

# MINERS

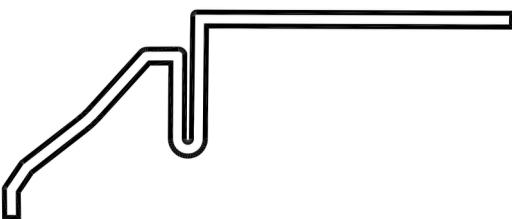
LEIGH MINERS RANGERS

WEEKLY PREVIEW

SATURDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY - ISSUE 1



# MAIN SPONSORS



Chassis and Cab  
Specialists Ltd



# COMMITTEES WELCOME

**LEIGH MINERS ARLFC**  
**TWIST LANE**  
**WN7 4EF**

**CHAIRMAN** - MICK FAIRHURST  
**VICE CHAIRMAN** - STEVE QUINN

**COMMITTEE** - JACKIE LEWIS, GABI LEIGH, KATIE PARTINGTON, PAULA TURNER, MINA PATEL, RICK SOUTHERN, JOHN SWEENEY, DEAN BALMER, DAVE ROWLAND, KEV HATTERSLEY, ANDY COSTELLO, DARRYL KAY

**PROGRAMME EDITOR** - GABI LEIGH

**HEAD COACHES** - DAVE ROWLAND, DEAN BALMER, CRAIG WINGFIELD, KEV HATTERSLEY, GAZ BURROWS

**SAFEGUARDING OFFICER** - GENNA BANKS

**GROUNDSMAN** - RICK SOUTHERN

On behalf of the Committee, a very warm welcome to all players, sponsors, and supporters for what promises to be another action-packed week at Leigh Miners Rangers.

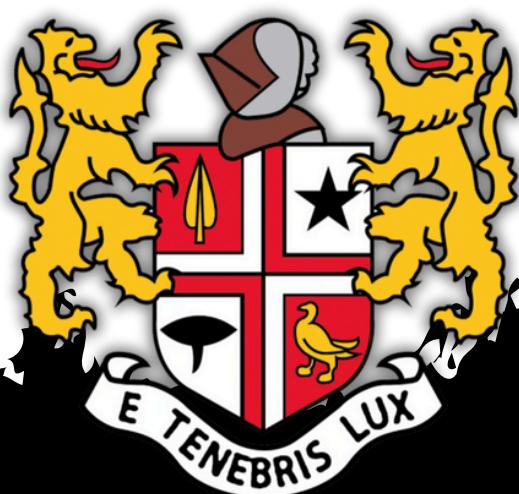
Whether you are a lifelong regular or visiting us for the first time, we are thrilled to have you here. This week's preview highlights the incredible breadth of talent across our club, featuring updates from our Men's, Ladies', and Under 18s setups.

The hard work being put in on the training pitch during pre-season is evident across all age groups, and as a committee, we couldn't be prouder of the standards being set.

Running a club of this size is a massive team effort. We'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to our sponsors and the army of volunteers who keep the kits clean, the burgers flipping, and the turnstiles moving.

Work continues around the club both on and off the field, and we're always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you can spare a bit of time to help out please speak to a member of the committee - all help is always appreciated.

**The Leigh Miners Rangers Committee**



# PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

## ROBYN BELL-SOPPELSA

**NICKNAME - BOBBY**

**AGE - 29**

**POSITION - ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE**

**OCCUPATION - CBT THERAPIST**

**WHICH RUGBY TEAM DO YOU SUPPORT?**

Leighhhh

**WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLAYER?**

Edwin Ipape

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PLAYING STYLE?**

Having a lack of consideration for my body

**WHICH TEAM MATE WOULD YOU LEAST LIKE TO BE TACKLED BY?**

Nev because she flies out the line like a slingshot

**WHICH TEAM MATE WOULD YOU HATE TO BE STUCK IN A LIFT WITH?**

Gabi because we talk too much

**WHAT IS YOUR PRE MATCH HYPE SONG?**

Discoland

**IF YOU WERE AN ANIMAL WHAT WOULD YOU BE?**

An eagle because I sound like one when I laugh

**WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT LEIGH MINERS?**

The community

**WHAT'S THE WORST THING ABOUT LEIGH MINERS?**

The roof (donate please)

**WHAT WAS YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING RUGBY MOMENT?**

I ran into touch ??? I was new what can I say

**WHICH TEAM ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO PLAYING?**

Rochdale because a few former team mates play there and I need bragging rights

**WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS FOR 2026?**

Make the play off, don't get injured in the process



# OFF SEASON ROUND-UPS



## NCL FIRST TEAM

AS WE STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF A "REIMAGINED" 2026 CAMPAIGN, THE OFF-SEASON AT TWIST LANE HAS BEEN ONE OF FOCUSED PREPARATION AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO THE STANDARDS THAT DEFINE LEIGH MINERS.

