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Betfred Super League vs Catalans Dragons Saturday 7 August 2021 Kick-off 2.30pm Totally Wicked Stadium



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Lancashire League: 1929–30, 1931–32, 1952–53, 1959–60, 1963–64, 1964–65, 1965–66, 1966–67, 1968–69

Charity Shield: 1992–93 BBC2 Floodlit Trophy: 1971–72,

Editor: Jamie Allen

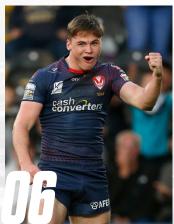
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GONTENTS











VIEW FROM THE CLUB KRISTIAN WOOLF

Kevin Naiqama will be returning home at the end of the season. Kev carries himself really well and is really well respected. I am really proud of both Kev and his wife Lily.

The last 18 months have been tough for everyone, but when you look at their personal circumstances and what they have had to go through along the way - away from all their family, they have had to do that on their own and I am really surprised in the circumstances that he didn't knock on my door and ask to go home early. That's a credit to him. I am also really proud of how our playing group have supported Kev and Lily and helped them get through a tough period and I think you have seen in the last few weeks; Kev's performances have been impressive and we are really looking forward to what he is going to do at the back end of the year with us. We want to make sure we send him away with some more good memories.

We are in the market to bring some players in as we are having a rather big turnover at the end of the season. I would like to think we can share some news on that in the next few weeks. I am really confident in what we are going to do moving forward. We have extended a lot of our current squad who are going to be here in the long-haul. Lewis Dodd and Jack Welsby are the best examples of that and we want to make sure the likes of Jake Wingfield and Josh Simm are given the chance to develop into first graders because we feel they have the

potential to do that. We don't want to go and sign players over the top of those guys and stop their development, so we have to get that right, but it is also important we add some new players to freshen up the group and add some real quality and experience. We are trying to get that balance right and I am confident that we will do that.

We play Catalans next and it's a great opportunity for us and a great challenge for us. I was very happy with how we came out of the recent disruption against Hull FC. They are a tough team to play and I thought we did a really good job. We get the opportunity to be a bit better again this week against a team that will be an even bigger challenge and they are travelling really well and will be really confident and that makes for a good contest.

Today is the first opportunity after the Challenge Cup to play in front of our fans at our stadium and thank you for your support and put on a bit of a show against the team who sit top of the ladder which is where we want to be. We would love to see a full house or very close to it!

Enjoy the game.

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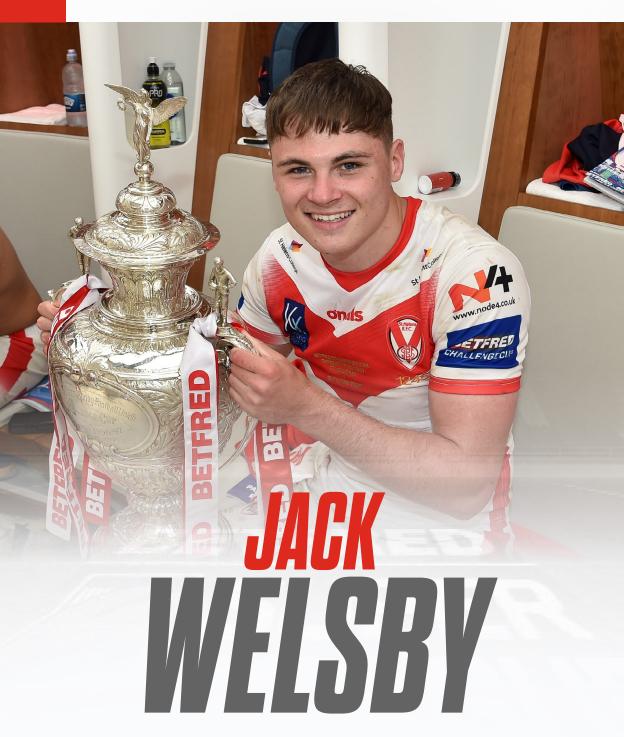


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FRESH FROM HIS HAT-TRICK AT HULL -Back at the ground he made his name In the 2020 grand final, we gaught up With, Jack Welsby...

Jack, you quite like scoring here in Hull don't you?

Yes I do! I scored another three, stealing all Regan's [Grace] thunder, but I am sure he was happy back home watching the game! It was a great atmosphere on a Monday night thanks to all our travelling fans.

