

WARRINGTON



R.U.F.C.

Welcome to Rochdale

This is only the second time we have played Rochdale in many years, as they have played in North 1 East for the past few seasons, with some success. They have consistently finished mid-table or above and have won the Lancashire Trophy five times since 2000.

It was no surprise then that the match in October was a very close run thing, as we managed to hold out for the win but Rochdale claimed a loser's bonus point with the final score at 23-17, with tries from Nathan Beesley, Kieran Hughes and Jamie Thompson.

Rochdale is a long established club, going back to 1867 but the present club only took off in 1921, following a meeting of a small band of enthusiasts in Smith's Café, Townhead. It has nurtured many successful teams and players, notably fly half Steven Collins, who played for the Lancashire County XV in 2010, before moving onto Fylde. Today it runs four senior sides, as well as a thriving Mini and Junior section. The Rochdale Mini's end of season tournament is the largest of its kind in Lancashire and Rochdale has been the venue for the Finals of Lancashire Schools, Lancashire Colts and Lancashire Juniors competitions.

However, Rochdale is famous for more than its successful Rugby club. It was the birthplace of the Co-operative Movement, with the establishment of the Rochdale Pioneers Society in 1844, which introduced the revolutionary concept of "divi", a share, or dividend, of the profits according to purchases. (When I was a lad, my mother bought all my new suits with her Co-op divi). The Co-op was an important part of many of our lives, especially in the North and it is a shame to see that the old Co-op in Stockton Heath is now a Marks & Spencers food outlet.

The other notable product of Rochdale was the singer and actress, Gracie Fields, "Our Gracie". Gracie had her heyday in the 1930s/40s, when she produced such memorable hits as "Sally", "Walter, Walter, Take Me to the Altar" and the never-to-be-forgotten, "The Biggest Aspidistra in the World". Now, they don't write songs like that any more.

But back to the present. Let's hope for a good game today and a great Saturday afternoon.

Apologies

I must apologise for the absence of any programmes for the Leigh game. Unfortunately, I was unavoidably detained in Northern Cyprus for medical reasons and was unable to access my computer and printer. Normal service has now been resumed!

North 1 West League Table

#	Team	Pd	W	D	L	Diff	Pts	Adj
1.	Kirkby Lonsdale	15	13	1	1	177	62	8
2.	Kendal	14	13	0	1	200	61	9
3.	Warrington	15	11	2	2	167	57	9
4.	Wilmslow	15	11	0	4	238	56	12
5.	Penrith	14	8	0	6	50	39	7
6.	Altrincham Kersal	14	7	1	6	34	36	6
7.	Rochdale	14	7	0	7	-16	32	4
8.	Eccles	15	6	0	9	-121	31	7
9.	Vale of Lune	13	6	0	7	-3	30	6
10.	Blackburn	13	5	1	7	-99	23	1
11.	Carlisle	13	2	2	9	-100	19	7
12.	Broughton Park	15	3	1	11	-139	16	2
13.	Widnes	14	2	0	12	-209	10	2
14.	Leigh	14	1	0	13	-179	10	6

Standish Media Services Division 1

	Team	Pd	W	D	L	Diff	Pts	Adj
1.	Wilmslow 2	13	12	0	1	250	49	0
2.	Preston Grasshoppers 3	13	10	0	3	320	43	0
3.	Crewe & Nantwich 2	13	10	0	3	110	43	0
4.	Warrington 2	13	8	1	4	-24	38	0
5.	Burnage 2	15	7	0	8	-122	36	0
6.	Wirral 2	13	7	0	6	155	34	0
7.	Rossendale 2	13	6	1	6	41	32	0
8.	Broughton Park 2	14	6	0	8	-7	32	0
9.	Altrincham Kersal 2	14	5	0	9	-180	29	0
10.	Blackburn 2	11	5	0	6	-34	26	0
11.	Macclesfield 3	14	4	0	9	-6	25	0
12.	Liverpool Collegiate 2	13	3	0	10	-117	25	3
13.	Bolton 2	13	4	0	9	-220	25	0
14.	Leigh 2	12	4	0	7	-166	15	-8

Picture Post



A Perfect Zak Off-load



Luke Johnstone Prepares for Take-off



Play it, Sam



Is this a truck-and-trailer???