THE OFF SEASON HAS SEEN SOME CHANGES FOR OUR MEN, WITH DEAN BALMER JOINING THE NCL COACHING TEAM.

THE RFL'S 2026 RESTRUCTURE SEES US COMPETING IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE NATIONAL DIVISION ONE. WE FACE A MIX OF OLD RIVALS AND FRESH CHALLENGES, INCLUDING A STANDOUT HOME OPENER AGAINST PILKINGTON RECS ON SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH.

## NWML ALLIANCE TEAM

THE MEN'S ALLIANCE TEAM REMAINS A COMPETITIVE FORCE IN THE NORTH WEST MEN'S LEAGUE (NWML) AND A CRUCIAL BRIDGE FOR PLAYERS TRANSITIONING INTO SENIOR RUGBY. FOLLOWING A HARD-FOUGHT 2025 CAMPAIGN WHICH WAS FINISHED STRONGLY, SEES OUR ALLIANCE MOVE UP A DIVISION FOR THE 2026 SEASON.

THIS OFF-SEASON, THE ALLIANCE SQUAD HAS BENEFITED FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CRAIG WINGFIELD AS THE NEW HEAD COACH AND A HIGH RETENTION RATE OF EXPERIENCED PLAYERS. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF LAST YEAR'S SUCCESSFUL UNDER 18S HAVE MADE THE PERMANENT JUMP TO THE ALLIANCE RANKS.

## UNDER 18S

THE UNDER 18S OFF-SEASON HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE IN RECENT MEMORY. FOLLOWING A 2025 SEASON WHERE THE SQUAD SHOWED FLASHES OF BRILLIANCE IN THE NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUES, THE FOCUS OVER THE WINTER HAS BEEN ON BRIDGING THE GAP TO SENIOR RUGBY WHILST ALSO EXPANDING TO TWO COMPETITIVE TEAMS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LEIGH MINERS HISTORY. DEAN BALMER CONTINUES AS HEAD COACH, WHILST GAZ BURROWS TAKES CHARGE OF THE NEWLY FORMED UNDER 18S GOLDS.



# OFF SEASON ROUND-UPS



## LADIES TEAM

THE 2025/26 OFF-SEASON HAS BEEN A LANDMARK PERIOD FOR THE LEIGH MINERS LADIES, AS THE SQUAD PREPARES FOR LIFE IN THE NEWLY STRUCTURED WOMEN'S NORTHERN LEAGUE 1.

THE BIGGEST NEWS THIS WINTER IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR COACHING DEPARTMENT. WE ARE DELIGHTED TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY WITH THE SAME DEDICATED COACHING STAFF FROM LAST YEAR, ENSURING THAT THE FOUNDATIONS AND SYSTEMS BUILT LAST SEASON REMAIN IN PLACE.

ADDING TO THAT WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE, WE ARE THRILLED TO WELCOME KIRSTY MILLINGTON TO THE COACHING TEAM. A FORMER MINERS STANDOUT AND CHAMPIONSHIP GRAND FINAL WINNER, KIRSTY HAS ALREADY MADE A HUGE IMPACT ON OUR PRE-SEASON SESSIONS.

WE KICK OFF THE YEAR WITH CHALLENGE SHIELD ACTION IN LATE MARCH BEFORE THE LEAGUE SEASON OFFICIALLY STARTS IN APRIL.

## MASTERS LADIES

THE OFF-SEASON HASN'T MEANT TIME OFF. THE MASTERS LADIES HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR WEDNESDAY NIGHT SESSIONS, PROVIDING A SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL OUTLET FOR PLAYERS AGED 30 AND OVER.

THE MASTERS SEASON IS LESS ABOUT THE SCOREBOARD AND MORE ABOUT THE MEMORIES MADE ON AND OFF THE PITCH.

WHETHER YOU'RE A FORMER PLAYER LOOKING TO GET YOUR BOOTS BACK ON OR A COMPLETE BEGINNER, THE LADIES' MASTERS SECTION IS PROOF THAT AT LEIGH MINERS RANGERS, YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO BE PART OF THE TEAM.

