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THE NORTHERN RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL **HULL v. OLDHAM**

SATURDAY
18th MAY
1957

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The League Championship

Like the "play-the-ball" law the method by which the Northern Rugby Football League Championship is determined has long been a source of controversy.

The Northern Rugby Football League comprises the thirty senior professional clubs whereas The Rugby Football League embraces the whole of the game. This senior league was formed in 1901, six years after the "birth" of the game.

In the three years 1902-5 two divisions were operated but in 1905 the present system of the Top-Four-Play-off was introduced.

There is no doubt that the League semi-finals and final are money-spinners and provide entertaining football for supporters.

Two Divisions

But, and it is a very big but, the system has its disadvantages and there are many who would like to revert to two divisions in order to create more competitive interest in the majority of League games.

Consequently we find that attempts are made from time to time to amend the fixture formula which is contained in N.R.F.L. Bye-Law No. 10. The latest attempt was less than two years ago when schemes for two and even three divisions were reviewed but none succeeded in obtaining the necessary two-thirds majority.

Fixture Formula

Although the Top-Four principle has been in operation for over fifty years the actual formula which determines each club's fixtures has seen many changes—most of the changes being caused by variations in the number of clubs in the League.

Present Scheme

The present formula governing last season's fixtures will operate again in 1957-58.

There are sixteen Yorkshire, twelve Lancashire and two Cumberland clubs.

The Cumberland clubs and one Yorkshire club are grouped with the Lancashire clubs in the Lancashire League making fifteen clubs in all. The remaining fifteen Yorkshire clubs play in the Yorkshire League.

Each club plays thirty-eight games, i.e. nineteen other clubs, made up as follows: fourteen clubs in its own County League and five inter-county League fixtures.

Inter-County Fixtures

The inter-county matches consist of the top five clubs in each County League playing each other, the middle five and the bottom five doing likewise.

The Yorkshire club to be transferred is that which wins the Yorkshire League the previous season.

As Leeds won the Yorkshire League this season they enter the Lancashire League next season, replacing Halifax who are grouped in the top five Yorkshire clubs for fixture compilation purposes.

It all sounds very complicated but it is quite simple in operation, next season's inter-county fixtures being as follows—

(5) Halifax	}	each	(1) Leeds
2 Hull			1 Oldham
3 Hunslet			2 Barrow
4 Huddersfield			3 Wigan
5 Wakefield T.			4 St. Helens
6 Featherstone R.	}	each	6 Warrington
7 York			7 Workington
8 Keighley			8 Leigh
9 Bramley			9 Whitehaven
10 Bradford N.			10 Swinton

11 Castleford	} each	11 Salford
12 Hull K.R.		12 Rochdale H.
13 Dewsbury		13 Widnes
14 Batley		14 Blackpool B.
15 Doncaster		15 Liverpool C.

The numbers indicate the positions in the respective County Leagues for 1956-7 season.

Advantages

This scheme in giving harder fixtures to the stronger clubs opens up the struggle for the top four positions. This season, for example, more clubs than usual had an outside interest in the race for League leadership and interest was maintained until the Easter holidays.

There are still many supporters and officials however who feel that two divisions are essential to give the clubs in the middle of the table a much needed fillip and it can be anticipated that the clubs will want to review the controversial fixture formula yet again before the 1958-9 fixtures are compiled.

