

ROUGHYED REVIEW

2019 PROGRAMME No.8
Sunday, 19th May
KICK-OFF 3PM
£3.00

Matty Wilkinson – two
tries in our 1895 Cup
win over Whitehaven

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OLDHAM VS COVENTRY BEARS BETFRED LEAGUE 1

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Keith and Shirley Mullaney of H Mullaney and Son Ltd are proud to sponsor Scott Naylor and his assistant Peter Carey.

Direct from the Dug-Out with **SCOTT NAYLOR**

Hello everyone and welcome to today's Betfred League 1 game against the Coventry Bears at the Vestacare Stadium.

Our opponents come to us today full of confidence after a fantastic result against Workington Town in which they scored 41 points, ran in seven tries and played some great rugby.

Winning 28-6 at half-time, they showed the ability to see the game out and win which indicates sound progression as a team and good coaching by Tom Tsang.

They are fit, athletic and strong with lots of passion and enthusiasm. Put that together with good coaching and confidence and we face a very tough challenge today.

Two weeks ago against Whitehaven in the 1895 Cup I thought we played some of our best rugby this season so far.

Considering 'Haven had lost only one game in the league previous to that, I thought we looked far superior in all the areas we have been working on.

Our defence looked more aggressive and our line speed was far better, especially when chasing kicks after yardage sets.

Our offence flowed better in both yardage and good-ball situations and we looked dangerous in all parts of the field which put 'Haven on the back foot early in yardage sets.

We've been frustrated so far this season with our performances but the Whitehaven game seemed to sort out a few demons and hopefully we can now kick on and play rugby like the team we know we can be, continuing with today's clash.

Many thanks,
Scott



Scott Naylor



Looking smart in their former Oldham RLFC kit – a gift from the club – the year 10 lads of Saddleworth School won through to the National final with a 14-12 win against St John Fisher School of Wigan. They will play Brooksbank School from Yorkshire in the final in July.

How the chairman sees it

with CHRIS HAMILTON

Welcome back to the Vestacare Stadium for another tough encounter in Betfred League One.

Our visitors today, Coventry Bears, had a great win last weekend against one of the pre-season title favourites Workington Town who, despite a change in head coach, have still not found the right formula for a side that's packed with experience.

Coventry were one of the four expansionist teams that were admitted to the league a few years ago and it is testament to them that, not only are they the only one still remaining, but that they have been getting better on the field year after year.

Last Saturday's result was another example of that. We know we need to be on our mettle today if we are to bag the points.

Our last game, prior to the week off, was a very convincing win against league leaders

Whitehaven in the 1895 Cup and it was a prime example of what this squad is capable of.

It was the second time we have beaten them this season and it should give the lads real confidence as we kick on.

The division this year is absolutely wide open which is no good for my health but fantastic if you are a neutral. The number of teams who are in the mix underlines just how much you have to be on your game no matter who you are playing and that is something the best teams will learn very quickly.

Our prize for beating Whitehaven in the 1895 Cup is another home tie against Doncaster which will be played on Sunday, June 2, kick-off 3pm.

Both teams will fancy their chances of getting through to the quarter-finals and that will be our next home game after today.

The Challenge Cup last weekend saw Bradford Bulls pull off a shock by beating Leeds Rhinos, who are certainly going through a very difficult period at present.

It was great, however, to see a Championship side beat a Super League team because it is those results, just like our fantastic win at Hull KR, which fly the flag for the game outside of the top echelon, and serve as a reminder to people that there is a game beyond what they see on SKY every week.

With the draw having paired the Bulls with Halifax in the next round, one of those teams will be only 80 minutes from Wembley!

When was the last time that happened ?

Back to today and you will probably be aware of our latest community link, which is with Oldham Foodbank. It is indeed a sign of the times that we have increasing numbers of people who sadly have to rely on the Foodbank to help them get through a week.

Oldham, as is well known, is not the most affluent area in the country so perhaps it is no surprise that the Foodbank is assisting so many people.

However, we simply shouldn't accept that this is right, nor should we just sit back and let others step into the breach to help.

Today is an opportunity for all of us to help, in a small way, by donating foodstuff while realising how fortunate we are not to be in the same position as those who can't manage without this help.

I know Roughyeds will step up and do their bit and on behalf of both the Foodbank and those who benefit from it, I thank you.

This weekend is also the Summer Bash for the Championship sides with the highlight now probably being a league clash between the teams mentioned earlier,

Bradford and Halifax, which will now have added spice to it.

For us, today is the start of a run of matches, with no gaps, in which it will be possible for us to shape what happens at the end of the season.

