

## Welcome To Vale of Lune

A very warm welcome to the players, officials and spectators of Vale of Lune. This is our third season of regular fixtures with Vale and, to-date, the win has always favoured the home side. (In our first meeting, they gave us an instructive introduction to North 1 West two years ago when they beat us 57-11.)

Vale was founded in 1900 and has won two Lancashire Cups in a proud career. It also boasts the largest playing area pitch outside Twickenham (which may have accounted for our trouncing two years ago). But it is above all a Northern club, playing Northern-style, open rugby. This style has been enhanced with the aid of Brian Ashton, who had a short coaching spell with them recently. Brian, who was unfairly treated when sacked as England coach, played a lot of his rugby at the once-mighty Orrell and was one of the first (after Dick Greenwood) northern coaches to introduce northern values into national sides. Just think of Mike Ford at Ireland, Sean Edwards with Wales and Andy Farrell and Stuart Lancaster with England. There has also been a great influx of Northern players into the England squad, with Owen Farrell, George Ford and Sam Burgess, while Chris Ashton from Wigan and Dave Strettle from Warrington graced the England wings for many games. Even so, the RFU still maintains its southern bias. Take the World Cup. How many games have we got in the North-West? One! Yet there are two games in Brighton and two in Milton Keynes. And there are eight games in Cardiff. I know you must follow the crowds but whose World Cup is it?? Still, all games are on ITV, which means they are free.

Well, that's my moan over. I probably have this North/South inferiority complex because I am a Wiganer. But as a Wiganer, perhaps I should dispel a universally believed Wigan myth. We are widely known as "the pie-eaters" (or "eighters" in the dialect). This has nothing to do with our gargantuan appetite for anything with a crust. It actually goes back to the 1926 General Strike when all the pits came out. Unfortunately, the Wigan miners were the first to vote for a return to work and this caused the Leigh miners to accuse them of eating "umblie pie". (Umblie is offal, usually of deer)

So there you have it. A flag-wave for the North, a moan at the RFU and the destruction of a Wigan myth. Not your usual introductory notes but once again, a warm welcome to Vale of Lune.

Dave Jervis  
President

**WARRINGTON**



**R.U.F.C.**



A few incidents from our recent game against Blackburn

One shows a perfect offload from a prop. One shows a scoring prop  
And one shows a prop who is actually moving

## **Punch Lines**

And so we see the return of Punch Lines, the regular column which takes an irreverent look at goings on within Warrington RUFC. Punch Lines survives on the scraps of knowledge obtained on the misdemeanors of anybody associated with the club. As such it relies on information from club members (or snitches, as they are called). So any gossip gratefully received.

### **Where Are They Now?**

Remember Coombsey? He was the tall number 8, grew a beard, had a French girlfriend, played the guitar. Well, it seems he has a new career – in the movies. Well, not quite the movies but he is acting in Dave Hartill's latest extravaganza. This takes place in a greasy spoon and Coombsey stars as a local hard man (What?). Evidently, he has based his performance on a mix of Thommo and Jon Callendar, with a bit of Steve Tickle thrown in. Both Thommo and Callendar are adamant that there is no resemblance whatsoever, although Steve thinks Coombsey has captured his brooding violence brilliantly.

### **What's a Prop?**

Conventional wisdom says that a typical prop is a slightly overweight, intellectually challenged bruiser, who wrestles in the scrum, lifts in the line and makes the hard yards in the loose. Well, just take a look at some of the Warrington props and think again! Clem O'Rourke is a nuclear physicist, Elliot Johnstone is a sommelier (he tells me), Chris White has just graduated, Steve Tickle is in IT and Wardy is..... Wardy.

All of these stalwarts are masters of the prop forward arts but they are by no means intellectually challenged. In fact quite the reverse and I am sure that a four-man team made up of props would beat any backs' team in an egghead-type quiz at Warrington.