Sponsorships still available

We are still actively seeking sponsorships, for matches and players. We are also offering opportunities to advertise in the programme and on the new advertising boards around the first team pitch. If you are interested, please contact Sean Hughes or Richard Woodward.

Punchlines

Flying the Flag

It would seem that the members of Warrington RUFC fly the flag both on and off the field. One Saturday before Christmas, a few stalwarts decided to have a night out in Manchester, where they visited a number of city watering holes. Unfortunately, when they stumbled into one pub, they bumped into a group of men who they immediately recognized as being members of De La Salle RUFC. Now, as you will know, De La Salle is not our favourite club and, inevitably, words were soon being exchanged between the two groups. Despite the diplomatic activity of mild-mannered Tom Wood and our resident pacifist, Matt Connelly, things eventually developed. Needless to say, our two reluctant peace-makers were very much to the fore and the result was yet another win for the Wire!



But Where's the Sponsor?

We are always looking for people to sponsor games and were grateful to Steve Riley for stepping in to sponsor the Altrincham-Kersal game. It seems that Steve's guests had an enjoyable afternoon but the question on everyone's lips was, "Where is Steve?" Well, it can be revealed that Steve himself was skiing in France! Evidently, he mentioned the sponsorship to his wife in a telephone call on the Friday night and Mandy managed to gather together some friends to enjoy Steve's absent hospitality. No doubt, there will be yet another photograph on Mr Riley's Facebook page!

When's the Serrano and Sherry Party?

In the weeks before Christmas it seemed that every supermarket was selling presentation packs of Serrano ham, complete with stand and knife. Many of you probably bought one. We did. Unfortunately, there is only so much Serrano ham you can eat. It must be cut very thinly and even if you remove two microns a day, you still have a lot left in January. So why don't we have a Serrano and sherry party? There must be lots of people out there with half a Serrano ham sitting on a table somewhere in the house. If we all brought them in and threw in a couple of bottles of Sherry, we could make a few bob for club funds. Well, we used to have wine and cheese parties years ago.

Yet Another Media Success for Warrington

Following on from Craig Davis's appearance on Corrie, our current President's interview on Wire FM, our mention in Rugby World and our extensive weekly coverage in the Warrington Guardian, it would seem that there has been yet another Warrington media success. If you had tuned into Radio 4 (I know) just before Christmas, you might have caught one of our past presidents, Jonny Jones, waxing lyrical on the subject of gin. JJ now runs Hunter's gin and to hear him talking about copper-bottomed stills and Cheshire apples was enough to make you reach for the nearest bottle. Well don, JJ, but you could have given us a mention,

North One West Fixtures 2015-16

DATE	OPPOSITION	RESULT	Sponsor
2015		Home Team 1st	
5 Sept	Wilmslow (Away)	W 30-45	
12 Sept	Blackburn (Home)	W 49-13	
19 Sept	Leigh (Away)	W 22-26	
26 Sept	Vale of Lune (Home)	W 45-23	
3 Oct	Rochdale (Away)	W 17-23	
10 Oct	Widnes (Home)	W 38-3	Emma & Richard Woodward
17 Oct	Carlisle (Away)	W 19-21	
24 Oct	Penrith (Home)	W 36-14	
7 Nov	Kendal (Away)	L 27-12	
14 Nov	Kirkby Lonsdale (Home)	D 12-12	Warrington Ladies
21 Nov	Broughton Park (Away)	W 19-32	
5 Dec	Eccles (Away)	L 24-20	
12 Dec	Altrincham Kersal (Home)	W 38-15	Steve Riley
19 Dec	Blackburn (Away)	D 19-19	
2016			
9 Jan	Leigh (Home)	W 29-22	
16 Jan	Vale of Lune (Away)	P	
23 Jan	Rochdale (Home)		Dave Cunningham
30 Jan	Widnes (Away)		
6 Feb			
13 Feb	Carlisle (Home)		
20 Feb	Penrith (Away)		
5 Mar	Kendal (Home)		Dave Jervis
19 Mar	Kirkby Lonsdale (Away)		
2 April	Broughton Park (Home)		
9 April	Eccles (Home)		Dave Broadbent
16 April	Altrincham Kersal (Away)		
23 Apr	Wilmslow (Home)		Ross Thompson

Warrington RUFC vs. Rochdale RUFC

WARRINGTON RUFC

Colours: Green, Scarlet & White

Rochdale RUFC

Colours: Red and White

Kick Off 2:15 p.m.