We have nine matches on successive weekends, including the 1895 cup tie, and if we can continue our recent form, and keep some consistency in our performances with it, we will have given ourselves every chance to be right in the mix at the three-quarter stage of the league season. Add a potential trip to Wembley and we'll take that !

Enjoy the game today and please play your part by getting behind the lads this afternoon with your support.

Thanks,

Christopher Hamilton
Chairman
Oldham Rugby League Football Club



Christopher Hamilton,

STATISTICS

BETFRED LEAGUE 1 TABLE 2019

	P	W	L	D	PF	PA	PD	PTS
Whitehaven RLFC	7	5	1	1	157	118	39	11
London Skolars	8	5	2	1	187	222	-35	11
Hunslet RLFC	7	5	2	0	218	130	88	10
Oldham RLFC	7	4	3	0	236	134	102	8
Newcastle Thunder	7	3	3	1	228	148	80	7
Doncaster RLFC	7	3	4	0	150	138	12	6
Workington Town	8	3	5	0	228	236	-8	6
Coventry Bears	7	3	4	0	165	220	-55	6
North Wales Crusaders	7	2	5	0	166	147	19	4
West Wales Raiders	8	0	8	0	76	398	-322	0
Keighley Cougars	7	5	1	1	212	132	80	-1

OLDHAM RLFC PLAYER STATS 2019

Squad No.	Player	Total App.	Sub	Tries	Goals	DGs	Points	Squad No.2	Player	Total App.	Sub	Tries	Goals	DGs	Points
1	Kyran Johnson	7	0	5	0	0	20	15	Adam Brook	4	0	1	12	0	28
2	Aaron Jones-Bishop	6	0	3	0	0	12	16	Danny Langtree	3	0	2	0	0	8
3	Zack McComb	10	0	12	0	0	48	18	Ben Davies	6	6	0	0	0	0
4	Jack Holmes	8	0	4	0	0	16	19	Jamie Greenwood	6	6	0	0	0	0
5	Richie Hawkyard	8	0	7	0	0	28	20	Matty Wilkinson	6	5	5	0	0	20
6	Paul Crook	3	0	2	16	0	40	21	Lee Kershaw	5	0	4	0	0	16
7	Dave Hewitt	9	0	2	29	0	66	22	Danny Grimshaw	2	0	0	0	0	0
8	Phil Joy	8	0	3	0	0	12	23	Luke Nelmes	1	1	0	0	0	0
9	Gareth Owen	9	0	1	0	0	4	24	Liam Bent	10	2	2	0	0	8
10	Scott Law	10	2	1	0	0	4	25	Danny Bridge	2	0	1	0	0	4
11	Ben Calland	5	0	0	0	0	0	26	Anthony Bowman	6	0	3	0	0	12
12	Emmerson Whittle	10	2	1	0	0	4	27	Harry Maders	4	0	5	0	0	20
13	Jack Spencer	10	4	1	0	0	4	29	Titus Gwaze	10	10	1	0	0	4
								30	Frazer Morris	2	2	0	0	0	0

NEWS

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP THE FOODBANK



Our ever-developing community programme has formed links with the local Foodbank.

Ben Whisker, a member of our new management team, has been talking with Oldham Foodbank, which will have a collection station set up inside the ground today to receive donations of food from our fans.

We're hoping you will have read all about it on the club website and on social media platforms and will come today armed with donations.

Said club chairman Chris Hamilton: "People are aware of the vital work Foodbank do in providing food to families in difficult times and we are keen to help them.

"As proud Oldhamers we can help fellow Oldhamers who are perhaps less fortunate than ourselves."

Lisa Leunig, one of the Foodbank managers, said: "This is a fantastic initiative by Oldham RLFC and we are truly grateful.

"This is a classic case of Oldham people helping fellow Oldhamers and that's what we're all about."

Last year the local Foodbank supplied 7,435 three-day emergency food supplies to Oldham people in crisis.

Situated at The Three Crowns Centre in

Manchester Street, Oldham, (tel: 0161 622 1061; email: info@oldham.foodbank.org.uk), the Foodbank is desperately short of carrier bags and would love to receive some along with tinned or long-life food.

Added Lisa: "While we are grateful for anything, we have 10,000 tins of baked beans in stock, but we are seriously in need of long-life milk, tinned fruit, tinned tomatoes, jams, tinned rice puddings and toiletries."

This year the club has donated kit and rugby balls to local schools; launched Roary's Pride; forged specific links with Co-op Academy, Failsworth; and welcomed more than 200 children, teachers and parents to the home game against London Skolars as backing for The Oldham Pledge, a local schools' initiative designed to prepare children for life after school.



