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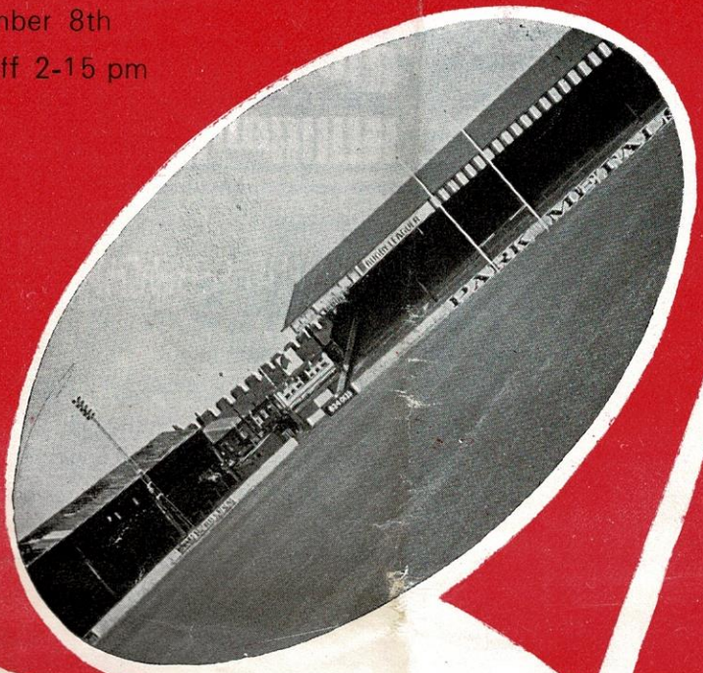

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BRIAN BATTY of the DAILY MAIL

The temptation for English Rugby League players to emigrate to Australia has never been greater that at present.

The decline of the game in this country coupled with the country's power and financial problems have helped to make this the winter of our discontent.

To be brutally honest the prospect is grim for all those involved in League and it is little consolation to learn that Soccer is facing a crisis.

At least the Soccer world is unlikely to be stripped of its stars even though Australia has reached the World Cup finals in Munich and now has more to offer than the sun and surfers' Paradise.

The cash rewards in this country are still much greater for the Soccer player than Down Under but unfortunately that situation does not apply in Rugby League.

For a long time that gap has been widening, and there is no sign of a change even though attendances have dipped slightly for some Sydney clubs.

There has been a ceiling placed on signing-on fees, limiting players to 2,000 dollars a season but it seems that most Sydney clubs are now finding loopholes.

That is why the exact fees are not being revealed by British players but there is plenty of talk of big houses with swimming pools and other extras.

It seems highly likely that the ceiling will be lifted for it has led to several Sydney stars moving North to Brisbane to collect sky-high contracts.

Australian Test star John Sattler started the trek to Queensland 12 months ago and South Sydney have never really overcome the loss to their pack.

Among the most recent to move to Brisbane was former Great Britain scrum half Tommy Bishop, who will collect £27,000 for three seasons at swansong of his career.

Bishop guided go-ahead Cronulla to their first Grand Final appearance but the club failed to hold him and Cliff Watson, his former British team-mate, who has moved to Wollongong for another lucrative deal.

The outcome of these moves and others is that Manly and Cronulla have headed a renewed bid to strip our game of leading players.

Unfortunately the traffic is only one way for the Australian players who come over here during their close season are generally of a poor standard.

It seems that unless the English League quickly takes some action we are going to have little left to offer the fans in this country and the result will once again be reflected in the attendances.

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Appearances & Scorers

	Appearances	*Tries*	*Goals*
Kevin Taylor	18		
Tony Wainwright	17	8	1
Chris O'Brien	17	5	
Fred Hall	16	1	
Geoff Munro	16	5	
Martin Murphy	15	2	
Mike Elliott	15	2	
Terry Clawson	13	1	26
Johnny Blair	13	2	10
Keith Ashcroft	11		
Arthur Daley	11	1	
Tommy Davies	10	1	
Jim Reynolds	9		
Johnny Farrell	8	1	
Phil Larder	7		4
Neil Goodwin	7		
Tony Peters	7	2	
Bob Gaitley	7	1	
Terry Gorman	6		
Bill McCracken	5	1	
Brian Hughes	5		
Tug Wilson	4		
Peter Astbury	4	1	
Andy Kavanagh	3		
Steve Whitmore	3		
Bob Irving	2		
Stuart Bottom	2		
Mick McCone	2	2	
David Treasure	1		
Brian Gregory	1		
Ian Ratcliffe	1		
Jim Brady	1		
Gareth Owen	1		
Syd Highton	1		
Norman Hodgkinson	1		

On the Inside with DAVE PARKER

Last Saturday's third and final Test at Wilderspool was shown live in Ireland. They have seen clips before of our finals at Wembley, but never actually seen a match live. The match also went by satellite to Australia, where it was 1.15 a.m. in the early hours of Sunday morning. 200 Aussies flew into Heathrow last Thursday and apparently brought a Sydney brewery with them for their celebrations. Still with the victory, and being "high" on their cans of ale, they did not feel the extreme cold apparently.

