

NATIONAL LEAGUE 2 NORTH Saturday 7th December - Kick Off 2.30pm

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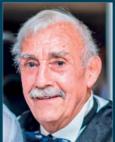
#### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – Keith Brierley

Hello, welcome to Preston Grasshoppers to today's opponents Hull RUFC and to visitors, guests, sponsors, coaches, players, ex-players, supporters and spectators for our latest home game of the season.

It gives me immense pride to be President of Preston Grasshoppers in our Sesquicentenary year and it seems only yesterday that I was celebrating our Centenary year as a 1st XV player, which has provided me with life long friendships and happy memories.

We have always had competitive games against Hull and I am sure that today, Hoppers will be doing all in their power to take advantage of the home fixture with a win to take us out of the relegation zone. Hopefully, today's game should offer some entertaining and competitive rugby, each team looking for the win to improve their position in the table for the rest of the season ahead.

This is my second year as President and I have been to some new destinations and met lots of new and interesting people from the various clubs that we



visited last season. Our success after promotion to League 2 North last season left us in a creditable 7th position in the league but this year we are looking to improve on that.

I feel I must thank Paul (Arnie) Arnold and his excellent coaching staff and not least the players who are all playing their part this season.

It has been a great honour and privilege to have served as your President and I am looking forward to carrying on in the same vein through this and next season. I would also like to thank all the army of staff and volunteers for their great work during the forthcoming season. Keith

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Front cover photo features a typical Ally Murray rampaging run during the game against Luctonians last weekend.

P.S. This is not a 'Spot the Ball' competition!

To see more 'Hoppers photos visit www.flickr.com/photos/mickcraig

#### **CLUB BLAZERS**

You may have noticed that there are plenty of club blazers on show at Hoppers matches. We are putting together requirements for a new order to the blazer manufacturers. The price of the first batch came in at £165 but there may be a slight increase in the cost. We'll need at least 10-12 orders before they will commence manufacture as all the original cloth was used up. If you are interested in purchasing a blazer please contact the club.

Tel: 01772 863546 or email: info@pgrfc.co.uk for further instructions.



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#### WHO'S WHO AT PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS ON MATCH DAYS

President: Keith Brierley Chairman: George Erdozain General Manager: Ben Hedley Match Day Coordinator: Ken Moore Fixture/Match Secretary: John Powell PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL VISITORS TO THE CLUB AND TRUST THAT YOU WILL ENJOY OUR FACILITIES AND THE GAME TODAY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

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#### **TODAY'S VISITORS - HULL RUFC**

A resurgent Hull RUFC are Preston Grasshoppers the visitors at Lightfoot Green today, who like our opponents last weekend have seen a recent turn around in fortunes. Hoppers had a date at Heath Road with Widnes RUFC in the Semi Final of the John Burgess Lancashire Cup last Saturday but with RFU Competitions taking preference, the tie will be played on the next available date. At the moment the first Saturday when both Preston Grasshoppers and Widnes have a free Saturday is scheduled be the 11th of April next year.

The other finalist after the game at Heath Road will be between Broughton Park and either Vale of Lune or Rochdale who are due to meet on the 25th of January to play their delayed Quarter Final game.

HULL R.U.F.C

Hull who were promoted as Champions of the Northern Premier League at the end of last season had an encouraging start to the season winning two of their three opening

games. A run of eight games without a victory dumped them down to the lower regions of the league before a most unexpected victory at the Woodlands steadied the fall and in turn knocked Fylde from their top-of-the-table perch. Whilst Hoppers were driven even deeper into the relegation mire last Saturday, failing to score a try for the first time since January last, our visitors had a comprehensive victory over bottom side Scunthorpe.

