

Theme 6

Hall of Fame

Pupil Resource Sheet 3

Stanley Moorhouse



Born in Huddersfield in 1891, Stanley Moorhouse played northern union rugby football from an early age.

Brought up in the Birkby area of Huddersfield, he was in the Hillhouse Council School team at the age of nine and later moved up to play for Hillhouse Congregational Intermediates. This team was based at his local Sunday School.

Stanley's speed and ball-handling ability soon attracted the attention of the nearby Huddersfield club, which played at Fartown. He soon progressed from Huddersfield's 'A' (second) team to make his first team debut at Dewsbury on 18th December 1909,

playing at stand-off. He also played centre in some early games before settling into the position in which he made his name, on the left wing.

Inside him on the left side of Huddersfield's attack was the greatest player of the time, Harold Wagstaff. Wagstaff's brilliant runs and superbly timed passes gave Stanley many try-scoring opportunities. During the 1911-12 season these two players scored 212 points between them. With Gleeson and Rosenfeld equally deadly on the right wing, Huddersfield became the best and highest scoring team of their day.

Stanley's first trophy came on 25th November 1911 when Huddersfield beat Hull Kingston Rovers 22-10 in the Yorkshire Cup Final at Wakefield, Stanley scoring a try. Seven days later he added three more tries as Huddersfield beat the Australian tourists 21-7 before 17,066 spectators at Fartown.

By the end of the season Stanley had two more trophies, the Yorkshire League title, followed by the League Championship as Wigan were beaten 13-5 in the final. A key player in Huddersfield's success, Stanley played the first of his five matches for Yorkshire in 1912, scoring three tries in each of his first two games, against Lancashire and Cumberland.

Huddersfield were again on course for three trophies in 1912-13. The Yorkshire League was followed by the League Championship, when Stanley's try helped trounce Wigan 29-2, leaving just the Challenge Cup Final. Opponents Warrington took an early lead, but Stanley rescued Huddersfield, scoring all nine points with three tries as they came from behind to win 9-5.



1913 Challenge Cup Final: Stanley, with long stride, makes a break on the left, carrying the ball on the blind side of the defender, who he fends off with his other hand.

In 1913-14 this great Huddersfield side had to settle for just two trophies – the Yorkshire Cup and the Yorkshire League. Huddersfield were expected to make it three championships in a row, but were surprisingly beaten 5-3 in the final by Salford at Headingley.

Then came the season for which The Team of all Talents is remembered, 1914-15. War had been declared on Germany in August 1914, but the rugby and football seasons went ahead as the war was expected 'to be over by Christmas'. No-one had any idea how long and dreadful it would be.

As casualties began to return from the front, Huddersfield's northern union team helped to keep spirits up in the town.

The Yorkshire Cup was retained with a 31-0 defeat of Hull in the final. The Yorkshire

League followed. Leeds were beaten 35-2 in the Championship Final, leaving just the Challenge Cup Final against St Helens. Huddersfield won another one-sided match 37-3, becoming only the second team, after Hunslet in 1908, to win all four trophies in one season. Only Swinton, in 1928, have done since.

Huddersfield's great team had an average age of 25 in 1915. When post-war rugby started in 1919 their best years were behind them, but they still had a little left, winning the first two post-war Yorkshire Cups and the 1919-20 Yorkshire League and Challenge Cup. Another four trophies in a season looked likely until Hull beat them 3-2 in the Championship Final at Headingley.

Stanley played for England three times, the highlight the four tries he ran in against Wales at Plymouth in 1913. This is an England record for one game that he shares with five other players, including greats Keith Fielding and Martin Offiah.

Stanley also went on the 1914 British Lions tour of Australia and New Zealand, winning his first Lions cap and scoring two tries as Australia were beaten 23-5 at Sydney. His second cap came against New Zealand in Auckland, when two more tries were crucial to the Lions' narrow 16-13 win.

A broken arm denied Stanley a second Lions tour in 1920.

Stanley shared a joint benefit match with Arthur Swinden in 1922 but the crowd and gate receipts – £322 – were disappointing. He asked to be transferred and in 1923 moved to Bradford Northern as player/coach, but played only five matches for them.

