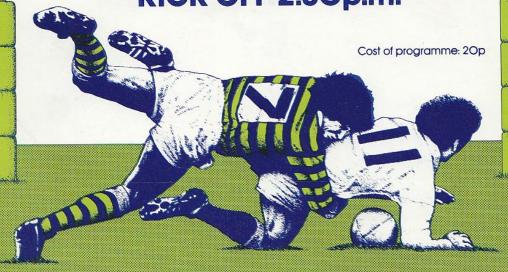
Rugby Football Union THORN EMI CHAMPIONSHIP

YORKSHIRE V GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Saturday 9th October 1982
HEADINGLEY R.U.F.C.
KIRKSTALL
KICK OFF 2.30p.m.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As a player, I recall vividly after dinner and A.G.M. speeches by leading administrators referring to rugby football as "a game for the players". There have been times in recent seasons when I have wondered whatever happened to that dream.

I have watched club fixture lists grow from the 30 to 35 matches of pre-war seasons to the 50 or even 60 matches of the present time, thanks to motorways and floodlights. I have seen selections at international level mushroom with "B" teams, Colts/Youth, Squad weekends, Under 23, Students, and recently proposals for an Under 21 level.

There have been Regional and Divisional sides, an ever increasing number of tours inwards and outwards, midweek County friendly matches, and a County Championship which last season started with a Wednesday afternoon encounter in the South East on September 30th and straggled on to the Semi Finals day on Saturday November 28th. On November 21st we experienced the play-off between the winners of the Southern and South-Western Groups on the same day as England B played France B in the only B International of the season. In all 15 different days were employed in operating the oldest and most senior of the Rugby Football Union's competitions, and nine of them were Saturdays. Rugby's fixture list was in a mess. Worse still in my book, we were putting more demands on our amateur players, who like me, still have a job of work to hold down in difficult economic times, by using six mid-week days.

Frankly I have great sympathy for the player. Have we not asked too much of him?

The clubs too, have rightly screamed, feeling the pressures as their better players have more and more been taken from their clubs.

To help both players and their clubs, we have scrapped the Regional sides, and the Divisional Championship which was too remote from local support, and concentrated on the County Championship. It will be played on fixed dates on Saturdays to assist Fixure Secretaries, and we have limited the demands on clubs to five Saturdays in the season, and the use of no mid-week days. A reduction from fifteen to five in the number of days involved, to the advantage of player and senior club alike.

Change is not made lightly and not without inconvenience, even from worse to better, and it is natural to get strong reactions, but I believe the changes to be right.

This newly reconstructed County Championship is an exciting prospect. I wish it well and ask for the support of all clubs and all players. It allows rugby to retain that ladder which any player may climb from the newest and humblest club right through to an England jersey at full international level.

It will help reduce the demands on our players and thereby make the amateur principle that much easier to administer and support.

It should – and this is entirely within the province of our senior clubs – enable them to work in the closest harmony with their own localities and develop as true rugby centres to the betterment of the game in general and of themselves in particular.

Thank you THORN EMI for your patience and your support, and congratulations on your commercial sagacity and business acumen. You clearly know a good thing when you see it.

J. V. SMITH

PRESIDENT RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

A NEW CHALLENGE

THE RUGBY UNION'S 75th President, Gloucestershire's John Smith, or "J.V." as he is often called, made an appropriate reference to this season's new-style county championship at the July annual general meeting in London where he called on all clubs to support it and asked the top players to enrich it by their presence.

This latest "babe" has had a long and difficult labour, whether the senior clubs like it or not it is a fact of life and as the R.U.'s major competition must be made to work with co-operation and goodwill on all sides.

Yes, as you may guess, I am a believer in the club-county-country syndrome and have been a supporter of county Rugby since my young days in Somerset when the thought of winning a county cap probably represented the pinnacle of most youngsters' careers.

The THORN EMI Championship is not, in my book, just for the small band of elite players at the top, but it is also for the 500 and more other players and replacements who will be competing this winter. And all the future players, too.

Of course, the revised system and its revolutionary league structure, with promotion and relegation, is designed to produce, we hope, better and better England teams and while some counties may regret the passing of old traditional fixtures, for the rest the changed formula gives them a fresh injection and challenge. Many top players in the Midlands and the South-East used to complain of "the old midweek bore" and demanded a national league framework. Now they have been given it. They should make it tick.