Foodbank volunteers (left to right) Mike Warrington, Bobby McKinley and Joe Worthington will be with us today to receive donations of food from Roughyeds fans.

SHANE McMENEMY . . .
transferred to Hull FC.

JOHN COGGER . . .
rugged, no-nonsense
and trademark blond

E A ANLEZARK . . .
seven finals between
1909 and 1913.

Shane McMenemy



Pictures courtesy of Oldham RL Heritage Trust.

By George Cowburn... THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

What have the Aussies ever done for us? (with apologies to Monty Python). Well, quite a lot actually. Read on.

Most of the Australians who came to play for Oldham spanned two eras - the period before the First World War and then from the mid-1980s when it was commonplace for our Antipodean cousins to play for a few seasons in this country.

An exception was Queenslander Graham MacRae who played 89 games for Oldham, mainly in the centre, from his debut in November, 1935 until January, 1939.

Five international-class Australians signed for Oldham in the early 20th century. After the inaugural Kangaroos' tour here in 1908/9 Sid Deane (centre), E A (George) Anlezark (scrum-half) and Tom McCabe (second-row) all signed on, to be followed, after the 1911/12 tour by brothers Viv and Billy Farnsworth, who were both utility backs.

Anlezark played for Oldham in seven cup finals between 1909 and 1913 (three Championship finals, three Lancashire Cup finals and a Challenge Cup final) in a 114-game career. Tom McCabe was with him in four of them, scoring the decisive try in the 13-7 victory over Wigan in the 1910 Championship final.

Sid Deane also appeared in four finals and Viv Farnsworth in the last one, a 1913 Lancashire Cup win over Wigan.

A plethora of Aussies arrived in the 1980s, starting with play-anywhere action man Paul Taylor in October, 1984.

There can't have been many faster players in Oldham's ranks than ex-Parramatta full-back David Liddiard who made 14 memorable appearances for the club in the 1985/6 season.

He scored four tries in a 56-10 Challenge Cup victory over Carlisle, the first coming when he

caught the match-starting kick-off and ran the length of the field past a bewildered Carlisle defence.

He also played in the Challenge Cup semi-final against Castleford along with his younger brother Glen when once again the rugby gods were not smiling on Oldham in the last hurdle before Wembley.

Bruce "Bruiser" Clark arrived from Western Suburbs for the 1986/7 season. A big man with a character to match, the burly prop starred in the Lancashire Cup final defeat by Wigan and the unforgettable 22-16 defeat by the Australians under the floodlights at Watersheddings.

That match was the closest any team, club or country, came to beating the Aussies on that 1986 tour - a source of great pride for the Roughyeds.

Test forward Bob Lindner was the biggest-name Aussie to sign for Oldham in the modern era. In his one season as a player, then player-coach after the departure of Peter Tunks, Lindner was instrumental in keeping Oldham in the top division when all looked lost.

His performance in a 30-26 away victory against St Helens was particularly important. Unfortunately, his spell as Director of Football in the ill-fated 1997 season was not a success.

Prop-forward Brett Goldspink, son of 1967 tourist Kevin Goldspink, couldn't save Oldham from relegation in the 1997 season despite his best efforts.

The ex-Perth Western Reds man had a star role, however, in the memorable victory over North Queensland Cowboys in that best-forgotten season.

Mal Graham and Gary Warneke were often team mates during the 1985/8 period, both playing in the Castleford semi, the 1987 John Player Cup semi-final defeat to St Helens and the great 1988 Second Division Premiership final win over Featherstone Rovers.

Graham had impressed Oldham when playing for Hunslet against them and made 65 appearances, scoring an impressive, for a back-row forward, 37 tries.

Warneke was "Mr Versatile", clocking up 87 games at centre, stand off, scrum-half and loose-forward.

In their homeland, Graham originally played for Newcastle Knights and Warneke for Western Suburbs.

In his two seasons at Oldham, Brett Clark formed a highly effective half-back partnership with local lad Mike Ford. Signed from St Helens, the former Western Suburbs player partnered Ford in two Challenge Cup semi-finals and a losing Lancashire Cup final before victory came in the amazing 30-29 Second Division Premiership final win against Hull KR when Oldham had trailed 29-8 early in the second half.

Who could forget John Cogger? Another ex-Western Suburbs man, he was signed from Runcorn for £12,000 - an absolute bargain. A rugged, no-nonsense back-row forward with his trademark blond locks, his 31-try haul for Oldham included hat-tricks in victories over Hunslet and Featherstone.

Wally Gibson was another speedy Aussie full back or centre who clocked up 111 appearances for Oldham. Signed from Huddersfield, the free-scoring back was another losing Challenge Cup semi-finalist, against Wigan in 1985.