Rochdale Hornets prop forward Peter Birchall has asked for a free transfer after not being able to regain his first team place after injury. Birchall, who is 32, reckons he still has three years football left in him.

Brian Taylor, the Dewsbury prop forward, who Hull K. R. would like to take onto their staff as cover for John Millington and Paul Rose, is also in for a move after being in and out of the first team. He has just completed a benefit with winger Kevin Osborne, and feels the club have virtually put him on the scrap heap at 30.

Dewsbury's players got a treat all for nothing last weekend. They were taken to the third Test and afterwards driven to Blackpool where they were staying overnight before moving back inland to Wigan for a Division One match. However, the Wigan ground was unfit, and so it became a holiday.

Dewsbury agreed with Huddersfield to pay £1,250 for former Warrington and Oldham winger or back row forward Ray Clark, but they could not agree terms with the player. Keighley are now interested in Clark.

After saying he had retired, Leigh hooker and former captain, Derek Clarke, has resumed training after a meeting with the directors, who this past week have dealt with transfer requests from Paul Kelly, who was makeweight in the Dave Eckersley move to St. Helens, and centre Mick Stacey, who until things are sorted out has refused to train.

In the meantime Leigh have taken Rochdale's balding second rower Kevin Flannagan on a month's trial. Flannagan has in the past few months had to refuse moves to Huddersfield and Keighley owing to lack of transport.

Blackpool Borough have rejected two meagre offers in the past week or so for their Lancashire Constabulary centre or stand-off half Doug Robinson.

Former Oldham and Widnes county forward Dick Bonser is coaching Rochdale's leading team, Mayfield, who also have in their ranks former Rochdale players Brian Kettleton (prop) and Syd Miller, stand-off half.

Alan Whittle, who went into dispute with Barrow shortly after moving to them from St. Helens, mainly over training and travelling, only to resume under special terms this season, and when dropped last month by Frank Foster refused to play for the "A" team, is not likely to move across to Bradford, who would like him. He is more likely to plump for the shorter journey to Warrington, another interested party.

Bradford are trying desperately to unload their fullback Eddie Tees on any Lancashire club. They have offered him to Barrow and Whitehaven, because he may move back to his adopted town, which became his home when he moved up there from Shropshire.

Whitehaven went after Bradford Northern's utility back Stuart Carlton, but although Carlton is listed at £1,000, the Odsal board thought at the moment they had no cover for their young fullback Keith Mumby. The Cumbrian club have also been onto Warrington for Mick Philbin, but after agreeing a fee the player refused to move although he was allowed to travel up only for matches.

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Rugby Quiz

1. Which member of last Saturday's Australian test team has not scored a try during the tour?
2. Which season did St. Helens not lose an away league match?
3. What year did St. Helens change from a club to a limited company?
4. The 1973 Australians lost only 2 of their 16 matches. Which touring team won all their matches in Britain?
5. What is the Saints record for consecutive league victories?

ANSWERS — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

1. Winger Lionel Williamson.
2. 1952-53, when Saints won 17 and drew one of their away league matches.
3. 1938.
4. The 1939 New Zealand team won both the two matches played in England before returning home because of the outbreak of war.
5. In 1964-65, St. Helens won 22 consecutive league matches.

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2—MUNRO G.
3—LARDER P.
4—WAINWRIGHT A. 2 goals
5—O'BRIEN J.
6—TREASURE D. try goal
7—McCONE M.
8—ASHCROFT K.
9—TAYLOR K.
10—HALL F.
11—GREGORY B.
12—McCRACKEN W. try
13—PETERS A.

14—ELLIOTT M.
15—HUGHES B.