# OFF SEASON ROUND-UPS



# AMERICAN FOOTBALL

**2026 SEES US INTRODUCE A NEW SECTION AT LEIGH MINERS, WITH THE ADDITION OF THE LEIGH MINERS AMERICAN FOOTBALL CLUB.**

WHILE TWIST LANE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH RUGBY LEAGUE, THE LEIGH MINERS AMERICAN FOOTBALL TEAM HAS BEEN BUSY CARVING OUT THEIR OWN LEGACY. AFTER CONTINUING THEIR JOURNEY WITHIN THE BAFA (BRITISH AMERICAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION) LEAGUES, THE OFF-SEASON HAS BEEN A PERIOD OF HEAVY RECRUITMENT AND REBUILDING.

**THE MINERS ARE LOOKING TO MAKE A MASSIVE STATEMENT IN THE NFC 2 MIDLANDS THIS YEAR UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF HEAD COACH ANDY ASTRIDGE.**



# CHALLENGE CUP MATCH REVIEW

## MATCH REVIEW: CHALLENGE CUP ROUND 1

### **WIGAN ST JUDES 17 – 12 LEIGH MINERS RANGERS**

It was a classic "blood and thunder" local derby at Parsons Meadow as we narrowly exited the Challenge Cup in a physical Round 1 encounter. Originally scheduled for earlier in the month but postponed due to the winter weather, the delay did nothing to dampen the intensity of this rivalry.

The opening forty minutes were defined by brutal defensive sets and a literal "tug-of-war" for territory. Miners showed incredible resolve, keeping the hosts within reach as they headed into the sheds trailing by just two points, with the score at 6-4.

St Judes managed to find a clinical edge after the break. Despite Miners' creative efforts to break the line, Judes added 11 points through a mix of opportunistic tries and disciplined kicking.

The turning point came late in the game with Judes leading 16-10. Miners looked certain to score after an interception, but a heroic chase-down tackle from the hosts prevented what could have been a leveling try. Moments later, a composed drop goal from the Judes' stand-off pushed the gap to seven, ultimately sealing the Miners' fate despite a late push.

A game of incredibly fine margins. While the result didn't go our way, the grit shown to stay in the fight until the final whistle sets a strong foundation for the upcoming league campaign.

While the cup journey ends here for this year, the focus now shifts entirely to the league. If we can take the defensive intensity and add a touch more clinical finish in the final third, there is plenty to be optimistic about for the rest of the season.





## TODAYS OPPONENTS



### LADIES PRESEASON FRIENDLY

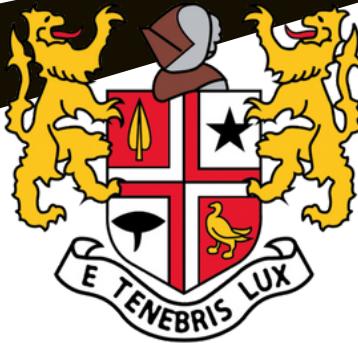
Today, we extend a very warm welcome to the players, staff, and supporters of the Manchester Swinton Lionesses. This afternoon's preseason friendly marks an exciting fixture against one of the most ambitious and rapidly evolving sides in the women's game.

The visitors arrive at Twist Lane sporting a fresh identity. Formerly known simply as the Swinton Lionesses, the club recently rebranded to Manchester Swinton Lionesses.

The Lionesses are coming off a stellar 2025 campaign that saw them lift the Challenge Shield and the Pankhurst Cup. Their clinical performance last season earned them a spot in the Women's National Championship for 2026, making them a formidable test for our Miners Ladies as we prepare for our own journey in Northern League 1.



