

ROUGHYED REVIEW

2019 PROGRAMME No.12
SUNDAY 14TH JULY
KICK-OFF 3PM
£3.00

DANNY BRIDGE . . .
on the charge

ON THE INSIDE

State of Mind
pages 10 and 11

ORSA latest
page 14

Junior Takeover Day
page 16

OLDHAM VS NORTH WALES CRUSADERS BETFRED LEAGUE ONE

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Direct from the Dug-Out with SCOTT NAYLOR

Hello everyone and welcome to today's game against North Wales Crusaders at the Vestacare Stadium.

Along with Newcastle Thunder, North Wales are the form team of the division. Their recent results have catapulted them up the table with some great performances and some great wins, including Whitehaven away a couple of weeks ago.

Muz (Anthony Murray), their head coach has done an amazing job and has turned the club around to such an extent that they have now become a force in this division, bringing back the old days in which Wales were the dominant team and gained promotion to the Championship.

Winning becomes a habit, just like losing, and Wales are now full of confidence and self-belief. They will be a huge challenge to us in today's game.

Unfortunately, I'm writing this for today's programme with the same disappointment and frustration I've had for most of the season.

Last week's game was a classic example of how to not play away from home in a top-of-the-table clash. Ball control, discipline, field position, calmness and a clear head are important things in big games.

We had none of those things in the second half last week and once again we capitulated to lose the game by six points after being in front from the beginning.

Simple mistakes with the ball and yardage penalties are costing us massively in big games in which we lose momentum

and give opposition teams too much ball and too much good field position in which to attack us.

As an example, Haven had 17 chances to score near our line while we had six. Each team scored two tries. If those figures had been in reverse, we would have won comfortably.

Until we learn how to change those negatives into positives, we won't win.

We are more than capable of beating anyone in this division if we cut out the negative things in our game and just play rugby like most teams in this league.

The players are desperate to win for the fans and the club. They know what needs to be done.

Many thanks,
Scott



Scott Naylor



PASSIONATE ABOUT RUGBY LEAGUE

How the chairman sees it

Welcome back to the Vestacare Stadium for what we hope will be a return to winning ways after the disappointment of losing a top-two clash last weekend at Whitehaven.

The outcome of fine margins in tight games was never better illustrated than by this game at the Recreation Ground, which finished in a 16-10 win for the Cumbrians, the Betfred League 1 leaders.

We dominated the first half and deservedly led 6-0 at half time but how quickly things changed when the second half got under way.

A kick on the last tackle, a wicked bounce of the ball and all of a sudden the game has changed completely and we end up on the wrong side of the scoreline after 80 minutes. It was a massive effort but to no avail.

With six games to go the intensity and the fierceness of the battle for promotion from League One shows no sign of relenting and it is going to be a roller coaster ride right up until the end of the regular season and then into the play-offs.

Our opponents today, North Wales Crusaders, are dangerous opponents, having won their last three matches, including a win up at Whitehaven. And we know from when we played them early in the season and got away with one, that this afternoon will be a tough encounter for sure and one for which we must turn up with the right attitude.

We need a win, not only to get our momentum going again, but to keep the pressure on the other teams in the top few. Today sees Doncaster host Whitehaven and I can see a home win there which would mean we could go back to second if we win as Newcastle don't have a game. That would tighten the gap once again at the top and it could almost come down to who can keep their nerve as the season end gets nearer.

Its a funny thing this "pressure". Players rightly strive to be playing in the matches that produce it, but it affects different people in different ways. Some can take it in their stride and others can be seriously and adversely affected by it. Strange don't you think? Or even ironic?

Anyway, we definitely want to be in that pressure situation so strap yourself in, hold tight and lets see who blinks first because i think there are plenty of twists and turns yet to come over the next few weeks through August and into September.

JUNIOR TAKEOVER DAY

Today is our Junior Take-Over Day in which a number of school children will be part of the match-day operation and will assist key members of staff throughout the day.

We have children carrying out duties as photographers, ground safety officer, PA announcer, kit manager, programme seller and chairwomen for example.

My "shadow" today will be Orlaith MacCafferty, who goes to St Anne's primary school on Greenacres Road. With a bit of luck she will be ready, by the end of the day, to take on the role permanently!