For the "new club" Shane McMenemy was the best of the few Aussies who have played for us since 1997. Playing just 23 games, the back-row forward was transferred to Hull in 2001 where he went on to enjoy a successful Super League career.

These were just some of the Australians who have done things for us over the years.



George Cowburn - lifelong fan
with statistics at his fingertips



Paul Crook might be in the autumn of his playing career with thoughts turning to coaching, but what a day he had when we beat Whitehaven in the 1895 Cup.

- + Eight goals from eight shots, plus a try, gave him 20 of our 48 points.
- + He won the club's champagne-moment award.
- + His try near the end was a nominee for try-of-the-week on the Our League app.
- + He was the League Express man of the match.

Of Crook (32), our Roughyed Review writer Ian Wilson penned in League Express: "He was Oldham's distributor in chief as well as kicking eight out of eight conversions and nipping over for a try late on.

"Flowing passing covering the whole width of the pitch merely served to underline the quality of the Roughyeds' display."

Dons splash out on big-name signing

Rangi Chase has signed for Doncaster whom we have drawn at home in the second round of the 1895 Cup, which will be played on Sunday, June 2.

The former Wests Tigers, St George Illawarra, Castleford Tigers, Salford Red Devils and England half-back star, can't play until July 14 when he has cleared a two-year drugs ban.

He won't be eligible, therefore, for either the cup-tie or for our league visit to the Keepmoat Stadium on Sunday, June 9 (5.30 pm kick-off), but there is every likelihood that he will play here in the league on Sunday, August 18 (that's one for your diary) and also, of course, if we were to meet The Dons in the play-offs.

The draw was done at Featherstone Lions ARLFC and conducted by RFL vice-president Pat Crawshaw and former RFL president Kath Hetherington.

At least one team from Betfred League One is guaranteed to reach the quarter-finals, after Oldham were drawn at home to Doncaster.

Neither of them has ever played at Wembley — and the eight winners of these second-round ties will be only two wins away from a dream appearance at the famous stadium.

Pairings: Leigh Centurions v Workington Town, York City Knights v Newcastle Thunder, Barrow Raiders v Bradford Bulls, Batley Bulldogs v Rochdale Hornets, Widnes Vikings v Featherstone Rovers, Dewsbury Rams v Swinton Lions, Halifax v Sheffield Eagles, OLDHAM v Doncaster.



One of the highlights of the Roughyeds' season to date is definitely the form and energy of centre Zack McComb.

Unusually for him, he wasn't on the list when we scored eight tries against Whitehaven last time out. And during banter with team mates as he left the dressing room he was overheard to quip: "I thought I'd give somebody else a go today!"

That was the same chatty Zack who told chairman Chris Hamilton before the Hunslet game: "I'll win it for you today boss". He then went out and scored twice in the second half . . . only to finish on the losing side.

MIGHTY MAC SHOWS HE KNOWS THE WAY TO THE LINE --- AND HOW TO GET THERE!

Not only is the 24-year-old former Siddal man scoring regularly (12 in ten games this year and 23 in 28 overall in his time here), but he regularly produces excellent match stats.

In all games this year he's five tries ahead of his nearest team mate, Ritchie Hawkyard on seven, and he's joint top of the League 1 charts with eight in seven games.

He joined us from Siddal and signed prior to the start of the 2018 season, but he's no stranger to the pro ranks, having spent five years at Huddersfield Giants in his teens.

He's found his niche here at Oldham. Well done Zack. Keep up the good work !

COME WITH US TO WEMBLEY FOR THE DOUBLE-HEADER

Fans who went on our club trip to Wembley last year voted it a smash-hit and have been asking for details of this year's Roughyeds' big day out on Saturday, August 24.

This time there will be TWO major finals on the same bill — the Coral Challenge Cup final (3pm) and the 1895 Cup final (5.30pm).

Our seats will be in Club Wembley as part of a deal reached between the RFL and Roughyeds and everyone on the trip will get an opportunity to parade around the national stadium, one of the most iconic sporting venues in the world.

The price, £65 per head, includes return executive coach travel, a Club Wembley ticket (value £55) for both games and a place in the parade as well as a great time guaranteed on the coach.

A deposit of £20 (or full payment) secures your place on this trip with the balance to be paid in full before July 31. Bookings can be made online; at the club offices; or pre-match at home games in the club shop.

The offices are open each week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 10am and 3pm.

Payment online is via debit or credit card and in person (office or shop) via cash or cheque.

We hope to take bigger numbers this year so please book early!

