

Official Programme

PRICE 1d.



SATURDAY

MAY 18th. 1946

**RUGBY LEAGUE
CHAMPIONSHIP
FINAL**

WIGAN V. HUDDERSFIELD

**ON THE GROUND OF THE
MANCHESTER CITY F.C.
MAINE ROAD MANCHESTER**

FITTING FINALE TO RUGBY LEAGUE'S VICTORY AND JUBILEE SEASON

BY "OBSERVER" OF "THE DAILY DISPATCH"

NO more fitting finale to the Rugby League's Victory and Jubilee season could have been wished for than the meeting of the two clubs on view to-day.

For a consistently high standard of the best type of Rugby, Huddersfield and Wigan possess records probably unequalled by any other two clubs.

Not even two world wars and the passing of a generation or two have undermined the traditions of these organisations. So the stage is set for what should be a thrilling game this afternoon.

This "play off" method of deciding the League Championship is open to criticism from many angles, but that it has become a real "money-spinner" to the clubs and the League is evidenced by the fact that two semi-finals last Saturday "pulled in" aggregate crowds of 67,573 and £6,418.

Assuming the weather conditions are good to-day, expectations are that the 69,504 attendance on this ground on May 13, 1939, when Salford defeated Castleford by 8 points to 6, will be surpassed. Almost certainly the receipts of £4,301 will be exceeded.

May Be World Record

INDEED, the world's record attendance for a Rugby League match, established in Australia on the Sydney Cricket ground in June, 1932, of 70,204 (£5,739 15s. 3½d.; I wonder how they got that halfpenny), may be beaten. In any case a big crowd is assured, and the game should be worthy of the occasion.

Wigan headed the League table with 60 points out of a possible 72, and Huddersfield finished second with 55 points. Wigan can be acclaimed the most consistent side of the season, for this is the third final they have contested.

In the last stage of the Lancashire Cup at Warrington last October they succumbed by a narrow margin to one of McCue's "master moves," and their dramatic last minute defeat at

Wembley in the Challenge Cup final a fortnight ago is fresh in the memory.

Up to now the only tangible reward they have received for their brilliant consistency is the championship cup of the Lancashire League, in which they gained 44 points out of a possible 48. Wigan, beyond any question, have paid dearly for the sacrifice involved by sending the touring team to Australia.

Wigan have contributed to that team four players who obviously cannot be replaced. On the other hand, Wakefield Trinity, their conquerors at Wembley, have only one tourist, and that also applies to Huddersfield. That is no fault of these clubs. They would just as readily have released any of their players chosen for the "greater glory" as Wigan have done.

This "country before club" spirit of Rugby League clubs is something to be proud of, and is an answer to those who think the sporting element has been submerged by financial and selfish motives.

Not Met This Season

THE strongest argument in favour of this "Play Off" system is probably that under existing conditions all teams cannot meet each other in ordinary League fixtures. For example, in the season which concludes to-day Lancashire clubs have played only six Yorkshire opponents and Wigan and Huddersfield have not previously met this season.

Huddersfield have had a much easier late-season programme than Wigan because of their early dismissal from the Challenge Cup by the ultimate winners, and they have revealed their power by winning nine of their last 10 matches.

The improvement can be traced largely to the return of several of their players from the Forces. The problem of the committee now is "whom to leave out." Leake is a promising young full-back from the Featherstone district. Anderson is the Scottish winger signed in January after he had helped his country to defeat the Kiwis, and Russell Pepperell is one of three Cumberland brothers to have worn the Huddersfield colours and I believe is a nephew of that great forward and world-famed wrestler Douglas Clark.

Alec Fiddes, the captain and right centre, has rendered brilliant service to the club for more than a dozen years. He came from the Scottish border town of Hawick and was joined at Fartown this season by Anderson and loose-forward Robson, a farmer. Fiddes is not only a great schemer but a splendid leader, as well as a scorer of tries and goals.

SIMILAR remarks apply to W. T. Davies, left centre or full-back, who joined Huddersfield after a big reputation in Wales, and has enhanced it here. Ken Winkworth, I believe, is a product of Manchester junior Rugby and a youngster well thought of.

Broke Club Record

A good many will be interested in left-wing three-quarter, Jeff Bawden, whose scoring feats around Eastertide hit the newspaper headlines. In one match he scored 10 goals and five tries (35pts.), a Huddersfield club record for one match. He hails from Whitehaven, Cumberland.