Preston Grasshoppers and Hull have on more than one occasion met with plenty to play for over the years. Hoppers supporters who travelled to Hull's previous home at Howarth Road for the first meeting between the two sides back in the 2004/5 season will recall a very similar state of affairs albeit at the other end of the league table. The situation before that game was a completely different affair to this weeks encounter, both sides were striving for promotion from North 1. Hoppers ended the season as Champions whilst it took Hull until 2009 to escape. Previous to this Saturday's meeting, the last encounter was also here at Lightfoot Green where a Hoppers victory eased them away from one of their closest rivals at the time and gave some breathing space at the top of the Northern Premier League.

The statistics tell us there have been seventeen meetings between the two clubs with Hoppers holding the upper hand, winning ten including one in a National Cup tie to Hull's five successes plus a couple of drawn affairs.

Digger (Mike Forshaw)

#### 200 UP

Congratulations to Ally Murray who made his 200th appearance for Hoppers for the 1st XV recently.

#### **1869 CLUB AWAY TRIP**

The 1869 Club are once again running a supporters coach next Saturday, this time to Otley for Hoppers next excursion and the team need all the support that can be mustered for what will be once again, an important game over in Yorkshire.

#### HOPPERS LOTTERY

This months lottery winners are: 1st prize - A J Whittaker - £88.54 2nd prize - Jim Moore - £35.41 3rd prize - George Erdozain - £23.61 If you would like to take part in the Hoppers Lottery monthly draw please contact Mike Forshaw at the club or Email: info@pgrfc.co.uk

#### HOPPERS PANTOMIME

Just when you thought it was safe to escape the Christmas and New Year jollities, Smoker Productions will be launching the 150th Anniversary Pantomime on Friday 3 January at 7.30pm in the Clubhouse.

For those of you who don't know about the venerable tradition of Hoppers pantomimes (and Ryan Carlson who doesn't even know what a pantomime is but is appearing in this one) they follow an invariable format. Performers drawn from most sections of the club enact, in traditional pantomime style, the story of brave Hoppers lads (and lasses nowadays) defeating the dastardly plans of the evil Fylde cads.

Some of the traditional players from years gone by such as the Matron who cares for the brave Hoppers players and Dulles Ditchwater the malign genius behind Fylde will be making an appearance. They will, however, be outshone by the new generation led by the inimitable Arnie who gets title billing, current and recent players and members of the bar staff.

Music, songs and community singing will be led by the Brasshoppers.

All in all it will be a night to remember. Oh no it won't. OH YES IT WILL so make sure you are there.



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#### Paul.Walton@pwaplanning.co.uk

FWP and PWA are keen supporters of the club and are looking forward Hoppers putting in a big push today to gain some vital points.



#### **ON OTHER TABLES TODAY**

Together with our President **Keith Brierley** entertaining our guests from Hull RUFC we have plenty of other diners today including **Bob Thompson** from **Shire Consulting** and his guests. **Hazel Maguire** and guests from **UCLAN** take another table as do local and well respected building company **J K Beardsworth**.

**Paul Dorrington** (must be a relation of 1<sup>st</sup> XV Jordan and Ben) takes another table, as does **Mike Hayward** representing Ex Mini/Juniors coaches and dads and includes **Rory McCormack** (who promised the editor a pint for a mention).

Stephen Penrose from Arena Investment Management Ltd heads up another table as does Douglas Wilkinson with his own table of guests. John Cronshaw heads up another table with his guests, as well as Stephen Snape from SC Consulting. Tony Callaghan (Cally) and friends take another table as do Craig Laprovitera, Paul Carroll and friends, John King and Hadyn Gigg are also dining today. Paul Reid from DLF Civil Engineering Ltd and today's match ball sponsor take another table and Hoppers match video recorder John Potter and friends concludes the list of diners today. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.







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Head of Rugby Operations, Gareth Dyer



Head Coach, Paul Arnold



Captain, Paul "PJ" Millea

#### HEAD OF RUGBY OPERATIONS Gareth Dyer welcomed our visitors this week and said

"A warm welcome to Gary and everyone at Hull for today's National 2 North encounter.