TEAMS

Tom Green	1	Tom Callaghan (C)
Paul Thompson	2	Johnny Bradley
Sam Bennett	3	Harry Hill
Zak Lythgoe	4	Shaun Needham
Josh Riley	5	Tom Helliwell
Sean Callender	6	Jake Castree
Matt Connelly	7	Tom Hindle
Danny Fleming	8	Andy Donoghue
Paul Hockenhull	9	Dom Serridge
Tom Wood (C)	10	James Duffy
Darren Norman	11	Travis Townsend
Luke Johnstone	12	Jon Mair
Jonno Smith	13	Josh Schofield
Haydn Fraser	14	Oli Coldman
Matt Rockey	15	Jimmy Flitcroft
	Bench	
Tom Marland	16	Dale Salmon
Max Walker	17	Robbie Willets
Steve Pilkington	18	Chris Hodgkinson
Coach: Andy Roberts		Coach: Mike Gould

Referee: Adam Carpenter, West Midlands Society

Today's Match Sponsor

Today's match sponsor is Dave (Cunners) Cunningham. True to form, Dave has spurned any offers of food but has opted for purely liquid refreshment for his guests. Have a good day, Dave and thanks for your sponsorship.

Apperances

<u>Name</u>		Games Played This Year	<u>Total</u>	Tries this Season	Points This Season
Beesley	Nathan	13+2	22	9	45
Bennett	Sam	1 + 2	3		
Brazendale	James	0+2	3	1	5
Caldwell	Max	2	9		
Callander	Sean	14	46	1	5
Connelly	Matt	12+1	74	3	15
Edwards	Pete	2+5	19		
Fleming	Dan	13 + 1	110	1	5
Fraser	Hayden	1+ 2	39	3	15
Griffiths	Dan	0+1	21		
Haddon	Mike	2 + 1	150		
Hockenhull	Ben	15	16		37
Hughes	Sean	9	85	1	5
Hughes	Kieran	10+1	75	10	50
Johnstone	Elliot	10+4	70	3	15
Johnstone	Luke	7+2	103	2	10
Jones	Kevin	3	246		
Lynch	Phil	2+2	43		
Lyon	Phil	0 + 1	1		
Lythgoe	Zak	3	133		
Marland	Alex	3+1	4		
McGregor	James	5 +3	8		
Nicholls	Sam	2+1	13	1	5
Norman	Darren	11+2	13	5	117
O'Rourke	Clement	14	42		
Pilkington	Steve	14+1	70	5	25
Preston	Ryan	0+2	22		
Riley	Josh	13	69	2	10
Rockey	Matt	2+2	156		
Smith	Jono	6	16	2	14
Thompaon	Paul	1	219		
Thompson	Jamie	6+1	13	3	15
Walker	Max	12	22	2	10
Ward	Jon	5 +3	26		
Wood	Tom	14	102	8	40

Farewell Jonah Lomu

This short article appeared in the Altrincham-Kersal match programme in November. Unfortunately, the weather was atrocious and we sold only twenty programmes, so it was not widely read. I make no apologies for printing it again.



Jonah Lomu died on November 18th. He was a giant of the game and the man who was, probably, the first global superstar of Rugby. But as well as being a giant physically, he was also a giant personality, who was a great ambassador for the game, who never lost his humility and who was active in his responsibilities in spite of the unforgiving kidney disease, which struck him at the early age of 21.

I first saw Jonah Lomu when he appeared in the Hong Kong Sevens as a 19 year old in 1994. I remember watching him on television and thinking, "Who the hell is that?" Well, I didn't have long to wait to find out when he took the World Cup by storm the following year. Will Carling famously said of him "He is a freak and the sooner he goes away the better." That was after that try, when he smashed through Tony Underwood and Mike Catt to create what was voted the 19th greatest sporting moment ever by the UK public in 2002. Perhaps he was a freak, if greatness has something of the freakish in it, but more than anything he had all the qualities of a supreme rugby player. His pace and power were outstanding. But he also had superb balance which meant that he could get tackled high or low and still maintain his momentum. As a result, he could run around you, run over you or run through you.