Tommy Grahame, out half, is an Australian recently demobbed from the Royal Navy, and he and Glyn Morgan have struck a happy partnership in the vital key department. Burrow is a versatile Cumbrian, who has played full-back for his county this season.

Interesting personality of the forwards is Joe Bradbury, the Wigan-born front-row man, who was in the Salford side which beat Castleford here in the

1939 final. Robson is by many considered unlucky to have missed the tour, and Alec Givvons joined Huddersfield after service with Oldham.

WIGAN are much the younger set. They expect to field the team defeated at Wembley, which comprises nine locally born, one Welshman, Edd Watkins, the captain, one Yorkshire man, George Banks, one Cumbrian Lowrey, and a New Zealander, Nordgren.

Watkins was a Cardiff and Welsh international before coming North and gained a lot of honours during his war service with the R.A.F. Banks is the oldest man in the team—37—but he can last out the game with many younger. Nordgren has only been in England under two months. He is credited with exceptional pace, and Wigan will wish him better luck in goal-kicking than at Wembley.

Wigan's three-quarters are all young, speedy, and enthusiastic, and in scrum-half Tommy Bradshaw have a vastly improved player who may exert a big influence on the game. The two Blans are brothers, and "J." has the responsible job of "hooker" in the absence of the tourist, Egan. So with Cunliffe, who has been called upon to deputise for the League's No. 1 full-back, Martin Ryan, Wigan have made the best of their difficulties, and can be relied upon for a bold bid to-day.

Tailpiece: Salford lost the Challenge Cup final at Wembley in 1939 before winning the League Championship. Will history be repeated?

SOME RECORDS BY THE CLUBS

Huddersfield

WON Rugby League Championship five times (runners-up four times). In 1914-15 won all four cups and narrowly failed to repeat it in 1920 when, with five players on tour, they lost League championship to Hull by 3 points to 2. Won Rugby League Challenge Cup five

times, Yorkshire Cup nine times, and Yorkshire League eight times. Scored 119 points against Swinton Park in 1914. Their winger, Rosenfeld, scored 80 tries in season 1913-14. In 1914-15 Huddersfield played 47 matches and scored 1,269 points (207 goals, 285 tries).

Wigan

WON Rugby League Championship four times (runners-up three times). Won Rugby League Challenge Cup twice (runners-up three times), Lancashire Cup seven times (runners-up 10 times), Lancashire League (11 times (runners-up six times).

Highest score 116 points against Flimby and Fothergill in 1925. Full-back and captain kicked 200 goals in 1933-34 season and over 100 goals every season between 1921-22 and 1938-39.

THE SCORING

A Try counts 3 points

All Goals count 2 points

WIGAN 13/18

Cherry and White Jerseys, White Pants,

1

J. CUNLIFFE

Full Back

2

B. NORDGREN

Right Wing Three-Quarter

3

G. RATCLIFFE

Right Centre

4

E. ASHCROFT

Left Centre

5

G. JOLLEY

Left Wing Three-Quarter

6

R. D. LOWREY

Outside Half



E. WATKINS

7

T. BRADSHAW

Scrum Half

8

G. BANKS

Front Row Forward

9

J. BLAN

Hooker

10

F. BARTON

Front Row Forward

11

E. WATKINS (Capt.)

Second Row Forward

12

H. ATKINSON

Second Row Forward

13

W. BLAN

Loose Forward

Referee :

A. S. DOBSON (Featherstone)

Kick-off 3-30 p.m.

Touch Judges :

R. STEAD (Leeds) and

A. FORD (Warrington)

14

R. S. ROBSON or ~~A. GIVVONS~~

Loose Forward

12

L. BAXTER

Second Row Forward

11

J. ASPINALL

Second Row Forward

10

J. BRADBURY

Front Row Forward

9

H. WHITEHEAD

Hooker

8

K. MALLINSON

Front Row Forward

7

W. G. MORGAN

Scrum Half



A. E. FIDDES

6

~~J. BURROW~~

or **T. L. GRAHAME**

Outside Half

5

J. BAWDEN

Left Wing Three-Quarter

4

W. T. DAVIES

or ~~K. WINKWORTH~~

Left Centre

3

A. E. FIDDES (Capt.)

Right Centre

2

J. ANDERSON or

~~G. R. PEPPERELL~~

Right Wing Three-Quarter

1

W. LEAKE

Full Back

HUDDERSFIELD 4/18

Claret and Gold Jerseys, White Pants.