threes he had not an awful lot of work to do. Swinton's cover kept both Quinlan and his partner Dennis Ayres well under.

Out-half Alan Kellett and partner Frank Pitchford gave a strong showing and both followed Winslade breaks to bring tries close. Pitchford actually sent Cracknell over in the first-half, but was pulled-up for a forward pass.

Kellett turned the ball the wrong way in the second-half and missed a great chance after an equally great break. Alongside him with the line at his mercy was Kelly, but Kellett

WATERSHEDDINGS SURVEY

Move Christmas Day games to another date

I HAVE a Christmas message to Rugby League legislators: "Leave December 25 clear of fixtures. It is one holiday that should be a day off for players as well as the supporting public. All the reasons for playing on Christmas Day are without foundation."

There was a time when the annual clash between Oldham and Swinton was looked forward to. Gates generally were higher than average and interest was high. But in recent years the attendance at Watersheddings has been no higher than the season's average. And worse, some of the results wouldn't bear comparison with current form.

From the financial aspect Oldham have been getting increasingly concerned about the difference in the attendance at Watersheddings on Christmas Day and at Swinton in the return game on Good Friday.

So concerned was the Oldham club that two years ago they told Swinton they wanted to alternate the games—playing the Christmas game one year at Oldham and the other at Swinton. But Swinton's directors would not agree. Instead they suggested that the two gates

Smith—another club was anxious to get him. It seems Dick has been going up to Oldham for several weeks but has not been going places very quickly. A Yorkshire club asked him to join them, but he decided to give Oldham a little longer.

The Smith case of apparent neglect could be the reason why some officials at Watersheddings have been pressing for a tightening-up of the trialist organisation.

Too many young players have come and gone at Oldham without some officials ever seeing them. Now any boy who comes up training must be seen by the manager on his arrival and personally cared for until he is fit enough for trials.

I hope it works, because one of these days Oldham may find the wrong player going away disillusioned.

WD REPORTS

should be pooled every year and split down the middle at the end of each season. Oldham are still not too happy about the situation.

"The Christmas Day game is fast losing its popularity," an official frankly told me. "The soccer people have already recognised that and hardly any games are played. Now the Rugby League should do the same thing."

TURNING away from finance I do not think it is a good day from the player's point of view. At one of the most joyful and celebrating periods of the year, they are expected to ignore the fun around them and go to bed.

They are expected to watch what they eat—and how much they eat at a time when everybody is eating twice as much as they normally do. It is just too much to expect of anybody.

Hence the sometimes strange results in most of the games played on Christmas Day. Twice in the past three years Oldham have lost when their form has clearly indicated them better than their opponents.

There is no great problem involved in lifting out the Christmas Day fixtures and placing them elsewhere in the season's list. The Rugby League should decide to do it next season.

One last word on this year's fixture. With Christmas Day on Thursday, it has meant games on the Friday and Saturday. No team can keep up their top form for such a long spell—and that means the fans are not getting their money's worth.

ROCHDALE HORNETS were desperate when out-half John Chisnall reported injured ribs this week—and they contacted Oldham to try and get out of their difficulties.

Hornets wanted Alan Jones on loan trials with the eventual view of signing him. They told Oldham: "We notice he does not get in the 'A' team regularly and we thought you might let him come to us on loan."

Oldham thought over the request this week but told Hornets: "Sorry, we want Jones to stay where he is. We wish we could help but we can't."

After only two trials Oldham signed on local junior Dick Smith, a lively prop-forward standing just short of 6ft. and weighing over 14st. He comes from local club Waterhead. Oldham are highly satisfied with his early showing and are confident they have made a find.

From what I hear it is as well they didn't wait too long to find

Here's New Year idea for Supporters' Club

"LET'S start from now. Let us make a great effort and give Mr. Dodgin the support he called for in his statement last week." I take these words of Oldham Athletic Supporters' Club committeeman, Mr. Albert Wood, and suggest them as a New Year resolution for everyone interested in the future of football at Boundary Park.

Mr. Wood's appeal was made last Saturday evening at the Supporters' Club social, when benefit cheques were presented to Bill Naylor and Wilf Hobson. And it was an appeal directed not at the man on the terrace, but at members of the Supporters' Club.

To an outsider, it may seem that Mr. Wood is asking too much of this loyal band. Already their efforts are keeping the club's head above water—and in addition they are managing to put on one side money to pay player's benefits.

But it seems to me that in asking for further effort from the club

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members, Mr. Wood has seen what is probably the most direct way in which Athletic can get out of trouble.

Simply, it is that the Supporters Club's weekly income must be increased, and a percentage of this total set on one side for the exclusive use of the manager in buying players.

Necessary evil

One fact must be faced. The supporters club is a necessary evil for Third and Fourth Division clubs—and I say that only in a monetary connection. Such is the state of these clubs today that they cannot exist without the income their supporters raise each week. And with each club the income varies.

With some, it is as much as £300 or even £400 each week. Obviously that club can offer more for players and offer those same players better terms. The unfortunate clubs whose supporting body raises only half that amount finds itself lagging in the race.

This is a terrible position for any club to be in when it cannot support itself through the turnstiles. But attendances are so poor in the lower grades that without supporters' clubs many famous teams would now be out of existence. This is no exaggeration.