(cont. on page 5).

This is another great initiative by the RFL and one which should become a part of the rugby league annual calendar.

We also have State of Mind, the mental health charity, here today which is a boost for the club. They are finishing off their Well-Being series in Super League so to get them here to our club is fantastic.

Mental health is high on the public agenda at present and rugby league continues to champion the cause so get along to their stall today, pick up their freebies but, more importantly, get information on what they do; it could be vital for somebody in our crowd today; somebody you have left at home; or for somebody else you know.

Our community work on game-day continues to go from strength to strength and those two initiatives today --- Junior Take-Over and State of Mind --- are the latest examples

Our club's management board puts in an enormous, unseen effort behind the scenes to bring these projects to fruition and we hope that you appreciate all the things that are happening as we strive to make the match-day experience better and better.

We don't lose sight, of course, that the best thing we can do in that regard is to keep winning and today we will be working to achieve that goal once again.

As always you have a key part to play in how we perform on the field. Please keep your support for the team loud and proud and get behind the lads as we try to keep the pressure on the others around us.

Enjoy the game.

Christoper Hamilton.
Chairman,
Oldham Rugby League Football Club.

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Christopher Hamilton

STATISTICS

BETFRED LEAGUE 1 TABLE 2019

	P	W	L	D	PF	PA	PD	PTS
Whitehaven RLFC	14	10	3	1	335	222	113	21
Newcastle Thunder	14	9	4	1	453	264	189	19
Oldham RLFC	14	9	5	0	442	237	205	18
Doncaster RLFC	14	8	6	0	407	209	198	16
Hunslet RLFC	13	8	5	0	392	218	174	16
London Skolars	14	7	6	1	318	368	-50	15
Workington Town	14	6	8	0	396	372	24	12
North Wales Crusaders	13	6	7	0	294	287	7	12
Coventry Bears	13	4	9	0	281	448	-167	8
Keighley Cougars	13	6	6	1	284	326	-42	1
West Wales Raiders	14	0	14	0	110	761	-651	0

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	9	0	5	0	0	20	17	Cameron Leeming	3	0	2	0	0	8
2	Aaron Jones-Bishop	6	0	3	0	0	12	18	Ben Davies	11	11	0	0	0	0
3	Zack McComb	17	0	15	0	0	60	19	Jamie Greenwood	10	10	1	0	0	4
4	Jack Holmes	14	0	5	0	0	20	20	Matty Wilkinson	13	11	8	0	0	32
5	Richie Hawkyard	15	0	9	0	0	36	21	Lee Kershaw	5	0	4	0	0	16
6	Paul Crook	7	0	3	35	0	82	22	Danny Grimshaw	2	0	0	0	0	0
7	Dave Hewitt	16	0	5	42	0	104	23	Luke Nelmes	1	1	0	0	0	0
8	Phil Joy	13	0	3	0	0	12	24	Liam Bent	16	2	3	0	0	12
9	Gareth Owen	17	1	3	0	0	12	25	Danny Bridge	9	0	2	0	0	8
10	Scott Law	18	4	2	0	0	8	26	Anthony Bowman	9	0	5	0	0	20
11	Ben Calland	8	1	0	0	0	0	27	Harry Maders	10	0	7	0	0	28
12	Emmerson Whittel	17	9	3	0	0	12	29	Titus Gwaze	14	11	1	0	0	4
13	Jack Spencer	17	7	1	0	0	4	30	Frazer Morris	2	2	0	0	0	0
15	Adam Brook	8	0	2	12	0	32	31	Harry Aaronson	6	0	2	0	0	8
16	Danny Langtree	10	0	11	0	0	44	32	Nick Gregson	2	1	0	0	0	0

Staying in Touch with Our Heritage with MICHAEL TURNER

Pictures courtesy of Oldham RL Heritage Trust



LEFT: Lee Kershaw races away to score in this season's clash at the Queensway Stadium. RIGHT: Jon Ford scores one of his three tries in July, 2013.

Today we welcome players, officials and supporters of North Wales Crusaders.

The first meeting was at Whitebank on May 6, 2012. North Wales won 32-36 and there have been several close scores since.