ST. HELENS 11
White jerseys Red V
White Shorts

1—PIMBLETT G.
2—JONES L.
3—BENYON W.
4—WILSON F.
5—MATHIAS R.
6—ECKERSLEY D. try
7—GWILLIAM A.
8—WARLOW J.
9—KARALIUS T.
10—GOULDING B.
11—MANTLE J.
12—~~STEVENS J.~~ or LIPTROT G.
13—COSLETT K. 4 goals
14—WILLS J.
15—BIRCHALL P.

Referee:
R. WOOD (Dalton in Furness)

Touch Judges
P. M. Oliver (Bolton) Red
T. Clayton (Widnes) Orange

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OUR VISITORS

The St. Helens playing register contains probably the most powerful and most experienced list of players in the entire league but unfortunately in recent weeks the Saints have suffered an alarming crop of injuries and their line-up this afternoon is not certain. What is certain, is that whichever fifteen players represent St. Helens they are sure to give Oldham a difficult game.

Full-back Geoff Pimblett played four times for Lancashire at rugby union before he turned professional from St. Helens R.U.F.C. in January, 1971. He made his debut the following March against Featherstone Rovers and two months later he was a member of the Saints team which defeated Wigan in the Championship Final. In season 1971-72 he played in a further three cup finals with Saints and so is now an experienced campaigner. He is also a useful goalkicker and earlier this season he landed 9 goals in the 30-9 defeat of Wakefield Trinity. On the wings Saints have two very dangerous attackers in Les Jones and Roy Mathias. Jones joined Saints from the Parr junior club in February, 1967 and apart from appearing in seven cup finals with St. Helens he has played three times for Lancashire and two years ago he played in a test match against New Zealand. In season 1970-71 he scored 37 tries including four tries in a Lancashire cup-tie at Huyton and another four in the 30 points to 9 defeat of Leeds. Twenty-three years old Roy Mathias joined Saints the summer before last from Llanelli R.U.F.C. and scored a try on his debut against Warrington. This season he has been scoring regularly and his total of tries for this season already stands at 16. The St. Helen's reserve winger is 21 years old Frank Taylor, a former England amateur, who signed professionally for St. Helens in April, 1971 after working his way through the St. Helens 'B' team. Last season he was the scorer of 4 tries when St. Helens beat Barrow 33-2. In the centre Saints have a most reliable and hard working player in Bill Benyon who has just recently taken a benefit with his home town club. Benyon's record at St. Helens is second to none. After captaining both the St. Helens and Lancashire schoolboy sides, Benyon signed for Saints in March, 1961 and he made his debut against Rochdale Hornets twelve months later. That was Benyon's only appearance of the 1961-62 season but before the start of the present campaign he had played well over 350 games and scored 100 tries plus a goal. His best seasons were in 1969-70 and 1970-71 when he scored 22 tries in each season. Representative honours have also fallen thick and fast for Benyon who has played 11 times for Lancashire, twice for England and seven times for Great Britain. This season he has twice represented Lancashire and on each occasion he has scored a try but he was overlooked for the Test matches. In the other centre position will be Frank Wilson who joined St. Helens from Cardiff R.U.F.C. in August, 1968. A couple of months after turning professional Wilson scored two tries in the Lancashire Cup Final against Oldham when he played out on the wing. This season he is playing in the centre with equal success for he has scored 16 tries to date. Wilson has played five times for Wales and he has also played in the usual quota of cup finals for Saints. Last season, in the 47-6 league win at Huyton, he crossed for four tries. In the event of injury, St. Helens have a most capable three quarter reserve in the shape of John Wills, a former junior player with the highly successful Pilkington Recreation team. Another former junior star is David Eckersley who joined his home town Leigh from the Leigh Colts team. Eckersley played an important part in Leigh's highly successful 1970-71 season when he scored the last minute match winning try in the Lancashire Cup Final (against St. Helens !) and followed this up by scoring a try and goal at Wembley in the defeat of Leeds. That season Eckersley won his first representative honour when he was substitute for Lancashire against Yorkshire. The following season he made two further Lancashire County appearances before starting a long drawn out argument with Leigh which resulted in his transfer to St. Helens in September, 1972. It cost St. Helens £12,000 for Eckersley but it seemed money well spent when he skipped over for two tries in his debut in the 33-12 defeat of Swinton. This season Eckersley has played in both Lancashire's County Championship fixtures and then, after being substitute in the first two Tests, he took over Great Britain's stand-off role in last Saturday's vital clash against Australia which unfortunately resulted in the loss of the Ashes. Up to recently Jeff Heaton had been working the scrums for St. Helens but Heaton now has a rival for the position in the

