

From "The Citizen" Saturday 12 October 1929:

JACK STEPHENS' MIGRATION NORTH

OLDHAM'S OFFER TOO TEMPTING

"W.B." was able to give exclusive information to "Citizen" readers on Wednesday that J. Stephens, the Gloucester three-quarter, had decided to accept Oldham's offer to go North. The news created no little sensation in Rugby circles in Gloucester and district.

Exit Jack Stephens from Rugby Union football. When the ex-Gloucester player turned down Oldham's offer to sign on for the Rugby League club I formed the opinion that negotiations would not end there. On Tuesday, Stephens visited Manchester, and before he left it was practically settled he would join the Lancashire Club. The actual signing of the document took place in Gloucester on Wednesday night, and the bargain clinched. No one blames Stephens for accepting such tempting terms - £550 down, employment at his profession at a good wage, with every prospect of improving his position, and payment for playing each week. I understand the engagement signed is for three years.

Stephens had three years with Gloucester, and topped the list of scorers last season when he was credited with 20 tries. A strong individualist, he played a number of fine games and reached his best form in the two matches with Newport. But there were occasions when he was "moody" and his play consequently suffered. Oldham have picked up Stephens at an age when he should be of great value to the club - he is not yet 21. He has the necessary physique and ability to make good, though he will probably find the Rugby League game faster and more strenuous. He is the fourth Gloucester player to join the Oldham team, his predecessors being Willie Hall, D. Holland, A. Wood, and G. Cook. Hall is still in business in Oldham, and I was informed Wood is employed at the same works where Stephens has secured his appointment. George Cook has passed on, and Dave Holland has returned to his native city.

Now that Stephens has definitely embraced professionalism, I hope the controversy regarding his unfortunate breach with the City Club will be closed and forgotten. That it caused a certain amount of unrest amongst players and supporters cannot be denied, but I am sure a good deal of misunderstanding existed as to the real facts. No one will convince me that the members of the Committee have any object other than the best interests of the Club. Decisions have to be taken which might not meet with unanimous approval, but as I pointed out previously, it would be impossible to carry on the Club if individual opinions were allowed to rule. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasised, and if players and followers will realise the true position, loyally support the Committee, and put Club interests first and always, there should be no question of any "incidents" in the future.