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**LANCASHIRE RUGBY LEAGUE
CHALLENGE CUP FINAL**

OLDHAM
v.
ST. HELENS

Saturday, 20th October, 1956



No 1865

Official Programme - Threepence

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY LEAGUE

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OLDHAM v. ST. HELENS

(LANCASHIRE R.L. CHALLENGE CUP FINAL)

SATURDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1956

Kick-off 3-0 p.m.

OFFICIAL NOTES...

Once again we at Wigan are proud to stage one of the most important matches of the season, and we appreciate the Lancashire County Committee's confidence in allocating us this game. This is our second representative match of the season, and in exactly one month's time the First Test Match between Great Britain and Australia will be played here.

No one could have wished for a more attractive match than to-day's, for both teams have caught the imagination with their great displays, and enthusiasm in both Oldham and St. Helens is at its height.

Although Oldham have won the Lancashire Cup six times to St. Helens' twice, the Saints are more recent winners, beating Wigan at Swinton in 1953. Oldham have been one of the outstanding teams of the last three years or so, and yet in this period they have not won a major trophy, whereas St. Helens, besides the Lancashire Cup, have won the Challenge Cup and the Northern League Championship in just over three years. Oldham have already delighted Wigan fans with two grand displays this season, but St. Helens have not been seen here as yet. However, their League record speaks for itself, with an average of 35 points scored per match. Oldham also are prolific scorers, and we may expect to see some scintillating football from two fine sides.

Mrs. F. W. Ashworth, wife of the Lancashire County President, will present the trophy at the end of the match to the winning captain.

Following are pen pictures of the two teams:—

OLDHAM

W. B. Ganley (full back). Age 25, 5ft. 9in., 12st. Graduated from a Leigh junior club. Previously centre, played as an amateur and signed professional forms in 1951. A Manchester University boy with a degree. Accountant.

R. Cracknell. 5ft. 10in., 12st., age 27. Formerly with Huddersfield, Dick was trans-

ferred to Oldham the season before last. A versatile player who can turn out on either wing, he has played for Yorkshire, England and Great Britain.

D. Ayres. A local boy signed from the local Rugby Union side. Originally an out-half, secured his position in the team this season as centre. Age 22, 12st. 7lb., 5ft. 10in.

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A. Davies. 5ft. 10in., 13st. 7lb., age 23. Born in Leigh, he played in junior clubs there before signing for Oldham. He has represented Lancashire and England, and is captain of the Oldham team this season. A high-scoring centre.

J. Etty. 6ft., 13st., age 25. Transferred from Batley, his birthplace, last season, John started playing Rugby in the local junior league and had trials for Dewsbury before signing for Batley. Has played for Yorkshire and was in the British Empire team which played against Wales in 1951.

F. Stirrup. 5ft. 7in., 10st. 7lb., age 29. Frank started playing Rugby in his home town, Leigh, and turned out for the senior club there and for Salford before joining Oldham. A fine player who has gained County honours, he was formerly scrum half and also took over the full-back berth when Bernard Ganley was injured.

F. Pitchford. 5ft. 5in., 11st., age 21. Born in Leigh, Frank played in school and junior football there and joined Oldham at the beginning of the 1952-53 season. One of the best scrum halves in the game.

K. Jackson. 6ft., 14st. 6in., age 26. A Lancashire County player, he played for St. Mary's, the local junior team, before joining the senior club. Played Rugby Union in the Services.

J. Keith. 5ft. 11in., 12st. 10lb., age 30. Started playing for Hunslet schools in Leeds, his birthplace. Played for England and Yorkshire as a schoolboy.

D. G. Vinas. A Welshman from Newbridge, signed last season, and has held his place in the first team since arriving. A champion weight-lifter, age 24, 5ft. 10in., 14st. 8lb.

S. Little. 6ft., 14st., age 24. Born near Carlisle, he played for Cumberland and Harlequins at Rugby Union before becoming a League player. Since joining Oldham he has turned out for Cumberland at the Rugby League code.

C. Winslade. 6ft. 11in., 15st. 4lb., age 24. Born in Maesteg, Glamorgan, he was a Welsh schoolboy Rugby Union international and Glamorgan County player. Joined Oldham in January, 1950, and has played in four internationals since then.

D. Turner. Signed on transfer last season from Hull Kingston Rovers. Yorkshire County player, age 25, 5ft. 11in., 13st. 10lb.