The Northern Rugby Football League

Final Table—Season 1956-7

		P.	W.	L.	D.	G.	For T.	Pts.	G.	Against T.	Pts.	Pts.
Oldham	...	38	33	5	—	181	177	893	76	71	365	66
Hull	...	38	29	7	2	148	156	764	96	80	432	60
Barrow	...	38	29	9	—	129	148	702	101	93	481	58
Leeds...	...	38	28	10	—	178	154	818	101	96	490	56
St. Helens	...	38	25	10	3	139	208	902	89	59	355	53
Wigan	...	38	26	12	—	126	166	750	99	73	417	52
Hunslet	...	38	26	12	—	122	148	688	96	75	417	52
Wakefield T.	...	38	23	14	1	144	153	747	112	107	545	47
Huddersfield	...	38	23	15	—	131	135	667	115	101	533	46
Warrington	...	38	21	16	1	119	111	571	128	103	565	43
York	...	38	21	17	—	130	127	641	116	102	538	42
Halifax	...	38	21	17	—	107	115	559	116	94	514	42
Salford	...	38	19	17	2	109	100	518	101	99	499	40
Workington T.	...	38	20	18	—	103	96	494	87	114	516	40
Featherstone R.	...	38	19	19	—	108	132	612	93	106	504	38
Rochdale H....	...	38	19	19	—	102	102	510	127	119	611	38
Leigh	...	38	18	19	1	138	136	684	121	122	608	37
Whitehaven	...	38	18	19	1	134	111	601	134	126	646	37
Swinton	...	38	18	20	—	117	114	576	126	114	594	36
Keighley	...	38	17	20	1	109	92	494	105	108	534	35
Bradford N....	...	38	17	21	—	85	103	479	138	132	672	34
Bramley	...	38	14	22	2	138	94	558	121	130	632	30
Widnes	...	38	15	23	—	92	85	439	116	98	526	30
Blackpool B....	...	38	14	24	—	103	88	470	148	193	875	28
Castleford	...	38	11	25	2	118	84	488	146	149	739	24
Hull K.R.	...	38	11	25	2	91	71	395	132	136	672	24
Liverpool C.	...	38	9	28	1	85	62	356	160	178	854	19
Batley	...	38	8	30	—	111	59	399	158	128	700	16
Dewsbury	...	38	5	32	1	80	77	391	139	180	818	11
Doncaster	...	38	3	35	—	66	63	321	146	181	835	6



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PEN PICTURES—HULL

C. Hutton Age 30. 5ft. 9½in. 13st. 7lb. Licensee. Formerly with Widnes, his home town, he joined Hull in 1951. A fine goal kicker, he has landed over 100 goals for the fourth consecutive season since he joined the club. Recently broke own and club goal scoring record for second time

S. Cowan Age 25. 5ft. 7in. 12½st. Decorator. Signed three years ago from Selkirk Rugby Union Club. Played for South of Scotland against the All Blacks in the Rugby Union Trial. A fast, strong runner, plays in either centre or wing position

G. Dannatt Age 22. 5ft. 9in. 13st. Fitter. Product of local junior football. A strong player with a good turn of speed. Equally at home in centre or stand-off-half position

C. Turner Age 27. 5ft. 10½in. 14st. 7lb. Electric Welder. Born in South Wales, he has played in the centre and on the wing and in the Semi-Final and Final of the Championship last season, played stand-off-half

I. Watts Age 30. 5ft. 7in. 12st. Motor Driver. Wing Threequarter. The longest serving player in the Hull side. Had a Benefit last season. At present the highest scorer with 28 tries. He has played many times for Cumberland County

R. Moat Age 25. 5ft. 6in. 12st. Fish Worker. Last season broke the try scoring record from the stand-off-half position by scoring 30 tries. A brilliant footballer and very fast. At present on the transfer list at £2,000. A product of local junior football

T. Finn Age 24. 5ft. 7in. 11st. 7lb. Fitter. Born in St. Helens, he played for St. Helens before joining Hull in December, 1954

M. Scott Age 26. 5ft. 11in. 15st. 8lb. Licensee. A product of local junior football. Joined the senior club in 1948 and has played for England as a junior and in full Internationals. Played in the League Thirteen against France at Marseilles in December last year

P. T. Harris Age 29. 5ft. 7½in. 12st. 10lb. Fitter. A Welshman, he joined the club from Newbridge R.U. team in 1949. Has played for Wales on eight occasions and toured Australia in 1954, playing in two Tests against New Zealand. Has played in the full Test series this season against Australia and in the Test against France at Toulouse early this year. A very fast and powerful player. Selected for World Cup tour