The story in pictures of our 1895 Cup win



Jack Spencer



Gareth Owen



Jack Holmes



Titus Gwaze



Emmerson Whittel



Dave Hewitt



Danny Bridge



Paul Crook



Ritchie Hawkyard



Scott Law



Danny Langtree

**OLDHAM 48
WHITEHAVEN 12**

Kyran JOHNSON 01	Mick Harrop	Chris BARRETT
Aaron JONES-BISHOP 02	Les and Eileen Davison	Nicholas NEWMAN
Zack MCCOMB 03	David and Val Webster	Ben GRAY
Jack HOLMES 04	David and Val Webster	Nathan CONROY
Richie HAWKYARD 05	Rita Walton	Peter RYAN
Paul CROOK 06	Rita Walton	Dan GOVER
Dave HEWITT 07	Chris Noble MBE	Euan TIERNAN
Phil JOY 08	Past Players' Association	Kameron PEARCE-PAUL
Gareth OWEN 09	Purpose Business and Marketing Ltd	Kadeem WILLIAMS
Scott LAW 10	Les and Eileen Davison	Brad SHERIDAN
Ben CALLAND 11	Luke, Abbie and Jessica Davies	Ollie PURSLOW
Emmerson WHITTEL 12	John and Lynda McAndrew	Hayden FREEMAN
Jack SPENCER 13	Graeme Lee	Will TULLY
Adam BROOK 15	John Davies	Jack DAYNES
Danny LANGTREE 16	Grant and Sheila Somerville	Mitchell SHAW
Ben DAVIES 18	Neil Gibbison	Jacob JONES
Jamie GREENWOOD 19	Sandra Bullock	Harry KAUFMAN
Matty WILKINSON 20	John and Lynda McAndrew	Alex BEDDOWS
Lee KERSHAW 21	Rugby Oldham Supporters' Trust	John SIPAWA
Danny GRIMSHAW 22	Neil Gibbison	James MASON
Luke NELMES 23	John and Lynda McAndrew	Elliot HALL
Liam BENT 24	ORSA	Callum MERRETT
Danny BRIDGE 25	Pam Taylor and LTS	Errol CARTER
Anthony BOWMAN 26	Graeme Lee	Niall COLLETT
Harry MADERS 27	Pam Taylor	Reece RANCE
Titus GWAZE 29	Purpose Business and Marketing Ltd	Kieron SHERRATT
Scott Naylor Head Coach	Keith and Shirley Mullaney	Cameron STEWART
Peter Carey Assistant Coach	Keith and Shirley Mullaney	Harvey HALLAS
Adam Neal Conditioner	Purpose Business and Marketing Ltd	Head Coach Tom Tsang

Referee: B. Milligan

Touch Judge 1: C. Etchells

Touch Judge 2: I. Arnold

Reserve Referee: P. Cromer



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SQUAD STRENGTHENER

SQUAD Strengtheners, the fund that was originally established by the late ORSA chairman Nigel Marland, is still proving invaluable in the recruitment of players.

Now run by Nigel's successor as ORSA chairman, John McAndrew, it has been in operation for a few years and has contributed significantly across those years towards the recruitment of dual-reg and loan players.

John told Roughyeds Review: "This year it assisted with the return of Danny Langtree to the Vestacare Stadium and also enabled the club to obtain the services of loan players from Wakefield Trinity and Halifax.

"Squad Strengtheners is supported by fans making regular standing order payments

or a one-off donation, all of which are transferred to the club either monthly or, as required, as a donation."

Anyone interested in joining Squad Strengtheners is asked to contact John McAndrew by phone (07980 129 541) or by email (mcandrewj@aol.com).

Chris Hamilton, Oldham chairman, said: "Squad Strengtheners has helped the club for a while now. It is a very important part of our fund-raising jigsaw,

"Funds go directly on players and I would urge fans and supporters to get involved and donate whatever they can; no amount is too small."



ORSA
treat
for
players

ORSA'S Sheila Somerville is pictured with coaches Peter Carey and Scott Naylor, presenting a cheque towards the cost of a team-bonding meal for the full squad.

Without a game last weekend, the players dined out after a light training session on the Thursday.

Said Sheila: "Collective time-away from rugby is good for the players' morale. It's also good for fans to acknowledge the hard work and commitment players put in."

ORSA are urging more fans to get involved with the association and especially with their 'easyfundraising' opportunity, full details of which are given on the ORSA page on the roughyeds' website.

Membership costs £10 annually, but you don't have to be a member to help -- just speak to Grant or Sheila Somerville on match day or on 01706 844810.

Staying in Touch with Our Heritage with MICHAEL TURNER

The Heritage Trust's "Pass It On" project is progressing smoothly and is on course for completion in December.