ST. HELENS

Glyn Moses (full back). Aged 26, 5ft. 9in., 13st. International and Test player. Rugby Union convert, he first played Rugby League for Salford but retired from the game and returned home to Wales. Has played for Wales and Other Nationalities. The best defensive full back in the game, he is also a clever attacker.

Stewart Llewellyn (right wing three-quarter). Former Monmouthshire County R.U. winger. Aged 29, 6ft. 12st. 4lb., he joined the Saints in 1948. Has played for Wales four times and is reckoned to be the best right-winger never to have played for Great Britain.

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Douglas Greenall (right centre three-quarter). Has played for Great Britain many times and toured Australasia in 1954. Aged 28, 5ft. 6in., 11st. 8lb. Rejected from the Forces because of flat feet, but has left many a defence flat-footed since then. A product of Rivington Rd. School, St. Helens.

William Finnan (left centre three-quarter). Another St. Helens-born player, can play equally well at out-half. Aged 26, 12st. 4lb., 5ft. 7in. A difficult player to tackle near the line.

Frank Carlton (left wing three-quarter). The third local player in the three-quarter line, he is only 19. Signed as a winger for Everton F.C., but returned to Rugby League, though Soccer was his first love. Represented Lancashire at athletics when a schoolboy, has played this season for the County. 5ft. 10in., 11st.

John Dickinson (scrum half). Before he was 18 he had played in every back position for the first team. As a schoolboy he captained his town team and school. Aged 20, he is serving with the R.A.F. 5ft. 6in., 11st. 4lb.

Austin Rhodes (stand-off half). Completing five locals out of seven backs, Rhodes only came to the fore last season. Has had the added responsibility of goalkicking thrust upon him. Kicked more than 130 goals last season. A former Lancashire schoolboy player, he is aged 18, 5ft. 8in., 11st. 6lb.

Alan Prescott (front row forward). Captain. A native of Widnes, Prescott came to St. Helens from Halifax, for whom he began

as a winger and ended as loose forward. Joined the Saints in 1948 and subsequently made more than 30 representative appearances. Last season was Captain of Club, County and Country and of the Test side. Is rated as one of the finest front-row forwards ever. Aged 28, 5ft. 11in., 16st.

Len McIntyre (hooker). Called upon for service with the first team just before the semi-final of the Challenge Cup Competition last year and has had to face some of the best hookers in the game in his short career. A Wigan junior, he is more than a useful goal kicker.

Douglas Silcock (front row forward). Perhaps better known as Nat after his famous father, who was also an international forward. Playing either front or second row, is so fast that he can readily turn out on the wing. He toured Australasia in 1954, and in January, 1955, signed for the Saints from Wigan. Aged 27, he is 6ft. 11in., 16st. 8lb., a difficult man to stop near the line.

George Parsons (second row forward). A former Wales and Cardiff Rugby Union player, was sought after by all the big R.L. clubs when he signed for Saints in 1948. The cleverest forward in the game, who is just now showing his best form. Aged 29, 6ft. 11in., 15st. 8lb.

John Gaskell (second row forward). Aged 25 years, 6ft. 11in., and nearly 17 stone, the biggest man in the team. Has a fine burst of speed, a tireless worker, and moves round the field like a back. Another local-born player.

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Vincent Karalius (loose forward). The third of Saints' Widnes-born forwards. Played in the Great Britain Team v. The Rest this season, also played for Lancashire. Aged 22, 6ft., 14st. 4lb.

Reg. Senior (centre threequarter). Wigan-born, signed from Swinton. Aged 26, 13st. 4lb., 5ft. 10in. A fine defensive player.

Brian Howard (centre threequarter). Aged 23, 11st. 8lb., 5ft. 10in. Local boy, has just

finished his R.A.F. service. Represented the R.A.F. in the Championships last season. A former athlete, he played at Wembley and gave the pass that won the match.

Walter Delves (second row forward). A product of St. Helens schools, for whom he was outstanding. He made his way through the 'B' and 'A' teams, changing from loose forward to second row. Can also play in the hooker position. Aged 22, 6ft., 13st. 6lb.