talented Alan Gwilliam. As a schoolboy, Heaton represented both St. Helens and Lancashire and it came as no surprise when he joined the Saints. Because Saints had both Alec Murphy and Alan Bishop on their books, Heaton moved down to Huyton but in August, 1969 he returned to Knowsley Road and was a regular first team player up to a few months ago. A player expected to return to first team duties this afternoon after a lengthy injury is international hooker Tony Karalius. In 1962 Karalius was signed by Widnes but it wasn't until his transfer to St. Helens in January, 1967 that he began to hit the headlines. Karalius is an extremely mobile player in the loose as well as a sharp striker. All his representative honours fell in seasons 1971-72 and 1972-73 in which time he played four times for Lancashire and seven times for Great Britain including being a member of last season's World Cup winning squad. One player who is not likely to be playing this afternoon is Mel James who seems unlikely to have recovered from a leg injury. After representing Glamorgan 12 times and also the Welsh 'B' XV, James turned professional in October, 1972 from Swansea R.U.F.C. James's first rugby league match was for St. Helens 'A' against Oldham 'A' when Saints won 19-3 and James scored 3 tries. He was signed during the half-time interval of that match. Another former rugby union prop forward is Mick Murphy whose first professional club was Leigh who signed him from Waterloo R.U.F.C. From Leigh Murphy moved on to Barrow and whilst on Furnaceside he twice represented Lancashire. Saints paid £2,500 when he moved back from Cumbria in September, 1972. John Stephens was born in Widnes and had a distinguished schoolboy rugby union career when he played for both Liverpool and Lancashire. In September, 1962 Wigan signed him and he enjoyed eight seasons at Central Park when he played four times for Lancashire, once for the England U24 side, four times for the full England side and twice for Britain. At Christmas, 1970 he moved to St. Helens for £4,000 and the following May he had the satisfaction of playing against Wigan in the Championship Final. He played twice for Lancashire last season. Assisting Saints in their recent injury crisis has been John Warlow, the former Welsh rugby union international, who turned professional with St. Helens from Llanelli in October, 1963. Whilst with Saints, Warlow gained both Welsh and Great Britain honours including a trip to Australia for the 1968 World Cup but in 1969 he moved to Widnes for £4,000. Warlow's international career continued at Widnes and his last British appearance was against New Zealand in 1971. Last month he announced his retirement from the game but a couple of weeks ago he answered Sain's S.O.S. and is back enjoying his rugby once again. Eric Chisnall joined St. Helens from Pilkington Recreation in December, 1966 and quickly established himself as a hard running back-row forward. He has played four times for Lancashire and he was also a try scorer against Oldham in the 1968 Lancashire Cup Final. St. Helens also have two players who have played in the second row of Britain's Tes's this season. One of them, John Mantle, has enjoyed a most illustrious career which began in January, 1965 when St. Helens signed him from Newport R.U.F.C. Previously, Mantle had played 8 times for Wales at rugby union including the tour of South Africa in 1964. In 1966, Mantle was on tour again, this time to Australasia with the Great Britain rugby league party. He has played three times for Wales and ironically this season's second Test against Australia was Mantle's thirteenth Test and it could possibly be his last, but at 31 years old and with 12 cup final appearances behind him Saints cannot grumble at the service already given and I suspect that Mantle will be thereabouts for a few more seasons yet. George Nichols joined his home town Widnes from Derby Arms juniors in 1965 and he is a hard working player who so far has eight Lancashire caps. Nichols' first Great Britain appearance was in the third Test against New Zealand in 1971 and so well did he play that he was retained for the French Tests and then assisted Britain to capture the World Cup in 1972 when he played in all four matches. Last Saturday's Test was his eleventh match for Great Britain. He moved from Widnes to St. Helens last January for £9,000. The St. Helens skipper and loose-forward is Kel Coslett, another former Welsh rugby union player, who joined St. Helens from Aberavon R.U.F.C. in July, 1962. Despite Coslett's consistency, the only representative honours that have come his way have been 5 appearances for Wales. However, Coslett's goal kicking will see that he is not forgotten. In the 1968 Lancashire Cup Final he kicked 6 goals against Oldham and in 1970 he landed 12 goals in the thrashing of Bradford Northern. In 1971-72 he was awarded the Lance Todd Trophy for his excellent display in the defeat of Leeds at Wembley and that same season he created a club record with his 211 successful shots at goal.

Oldham will have to be careful not to give away too many penalties today but judging by the Saints line-up there will be 15 dangermen in opposition this afternoon.