We wish a warm welcome to Coventry Bears today and hope for an open and attractive game.

It may surprise some people to know that Oldham v Coventry encounters go back to the early part of the last century when the original Coventry team was formed with the help of several signings from Oldham, including Jim Parkinson, Michael Yewlett and Tommy Cash.

The first time Oldham played Coventry was on September 24, 1910 at Watersheddings, Roughyeds winning 26 - 13. They completed the double with a hard-fought 7 - 0 success at Coventry on March 23, 1911. The following season Oldham again did the double and also beat them in the first round of the Challenge Cup. Coventry then folded and it would be more than 100 years until these teams met again. It came in 2015 when they met three times in five weeks in the League One Cup, the

A try for Jack Holmes in the match here last year.



Challenge Cup and Championship 1, all at Whitebank with Oldham winning each time.

Roughyeds then had two years in the Championship before rivalry was renewed last year with Oldham successful home and away.

Coventry are working hard on and off the field to establish themselves in the Midlands and they have been rewarded with three league wins this season so far, their latest victory coming against Workington Town 41-30 -- a pointer, perhaps, to how tough today's game might be.



Ex Roughyeds, Michael Yewlett (left) and Jim Parkinson in Coventry colours in 1911.



Michael Turner

VISITORS

COVENTRY BEARS

Coventry Bears arrive at the Vestacare Stadium this afternoon fresh from last Saturday's impressive 41-30 victory over Workington Town.

The Bears hosted the game at Ivor Preece Field, the home of Broadstreet RFC, and the Midlands side took full advantage of the large playing area to run up a 28-6 half-time lead.

Workington fielded a team with high calibre performers such as Danny Tickle, FuiFui MoiMoi, Oliver Wilkes and Sam Hopkins yet they were unable to recover from Coventry's opening salvo of tries. The Cumbrians staged a second-half comeback, outscoring their hosts in the process, but the damage was already done and they headed back home empty handed.

The win means that Coventry have now gained six points from seven games having already defeated West Wales Raiders in round 1 and big spending Newcastle Thunder in round 2.

Managing director Alan Robinson can always be seen with a smile on his face and you can't fail to notice his enthusiasm for our game.

His club's wins over heartland sides such as Workington must surely be a stepping stone to greater things and Robinson has a vision for the future of his club. He sees Championship status within five years as a realistic target and hopes to be knocking on the door of Super League within the next decade.

Robinson hasn't made assumptions that a fan base will simply appear and is keen to push the club's cause on all fronts. He's looked at the impact of Toronto Wolfpack and their business model whilst taking note of impressive prospectuses from new applicants New York and Ottawa.

Recruitment for the 2019 season has seen Australian playmakers Nick Newman and Mitch Shaw arrive at the Coventry club. Kameron

Pearce-Paul, a former Roughyeds loanee, is now a permanent fixture in the Bears three-quarter line and the team as a whole is self-described as being fast, fit and well-trained.

One notable absentee from the Bears line-up will be Dante Morley-Samuels. Instantly recognisable because of his impressive curly hair style, the Wigan youngster has swapped clubs to join North Wales Crusaders due to travelling problems. The utility back was an iconic feature of the Coventry club and will be sorely missed after picking up the club's young player of the year award for 2018.

Last season Oldham had the better of two league encounters with Coventry. A 60-0 win at the Butts Park Arena was followed by a 58-6 victory at the Vestacare Stadium. Bears coach Tom Tsang will be hoping his side can improve this year and seriously test Scott Naylor's men.

The Bears have yet to take any points off an Oldham side and to do so today would be yet another indication of their progression.

The free flowing nature of Oldham's play against Whitehaven in the 1895 cup will today come up against Coventry's new style of fast expansive rugby. We could be in for some scintillating action this afternoon as both clubs look to continue their good form.

At the League Launch event in York back in February, I had the opportunity for a quick chat with the Coventry representatives. Reflecting on their 2018 wins over the likes of Keighley and Hunslet, I asked which heartland scalps they would be targeting this year. The dry smiles on their faces told me they may have something up their sleeves for this season. Maybe we'll see what the smiles were all about today.

Writes Dave Naylor.



SQUAD

THREE TO WATCH

Nick Newman

A quality half-back with a big reputation for being an attacking and creative playmaker. Cut his teeth down under by playing U20s football with both the Sydney Roosters and the Newcastle Knights before moving on to the open-age game and a stint at Lakes United Seagulls.

Nick is the complete package, offering a strong passing and running game, as well as astute kicking and fast-thinking decision making.

His aims for 2019 are: "...to play consistent footy and play my part in helping the team improving from last year."