THE PLAY-THE-BALL RULE

This particular law is probably causing more controversy than anything else in our game, and recently two games were played at Bradford with a view to improving the rule. The first of these matches, between Oldham and Leigh, went back to the original rule, and the one applied in Rugby Union to-day, whereby the player releases the ball after a tackle, then no player can handle the ball until it has been played with the foot. This was considered a failure, as the players could not get the best out of the rule; in fact, certain observers likened it to an Association football match at times. If such a law was brought into force it would completely revolutionise the game. The other match, between Bradford and Huddersfield, experimented with playing the ball forward after a tackle. This game was more successful, as the two teams were generally keener and there was cohesion and method throughout the match. More of this rule will be heard later, as it is hoped that further trials will be played under it.

Whilst these experiments have taken place and more are to come, it is very unlikely that any change will be made in the rule for some years. The Managers of the Australian team over here at present have openly expressed the opinion of the authorities who control the game "down under" that they do not want any

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change in the rule. Their contention is that too much damage has already been done to the game by constantly changing the laws during the past few years. Any change in the rules has now to be accepted by the International Board, composed of Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and France, and there is more satisfaction in all the other countries than there is here. In Australia the game is continually gaining ground, and season after season their gates are growing bigger.

One look at one of their games and it is quite obvious why they are satisfied with the present rule. They play it strictly according to the law, which demands that the ball be brought back into play as soon as possible. This eliminates a lot of the static play that generally surrounds our club games. The emphasis on winning that prevails in this country is not apparent to the same extent in other countries, and consequently there are not the same bad methods, for instance a team gaining a lead and sticking to it by playing negative football, with no further outlook than to keep the ball from the opposition.

It is obvious, then, that we shall have to find our own solution to the problem without interfering with the game as it is played in other countries; thus Rugby Union methods and playing the ball forward would appear to be a waste of time.

Many solutions are continually being put forward by Rugby League followers (it is a favourite pastime), but in the personal opinion of the writer the rule should be left as it, but for the benefit of our game over here add that if at any time during the game the referee feels that a team is playing negative football he has the authority to order a scrum. In this way the teams that want to play football (and this rule allows them) can play, but it will stop a team from sticking to the ball for an indefinite period merely to waste time. The only opposition against this idea to date is that it puts too much on the referee's shoulders, but in the opinion of several referees it would make their job easier, and in fact the writer believes that some referees are adopting this method now.

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Blackpool	H	8-30		14-43			16-27		5-58						
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Leigh	H									7-10				11-17	
Liverpool	H					16-8			5-56		13-34			14-44	
Oldham	H	45-13	27-6	20-0											
Rochdale	H	9-29				0-43						15-5			
Salford	H		9-12						11-27		11-12				
St. Helens	H				25-5	16-25	49-11	40-0						29-0	
Swinton	H				17-4									32-8	
Warrington	H		25-21	14-17				11-15				16-8			
Whitehaven	H			24-13						27-17					15-8
Widnes	H						8-29					12-17			6-13
Wigan	H	15-26				13-25							30-5		
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Home Team on left. Away Team on top. Home Team's score given first.