# TEAM SHEET



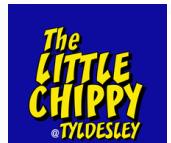
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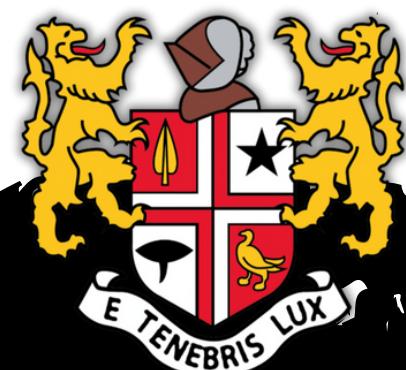
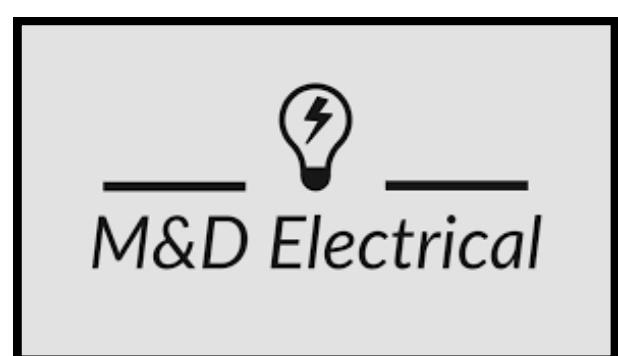
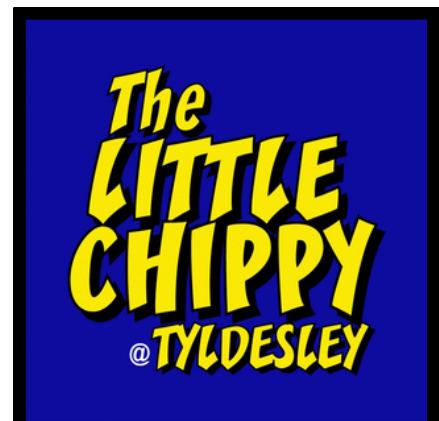
SUN 1<sup>ST</sup> FEB | 2:00PM KO  
LEIGH MINERS, TWIST LANE

- 1 GABI LEIGH
- 2 ELLIE WALSH
- 3 ROBYN BELL-SOPPELSEA
- 4 BOBBI ALLRED
- 5 GRACE RIDYARD
- 6 LILY JONES
- 7 NEVE COLEMAN
- 8 JESS FARRELL
- 9 RUBY BAILEY
- 10 NIAMH O'CONNOR
- 11 CHARLOTTE HILL
- 12 LOUISE BOARDMAN
- 13 VICKY ROSEVERE

- 14 CAITLIN MCARDLE
- 15 NEVE MULCROW
- 16 RUBY MAGUIRE
- 17 SARAH YOUNG
- 18 LOTTIE HALL
- 19 HANNAH O'NEILL
- 20 FREYA WISE



# A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR LADIES SPONSORS FOR THE 2026 SEASON



# 2026 LEIGH MINERS LADIES CALENDAR



■ HOME GAME

## FEBRUARY

01 2PM FRIENDLY



21 2PM CLIFF TAMOU MEMORIAL GAME



## APRIL

12 CUP TBC

19 2PM



26 2PM



2PM

## MARCH

22 CUP TBC

## MAY

29 CUP TBC

## JUNE

07 2PM



14 2PM



28 2PM



## AUGUST

02 2PM



09 2PM



16 2PM



## JULY

12 2PM

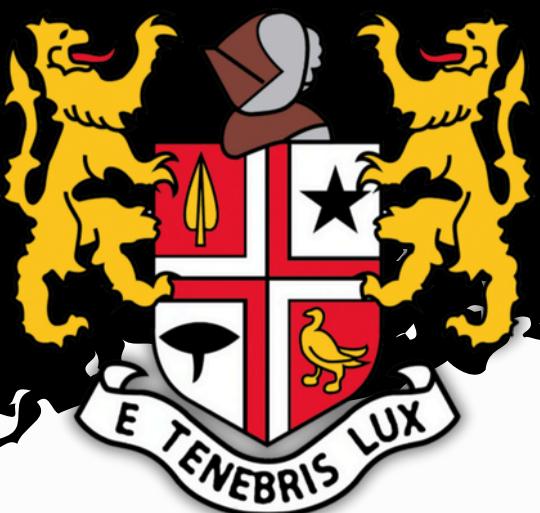


## SEPTEMBER

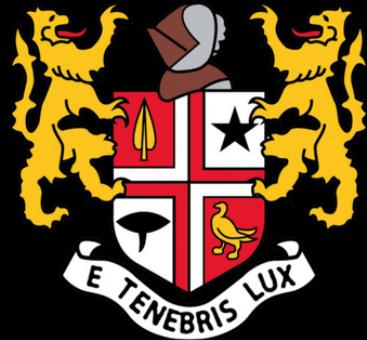
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# UPCOMING FIXTURES



**NWML ALLIANCE - PRESEASON FRIENDLY**  
**LEIGH MINERS VS HINDLEY STAGS**  
**SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**SUTTON PARK, WN7 2LZ**

## CHARITY MATCH IN HONOUR OF LEE LOMAX

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February



VS



**14:30 KO**

Golborne Parkside sports & Community Club  
Rivington Ave, Golborne,  
WA3 3HG

**£2 Admission**

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO:

**Pancreatic  
Cancer  
UK**