Little encouragement

The sooner Athletic Supporters' Club members realise the importance of their body—the better Athletic's results can be.

I am not implying criticism of the work to date in any way—in fact I think they have done a marvellous job to carry on at all. Lets face it, they have little enough encouragement in the past years.

Unfortunately, it seems they will have to battle on even further with just as little encouragement.

That, I feel, is what Mr. Wood has

BOUNDARY PARK NOTES

DIVISION 4 GOSSIP

seen, and in his appeal he has set the ball rolling for a new drive in this important branch of professional football. And, as I commented to two Supporters Club members last weekend, I think they will soon have to regard their voluntary work more from a professional viewpoint than amateur.

It was re-assuring indeed to hear the two members in question each affirm that if necessary they would give up their present every-day jobs to become fully paid officials of the Supporters' Club. This is only supposition—but it may well be the next move that the club have to make to increase their weekly income.

Law changes

A number of paid men in the organisation, working full-time on the pools and other money-raising efforts, could appreciably increase the weekly takings. Under present arrangements, I understand some changes would have to be made under the licensing laws—but it is something that supporters club members might consider in the coming weeks.

In Mr. Dodgin's now well-digested statement, he admitted his task would be much easier if the supporters' club could increase its income in any way. I suggest to Mr. Dodgin that he meets the members of the club and gives them a frank picture of his needs.

If the Supporters Club envisages a separate account for Mr. Dodgin to be used for buying players, then they will have to work together. And they may as well start together on the right foot.

THE two goals scored by Northampton outside-left Tommy Fowler against Port Vale last Saturday brought his total to six, in 22 League appearances. This represents a vast improvement over last winter, when he netted only twice in 39 games.

Fowler, the Cobblers' longest-serving player, joined the club after a spell as an amateur with Everton at the end of the war.

CARLISLE UNITED'S 4-0 defeat at Aldershot last Saturday was their heaviest of the season up to that time. Only once previously, when they drew 3-3 with Crystal Palace at Brunton Park last month, had Carlisle conceded more than two goals in any game.

The last time they had four debited against them was on March 22 last, when they were defeated 4-0 at Hull in a Northern Section fixture.

DENNIS PACEY, the centre-forward whom Aldershot signed from Millwall early in October, must like playing against former Northern Section clubs.

He scored a goal for his new club at Chester, in his first game, netted once against Southport on November 1, and got two against Carlisle last Saturday, after failing to find the net in his five previous outings.

FOOTBALL FACTS

THE New Year seems certain to bring not merely Billy Wright's 100th appearance for England but also another unique feat, by none other than Stanley Matthews. If he re-signs for Blackpool for another season, he will surpass the existing record for the longest period of Football League playing service in history—the late Billy Meredith's 29 years with the two Manchester clubs. It's long odds that both achievements will remain unchallenged for a long time, if not for all time.

WHY should Preston continue to remain the Football League headquarters? It might have been suitable when the League originally was composed entirely of Lancashire and Midlands clubs, but only sentiment seems to be in favour of retaining the existing set-up. The view is growing among prominent soccer folk that a change to Manchester, London, or the Midlands would be in the best interests of all concerned.

DID you know that two Tyne-siders are responsible for the longest period of one-club service by any current player, and that only a month is the extent of the difference between them. Next May, goalkeeper Billy Bly will complete 22 years with Hull City; a month later international outside-left Jimmy Mullen will have been a Wolverhampton Wanderer for 22 years. Which of the pair will keep it up longer?

ONE of the swiftest changes and contrasts ever known in the status of neighbouring clubs could be on the way. Two seasons ago, both those of Nottingham were together in the Second Division, but what a difference since then! There are more unlikely things than that next season Forest, as now, will be in the First division, and County will have descended to the Fourth.

WHAT sort of a show could either Scotland or Ireland turn on internationally if they had to rely entirely on players operating with clubs in their own country? It would be pretty feeble, we fancy. The reason, of course, is that so many of them continue to flock into English soccer. Just think of it—in the current service of Football League clubs are as many as 20 Scottish internationals and an identical number of Irish internationals!

AMONG all the 92 Football League teams, only Sheffield United went through the season's first half without making a change in their middle or rear ranks. Hodgkinson, Goldwell, Graham Shaw, Richardson, Joe Shaw, and Summers were the stalwart six. It reminds us that in winning promotion in 1952-3, Huddersfield Town presented the only case in history of a club going through a whole season without making a change in goal or at back or half-back.

"NICE to be back home again," is what an unusual number of players have been saying. One after another has been transferred back to a club with which he used to be associated, and all these forwards are numbered among these "returned prodigals," Jimmy Rogers (Bristol City), Andy Graver (Lincoln City), Alec Govan (Plymouth Argyle), Leslie Stubbs (Southend United) and Paddy Ryan (Coventry City).

THE fact that Barrow and Gillingham meet in the Football League this season for the first time is a reminder that just 34 years ago they were in conflict in a cup-tie that went to the fifth meeting, with a colossal amount of travel thrust upon both teams. With four league games thrown in, Barrow actually fulfilled nine tough matches in 19 days—surely the most strenuous and congested programme any side ever had.

Wonder how and present-day team would react to it!



Little attempts to break away, but Norburn stops him—an incident from Oldham v. Swinton at Watersheddings on Christmas Day.