Of the 11 meetings, five have had winning margins of four points or fewer.

These include the return game in June, 2012 when Crusaders won 30-28 at the Racecourse Ground in Wrexham and this season's match at the Queensway Stadium when Oldham 'nicked it' 14-16 after the Crusaders had led for most of the match.

The turning point came when Lee Kershaw intercepted to race in from 80 yards to score under the posts.

The largest crowd was on July 28, 2013 at Whitebank when Oldham won 28-10 thanks to a hat-trick by Jon Ford and further tries by Mo Agoro and Kenny Hughes with four goals from Lewis Palfrey in front of an attendance of 1,209.



Michael Turner

Although Oldham won this table-topping clash, Crusaders went on to claim the title, the loss at Oldham being one of only two league defeats all season.

By George Cowburn... THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

Under the Lights.

There was something special about night matches under the floodlights at Watersheddings.

The original lights were installed in time for the England Under 24s v France Under 24s match on October 20, 1965 in which Oldham's hooker Kevin Taylor played. This also meant Oldham could take part in the newly introduced BBC2 Floodlit Trophy competition televised mid week.

Oldham didn't enjoy much success in the tournament although they reached the semi-finals in the 1972/3 season, losing at Leigh 10-8 despite a brilliant individual try from Martin Murphy. New improved floodlights were installed in time for the 8-8 draw against Leeds on March 3, 1985.

I have chosen to highlight four matches from after that date, each a memorable occasion. On October 1, 1986 Oldham

played Widnes in an exciting Lancashire Cup semi final. The Roughyeds scored first with a Paul Sherman try but with just a quarter of an hour left the Chemics (Vikings hadn't landed on Merseyside yet) were leading 14-8. Cometh the hour... Oldham's hero that night was prop-forward David Hobbs whose try and two goals sealed a final place against the mighty Wigan outfit.

Just to show the result wasn't a fluke Widnes were back at Watersheddings for a league match the week after and Oldham triumphed again by 22-16.

Nobody who was there will forget the last time Oldham played Australia - Tuesday, November 4, 1986. The Aussies swept all before them on that tour, winning the three Tests and handing out beatings to Leeds (40-0), Hull (48-0) and Bradford (38-0).

Oldham were in no mood to lie down though against the tourists

who had stars such as Mal Meninga and Dale Shearer in the backs and Benny Elias, Martin Bella, Paul Sironen and Les Davidson in the pack.

Oldham were 2-0 up when the first scrum erupted into a mass punch-up (oh the joys of contested scrums) and for their sins two Aussies plus Paul Sherman and Mick Worrall were sent to the bin. Australia moved through the gears to lead 14-2 but Oldham were not done yet.

A Colin Hawkyard try, goaled by Worrall got them back into the game and two second-half penalties from the boot of Worrall left the match balanced at 14-12. As Oldham tired, Australia scored two unconverted tries but the Roughyeds finished strongly when Des Foy chased down a pin-point kick from Stuart Raper to score in the corner which left Oldham within six points of Australia - the closest anybody got to the Kangaroos on that Tour - when the full time whistle blew.



FANTASTIC UNDER THE FLOODLIGHTS
Mick Burke slotting home the winning conversion after Paddy Kirwan's dramatic try against Wigan in February, 1987.

A frost-bound pitch (at Watersheddings, surely not?) meant Oldham's Challenge Cup tie against Wigan was moved from Sunday to Wednesday, February 4, 1987. The last five-figure crowd was packed into the old ground to see a dramatic cup tie under the lights.

Wigan came to town with a team packed with stars - Steve Hampson, Joe Lydon, Ellery Hanley, Dean Bell, Henderson Gill, Shaun Edwards and Andy Gregory in an all International back line plus Graeme West, Martin Dermott, Brian Case, Ian Roberts, Ian Potter and Andy Goodway in a formidable pack of forwards.

Oldham led 4-0 at half time (two Mick Burke penalties) before the tie swung Wigan's way as they led 8-4 with time running out. A Wigan fumble in their "25" saw stand off Gary Bridge stopped with his nose on the line after the scrum. It looked like Paddy Kirwan had lined up David Hobbs for a last ditch charge for the line but instead as the Wigan defence moved up to snuff out Hobbs crafty Paddy dived over the line for the try to stun the Wigan faithful.