Will Tully

Loose forward or prop Tully arrived at The Butts Park arena on trial in November 2018. He impressed the coaching staff with both his ability and work ethic.

A Midlands lad from Leicestershire, Will developed his Rugby League playing for the Midlands Hurricanes academy as well as a season with Castleford Tigers.

He's a big framed player with excellent technical ability. Has featured for the England Academy side.



Ollie Purslow

A very experienced front-row player, Purslow has spent periods of time with London Skolars, Gloucester All Golds and London Broncos. In all he's clocked-up over 200 professional appearances.

Moved to the Birmingham area in 2019 and so a move to the Bears was a natural choice for a new club.

Ollie hopes to bring experience to the Coventry side, using his natural aggression to bolster the Bears pack.





Action from the 1895 Cup
KYRAN JOHNSON



Action from the 1895 Cup
TITUS GWAZE

By Ian Wilson... A RUGBY LEAGUE MISCELLANY ON MEN AND MATTERS...

I have been astounded by some of the negative comments being made by some people, remarkably even by some of our own loyal supporters, about the new 1895 Cup.

The couple from Whitehaven whom I sat beside at the first round game began the afternoon by saying: 'I suspect both these sides would quite like to lose this match to concentrate on the league', and much the same view seems to be around in Oldham.

I bet it isn't the view of the club's management, or indeed of the players.

Whereas Gary Charlton 'rested' a number of his major players for the game, Scott Naylor showed his perspective on the tournament by putting out the strongest side we had available, and the team showed their positivity by the way

TIME TO END NEGATIVITY ABOUT THE 1895 CUP.

we started the game - two tries in the first eight minutes, and 'Haven only permitted to enter our half on three occasions in the whole of the first 40 minutes.

And let's look at the season as a whole. After that first round game v 'Haven, there remained 18 Sundays until the end of the league season proper on September 8, when we finish our regular fixtures away at Hunslet.

And in those 18 weeks, with us having been eliminated already from the Challenge Cup,

and having played seven league fixtures already, we have just 13 games still to play, ignoring the new competition.

Does not playing on a regular week-by-week basis increase a team's chances of performing at maximum capacity each time they do?

Would players prefer five further weekends without a match, having already had two gaps in the fixture list?

The option is to play competitive games each week - with winning pay on offer each time - rather than going through five more weeks of training with no game to look forward to at the end of the week.

I am absolutely certain what the answer in each case is. And that is not taking into account the potential revenue benefits from continued cup success for the club ; it may not be a huge money spinner - but surely better than a guaranteed nil income.

And given that several generations of Oldham diehards have dreamed without fulfilment of seeing their side walk out at a final at Wembley, how absurd is it to downplay the possibility of getting there via the 1895 cup, even if it is a possibility where the odds are not in our favour. Looking at practicalities, too, a home draw v Doncaster gives us every opportunity to reach the quarter-final stage.

This is not to downplay the opponents - Doncaster are around our level, in our league, and will certainly be competitive. But at our best, we would be favourites to progress. And then?

It will not have escaped the players' notice that there will be at least two of the winners from the other seven second round ties who we would probably fancy our chance against, especially given another home draw.

And then it would be 'only' a semi-final to get through ! So let's have no more of the negativity. After all, Manchester City haven't done too badly this season, have they, whilst going all out in all their competitions.



Ian Wilson - our man
with something to say

FIXTURES

Date	Time	Opponents	Venue	Score	Results	Attn.
February						
Sunday 17	3:00pm	Workington Town	Home	28 - 32	Lost	765
Sunday 24	3:00pm	Whitehaven RLFC	Home	36 - 12	Won	546
March						
Sunday 3	2:30pm	North Wales Crusaders	Away	16 - 14	Won	426
Sunday 10	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 3 - Haydock	Home	80 - 10	Won	508
Sunday 24	3:00pm	London Skolars	Home	34 - 4	Won	709
Sunday 31	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 4 - Widnes Vikings	Bower Fold	14 - 54	Lost	1,247
April						
Sunday 7	3:00pm	Newcastle Thunder	Away	22 - 28	Lost	889
Sunday 14	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 5				
Friday 19	3:00pm	Hunslet RLFC	Home	28 - 36	Lost	652
Saturday 27	3:00pm	West Wales Raiders	Away	72 - 8	Won	197
May						
Sunday 5	3:00pm	1895 Cup 1 - Whitehaven	Home	48-12	Won	369
Sunday 12	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 6				
Sunday 19	3:00pm	Coventry Bears	Home			
Saturday 25	6:30pm	Keighley Cougars	Away			
June						
Sunday 2	3:00pm	1895 Cup 2 - Doncaster	Home			
Sunday 9	5:30pm	Doncaster RLFC	Away			
Sunday 16	3:00pm	Keighley Cougars	Home			
Sunday 23	3:00pm	Workington Town	Away			
Wednesday 26	7:30pm	1895 Cup QF				
Sunday 30	3:00pm	West Wales Raiders	Home			
July						
Sunday 7	3:00pm	Whitehaven RLFC	Away			
Sunday 14	3:00pm	North Wales Crusaders	Home			
Sunday 28	3:00pm	1895 Cup SF				
August						
Saturday 3	3:00pm	London Skolars	Away			
Sunday 11	3:00pm	Newcastle Thunder	Home			
Sunday 18	3:00pm	Doncaster RLFC	Home			
Saturday 24	4:00pm	Challenge Cup/1895 Cup Final				
September						
Sunday 1	3:00pm	Coventry Bears	Away			
Sunday 8	3:00pm	Hunslet RLFC	Away			
Sunday 15	3:00pm	Play-offs				
Sunday 22	3:00pm	Play-offs				
Sunday 29	3:00pm	Play-offs				
October						
Sunday 6	3:00pm	Promotional Final				