J. Drake Age 24. 5ft. 11in. 15½st. Slater. Born in Workington. Formerly a full back, now established as a regular prop forward. Has played for his native county Cumberland. His twin brother plays in the second-row of the pack

C. Sykes Age 22. 6ft. 1in. 14st. Driver. Second-row forward. Product of local junior football. Signed for Hull two seasons ago. (In Olympic Skiing trials)

W. D. Drake Age 24. 6ft. 1½in. 14st. 6lb. Slater. Born in Workington. Formerly a winger, he started playing as a forward two seasons ago and is now a regular second-row man. Has played several times for his native county Cumberland

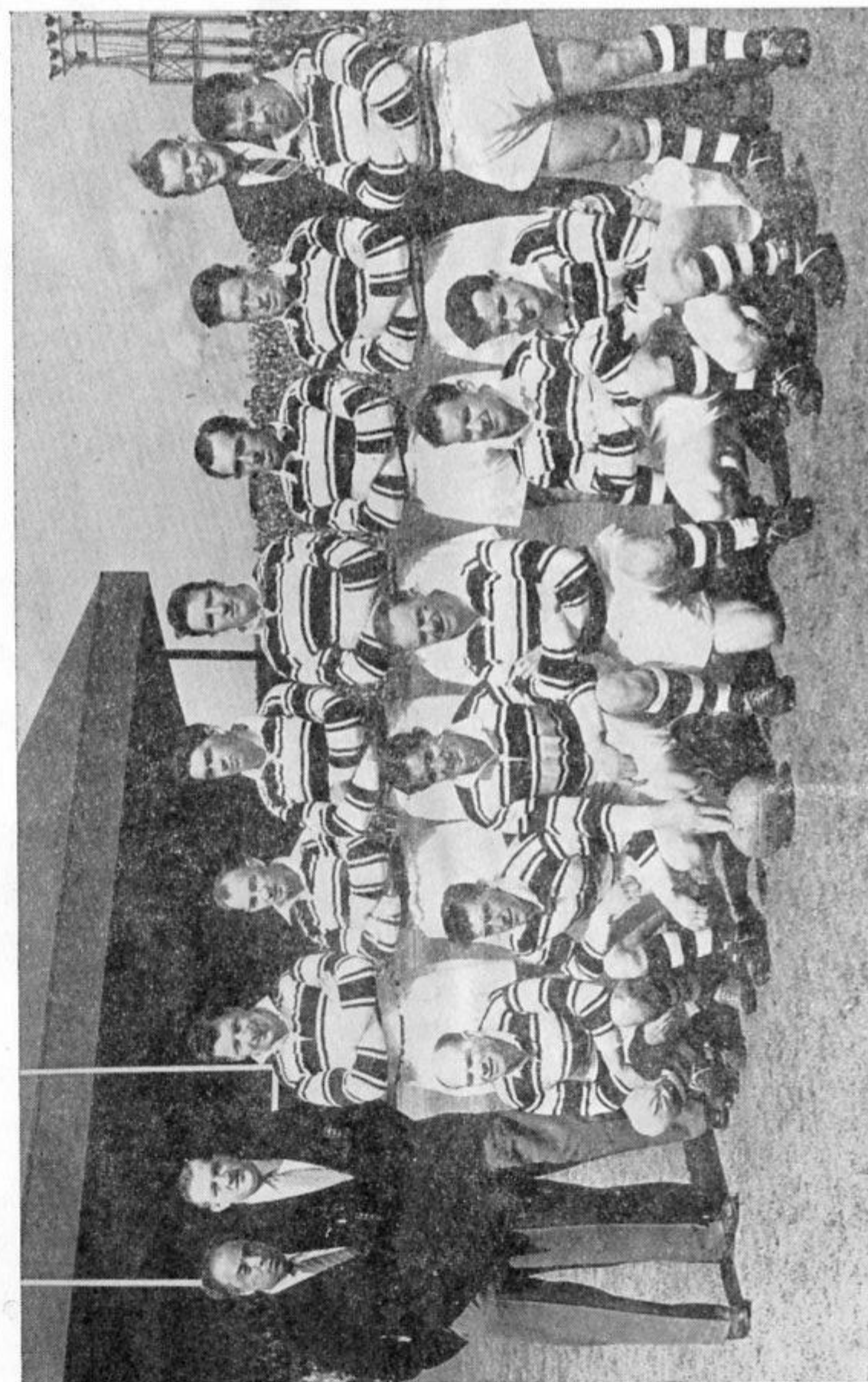
J. W. Whiteley Age 26. 6ft. 1½in. 14st. 10lb. Motor Driver. Signed for Hull from a local junior club in 1951. Has played for England against France in both Junior and Senior Internationals. Was a reserve for the World Cup Team in 1954. Now captain of the Hull club and considered to be one of the best loose-forwards in the game. Selected for World Cup Tour