As his one-time team mate, Zinzan Brooke has said, "When I played with him, we used to say that once he got the ball and had broken past the first defender, then we could safely run back to halfway for the restart, even though he had another 25 metres and another six guys to run through."

He was held in the same respect, and awe, by teams he played against. Sir Clive Woodward tells the story that before each game, as part of his motivational talk, he would list both sides and say, "there's absolutely nobody I'd swap man for man." At the end of one talk, Will Greenwood put up his hand and said, "Clive, we're all with you but on behalf of all the team, I think we would swap Austin Healey for Jonah Lomu."

And perhaps there is no better example of the way opposing sides viewed Jonah than when Paul Burke, the substitute Irish stand-off, who was sitting on the bench when Ireland were playing New Zealand, suddenly exclaimed "I'm not going on, I'm not going on," when there was an injury in the Irish backs.

I actually saw Jonah Lomu in the flesh, in the opening ceremony of the 2011 World Cup at Eden Park. He came onto the pitch, holding the hand of a little lad and the whole stadium erupted. But I was at the top of the stand and that is the closest I have ever come to greatness.

Jonah lived for just twenty years after his World Cup debut but he packed a helluva lot into those years. He amassed 63 caps for New Zealand, he won a gold medal in the Sevens event at the 1998 Commonwealth Games, he played club rugby for the Blues, the Chiefs, the Hurricanes, Wainulamata, Cardiff Blues and Marseilles and he fathered two children. Even after being diagnosed with his serious kidney complaint, which necessitated regular dialysis and a transplant in 2004, he still continued playing. However, it eventually became clear that nephrotic syndrome was something that he couldn't run around, run over or run through. He died on 18th November in Auckland after returning from the UK, where he had been heavily involved in promotional work for the Rugby World Cup. RIP, big man. Will we ever see your like again?

Warrington 29 Leigh 22

Only buckets of sand and assiduous mid-week work from the Warrington groundstaff avoided an even longer Christmas break for the players. However, neither side seemed to have suffered from the 3-week lay off and the game started at full tilt. Warrington moved the ball confidently and had the first points on the board in 10 minutes. From a steal by Danny Fleming in the middle of the pitch, the ball was whisked wide to winger Nathan Beesley on the right. The flyer rounded his man popped the ball inside to stand-off Johnno who repeated the inside pass to centre Kieran Hughes who finished in style.

Leigh responded immediately, however, taking advantage of a defensive fumble which gave them a scrum 15 metres out in front of Warrington's post. Quick ball and a nice line from the Leigh stand-off caught Warrington's back row flat footed and earned a try and an easy conversion to give Leigh a two point lead. Warrington stormed back to attack with Jono Smith, in the unaccustomed position of stand-off, linking well with centre Luke Johnston to launch this willing battering ram, at pace, into the Leigh defence. Sound tackling from Leigh stemmed the initial onslaught but excellent clear outs from the Warrington pack ensured quick ball for scrum half Hockenhull whose pinpoint passing launched the next wave of attack. Despite this sound approach work, scoring chances were squandered when final passes went astray. On 20 minutes it looked like another chance had been missed when the last pass went behind winger Haydn Fraser only yards from the line. As the crowd groaned, a magnificent piece of athleticism from Fraser recovered the situation and he wriggled, eel-like, over the line for Warrington's second try.

Leigh again responded immediately and levelled the score at 10-10 with a penalty when Warrington failed to release the ball when tackled. From the restart Warrington earned a scrum deep in Leigh territory and gained quick possession. Fraser, looping infield from the wing, side stepped his way through the defence for a try under the posts. Hockenhull converted. Despite two more penalty attempts before the interval Leigh could not convert so Warrington turned round 7 points up.

This margin began to look increasingly fragile as Leigh began to dominate possession and, in the process, manufacture an extra man out wide. Only 10 minutes into the half, 15 metres from the Warrington line and an extra man to use, a try from Leigh looked certain but an interception from winger Beesley, probably the fastest man on the park, meant the try was scored under the posts at the opposite end. A Hockenhull conversion gave Warrington a more comfortable 14-point cushion which was just as well as Warrington could hardly, thereafter, get out of their own half.