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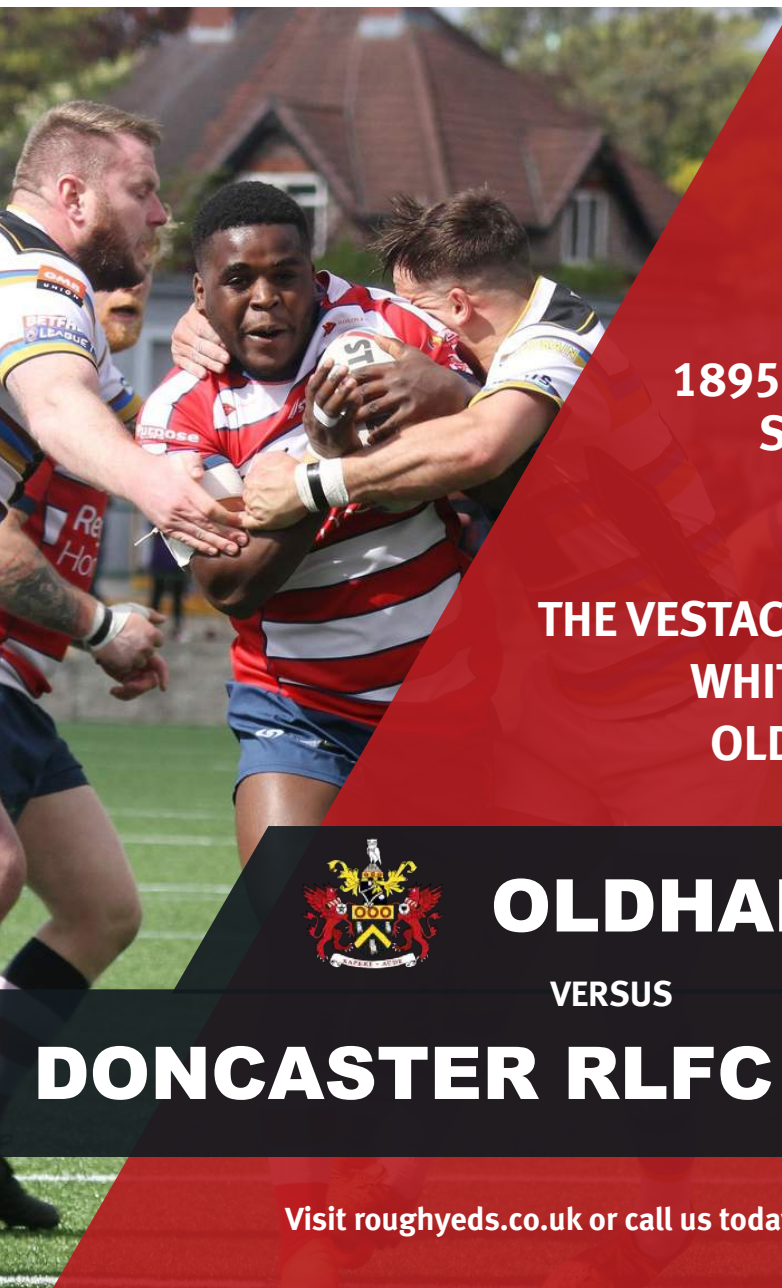
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NEXT TIME: KNOCK-OUT RUGBY WITH WEMBLEY AS A GLITTERING PRIZE



**1895 CUP, ROUND 2
SUNDAY, JUNE 2
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