That second try you scored, it seemed you made a point of touching down in a similar place to that of your famous last minute try in the Grand Final last year?

I was just trying to make the kick as easy as possible for Cootie. I probably pushed my luck a little bit but I didn't think that the Hull player was going to get back, and he did. I had a nervous wait looking up at the screen like I did in 2020, but luckily I got it down and got the try!

And again, just like 2020, you made the effort to support the play for your third try?

I backed Doddy [Lewis Dodd] to get there and just like last year, I tried to put myself in the frame. He has come up with a massive play in keeping it alive for me and after a tough 80 minutes, that try was the icing on the cake.

How tough was the game, especially after a break following Wembley?

There were moments in the second half where Hull really came after us and threw some shapes and some kicks we were not used to dealing with. It was a really tough game, especially after having 10 days in isolation after the Challenge Cup. It was a good result and the score line was probably a little more emphatic given how tough the game was. Roll on Catalans this Saturday!

Did the break due to covid, actually freshen us up a little following Wembley?

It wasn't ideal. As a team we want to play as many times as we can and roll into week after week. It has been disruptive and we are a little light on players, but at the end of the day we got a good win and got what we needed out of the game.

Now it's Catalans up next on Saturday. How tasty will that be?

The top two will go at it at the Totally Wicked Stadium and it is set to be a special atmosphere for the first game back with unrestricted crowds. Hopefully everyone can get down and support the boys and we are more than ready for it!



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PREVIEWING TONIGHT'S MATCH!



SAINTS TV: WOOLF ON GRACE AND PAASI RETURN, FANS AND NAIQAMA NEWS

Hear from Head Coach Kristian Woolf who pays credit to Kevin Naiqama following the news he will return home at the end of the season, plus the boss reveals some early team news ahead of Saturday's top of the table clash with Catalans Dragons.



SAINTS TV: PERCIVAL ENJOYING BEING BACK TO FULL FITNESS

Hear from Mark Percival who admits he is feeling fit and is delighted to be over his injury worries, whilst he is looking forward to the challenge of top of the table Catalans on Saturday.



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2 2 2 KRISTIAN WOOLF SAMTS

CONFIRMED: WOOLF EXTENDS STAY AT ST HELENS INTO 2022

St.Helens R.F.C. is delighted to confirm that Head Coach Kristian Woolf will lead the Saints in 2022 after he and the Club took up the option to extend his contract into a third season.

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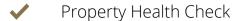


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A warm welcome back to the Totally Wicked Stadium this afternoon, as St. Helens face the Catalans Dragons in a mouth-watering 'top of the table' clash. This is Saints first home match since our outstanding Challenge Cup triumph, at Wembley, three weeks ago, against the Castleford Tigers; and, since all Covid 19 restrictions were lifted by the UK Government on 19 July 2021. So today there are two huge reasons for St. Helens supporters to celebrate; as, many of you here, will be watching your first 'live' Saints match for 17 long months. And to help create a carnival like atmosphere, the club will be presenting the Betfred Challenge Cup to you all, before kick-off.

This is the biggest game of Super League XXVI. The Dragons arrive on the back of a club record; 12 successive Super League wins as they stand proud at the top of the Super League table, having won 15 of their 16 matches, for a total of 30 points and a win percentage of 93.75%. Saints are, of course, lying in 2nd place in the table, after winning 11 of their 13 matches, for a total of 22 points and a win percentage of 84.61%.

The Catalans are having an outstanding campaign. Steve McNamara has instilled stability and a new found confidence in his squad and they are playing great rugby. They have built their success on the back of the traumas and disruption that the pandemic had on last year's competition. A year where they gelled, as a team, and performed well.

The Catalans qualified for the Play Offs in 2020 by finishing the regular season in 4th position on the Super League ladder. They played 13 matches; winning eight of them; giving them a total of 16 points. That gave the Dragons a win percentage of 61.54%. They finished above both Leeds Rhinos and Hull FC, despite having fewer competition points because their win percentage was higher. What added to the confusion was that when the regular season was called to a premature halt on 6th November 2020, the Catalans were the only team not to have played minimum of 15 matches in order to qualify for the Play Offs. The rules were then amended to allow their participation because the cancellation of their matches against Leeds Rhinos (H) and Wigan Warriors (A) together with their last three regular round matches, due to Covid-19 issues, could hardly be blamed on the Dragons.