There are criticisms naturally and anomalies in player qualification. I hope the Rugby Union will iron them out in due course. I think it is deplorable that because of entrenched and selfish interests, certain clubs have said that they will not allow their grounds to be used for Saturday THORN EMI Championship matches and have implied that their players might not be available for the county side. In a so-called democratic amateur game how's that for dictatorship?!! I hope they will soon see the errors of their ways and recognise their responsibility to Rugby. West Country clubs like Bristol and Gloucester, Northern clubs like Sale and Gosforth have for donkeys years juggled their fixtures around Saturday County Championship Matches. Why can't the five senior Midland Clubs who have not made their grounds available for this season's THORN EMI Championship matches do the same?

The Championship's detractors, all paddling their own canoes, may think that the tournament will gradually die off because of the changes. It's been a long time dying! The Rugby Union, I have no doubt, will be determined to make it succeed. The game is greater than a club or a player, however distinguished. It should also be remembered that the sponsors, THORN EMI, have increased their original allotment of £150,000 to £210,000 in renewing their three-year agreement with the R.F.U. They, too, deserve encouragement for their financial support.

The national selectors, as in the past, will be keeping a close eye on the THORNEMI Championship. I wonder if Bill Beaumont himself would ever have achieved such international and world-wide recognition but for Lancashire? And there are hosts of other internationals and trialists who might well have languished in the obscurity of club football but for their development through the county system.

You may argue that playing for a first-class club like Moseley or Leicester will give a higher standard of football than, say, turning out for Leicestershire against Hertfordshire in League 2. And you may be right. But why not help your county get into League 1? Promotion and relegation is soon going to sort out the sheep from the goats.

As I have said before the minds of potential international players would be wonderfully concentrated if it was suggested that to play for England you were expected to play in the THORN EMI Championship. But then that might smack of dictatorship!

JOHN REED RUGBY CORRESPONDENT SUNDAY EXPRESS



Lancashire, last year's victorious county in the old style THORN EMI County Championship with Terry Morris, stand-in Captain for the day after Billy Beaumont was injured, holding the THORN EMI Trophy, together with Steve Smith who then went on to captain England after Beaumont's retirement from the game.

THORN EMI COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

GLOUCESTERSHIRE YORKSHIRE ŧ 15 P. CUE (Bristol) 15 D. NORTON (Headingley) Threequarters Right - Wing - Left 14 J. CARR (Bristol) REPRITCHARD 14 M. HARRISON (Wakefield) 13 A. J. MORLEY (Bristol) 13 B. BARLEY Wakefield Right - Centre - Left 12 R. KNIBBS (Bristol) 12 S. TOWNEND (Wakefield) Left - Centre - Right Left - Wing - Right Half-backs Stand Off 11 R. HOGG (Gloucester) M. PRICE 11 R. UNDERWOOD (Middlesbrough) 10 D. SORRELL (Bristol) 10 A. OLD (Sheffield) 9 R. HARDING (Bristol) Scrum Forwards Prop 9 H. JARZYNA (Morley) 1 J. DOUBLEDAY (Bristol) 1 P. HUNTSMAN (Headingley) Hooker 2 K. BOGIRA (Bristol) 2 P. LAZENBY (Morley) 3 P. BLAKEWAY (Gloucester) (Capt.) Prop 3 R. AUCKLAND (Huddersfield) 4 S. BOYLE (Gloucester) Lock 4 H. COOPER (Halifax) 5 J. ORWIN (Gloucester) Lock 5 R. WALTERS (Huddersfield) Blind Side 6 J. GADD (Gloucester) 6 S. TIPPING (Roundhay) 7 M. RAFTER (Bristol) 7 P. BUCKTON (Liverpool) Open Side 8 R. HESFORD (Bristol) 8 J. ELLISON (Headingley) No. 8 Replacements Replacements Referee: L. M. PRIDEAUX 16 J. KOUFARIS (Bristol) 16 A. MASON (Roundhay) (North Midlands) 17 K. WHITE (Gloucester) 17 A. HICKEN (Sheffield)

Touch Judge: M. de V. ROBERTS (Yorkshire Society)

Touch Judge: C. ANNETTS (Gloucester Society)

THORN EMI COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

YORKSHIRE v. GLOUCESTERSHIRE 1982–83

Today Yorkshire open their County Championship season against a County with whom contact has rarely been made in the history of County Championships.