Mick Burke held his nerve to kick the goal; a quick Wigan kick off; a Hugh Waddell hit up and

Watersheddings erupted at the sound of the final whistle.

Everyone remembers Paddy's try but just before that a magnificent cover tackle by Michael Taylor on Henderson Gill saved a certain try and gave Oldham the chance to create history.

To put the result into perspective Wigan went on to win the next eight Challenge Cup Finals on the trot but that unforgettable Wednesday night belonged to Oldham.

The year 1989 was a good year to be an Oldham fan. Tony Barrow's battlers fought their way to a Challenge Cup semi final, went on to win the Second Division Premiership after one of the greatest comebacks in any final and reached the Lancashire Cup Final.

To get to that final the Roughyeds had to overcome Wigan on October 5, once again under those Watersheddings lights. The game was another thriller as a Mike Ford drop goal was all that separated the sides at full time, Oldham prevailing by 19-18.

The game swung to and fro with Oldham's tries

coming from John Fieldhouse, Keith Newton and Mike Ford. Once again there was late drama as Oldham trailed by one point with just five minutes to go when they were awarded a long distance penalty well wide of the posts.

Step forward Gary Hyde, tasked with the responsibility as full-back Duncan Platt was off the field injured. Sure enough the Yorkshireman's kick soared high and handsome through the posts at the Watersheddings Street end to put a stop to a run of four consecutive Lancashire Cup Final appearances by Wigan.

To compound the "pie eaters" misery, Shaun Edwards was sent off before the end as Oldham fans celebrated another famous Watersheddings night under the lights.



FANTASTIC UNDER THE FLOODLIGHTS
Des Foy scoring a last minute try in the corner against the Australians in November, 1986.



George Cowburn - lifelong fan with statistics at his fingertips

STATE OF MIND . . . AND THE WONDERFUL JOB IT DOES

State of Mind Sport (SOMS) was established in 2011 after the death of international rugby league player Terry Newton, who tragically took his own life.

SOMS was set up by four experienced NHS staff who all had a passion for rugby league and were keen to prevent similar incidents but were uncertain about how best to make an impact.

They were joined by former team mates of Terry (Brian Carney and Terry O'Connor). Crucially, they brought the perspective of the player and important contacts in the sport and the media and gave SOMS some valuable credibility to build numerous partnerships to achieve our goals of trying to improve the mental fitness of rugby players, coaches, fans and communities and that's why we are in Oldham today.

Our work

We continue to deliver mental fitness sessions across the country and have delivered to over 60,000 people across the country in rugby league clubs, sports clubs, schools, colleges, universities and businesses as well as police, fire and ambulance services.

Offload

A partnership with Rugby League Cares, the RFL, and three rugby league club foundations (Salford Red Devils, Warrington Wolves and Widnes Vikings) has led to an innovative 'Offload' project. The project is Big Lottery funded for the past two years and now for a further two years for a mental fitness and resilience programme, targeted at groups of men at risk of developing mental health issue and delivered by former rugby league players and officials with community club foundation staff at the stadiums.

Women's Super League

State of Mind Sport have been delivering mental fitness sessions to all clubs in the three tiers of women's rugby league in 2019.

Squad Goals

State of Mind Sport in partnership with Altru Drama have premiered a drama performance based on rugby league and funded by the Isabella Blow Foundation saw performances taking place in schools in Wigan, Warrington and St. Helens for its very first run with other funding being sought to deliver in different areas.



Danny Sculthorpe after addressing one of the many groups he talks to regularly on behalf of State of Mind.

World Record Breakers

State of Mind Sport with North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Trust in June 2018 broke the world record for the largest mental health awareness lesson that took place at the Halliwell Jones stadium with Oldham born former players Danny Sculthorpe and Ian Knott and former Oldham born Super League Referee Ian Smith.



Wow! Look at that crowd. State of Mind broke a world record when addressing this crowd in the summer of 2018.

We're Proud and Privileged

OLDHAM RLFC is proud and privileged to host a visit to the Vestacare Stadium today by representatives of State Of Mind Sport (SOMS) which was established in 2011 after the death of Wigan and Great Britain forward star Terry Newton, who had tragically taken his own life.