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FIRST TEAM FIXTURES

1973

Aug. 18—Leeds ..... A
25—Dewsbury ..... H
Sept. 1—Wigan. Lancs. Cup ... H
8—Bramley ..... H
15—Player's Competition
22—Wakefield ..... A
26—Castleford ..... H
29—Wigan ..... A
Oct. 6—Whitehaven ..... H
14—Dewsbury ..... A
19—AUSTRALIA ..... H
27—Featherstone ..... H
Nov. 2—St. Helens ..... A
11—Widnes ..... H
25—Wigan ..... H
Dec. 1—Featherstone ..... A
8—St. Helens ..... H
16—Warrington ..... A
23—Leigh ..... H
26—Rochdale H. ..... H
30—Whitehaven ..... A

1974

Jan. 1—Salford ..... A
6—Hull K.R. ..... H
13—Leigh ..... A
20—Warrington ..... H
Feb. 2—Challenge Cup (1)
10—Bramley ..... A
16—Wakefield ..... H
23—Challenge Cup (2)
Mar. 2—Leeds ..... H
9—Challenge Cup (3)
17—Widnes ..... A
23—Chal. Cup (Semi-final)
31—Hull K.R. ..... A
Apr. 7—Castleford ..... A
13—Salford ..... H
15—Rochdale H. ..... A

"A" TEAM FIXTURES

1973

Aug. 11—Rochdale ..... H
18—Barrow ..... H
25—Workington ..... A
29—Rochdale
(1st leg Shield) ... H
Sept. 8—Rochdale
(2nd leg Shield) ... A
22—Barrow ..... A
29—Wigan ..... H
Oct. 13—Swinton ..... H
20—Swinton ..... A
27—Workington ..... A
Nov. 3—St. Helens ..... H
9—Widnes ..... A
17—Huyton ..... A
24—Wigan ..... A
Dec. 1—Barrow ..... H
7—St. Helens ..... A
16—Warrington ..... H
22—Leigh ..... A
Jan. 4—Salford ..... A
12—Workington ..... H
18—Warrington ..... A
23—Salford ..... H
26—Swinton ..... H
Feb. 9—Huyton ..... A
23—Huyton ..... H
Mar. 2—Barrow ..... A
9—Huyton ..... H
13—Leigh ..... H
16—Widnes ..... H
23—Rochdale ..... A
29—Swinton ..... A
Apr. 6—Workington ..... H

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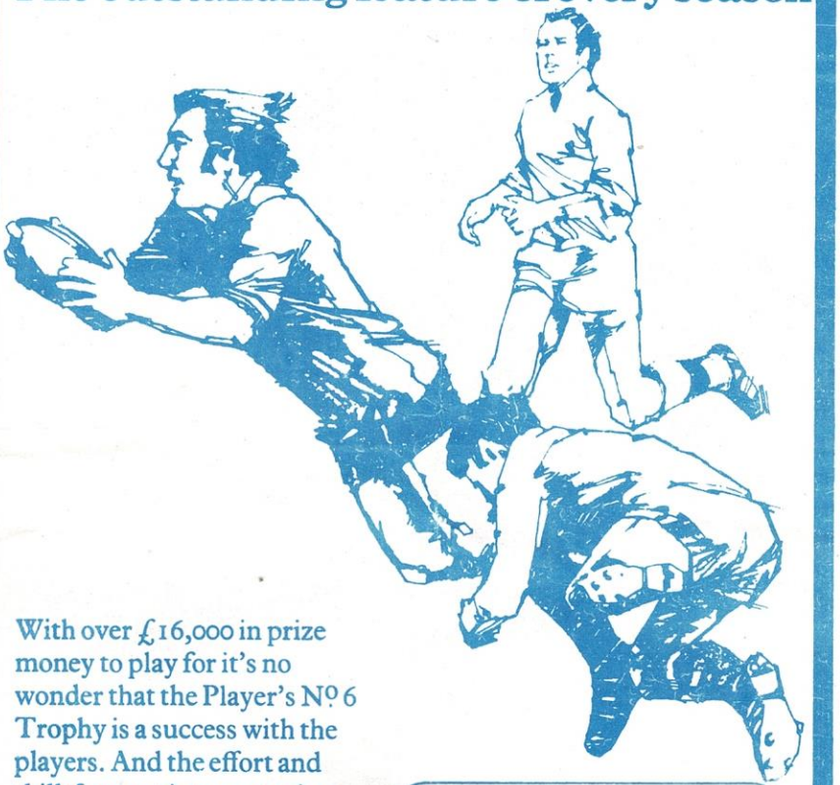

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