Reserves—

K. Bowman Age 27. 6ft. 1in. 14st. 7lb. Farmer. Played with Hunslet before joining Hull three seasons back. Has played for Yorkshire on several occasions. Usually a wing threequarter, has had a trial recently in the second-row forwards

C. Cole Age 22. 6ft. 3in. 15st. 7lb. Accountant. Second-row forward. Signed from a local Rugby Union club two seasons ago

B. Coulman Age 23. 5ft. 9in. 12st. 10lb. Wing threequarter. Product of local football, showing great promise, competing for a first team position



HULL—Left to Right, Back Row—R. Francis, H. Markham, M. Scott, S. Cowan, W. Drake, C. Sykes, C. Turner, G. Dannatt, C. Cole, J. Drake
Front Row—C. Hutton, T. Finn, J. Whiteley, R. Moat, I. Watts
(Photograph by courtesy of the Hull Daily Mail)

THE TEAMS

HULL

Colours—Black and White Jerseys, White Shorts

1	C. HUTTON	...	...	...	Full Back
2	S. COWAN	...	...	...	Wing Threequarter
3	G. DANNATT	....	...	...	Centre Threequarter
4	C. TURNER	...	...	...	Centre Threequarter
5	I. WATTS	...	...	...	Wing Threequarter
6	R. MOAT	...	...	...	Out-half
7	T. FINN	...	...	...	Scrum-half
8	M. SCOTT	...	...	...	Prop Forward
9	P. T. HARRIS	...	...	...	Hooker
10	J. DRAKE	...	...	...	Front Row Forward
11	C. SYKES	...	...	...	Second Row Forward
12	W. D. DRAKE	...	...	...	Second Row Forward
13	J. W. WHITELEY	...	...	...	Loose Forward

Reserves—C. COLE K. BOWMAN B. COULMAN

Referee—M. COATES, Pudsey

OLDHAM

Colours—Red and White Jerseys, Blue Shorts

1	W. B. GANLEY	...	...	...	Full Back
2	R. CRACKNELL	...	...	...	Wing Threequarter
3	A. DAVIES	...	...	...	Centre Threequarter
4	D. M. AYRES	...	...	...	Centre Threequarter
5	J. W. ETTY	...	...	...	Wing Threequarter
6	F. DALEY	...	...	...	Out-half
7	F. PITCHFORD	...	...	...	Scrum-half
8	K. JACKSON	...	...	...	Prop Forward
9	J. KEITH	....	....	...	Hooker
10	D. G. VINES	...	...	...	Front Row Forward
11	C. WINSLADE	...	...	...	Second Row Forward
12	S. D. LITTLE	...	...	...	Second Row Forward
13	D. TURNER	....	....	...	Loose Forward