The State Of Mind organisation, in which Oldham-born Danny Sculthorpe is heavily involved, has completed a tour of Super League clubs and will now bring this Wellbeing initiative to an end at the Vestacere Stadium, which is rightly said to be a coup for the Oldham club.

Said Oldham chairman Chris Hamilton: "Mental health is high on the public agenda at present so I'm asking fans who will be at our game against North Wales Crusaders on Sunday to go to their stall and see what they do -- it could be vital to someone you know."

A spokesman for SOMS added: "We deliver mental health sessions across the

country and have spoken to, more than 60,000 people in clubs, schools, colleges, universities and businesses plus others to police, fire and ambulance services."

In the summer of 2018 State Of Mind Sport and the North-West Boroughs' Healthcare NHS Trust broke the world record for the biggest audience at a meeting of its kind, held at the Halliwell Jones Stadium in Warrington.

Three Oldhamers played key roles in the presentation ===== Danny Sculthorpe, Ian Knott and former Super League referee Ian Smith.

We ask fans attending today's game to visit the State of Mind stall to discover more of the work the organisation does.

Narrow defeat in tight game at Whitehaven



Zack McComb



Danny Langtree



Adam Brook



Danny Bridge



Cameron Leeming



Dave Hewitt



Harry Aaronson



Jack Spencer



Gareth Owen



Danny Langtree

Phil Joy



Liam Bent



Scott Law

WHITEHAVEN 16
OLDHAM 10

ORSA NEWS

ORSA, the Oldham Roughyeds Supporters Association, has been running since 2010 and by virtue of membership subscriptions and various fund-raising activities, has continued to support the club, the players and the coaching staff in various way.

Among other things, members' contributions cover the cost of player sponsorship, some of the nutrition costs, and very importantly, the cost of sponsoring the annual Supporters' Player of the Year Award on behalf of fans in general.

FUNDRAISING

In recent seasons, ORSA fund raising has also provided funding for various 'team bonding' events, something which is massively appreciated by Scott Naylor and his staff, as an important boost for the morale of the squad.

However, to fund such events for the squad, ORSA needs to raise some funds on match days and did so successfully last season to enable one such bonding event to go ahead at a crucial time during the season.

In the current season, ORSA has already covered the costs of one team bonding event and is now aiming towards another in the run-up to the 'business end' of the season

Unfortunately, despite ORSA membership having increased over the seasons, those actively involved

with ORSA have reduced in numbers, so with that in mind, the players have got involved to help out with some match-day fund-raising.

So, if you see the players raising funds for ORSA, you are assured that those funds are being ring-fenced for the sole purpose of use by the squad at an appropriate time. A raffle and a couple of name cards at recent games have already raised £260, so that will certainly be put to good use, when required.

'EASY FUND-RAISING'

It is six months since ORSA was registered with the 'Easyfundraising' website, enabling fans to raise free donations by virtue of their on-line shopping.

There are currently 69 people signed up for donations and the amount raised to date is around £160, which is very pleasing. We have a few fans in 'hot' competition at the top of the donation table and statistics show that of the 69 signed up, between 20 and 30 have made purchases via the site.

Many thanks to all who have made it a habit to use the site, it's much appreciated. However, to those who have registered, but may have forgotten to use the website, may we remind you to 'TAP the APP' if you are shopping via a mobile or tablet, OR, to set the donation reminder, if shopping via a computer – it's easy to do and there's nothing quite like getting some free money via your purchases.

THANKYOU

For more information on ORSA, please see the club website.

As always, many thanks to all who contribute to ORSA in any way and remember, every bit counts, in our support of THE ROUGHYEDS.

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OUR YOUNG HOPEFULS ARE ALL SET AND READY TO TAKEOVER

JUNIOR TAKE OVER DAY 14 JULY 2019

ARE YOU READY?

WHO'S THE BOSS?

BETFRED LEAGUE 1

OLDHAM v NORTH WALES CRUSADERS

VESTCARE STADIUM KO:15:00



We can now name the children who will take over key roles in our club's big Takeover Day at the Vestacare Stadium when North Wales Crusaders come to town today seeking their fourth win in a row.