And they defeated Leeds Rhinos, at Warrington, 26-14 in the Elimination Play Off before being beaten by St. Helens in the Semi Final by 48 points to 2. During the off season, the Catalans stuck with the majority of their squad; making just a few changes in how they lined up ahead of the new campaign

Dean Whare (Penrith Panthers, Aus), Gil Dudson (Salford Red Devils) and Mike McMeeken (Castleford Tigers) each joined the club. Whilst, Lucas Albert & Mickael Simon (both AS Carcassonne, Fr), Antoni Maria & Sam Moa (both Lézignan, Fr), Rémi Casty (Toulouse Olympique, Fr), Gavin Marguerite (Villeneuve, Fr), David Mead (Brisbane Broncos, Aus), Lewis Tierney (Leigh Centurions) and Israel Folau (released) departed. The Catalans' three new

recruits are vastly experienced and knew how to fit into their systems. They have enriched their squad and more than made up for those players who have moved on.

The extended off season benefited the Dragons as McNamara had more time to work with his squad, despite the strict rules in France making it difficult for their players to train as a group. McNamara conducted zoom meetings and the players did a large bulk of their training on their own and whilst there was a danger they could have started the season a little 'under cooked', this didn't prove to be the case. They again were looking for stability and continual improvement and they certainly have managed that.

Their main strength is in the quality and the experience they have in the spine of their team with Sam Tomkins at full back, James Maloney and Josh Drinkwater in the halves and Michael McIlorum at hooker. They have each been outstanding in 2021 and have been supported by the development and ability of young Arthur Mourgue who is proving to be one of the stand young players in Super League.

The Catalans began their campaign by beating a French Selection team by 50 points to 18 and Toulouse Olympique 40-28 in pre-season Friendly matches. They then defeated Hull KR (H*) 29-28, Huddersfield Giants (A*) 20-10, Wakefield Trinity – (CC3) (A*) 26-6 and Salford Red Devils (H) 42-6 in their opening four matches. Warrington Wolves then visited Perpignan and inflicted on the Dragons their only Super League loss 8-24. The Catalans then beat Wakefield Trinity (A) 38-18 before they lost to Warrington for a second time, in the Challenge Cup Quarter Final (at Leeds) 6-16. That defeat was back on 07 May 2021 and, exactly three months later, the Dragons remain unbeaten, having won their last eleven matches.

In that time, the Catalans have beaten, Hull FC (A) 27-10, St. Helens (H) 20-16, Wigan Warriors (H) 48-0, Leigh Centurions (A) 36-30, Castleford Tigers (A) 16-6, Huddersfield Giants (A) 50-12, Leeds Rhinos (A) 26-18, Leeds Rhinos (H) 27-18, Hull KR (H) 32-30, Wakefield Trinity (H) 40-20 and Hull KR (A) 23-16.

Warrington Wolves are the only team to defeat the Dragons in 2021. The Catalans have already played two matches here at the Totally Wicked Stadium during the current campaign and have won both, beating Huddersfield Giants by 20 points to 10 and Wakefield Trinity in the Challenge Cup 26-6, back in April. All pointers suggest that this afternoon's match should be a cracker with both teams showing excellent form and brimming with confidence.

Since their introduction into Super League in 2006, St. Helens have played host to the Dragons on twenty occasions. Saints have won fifteen of these matches including a, 40 points to 18, victory at the Stobart Stadium in Widnes in 2011 and a 34-6 triumph at Headingley, Leeds, last year. At The Totally Wicked Stadium, the Catalans triumphed on their first two visits; in 2012 and 2013 and again early in 2017. At Knowsley Road, St. Helens won five of their seven encounters including victory in two Challenge Cup ties.

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SAM TOMKINS

Sam joined the Catalans at the start 2019 campaign. A product of the Wigan Academy system, Sam scored 5 tries on his debut in 2008 versus Whitehaven. He soon became a first team regula and was voted Super League's 'Young Player of the Year' in 2009 & 2010, was named in five successive 'Dream Teams' from 2009 to 2013 and was voted 'Man of Steel' in 2012. He represented England in the 2013 World Cup and in Four Nations Series in 2009, 2010, 2011 & 2014. Tomkins played two years in the NRL with the New Zealand Warriors before returning to Wigan in 2016. After missing much of 2017 due to injury he played out a further season with his hometown team before joining the Catalans. Sam is now back to his best and is arguably now the in-form full back in Super League