Reserves—V. NESTOR F. STIRRUP A. JARMAN

Touch Judges—V. Waddilove, Leigh and T. Marley, Wakefield

On all grounds . . . *Player's* please



PEN PICTURES—OLDHAM

W. B. Ganley 5ft. 8in. 12st. 6lb. Age 26. Lancashire County, one of the leading goal kickers. Has kicked 191 goals this season. Ex-Manchester University and an accountant

R. Cracknell 5ft. 10in. 13st. Age 27. England, Yorkshire and Great Britain, formerly with Huddersfield. Transferred to Oldham 1954, a versatile player who can turn out on either wing. Has scored 28 tries this season

A. Davies 5ft. 11in. 13st. 11lb. Age 23. Born in Leigh. Great Britain, Lancashire and England. A forthcoming World Cup tourist. Has scored 17 tries this season

D. M. Ayres 5ft. 9in. 12st. Age 22. A local boy who is improving with every match, came from the local R.U. club. Scored 26 tries this season

J. W. Eddy 12st. 12lb. 6ft. Age 28. Transferred from Batley (his birthplace) in season 1955. Had trials with Dewsbury before signing for Batley. Yorkshire County and British Empire teams in 1951. Has scored 41 tries this season

F. Daley 5ft. 9in. 12st. 4lb. Age 29. Started his rugby career in Wigan, his home town, and played for Leigh before coming to Oldham. Has played for Lancashire

F. Pitchford 5ft. 7in. 11st. 7lb. Age 21. Born in Leigh. Frank played in school and junior football and joined Oldham in 1952-53 season. Has played for England and Lancashire. Scored 20 tries this season

K. Jackson 6ft. 14st. 10lb. A local player and has played for Lancashire County. Played for St. Mary's, the local junior team, before joining Oldham. Played R.U. in the Services

J. Keith 5ft. 11in. 12st. 6lb. Age 29. Started playing for Hunslet Schools in Leeds, his birthplace. Played for England and Yorkshire as a schoolboy. 14 tries this season

D. G. Vines 5ft. 9½in. 14st. 8lb. Age 24. A Welshman from Newbridge, in his second season with the club and has settled down to the League, plenty of energy

C. Winslade 6ft. 1in. 15st. 6lb. Age 24. Born in Maesteg, Glamorgan. Welsh Schoolboy International and Glamorgan County. Joined Oldham in 1950 and has played in several International matches for Wales since

S. D. Little 6ft. 14st. 6lb. Age 24. Born Burgh-by-Sands, near Carlisle. Played for Harlequins and Cumberland and R.A.F. in R.U. before becoming a League player. Test and County player, and selected for the forthcoming World Cup team

D. Turner 5ft. 10½in. 13st. 7lb. Age 23. Born in Ossett, transferred from Hull Kingston Rovers to his present club. Test and Yorkshire County, and chosen for the forthcoming World Cup team

V. Nestor 5ft. 10in. 11st. 10lb. Age 19. Up and coming wing and centre. Signed from Tyldesley R.U. A player of the future

F. Stirrup 5ft. 9in. 10st. 7lb. Age 29. Started playing in his home town of Leigh and turned out for the senior club, from there to Salford and eventually arrived at Oldham. Formerly a scrum-half but plays anywhere

A. Jarman 5ft. 11in. 13st. 12lb. Age 23. A native of Rochdale but signed from an Oldham junior club, Higginshaw. Plays anywhere in the pack with the exception of hooker



OLDHAM—Left to Right, Back Row—Vines, Jackson, Turner, Winslade, Little, Jarman, Davies
Middle Row—Cracknell, Ayres, Nestor, Stirrup, Eddy, Keith, Ganley
Kneeling—Pitchford, Daley
(Photograph by courtesy of the Oldham Chronicle)

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Reading from left to right and starting with the front row the party is as follows—
G. Moses, R. Price, J. Stevenson, W. Fallowfield, A. Prescott, H. E. Rawson, M. Sullivan,
A. Rhodes, T. Harris, B. L. Jones, E. Ashton, G. Gunney, P. Jackson, J. Whiteley, S. Little,
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