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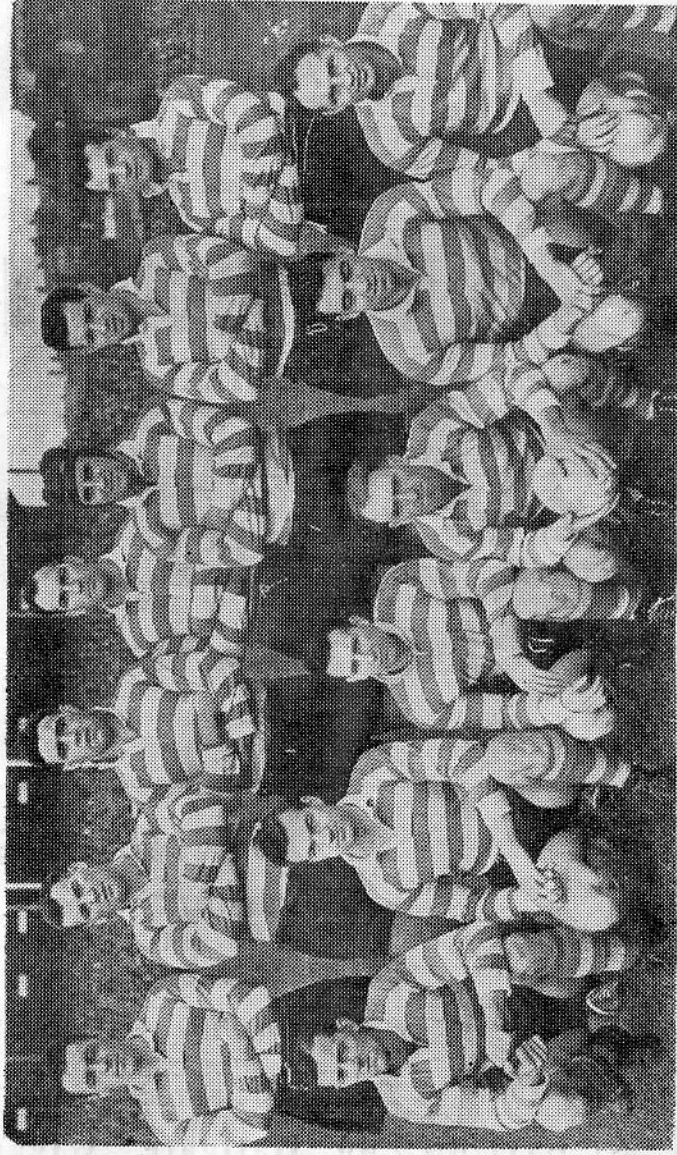
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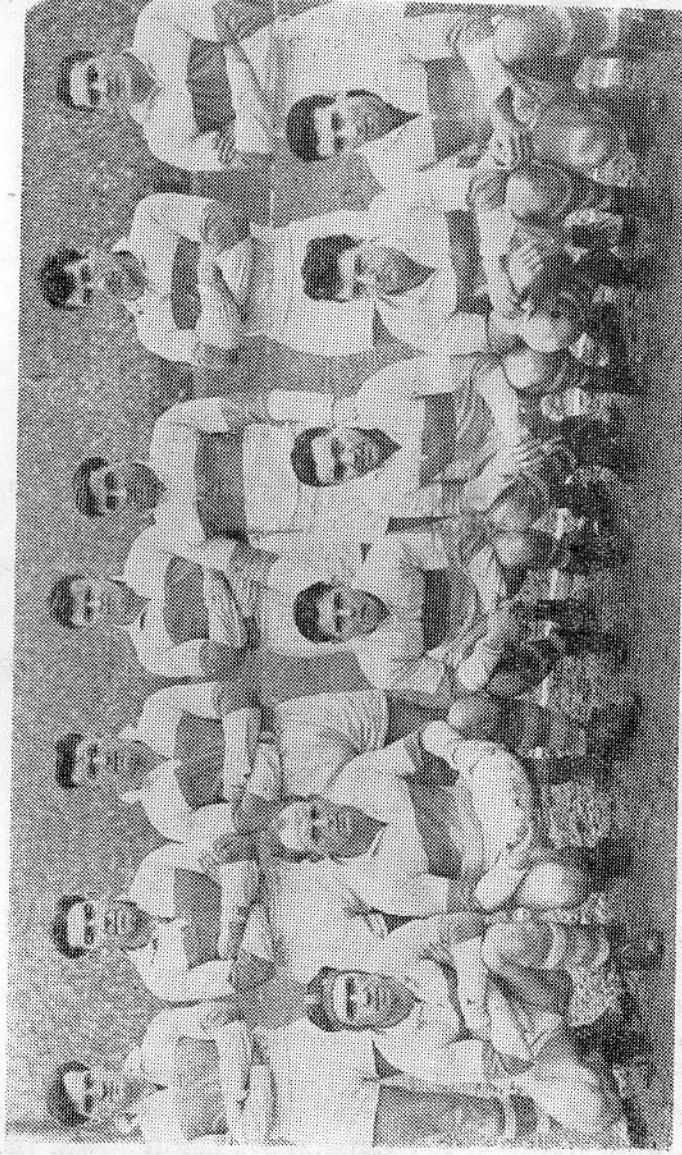
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OLDHAM

Top Row (left to right): GANLEY, VINES, JACKSON, WINSLADE, TURNER, DAVIES, AYRES.
Bottom Row: KEITH, ETTY, PITCHFORD, STIRRUP, CRACKNELL, LITTLE.

(Photo by courtesy of the "Lancashire Evening Post.")



ST. HELENS

Top Row (left to right): LLEWELLYN, PARSONS, TERRY, SILCOCK, MOSES, KARALIUS, GREENALL.
Bottom Row: MCINTYRE, PRESCOTT, DICKINSON, FINNAN, RHODES, CARLTON.

(Photo by courtesy of the "Lancashire Evening Post.")