But back to Wardy. Wardy is an archetypal prop. He spends his evenings as a bouncer "on the doors". However, during the day he is a student nurse. Nowhere has his expertise been put to better use than in our opening game against Wilmslow. After ten minutes, one of their players suffered a horrendous leg fracture. Wardy, racing from the subs bench, was first on the scene and, in the absence of any other qualified personnel, he supervised immediate treatment while waiting for an ambulance to arrive. So next time you see the smiling assassin down someone from the opposition, don't be surprised to see him tending to the injured player as he comes back into the world.

### **News from the Dark Side**

Naturally, there is fierce competition between Warrington and the Dark Side (aka Lymm RUFC). But fear not, we now have a mole (code name Z) under deep cover. Z obviously cannot be named but he is now well established in the Dark Side hierarchy. He will be reporting at regular intervals via a drop box somewhere in Grappenhall.

### North One West Fixtures 2015-16

DATE	OPPOSITION	RESULT	Sponsor
<b>2015</b>		<b>Home Team 1st</b>	
5 Sept	Wilmslow (Away)	W 30-45	
12 Sept	Blackburn (Home)		
19 Sept	Leigh (Away)		
26 Sept	Vale of Lune (Home)		
3 Oct	Rochdale (Away)		
10 Oct	Widnes (Home)		
17 Oct	Carlisle (Away)		
24 Oct	Penrith (Home)		
7 Nov	Kendal (Away)		
14 Nov	Kirkby Lonsdale (Home)		
21 Nov	Broughton Park (Away)		
5 Dec	Eccles (Away)		
12 Dec	Altrincham Kersal (Home)		
19 Dec	Blackburn (Home)		
<b>2016</b>			
9 Jan	Leigh (Home)		
16 Jan	Vale of Lune (Away)		
23 Jan	Rochdale (Home)		
30 Jan	Widnes (Away)		
6 Feb	Blackburn (Away)		
13 Feb	Carlisle (Home)		
20 Feb	Penrith (Away)		
5 Mar	Kendal (Home)		
19 Mar	Kirkby Lonsdale (Away)		
2 April	Broughton Park (Home)		
9 April	Eccles (Home)		
16 April	Altrincham Kersal (Away)		
23 Apr	Wilmslow (Home)		

# Warrington RUFC vs. Blackburn RUFC

**WARRINGTON RUFC**

*Colours:* Green, Scarlet & White

**Blackburn RUFC**

*Colours:* Blue and Red

*Kick Off 3:00 p.m.*

## TEAMS

	<b>1</b>	
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	<b>12</b>	
	<b>13</b>	
	<b>14</b>	
	<b>15</b>	
	<b><i>Bench</i></b>	
	<b>16</b>	
	<b>17</b>	
	<b>18</b>	
<b><i>Coach:</i></b>		<b><i>Coach:</i></b>

**Referee:** Kris Connabeer, DevonSoc

## **Leigh 22 Warrington 26**

Warrington continued their excellent start to the season, and maintained their position on top of North 1 West, with this hard-earned win over local rivals Leigh. In fact, this was a game they could have lost, as they were trailing 6-17 at the interval but a superb second half display, including awesome defence for the final ten minutes when they were reduced to 14 men as a result of a spate of injuries, saw them claim the winning points.

The opening ten minutes saw both sides testing each other up front and Warrington seemed to be gaining the upper hand until Leigh, showing an exciting mix of electric speed and forward power, gained territorial advantage with a good kick to the corner. From the line out they went through the phases before a fine pass allowed their back row to find a gap and cross for the first Leigh try, which was converted.

Warrington replied with a penalty from Darren Norman but Leigh increased their lead when their full-back speedster took advantage of a turn-over to race in from forty yards.. Warrington replied with a second Norman penalty but Leigh eased into a deserved half time lead when they scored in the corner after the ball had flashed across the backs from a line-out.