Orlaith MacCafferty, a nine-year-old from St Anne's RC Primary School, has her sights set on the top job. She wants to be chairman of the club and, guess what, the real chairman, Chris Hamilton, says she is welcome to it!

Others on duty today will be:

PA announcer: Jessica Davies (9) from Audenshaw Primary

Photographers: Evie Wood (7), Higher Failsworth Primary; Bailey Howell (14), Co-op Academy, Failsworth.

Kit managers: Stanley Simpson (10), Friezland Primary; Harvey Hall (8), Oasis Academy, Limeside;

Ground Safety officers: Amelie Betts (11), Friezland Primary; Theo Black (9), Ditton Primary, Widnes.

Programme seller: Jasmine Tierney (7), St Margaret's CE Primary School.

The children, whose ages range from 7 to 14, will be given a boardroom briefing before starting their game-day duties with their respective "real" operators.

At 1.30pm the children and their counterparts will be photographed on the pitch and post-match there will be a presentation in the boardroom to staff and counterparts.

Children will be encouraged to be actively involved and chairman Chris said: "The whole purpose is to make it real and that's exactly what we aim to do."

The club was well represented at an NHS barbeque at the Royal Oldham Hospital on Thursday. Many other partners were also present. Like many of the others, we had a stall in which we attempted to reflect the club's contribution to local community life, both as a founder member of the Rugby Football League and a club that contributes significantly to the borough and all it stands for.

Said club chairman Chris Hamilton: "We were delighted to receive this invitation and equally delighted to accept. It was an event that recognised the fantastic work done by the NHS and its partners, including the emergency services."



Children from St Anne' Primary and Holy Family Primary in Rochdale were due to be our flag bearers today. We have had children from several local schools and local community clubs over the course of the season in an initiative that has been received really well by our supporters and by the clubs and schools involved.

Our players too have readily got in on the act, as can be seen by these pictures.

Long may these flag-bearing initiatives continue . . . and a big well-done to all concerned.



NORTH WALES CRUSADERS

North Wales Crusaders arrive at the Vestacare Stadium today seeking their fourth win in as many games. Their recent run of good form has seen them rise up the table to be in a genuine position to challenge for an end-of-season play-off place.

Crusaders' 2019 season began back in February with a trip up to Workington Town, a team riding high after defeating Oldham on the opening day of the season. Town proved too strong for Anthony Murray's side and handed out a 48-18 thrashing at Derwent Park.

Oldham provided the next opposition for the Welshmen and on a wet and miserable day at the Queensway Stadium in Wrexham they nearly claimed the scalp of the pre-season title favourites. Leading 6-0 at the break, Crusaders improved their score to lead 14-0 with twenty minutes on the clock.

An unconverted Lee Kershaw try for the visitors reduced the margin to ten points but the home side were looking good for the win.

A second try from Kershaw in the 68th minute came from an interception and 80 metre dash for the posts. It was a key turning point in the game as Crusaders found themselves under intense pressure which ultimately led to Dave Hewitt's match-winning try and goal. The Welsh side were visibly crestfallen at the loss and certainly deserved to take something out of the game.

Defeats against Hunslet and Keighley Cougars followed before a pressure relieving win against

West Wales Raiders finally put some points on the board for Cru.

A period of inconsistency followed as away wins against Doncaster and Coventry Bears were countered by losses to Whitehaven, Newcastle Thunder and London Skolars.

That brings us to the current Crusaders winning streak. As Oldham were defeating Workington Town at Borough Park three weeks ago, Crusaders pulled off an impressive win at Whitehaven just down the Cumbrian coast. A home victory against Keighley Cougars followed before a hat-trick of wins was completed with a home defeat of Workington Town.

The win against Town has put Crusaders on level points with Workington and only three points behind sixth placed London Skolars, with a game in hand.

Speaking after last week's win against Workington, head coach Anthony Murray had this to say to the club website:

"We won't get ahead of ourselves and get too excited,"

"We've got a real tough fixture at Oldham and we've never taken it further than the next game.

"We'll just carry on working on the things we have been in training and all we can ask is that the players look to improve week in, week out.

"This kind of form has always been there and the players haven't

stopped working hard.