MIKE MCMEEKEN

Mike aged 27; began his pro career in 2012 with the London Broncos. The Hampshire-born second rowe is a robust player, who continued to develop into one of the Back Row forwards in Super League. Powell signed McMeeken in 2015 and he soon became a great favourite amongst the Tigers' supporters. In 2017, he earned his way into the England set up and travelled to Samoa for the mid-season Test before representing his country in the Rugby League World Cup. He ended the year with a Grand Final appearance and a place in the Second Row in the 'Super League Dream Team'. He remained with Castleford until the end of last season, scoring 35 tries in 139 appearances for the club. Mike joined the Catalans during the off season and has made a great start to Dragons' career, as he has scored 6



JAMES MALONEY

The 35-year-old former Penrith half back has signed with the Dragons in 2020 and, in doing so, he became the first Marquee Player in the club's history. In his 10-year NRL career, James Maloney has already built an impress track record, collecting trophies in both Club and Australian Rep Football. James is a World Champion, a two-time NRL winner and has also won the Four Nations and the World Club Challenge; as well as helping NSW win the 2019 State of Origin series, for the second time in his career. He was named as the best NRL half back in 2016; was top points scorer in the NRL in 2013, 2014 and 2015, and he has played in 249 NRL games with Melbourne Storm, New Zealand Warriors, Sydney Roosters, Cronulla Sharks and Penrith Panthers. Since joining the Catalans, James has become their main playmaker and is one of the principal reasons why the Dragons are current



GIL DUDSON

Trowbridge born Gil Dudson now aged 31; played his junior rugby with Torfaen Tigers and Newport Titans before joining the pro ranks with the Celtic Crusaders. He gained selection for Wales before linking up with Wigan Warriors in 2012, making his debut in the Good Friday win against St Helens. In 2013, he helped the Warriors win the 'double' of the Challenge Cup and Grand Final, in addition to playing a major part for Wales in the 2013 World Cup. Gil made 48 appearances and joining Widnes in 2015. made 90 appearances and scored 2 tries for the club, before joining Salford in 2019. His two year stay with the Red Devils saw him make 45 appearances and score 3 tries for Salford; and, he was and Challenge Cup Finalist in 2020. Gil joined the Catalans at the start of 2021 and has settled in well, scoring one try in his 12 appearances to date.



FOUAD YAHA

The 24-year old winger rejoined the Dragons at the start of the 2019 campaign, after having a short spell in rugby urion. He originally came through the Club's youth system playing Under 19s and Reserve Team rugby before he made his 1st Team debut in 2015. Fouad was named as Catalans' Young Player of the Year' in his first full season in the 1st Team in 2016 and since then he has continued to improve. Originally from Avignon, he has become a prolific try scorer, scoring 70 tries in his 115 appearances for the club. In 2017, Yaha was selected to play for France in the World Cup and he made appearances against Lebanon, Australia and Frantand

KEY STATS HIGHEST HOME WIN 56-10

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ALL MATCHES [EXCLUDING FRIENDLIES]

	P	W	D	L	F	A
HOME	20	15	0	5	690	341
AWAY	19	10	0	9	437	404
NEUTRAL	2	1	0	1	46	43
TOTAL	41	26	0	15	1173	788

PREVIOUS LEAGUE ENCOUNTERS

	P	W	D	L	F	A
HOME	16	11	0	5	514	309
AWAY	18	9	0	9	367	398
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A LOOK BACK AT SOME MEMORIES AGAINST TODAY'S OPPONENTS...

BY CLUB HISTORIAN - ALEX SERVICE

Images from two matches against this evening's opponents. A tale of two banners, you might say!



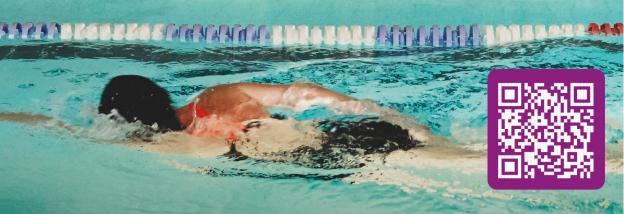


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KEVIN NAIQAMA

Centre Kevin Naiqama will leave the Club at the end of the 2021 season and return home to Australia to spend time with his family.

Naiqama, 32, joined the Club ahead of the 2019 season having signed from NRL Club, the Wests Tigers. He has gone on to make 68 appearances so far for the Saints, scoring 35 tries, winning back-to-back Super League crowns and more recently, the Betfred Challenge Cup.