Leigh monopolised possession and drove at the Warrington line through the forwards eventually crossing near the posts for an easy conversion. Another Leigh try from a well struck cross kick from stand-off to right winger put Leigh only 2 points behind with 10 minutes to go. Warrington at last gained a scrum in the Leigh 22 from which centre Hughes clinched the game for Warrington with a piece of individual magic and a try in the corner.

Coach Callander said "I am obviously pleased with the win and the bonus point but I think we need to keep concentration for the whole of the game. We did not manage to maintain our intensity in the second half and will have to work on that for the future."

Blackburn 19 Warrington 19

Once again this season Warrington performed their Lazarus act, coming back from a 19-5 deficit. However, this time, they were only able to manage an honourable draw, although the two points moves them up to third place in the league table.

Warrington started at full speed and attacked the Blackburn line for ten minutes with phase after phase. Eventually, the score came when a long pass from Tom Wood found Steve Pilkington in space and the full back drifted over in the corner.

Blackburn soon showed how far they have progressed since the earlier meeting of the sides in September. Excellent kicking from stand-off and full back and rampaging runs from their excellent number eight meant that they virtually camped out in Warrington territory. The pressure was eventually exploited when the heavy Blackburn pack scored a push-over try. The conversion gave them a two point lead.

The lead was soon increased to nine when the home side attacked from a scrum in the Warrington 22 and their right centre found just enough space to squeeze over to allow a simple conversion. At this point, Warrington lost their iconic skipper and hooker with injury but Sam Bennet, playing only his second game for the side, following his debut the previous week, stepped up to the plate to steady the set piece.

The second half saw Warrington start to regain some of their composure and they were unlucky not to score when Nathan Beasley was late-tackled after he had kicked ahead following a superb run. Blackburn then increased their lead, after the referee had missed a crooked throw in the line and a blatant forward pass, when their right centre showed a clean pair of heels to the Warrington cover and scored in the corner.

Once again, Warrington were struck by injury, losing their principal line-out jumper, Josh Riley, to an ankle sprain. Fortunately, this seemed to spur the side to greater effort and superb handling involving backs and forwards saw Kieron Hughes claim the inevitable try. Darren Norman converted.

However, the best try of the game came with just five minutes left on the clock. Picking up a loose ball in their own 22, the Warrington backs combined to create a sweeping move which saw the ball transferred from right to left and back before Kieron Hughes eventually touched down. This made the score 19-17 and, as regular kicker, Darren Norman had been substituted it was left to scrum half Ben Hockenhull to kick a magnificent conversion from just five yards inside the touch line.

"We took some time to get going today," said coach Andy Roberts. "However, this was a totally different Blackburn outfit from the side we played earlier on and a draw was probably a fair result."

Warrington 38 Altrincham Kersal 15

In torrential rain, Warrington seemed to have game sewn up by half time before Altrincham Kersal came back strongly in the second period but were eventually comprehensively beaten by the home side's counter-attacking flair.

Warrington soon took control but Altrincham eventually started to exert pressure in Warrington territory through astute kicking. This pressure saw them awarded the first kickable penalty but fortunately this was missed, as were all the visitors' subsequent kicks at goal.

Eventually, Warrington started to string some phases together and the backs took advantage when Nathan Beasley received the ball in his own 22, took the outside line to skin his opposite number and then put in a beautifully judged kick inside. Full back, Steve Pilkington was on hand to follow up and score between the posts. Darren Norman converted.

Ten minutes later, Warrington struck again when Jonno Smith made a signature break but was stopped short of the line. The forwards quickly recycled the ball and, ten yards out, Tom Wood put in the slowest of show-and-goes to drift over through a bemused defence. Norman again added the extras.

Virtually from the kick-off, Warrington returned to the attack. A good take from Elliot Johnstone provided the platform for Ben Hockenhull to feed Kieran Hughes and the elusive centre outpaced and out-foxed the Altrincham cover defence to complete a superb 60 yard effort with a try in the corner. The conversion was missed.

Altrincham finally realized that their strengths lay with the forwards and they used this at a five yard scrum, which eventually resulted in the award of a penalty try.