"They've never stopped believing in what we're doing.

"I can't fault any of them as the desire and commitment is there.

"It's a really nice reward for the players to get some points on the board and it just gives you that bit more confidence.

"Rugby league is about loving what you do and it's great to see the players playing with a smile on their faces."

We may have an opportunity of welcoming former Roughyeds players back to Oldham this afternoon. Dave Eccleston, Matt Reid, Steve Roper, Alex Thompson and Kenny Hughes are no strangers to the Vestacare Stadium. It'll be great to see them at the ground.

Today's game is vital for both clubs. Oldham are still in with an outside chance of claiming top spot and Crusaders have the bit between their teeth to grab a play-off place. It should provide us with some entertaining rugby league.

Writes Dave Naylor.



SQUAD

THREE TO WATCH

Rob Massam

Dubbed the Tank on the Flank, Welsh international Massam creates an impressive presence in the Crusaders three-quarter line.

Born in Wiltshire but qualifying for Wales through residency, Massam began his professional career with North Wales back in 2012. Scoring 90 tries in 106 appearances in a five year spell, the winger left to play at the Crown Oil Arena in 2017.

Returned to Wrexham and Crusaders this year bringing Championship experience to Anthony Murray's side.



Kenny Baker

Forward, Crusaders Captain and club player of the year for 2018. Joined Crusaders from amateur side Ince Road Bridge.

Toured South Africa with Great Britain U19s when he was younger and has played for England Lionhearts.

Baker is relishing his leadership role with Crusaders and has drawn on the knowledge of experienced clubmate and former England international Stephen Wild.

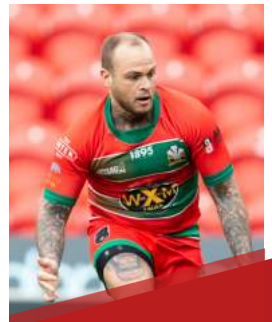


Steve Roper

Former Roughyed half-back Roper was a member of Scott Naylor's League 1 title winning side of 2015.

Vastly experienced and a player to respond to big moments in games, Roper is a dangerous opponent. Scored an individual try in Oldham's famous win at Hull Kingston Rovers in the Challenge Cup.

Broke the deadlock with a 105th minute golden point drop-goal in the 2017 play-off semi-final against York. Steve is enjoying his second season at the Queensway Stadium.



Photographs courtesy of Richard Long

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

With lots of discussion currently about the ideal future structure of the RL competition, it is a good time to return to the topic of expansion, with particular reference to overseas expansion. I think virtually everyone - apart from the extreme M62 corridor-ers (and I suspect even they would vote for Bramley, Broughton Rangers and Liverpool Stanley being re-admitted to the semi-pro ranks) - agrees that the more places our game is played, in principle, the better.

Considerably less unanimous, though, is the support for the possibility of further expansion overseas.

I should perhaps first nail my colours to the mast. Temperamentally, I am in favour. With the international game at last now showing signs of support from those unbelievably insular Aussies, everything that can be done to strengthen it must surely be a good thing.

Hence, firstly, the attractions of an increasingly strong Toulouse club, hopefully in due course to become a second French side established and competing successfully in Super League. That can only be good for the health in the long run of the France national side, as well as the overall strength of rugby a treize across the Channel.

And how good would it be to see genuinely competitive northern hemisphere mid-season internationals between GB, or England, and France, that the broadcasters would be falling over themselves to pay for the rights to cover?

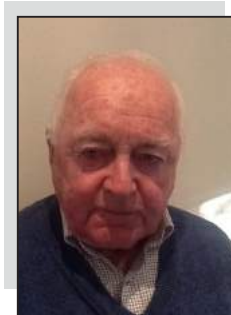
Secondly, though, is the issue of wider expansion, whether that be in Europe - Serbia perhaps the most likely avenue? - or in North America. With reference to Europe, I can see no issues - just let things develop naturally, accepting that it may be a longish process, but unless a sugar daddy or two comes into the game there, it needs to be what one might call 'organic' growth, with Serbia,

say, competing at gradually higher levels, using largely their own players.