The second half saw Warrington step up a gear and they quickly cut the deficit with a third Norman penalty. They then seemed to have scored an excellent try when Tom Wood touched down under the posts after great build-up work, but the referee was distracted by an off-the ball incident and the try was strangely not awarded. However, he awarded Warrington a penalty and Norman again added a further three points.

Ten minutes later Warrington took the lead when a superb break from a line out by Tom Wood saw the stand-off inter-passing with scrum half Ben Hockenhull before touching down. Darren Norman added the extras to make the score 17-19 to Warrington,

Warrington then edged into a nine point lead when the industrious Matt Connelly made a twenty yard break and shipped onto Nathan Beasley. Warrington's own speedster broke inside and then backed his pace to steam over between the posts to allow Norman an easy conversion.

The last ten minutes of the game saw Warrington reduced to 14 men, as they ran out of substitutes through injuries. Still, even with uncontested scrums, they defended heroically, halting attack after attack on their line. Eventually, Leigh's numerical superiority proved too much and they forced their way over for a try. But it was too late and Warrington ran out worthy winners.

"Our defence in the last ten minutes was awesome," said coach Andy Roberts. "Fortunately, our better fitness proved decisive and we had already done enough against a side which is very much better than its current league position would indicate. However, we are still league leaders and are now looking forward to a tough game at home against Vale of Lune next week."

## **Warrington 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 29 Leigh 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 12**

After a sloppy start, Warrington's second team took total charge of a game which they eventually won in some style.

Leigh opened the scoring with a try in the first ten minutes, thanks to some slack defence by Warrington. The home side was quickly stung into response and the scores were equalized when Mark Tickle, playing in the centre, skipped over in the corner after a set back's move.

Warrington went further ahead when Craig Byrne worked the blind side and handed onto Max Caldwell and the pacey winger zipped over. Shortly before half time, ex-colts' scrum half and man-of-the match, Jack Hannon scored a brilliant fifty yard solo try, converted by Shaun McDermott to make the score 17-5 to War-

rington at the turn-around.

The second half saw a Leigh revival, restricting Warrington to just the one score. Second row Rob Woolridge kicked ahead and the ever-present Mark Tickle picked up to scoot over. Leigh then scored an interception try but Warrington should have had the last word, and Mark Tickle a hat trick, but the centre unbelievably knocked on when already over the try line.

“Our young side combined well,” said player/coach Shaun McDermott. “Particularly pleasing were the performances of Jack Hannon and James Brazendale, while John Morris showed that he has inherited some of his father’s hooking genes.”

### **Northwich 2<sup>nd</sup> XV 6 Warrington 3<sup>rd</sup> XV 16**

After an evenly contested first half, Warrington’s third string combined clinical attack with sterling defence in the second period, to gain an excellent win over neighbours Northwich.

The first forty minutes saw Warrington squander a number of try-scoring opportunities while finding it difficult to manage Northwich’s powerful counter-rucking. However, both sides kept the scoreboard ticking with two penalties each, Warrington’s coming from the unerring boot of Kevin Jones.

The Warrington pack started to gain more possession in the second period and a couple of bullocking runs from Chris Higham were unlucky not to bear fruit. However, constant pressure eventually bore dividends when they were awarded a penalty try, following persistent handling in rucks by the Northwich pack. Kevin Jones converted.

A third penalty from Kevin Jones allowed Warrington to enjoy a ten point buffer and they defended this heroically for the final ten minutes of the game, stemming continuous Northwich attacks.

“Defence is a major part of our game,” said coach Lee Graham, “Although it does help to have some old heads in the side and this week a lot of credit must go to the very old three-quarter heads of Gaz Jeckman, Kevin Jones and Tony Fretwell, who were complemented by the young legs of man-of-the-match, Ben Hockenhull.”

### **WARRINGTON 49 BLACKBURN 13**

Warrington find themselves at the top of North West One courtesy of a convincing win over league newcomers Blackburn. With the score at only 19-13 at the interval, however, an eventual victory, and its margin, was far from obvious.