On retiring from playing he refereed in the Yorkshire Senior Competition and later returned to Huddersfield to coach the second team.

Stanley's other job, besides playing rugby, was foreman-electrician at the Great Northern Street Works of Huddersfield's Passenger Transport Department, where he worked from 1906 and through both world wars. He also played local amateur cricket for Primrose Hill and Huddersfield.

Writing in *The Sports Post* in 1935, Harold Wagstaff paid this tribute to Stanley:

'Moorhouse would have been a great wing-man in any team ... he had a big match temperament and I could always depend on him.

More than that I could tell to a few inches whether he would score, and it was very seldom indeed that he let me down when I gave him a pass ...

Moorhouse going at top speed could kick in his stride – the ball just left his hands for his

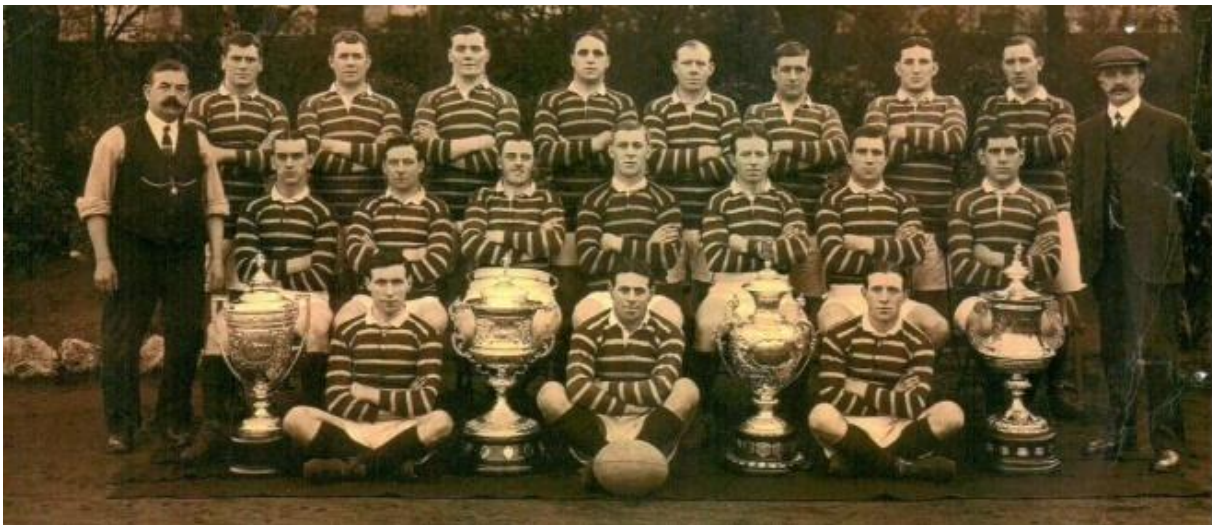
feet and shot away in front: but there was no slackening of Stanley's speed.

He could kick through on the ground for himself ... and when he kicked across for his forwards it was rare indeed that he did not find them there waiting for the move.'

Stanley died suddenly at his home in Almondbury on 23rd April, 1951. He was 59.

Stanley Moorhouse: Playing Record

Team	Matches	Tries	Goals	Points
Huddersfield	255	240	1	722
Bradford N	5	0	0	0
Lions (Tests)	2	4	0	12
Lions (Tour)	8	15	0	45
England	3	7	0	21
Yorkshire	5	8	0	24
Other	1	2	0	6
Totals	279	276	1	830



Huddersfield NURFC 1914-15

*Back: A Lee; JW Higson; H Banks; E Jones; E Heyes; F Longstaff; D Clark; A Swinden
Middle: A Bennett (trainer); R Habron; M Holland; **S Moorhouse**; H Wagstaff (captain); T
Gleeson; G Todd; B Gronow; H Bennett (assistant trainer)
Front: Yorkshire League Cup; WH Ganley; Northern Rugby League Cup; AA Rosenfeld; Northern
Union Challenge Cup; JH Rogers; Yorkshire Challenge Cup*