USA/Canada, however, is a different animal. First, we already have a side in Toronto that will probably make Super League on the competition's own rules, for 2020. And we also have, it seems, two others in Ottawa and New York that have been given apparently clear [though not transparent, it has to be said, at least at the moment] hurdles to meet to be accepted into our League One in respectively 2020 and 2021.

Again, it seems to me to be a great thing in principle if RL can become established in the long run in N America - what is not to like about such a development? But, in this case, I can also see the problems that are clearly endemic in the way in which the apparent growth is happening at the moment, and so the need for caution, perhaps.

Issues of where the players come from, how home-grown players are to be generated and over what time-scale, implications for UK-based TV deals, cost implications for Europe-based clubs and reliance on individual sugar-daddies are all ones that need very careful consideration. But at least let us acknowledge that the future is potentially very exciting.



Ian Wilson - our man with something to say

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FIXTURES



**OLDHAM
RLFC**

**NORTH WALES
CRUSADERS**



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	34-18	Won	451
Saturday 25	6:30pm	Keighley Cougars	Away	52-12	Won	836
June						
Sunday 2	3:00pm	1895 Cup 2 - Doncaster	Home	12-24	Lost	283
Sunday 9	5:30pm	Doncaster RLFC	Away	0-31	Lost	678
Sunday 16	3:00pm	Keighley Cougars	Home	28-4	Won	591
Sunday 23	3:00pm	Workington Town	Away	26-16	Won	1,013
Wednesday 26	7:30pm	1895 Cup QF				
Sunday 30	3:00pm	West Wales Raiders	Home	56-6	Won	552
July						
Sunday 7	3:00pm	Whitehaven RLFC	Away	10-16	Lost	1,102
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				

Kyran JOHNSON 01	Mick Harrop	Karl ASHALL
Aaron JONES-BISHOP 02	Les and Eileen Davison	Simon ATHERTON
Zack MCCOMB 03	David and Val Webster	Kenny BAKER
Jack HOLMES 04	David and Val Webster	Brad BRENNAN
Richie HAWKYARD 05	Rita Walton	Gavin CONROY
Paul CROOK 06	Rita Walton	Aled DAVIES
Dave HEWITT 07	Chris Noble MBE	Dave ECCLESTON
Phil JOY 08	Past Players' Association	Alex ECKLEY
Gareth OWEN 09	Purpose Business and Marketing Ltd	Lewis FAIRHURST
Scott LAW 10	Les and Eileen Davison	Dec GREGORY
Ben CALLAND 11	Luke, Abbie and Jessica Davies	Callum HAZZARD
Emmerson WHITTEL 12	John and Lynda McAndrew	Jack HOUGHTON
Jack SPENCER 13	Graeme Lee	Earl HURST
Adam BROOK 15	John Davies	Kenny HUGHES
Danny LANGTREE 16	Keith and Shirley Mullaney and Grant and Sheila Somerville	Tommy JOHNSON
Ben DAVIES 18	Neil Gibbison	Rob MASSAM
Jamie GREENWOOD 19	Sandra Bullock	Dante MORLEY-SAMUELS
Matty WILKINSON 20	John and Lynda McAndrew	Matt REID
Lee KERSHAW 21	Rugby Oldham Supporters' Trust	Steve ROPER
Danny GRIMSHAW 22	Neil Gibbison	Joe RYAN
Liam BENT 24	ORSA	Ryan SMITH
Danny BRIDGE 25	Pam Taylor and LTS	Ben STEAD
Anthony BOWMAN 26	Graeme Lee	Alex THOMPSON
Harry MADERS 27	Pam Taylor	Warren THOMPSON
Harry AARONSON 28	Rugby Oldham Supporters' Trust	Jonny WALKER
Cameron LEEMING 29	Les and Eileen Davison	Stephen WILD
Scott Naylor Head Coach	Keith and Shirley Mullaney	Chris WORRALL
Peter Carey Assistant Coach	Keith and Shirley Mullaney	Head Coach Anthony Murray
Adam Neal Conditioner	Purpose Business and Marketing Ltd	Assistant Coach Alan Hadcroft

Referee: L. Staveley
 Touch Judge: J. Pulein
 Touch Judge 2: T. Arnold
 Reserve Referee: L. Arnold





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