Blackburn dominated early possession but Warrington’s ferocious tackling nullified the opposition drives. The visitors missed two early penalties with Warrington missing one before skipper Hughes opened up the Blackburn defence running hard onto a short ball and into a gap on the half way. Breaking a couple of tackles he took the ball to within 10 metres of the try line before putting an intelligent kick inside for his fellow front rower Elliot Johnstone to gather and go over under the posts. Ben Hockenhull duly converted.

A poor collection from the restart had Warrington defending grimly for the next 5 minutes but Blackburn could only manage 3 points from an off-side penalty on the 22 metre line. Blackburn continued their attempts to batter through with their big forwards but got little change from Warrington. With 20 minutes gone Warrington’s stalwart defence brought rewards in the shape of spilled ball. A quick counter attack got the ball to winger Nathan Beesley who scampered deep into Blackburn territory only to be almost decapitated 10 metres out. The referee, however, played advantage and as the ball was transferred back inside that man Johnstone was again on hand to finish under the posts to give Hockenhull an easy conversion.

Blackburn replied with a penalty from half way and with 5 minutes to the interval came back to within

one point thanks to an interception on halfway that finished under the Warrington posts. Warrington bounced back almost immediately and on the stroke of half-time executed a well rehearsed ploy. At a line-out on the Blackburn 22, Sean Callander took the ball at the front and handed down to Josh Riley heading for the touchline. A delayed pass sent winger Steve Pilkington clear and his inside pass for a try by backrow Matt Connelly completed the sequence.

The third quarter began much in the same vein with Blackburn having the better of possession but being unable to do much with it. Any incursions to the Warrington 22 were strangled and the pressure relieved by some sensible touch kicking which, for the most part turned, the Blackburn wings and pinned them back in their own territory. With 20 minutes to go the return to No8 of Max Walker heralded a decided change in Warrington's fortunes. The juggernaut blasted through the middle from half way, scattering bodies before him and laying the foundation for a try in the corner for Pilkington. 5 minutes later, in a perhaps less flamboyant, but just as effective style, second row Danny Fleming carved a path through the Blackburn defence from 30 metres out and scored for himself under the posts. New recruit Darren Norman added the extras.

With Blackburn now reduced to fourteen men through injury and beginning to tire, it was stand-off Tom Wood, revelling in his new position, who poured further misery on the visitors when an outrageous dummy opened up the defence like the Red Sea and gave him a clear run to the posts. Norman converted.

Callander scored next, taking the ball cleanly from a line-out on the Blackburn 22 and striding over almost unopposed. Winger Norman then almost got his name on the score sheet but crossed the dead ball line before he could get the ball down. Captain Hughes completed the scoring with a try under the posts rounding off a break wide –out by Pilkington. Norman converted.

Coach Andy Roberts said “ This was another good all round performance. I thought we kicked too much in the early stages giving Blackburn too much possession but our defence was exemplary. Our superior fitness told in the end and was more than a match against a team that was probably about 2 stone a man heavier.”

	Team	Pd	W	D	L	Diff	Pts	Adj
1.	Warrington	3	3	0	0	56	14	2
2.	Kendal	3	3	0	0	43	14	2
3.	Kirkby Lonsdale	3	3	0	0	32	13	1
4.	Wilmslow	3	2	0	1	32	10	2
5.	Penrith	3	2	0	1	29	10	2
6.	Carlisle	3	2	0	1	11	9	1
7.	Altrincham Kersal	3	2	0	1	6	9	1
8.	Vale of Lune	3	1	0	2	-27	6	2
9.	Rochdale	3	1	0	2	-10	5	1
10.	Leigh	3	0	0	3	-9	4	4
11.	Widnes	3	1	0	2	-31	4	0
12.	Blackburn	3	1	0	2	-55	4	0
13.	Eccles	3	0	0	3	-38	2	2
14.	Broughton Park	3	0	0	3	-39	1	1