On the stroke of half time, Warrington gained the four-try bonus point when another scintillating break from Kieron Hughes took play to the Altrincham five metre zone. The visitors were caught offside and a quick tap penalty saw the ball transferred at speed across the pitch from right to left before Darren Norman squeezed in at the corner to make the half time score a comfortable 24-5.

However, the second period proved far from comfortable for Warrington. They were completely starved of good possession and for twenty five minutes the game was played almost totally in Warrington territory. This saw Altrincham score a powerful push-over try from a set scrum. The Altrincham backs were also threatening at this stage but the Warrington defence held firm.

Warrington finally became alive to the danger and a clinical counter attack saw the backs combine to gain ground before an astute long pass found Nathan Beasley, who showed his pace first to cross the line and then to turn inside to touch down between the posts. Norman did not miss with the conversion. However, Altrincham were still not finished and soon replied with a try from a driving maul. But Warrington sealed off the game with five minutes to go when a Wood cross-kick found and unmarked Nathan Beasley and the winger finished off in style with an appropriate Ash Splash under the posts.

"We played some excellent rugby today, especially bearing in mind the conditions," said coach Andy Roberts. "Altrincham came back at us in the second half but we counter-attacked magnificently."

Warrington 2nd XV 22 Liverpool Collegiate 2nd XV 6

Warrington's second team had this game against Liverpool Collegiate virtually sewed up by half, having subdued the heavier Collegiate pack and crossed the line four times, in very difficult playing conditions. It didn't take long for Warrington to get the scoreboard rattling, as Max Caldwell demonstrated his finishing skills after just six minutes when he crossed in the corner. Fifteen minutes later, Caldwell was again on the scoresheet, when he sprinted over, following good hands from the backs. Max Caldwell could have celebrated a hat-trick performance in the 30th minute but he, unselfishly, passed inside to Craig Byrne and the rumbustious centre barreled over to make the score 15-0.

Liverpool Collegiate had a brief say in proceedings with two well-stuck penalties but Warrington came back again when iconic player-coach Paul Thompson, who was infallible under the high ball all afternoon, picked up at a ruck ten yards out and steamed over to allow Shaun McDermott his sole conversion of the game.

The second half developed into a dour, try-less affair, with excellent defensive contributions from Craig Byrne, Jonny Evans and man of the match, Tom Wright, while Alex Marsland and Tom Green proved solid up front.

"Although we eased off in the second half, we had done more than enough in the first period," concluded player-coach Paul Thompson.

Warrington 3rd XV 28 Warrington 2nd XV 3

Warrington's third string capitalized on a good first half performance to score 14 unanswered points in the second period to achieve a comprehensive win over local rivals Winnington Park.

It was the Winnington pack which controlled the first twenty minutes of the game, as they kept the ball tight to eventually force a penalty and take a 3-0 lead. Warrington then found their natural rhythm and switched from sterling defence to incisive attack. A series of strong drives from the Warrington forwards forced a Winnington offence at a ruck and a quick tap penalty saw Sam Nichols scurry over from short range. Dan Griffiths converted.

This proved the signal for the Warrington pack to go on the rampage, as they continually punched holes in the Winnington defence. Unfortunately, enthusiasm tended to overcome execution and spilled or missed passes prevented any further scores for ten minutes. Eventually, the ball was flashed wide and a superb line from Danny Griffiths left Tony Fretwell in space. The veteran centre destroyed the opposing full back with a show-and-go dragged from his memory bank of playing Rugby League at high level and he strolled in under the posts. Griffiths converted to make the score 14-3 at half time.

Winnington decided to revert to forward power play in the second period but Warrington soon defused the danger with aggressive tackling. Defence turned into attack when the pack forced its way into Winnington territory and Sam Nichols again took advantage to storm over. Griffiths converted.

Warrington finally secured the result with the best try of the game. With the forwards providing the platform, Ryan Carter unleashed his backs on the half way line. First Nichols passed to Fretwell, who put Griffiths into a gap in the defence. Nichols was then on hand again to take the inside pass and cross under the posts for his hat trick. Griffiths added the final two points.

"We played excellent rugby today, from one to fifteen," enthused coach Lee Graham. "We are now comfortably in mid-table but there is no reason why we shouldn't finish in the top four at the end of the season."