Last weekend's long trip to Luctonians was a disappointing day in terms of the result and the fact that we allowed the home side to get a bonus point.

The game itself was pretty evenly matched in terms of possession and territory and for spells in both halfs we had plenty of strong attacking positions. The 15 minutes just after half time proved to be pivotal. How we didn't score was a source of frustration at the time and ultimately was the defining point in the game.

When you are on top in games you have to score and we aren't doing that. A couple of defensive errors gave away a couple of soft scores and suddenly the result looks as bad as the scoreline suggests.

We are in a rut at present and Hull will be favourites this afternoon after giving Scunthorpe another heavy beating. Following Scunthorpe's fixtures isn't helping us in that teams are facing us having fined tuned their performances a week previously.

So does it feel like everything is conspiring against us? With the injuries, some bad luck in games and a few officiating errors then we aren't getting much luck. But there is only one way to turn that around. Your support is very important. It was interesting that Luctonians tried to whip up their home crowd to be their 16th man. It seemed to work and the roar when they got a 50;50 decision certainly galvanised their team and it might be said validated some tough calls against us. We really value our support and we need that Hoppers passion from the sidelines. Together we stand if we are going to get back on the horse."

#### HEAD COACH Paul 'Arnie' Arnold had this to say this week

"Today we welcome Hull who are on a good little run and we know we will have to perform well to get the result we all want today. It's been a frustrating season so far with injuries and results not going our way but rest assured we are all pulling together and working hard to get us back on track.

I would personally like to say big thank you to everyone who travelled to Luctonians last Saturday. It's always appreciated from me and all the lads."

#### CAPTAIN Paul 'PJ' Millea said this week

"As a team we are just looking to get on with the job, we know we are up against it at the minute but no-one is shirking the challenge in the squad.

We have had another tough week working hard in training. We are very close as a squad and our group is becoming tighter which is what will be needed to get us through this tough patch,

I have no doubt that this is a small part of the season that we will look back on and see progression from other teams will have their 'bad patch' and we will be there to capitalize.

We know that it is going to be a tough job against Hull having played them two seasons ago in our promotion year and form from that campaign means we will be looking to reignite and push on. Keep shouting, we very much appreciate our support that follows us home and away."





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# BOXING DAY CHARITY MATCH Thursday 26th December 2019 KO 1pm HOPPERS v GARSTANG

#### **STEVE'S STORY**



In July this year, at the age of 58, Hoppers member and volunteer Stephen Nicholls suffered an extensive Ischaemic Stroke caused by undiagnosed Atrial Fibrillation.

Stephen had just retired 8 months earlier following 41 years working for BAE Systems. He was enjoying retirement doing all the things he wanted to do. He was fit and healthy, cycling 50/60 miles a day 2 or 3 times a week. Using his engineering skills, he was always fixing and repairing bikes or indeed anything that needed fixing or repairing for anyone, always assisting friends and family who needed help.

Following his stroke, Stephen was left with a facial and dense right sided weakness. He currently has no movement in his right arm and hand, and very

limited movement in his right leg. He also has expressive dysphasia which means he struggles to speak and express himself. All the evidence suggests that his abilities will only improve if he has intensive physiotherapy, speech therapy and specialist support. Due to the lack of movement in his right arm Stephen is unable to utilise a wheelchair independently which means he cannot even move around the house without help. An electric wheelchair would give him much needed independence.

We are looking to raise money so we can purchase a wheelchair, support home alterations to accommodate Steve's disability which include adaptations to the bathroom and to provide specialist rehabilitation to include physiotherapy and speech therapy.

Stroke is such a devastating illness which is so underfunded. With your support we want to give Steve the best possible opportunity to maximise his potential so he can return to enjoying his well-earned retirement and resume his attendance at the Hoppers. Thank you for your support!