And half way through his third season here in England, the Fijian Flyer has decided to head home, with his new-born baby and his family a key priority after a difficult 18 months due to the pandemic.

Kevin has released the following statement:

"Firstly, I want to thank Eamonn McManus, Mike Rush, Justin Holbrook and Kristian Woolf who all played a part in giving me the chance to play for this historic Club.

"Woolfie and my teammates have all been great with me since I arrived and I couldn't have wished to spend my time here with a better group of players.

"Winning back-to-back Super League titles is something I never thought I would experience over here and to top it off with the Challenge Cup was unreal.

"Off the field times have been tough for everyone. On a personal note, my wife Lily gave birth to our first born recently. I had to experience the birth of my daughter through FaceTime – in a hospital car park. It's been the hardest years we have faced as a couple, especially with my wife having to go through that on her own and it naturally caused a lot of traumas for the both of us.

"On the back of that, both myself and my wife's mental health were affected, but I want to thank the Club Welfare team of Paul Johnson and Dave Kirk for helping us through it.

"I also want to personally thank my wife for her strength in getting through it, without our family to support us. I can't thank her enough for the sacrifices she has made which has enabled me to dream and continue to play professional rugby league and finish off the season here at St Helens.

"I finally want to thank the St Helens fans, who have shown love to me and my family. I'm certainly going to miss St Helens and the community. I want to wish the Club all the best in the future, but my focus now is to end with a third Super League crown."

Head Coach Kristian Woolf added: "I am really proud of Kev and Lily for the way they have handled themselves through some real challenging circumstances. Everyone can understand how difficult it must have been for them over here and having to go through that by themselves.

"Most people in their position would have most likely knocked on my door and asked to go home early, but I am really proud of the fact they have shown that commitment and toughness as a couple to get through it and see out the rest of the year with us at St Helens. I am also really proud of the Club and the playing group in how they have supported Kev and Lily.

"I am really happy that Kev is going to be with us for the rest of the year and he is a big game player for us as his performances in the last few weeks have shown. He is also a real respected member of the team and is a leader. We really enjoy having him around and we would loved to have him for longer. What we do want to do is ensure we make the most of him being apart of our team for the rest of the season and make sure that he returns home with more memories of St Helens."

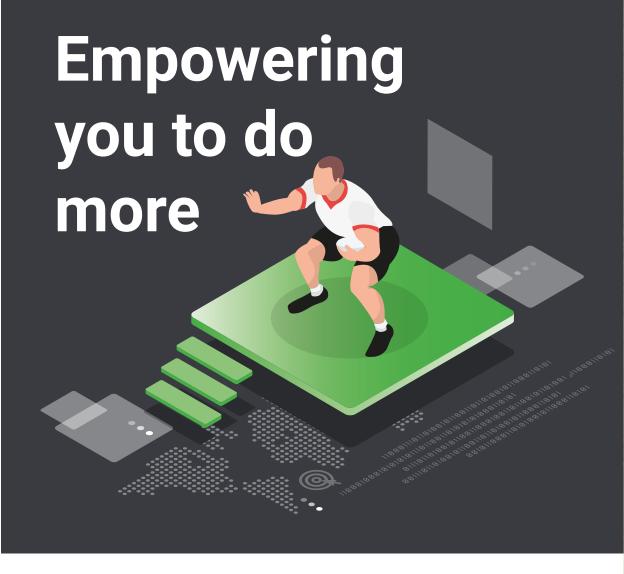
The Club fully respects Kevin's decision and we wish him well for the rest of the season and in his future endeavours.

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A LOOK BACK IN TIME FROM OUR CLUB HISTORIAN

BY CLUB HISTORIAN - ALEX SERVICE



FOR ENGLAND AND ST GEORGE

This evening we look at the England debuts of two St Helens-born favourites who had enjoyed an excellent 1955-56 season with the Saints. Flying winger Frank Carlton [England Heritage number #400 on the left of the photograph] and talented half-back John 'Todder' Dickinson [401] were members of the England team that lost 23-9 against France in the European Championship match at Stade de Gerland, Lyon, on 10th May 1956. It was 4-3 at half time. Carlton and Dickinson were two of six debutants, including Don Fox of Featherstone who partnered Dickinson in the halves. Carlton's centre was Oldham's Alan Davies. The England captain was the legendary Saints' front-rower Alan Prescott, who also led his club to Challenge Cup glory and Great Britain to a 2-1 series win against the visiting Kiwis in 1955-56.