The first encounter in a County game was a Final at Gloucester in season 1909–10 when Gloucestershire won by 4G–1T to 0. Then in 1920 the two teams met at Bradford; once again Gloucestershire were winners by 27 points to 0. However, in 1960–61 Gloucestershire invited Yorkshire as a Guest County to their Golden Jubilee game at Cheltenham, score 10 points to Nil, played on a day of ceaseless wind and rain, readily remembered by Oliver Grieveson, Roger Sangroin and Bev Dovey (Roundhay and Lydney). Over the years Gloucestershire have won the County Championship 13 times and Yorkshire 8 times.

Three Gloucestershire men have been President of the Rugby Football Union. Presently John V. Smith is President; in 1960–61 the legendary Tom Voyce served and in the period 1929–31 Walter T. Pearce served the Union for a unique 3 years. A most remarkable fellow, he was chief guest at a Yorkshire County Dinner, where he presented County caps awarded to 40 players during the previous five seasons. Many supporters today will remember David Rollitt, Barnsley G.S., Barnsley, Wakefield and England, who made a quite tremendous contribution to the success of Gloucestershire and Bristol during the period 1961–78.

What of today? We in Yorkshire, as always, hope and look for the best. Maybe we didn't make a very auspicious start against Durham but, with a changed side and probably a greater eagerness and led by the perennial Alan Old; a very useful Ulster side was held to a draw at Ravenhill. With a number of further changes there should be a greater forward drive, a more incisiveness in the backs, and then we should go away from Headingley happy.

In any case, all you Yorkshire supporters, let the Yorkshire team know you are present by your vocal support. Teams don't give of their best in a vacuum, our team has great spirit, ability and a desire to play hard to win. You do your part.

ALAN OLD

All supporters I am sure will congratulate Alan Old on his appointment as Divisional Technical Administrator for the Northern Division. Good luck.

THORN EMI COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP 1982—83

This season brings with it a new style County Championship to be played for the THORN/EMI Trophy. It will be the competition's fifth format since the first year in 1889 when Yorkshire were declared champions.

THE NEW FORMAT

- 1. The 27 participating Counties have been allocated into four Leagues as a result of their performances in the 'Old' Competition last season 81-82.
- 2. Only Counties in League 1 can become the new County Champions, but there is a system of promotion and relegation which will ultimately allow any County to take the Championship provided they first gain promotion to League 1.
- 3. Each of Leagues 1, 2 & 3 has been drawn into two groups of four teams and each group will play off over four Saturdays to arrive at a final order of merit which will determine promotion and relegation.
- 4. There are only three teams in League 4 and they will play each other on a home and away basis over six Saturdays.

THE LEAGUES	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
League 1.	Gloucestershire Lancashire North Midlands Yorkshire	Middlesex Notts., Lincs., & Derbys. Somerset Surrey
League 2.	Cornwall Durham Kent Northumberland	Devon East Midlands Hertfordshire Leicestershire
League 3.	Cumbria Dorset & Wilts. Hampshire Warwickshire	Cheshire Eastern Counties Staffordshire Sussex
League 4.	Berkshire : Buckinghamshire : Oxfordshire.	

FIXTURES, LEAGUE 1.

Oct. 9th Lancashire v. North Midlands Yorkshire v. Gloucestershire (Headingley)

Middlesex v. Surrey Notts., Lincs. & Derbys. v. Somerset

Oct. 23rd Gloucester v. North Midlands Yorkshire v. Lancashire (at Otley)

Notts., Lincs. & Derbys. v. Middlesex Somerset v. Surrey

Nov. 13th Lancashire v. Gloucestershire North Midlands v. Yorkshire (Stourbridge)

Nov. 27th SEMI-FINALS

(a) Winners Group 1 v. Runners-up Group 2.

(b) Winners Group 2 v. Runners-up Group 1.

The bottom two sides in each Group will also play off for the two relegations.

The new format will inevitably create changes. In every game there will be something to play for. For some counties there will, regrettably, be a loss of some traditional games and a break in friendships generated over many years. Additionally there will be travel problems with their strain on players and officials and a possible diminution of support from members and other supporters. The refusal of some clubs to grant the use of their facilities or making players unavailable is deeply regretted.

Let us accept these changes in the spirit they have been made. The new championship is an exciting prospect and operating nationwide with annual promotion and relegation a real competitive spur has been provided for our Rugby game in England.

Remember our Rugby Union Motto: "Rugbeia Floreat Ubique"