A proportion of Boxing Day takings will also be donated to the Stroke Association for similarly afflicted people who are striving to recover and trying to get back to normal living.



Please give generously on the day, but if you are unable to attend, there is a Just Giving site to which you could donate. Just hover your phone in photo mode over the QR code (below right) and the Just Giving site will pop up.

Today there are many fabulous raffle prizes including tickets for two to each night of Lytham Festival which this year features Little Mix, Snow Patrol, Westlife and Lionel Richie. A must for music fans so please support the cause.

Chris Ford from Accor Hotels has donated a weekend away together with tickets for the races at Haydock Park. There are many more prizes on offer so please dig deep for the benefit of all stroke victims.





# STEVE NICHOLLS CHARITY RUGBY MATCH



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- 14 Michel Adlard
- 13 Alexander Heard (C)
- 12 Stephen Johnson
- 11 Lee Birch
- 10 Simon Humberstone
- 9 Robin Watts
- 1 Michael Dias
- 2 Alistair Thomson
- 3 Michael Jobling
- 4 Cameron Curry
- 5 Liam Regardsoe
- 6 Thomas O'Donnell
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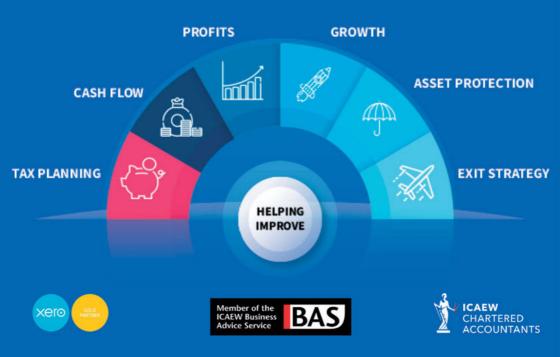
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#### SQUASH

Members can book courts from 9.00am to 10.00pm seven days a week. Coaching is available from junior level to expert level by Mike Farrington, one of the top coaches around. For more squash information please contact Gary Jackson 07775 753968.

#### ARCHERY

There are two archery sections at the club; conventional shooting and long bow via the Samlesbury Longbow Archers. For further information please contact David Howard 01772 744009 or Alan Cowie 01772 743916.

#### **RIFLE SHOOTING**

Preston and District Rifle and Pistol Club currently use the Hoppers facilities for small calibre shooting disciplines. For more information visit www.prestonshooters.org

#### HOPPERS ROLLERS

Hoppers Rollers provide a platform for cyclists to participate and/or compete in road cycling to a level that suits their aspirations. This varies from social cycling in club runs through to elite racing. Throughout the summer the club runs social rides on a Wednesday evening. To keep up to date with departure times and routes visit @HoppersRollers on Twitter, through the Hoppers website, or contact Ben Hedley 01772 863546.



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#### MINI JUNIOR AND COLTS RUGBY AT LIGHTFOOT GREEN



Hugh Duckworth



Charlotte Kenny Mcinally



Ryan Carlson

Welcome back to players and parents alike to the forty sixth season of Mini Junior Rugby at Lightfoot Green. A particularly warm welcome to those registering for the first time.

In terms of registered players, 2018/19 saw 400 plus youngsters enjoy the rugby experience at Hoppers. Not only did the number of volunteer coaches and managers increase by 20%, but also there was a planned and effective focus on achieving the England Rugby Coaching Award. This in itself is a tremendous platform for future growth. Two Junior age groups with high numbers played double fixtures throughout the season, thereby ensuring all youngsters enjoyed game time.

The Artificial Grass Pitch, entering its fourth year, has proved to be an invaluable asset, not only allowing more rugby to be played by an increasing number of youngsters but also leading to improved management

of the grass pitches. The RFU now appreciates the challenge of providing mid-week training for over two hundred youngsters and has arranged for the club to pre-book two hours on the AGP every Wednesday evening. This represents a tremendous concession and can only lead to an improved standard of Junior Rugby here at Preston Grasshoppers.