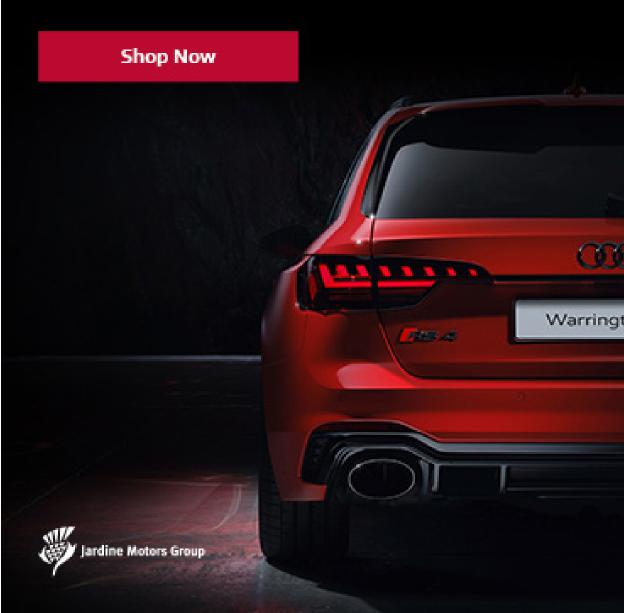
Unfortunately, England lost both their matches in the European Cup competition, the other 16-33 to Other Nationalities on 12th September 1955 in front of over 18,000 at Central Park, Wigan. It was to be the last

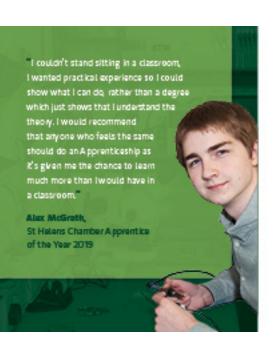
time the England team took the field until a friendly against France at Headingley, Leeds on 17th November 1962, when twelve players made their international debuts. But that's another story.

Although the match against the French had been the last match of the season for Carlton and Dickinson, it had been one of contrasting fortunes. Injury cruelly robbed Todder of a Wembley place against Halifax and Frank Carlton went on to score the vital try in Saints' first-ever Challenge Cup win. It was also Todder's one and only international appearance. Carlton went on to be selected for the 1958 Australian tour, but found international appearances to just one [v New Zealand in Auckland] as a result of the tremendous form of fellow wingers Mick Sullivan and Ike Southwood. Ironically, after 156 games for Saints and 129 tries, Frank was transferred to Wigan as part of the deal that took Sullivan to St Helens in 1961. After 160 appearances for St Helens, Todder played for Leigh and Rochdale Hornets before becoming coach of famous amateur outfit Pilkington Recs.



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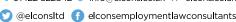
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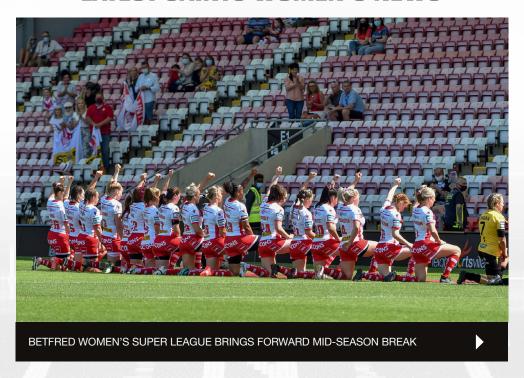


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LOAN NEWS: EAVES AND FOSTER RE-JOIN LEIGH ON LOAN

Josh Eaves and Matty Foster have both joined up with Leigh Centurions again on one week loan deals.

Eaves and Foster linked up with Leigh earlier in the season and will both re-join with the moves reviewed on a week-to-week basis.

Foster has recovered from his double jaw fracture and, alongside Eaves, will look to feature this week as Leigh host Hull KR on Sunday.

Good luck to both Saints!



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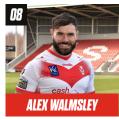




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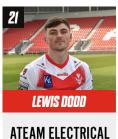
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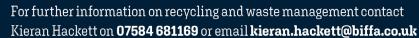
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DATE	OPPONENTS	COMP	٧	Ħ	ATT	POS			
MARCH									
26	SALFORD RED DEVILS	SL * - 6.00pm	Н	29 - 26	BCD	1			
APRIL									
	HULL KR	SL ** - 8.15pm	A	0 - 25	BCD	1			
10	LEEDS RHINOS	CC3	Н	26 - 18	BCD	1			
16	WAKEFIELD TRINITY	SL - 6.00pm	Н	34-6	BCD	1			
22	HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS	SL - 7.45PM	A	10 - 18	BCD	1			
30	LEIGH CENTURIONS	SL-6.00PM	A	12 - 22	BCD	1			
MAY									
	HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS SKY	CCQF*- 8:15pm	Н	23 - 18	BCD	1			
17	SALFORD RED DEVILS	SL	Н	28 - 0	4000	1			
22	CATALANS DRAGONS	SL	A	20 - 16	1000	1			
28	HULL FC SKY	SL	Н	34 - 16	4000	1			
JUNE									
5	HULL FC	CCSF	N	18 - 33	2500				
11	LEEDS RHINOS	SL	A	P-P		2			
17	WARRINGTON WOLVES SKY	SL	Н	2-6	4000	2			
25	HULL KR	SL	A	P-P		2			
30	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	SL	A	0 - 24		2			

^{* -} Emerald Headingley Stadium | ** - Totally Wicked Stadium *** - Magic Weekend, St. James' Park

DATE	OPPONENTS	COMP	V	FT	ATT	POS	
JULY							
4	WIGAN WARRIORS	SL	Н	24-6	4,000	2	
11	WAKEFIELD TRINITY	SL	A	14 - 30		2	
17	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	CCF	N	12 - 26	45,000	2	
23	HULL KR	SL	Н	P-P		2	
28	HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS	SL	Н	P-P		2	
AUGUST							
2	HULL FC	SL	A	10 - 42	7,038	2	
	CATALANS DRAGONS	SL	Н				
13	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	SL	Н				
20	WIGAN WARRIORS	SL	A				
26	LEIGH CENTURIONS	SL	Н				
30	WARRINGTON WOLVES	SL	A				
SEPTEMBER							
4	CATALANS DRAGONS SKY	SL - 5.15PM***	N				
10	LEEDS RHINOS	SL	Н				
17	SALFORD RED DEVILS	SL	A				
24		SLEP0					
OCTOBER							
	-	SLPOSF					
9		SLGF	N				







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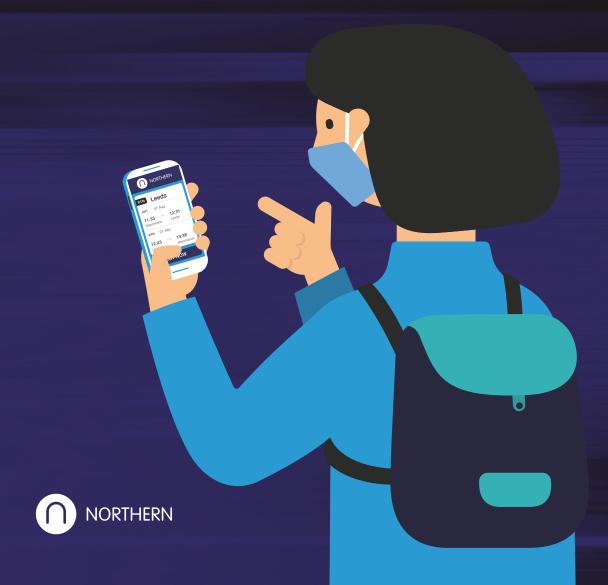
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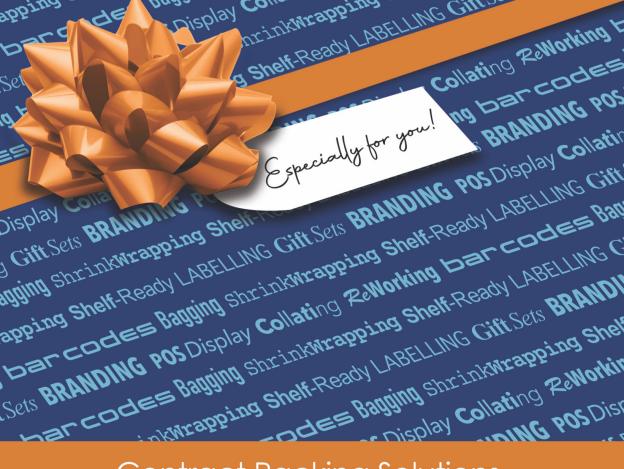




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