The Colts demonstrated tremendous team spirit throughout the season, which culminated in a successful end of season tour to Bristol. Several of the ex-Colts are currently enjoying pre-season training with the first and second team squad. Phill Mills will be lead coach for 2019/20, supported by First XV player Ryan Carlson and Ollie Hoban, a former Colt.

The local Land Rover retailer has sponsored Mini Junior Rugby at Preston Grasshoppers since 1997 and last season saw the fourth name change - to Inchcape. In celebration, our sponsor funded the purchase of brand new kit for the Under 7s to 16s inclusively and for the first time the playing shirts reflected the dual brands of Jaguar and Land Rover. These were not only a great source of pride to the youngsters but also the envy of the opposition!

The club is particularly indebted to UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire) for providing First Aid cover on a Sunday throughout the season. The students have achieved an extremely comprehensive and professional standard, and generated favourable feedback from visiting teams.





Simon Seekings and the catering team deserve a special thank you for serving approaching three thousand portions of sausage and chips to visiting teams. This fact alone reflects the scale of Mini Junior Rugby at Hoppers.

Finally a big thank you to Dave Preston and Derrick Cray for their outstanding commitment to preparing and maintaining the pitches to such a high standard.



In terms of representative honours in 2018/19, fourteen players from the Under 15s and Under 16s were selected for Lancashire, and four for the Sales Sharks Junior Academy. Four ex Preston Grasshoppers players were selected for the Sale Sharks Senior Academy and all played for Sale Sharks during last season. Arron Reed played for England in the Under 20s World Cup in Argentina, and Kieran Wilkinson in the Under 20s Six Nations.

New milestones were achieved with the Hoppers Festivals, the long-standing and successful one day events for the Under 7, Under 8 and Under 9s and separately for the Under 10, Under 11 and 12s were repeated. For the very first time these were supplemented by an Under 13s Festival, the success of which providing the platform for a much bigger event in 2019/20. The club is indebted to Vivienne Davenport of Westholme School for confirming the continued sponsorship of the Hoppers Festivals in 2019/20.

The Sportsman's Dinner, with Jason Leonard as Principal Speaker, was a sell out. The monies raised contributing to the ongoing pitch improvement programme.

The Presentation Dinners at the end of the season were successful events and achieved record attendances. The Masters of Ceremonies, Ian Gaskell and Daniel Weed deserve a particular vote of thanks. Alex Carson, captain of the Under 16s, presented the awards at the Junior Dinner, he himself receiving the Founders Cup for 2018/19 towards the close of the event.

Oga Mabaya from the First XV proved a popular choice at the Minis Dinner.

The Hoppers Tours go from strength to strength and reflect the scale of Mini Junior Rugby here at Lightfoot Green, with approaching five hundred departing on six separate tours.

Looking forward, the plans for 2019/20 will be threefold.

- Firstly, aim to achieve an improvement in skill levels in the Junior age groups, based on the increased availability of the AGP for midweek training.
- Secondly, retain the focus among the volunteer coaches on achieving the England Rugby Coaching Award.
- Finally, improve the availability of professional coaches to the Junior age groups.

Commitment to these three areas will not only assist in the man-

agement of our numbers but also improve the standard of Mini Junior and Colts Rugby offered by Preston Grasshoppers.

HUGH DUCKWORTH Chairman– Mini, Junior and Colts Rugby







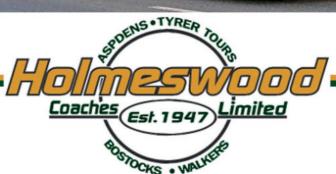






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#### HOPPERS WOMEN'S RUGBY HOPPERS V BROUGHTON PARK

On Sunday the 24th November the Grasshoppers Women travelled away to Broughton Park having previously played their last game at home to Sale Women.

During the first ten minutes of the game after kick off, Broughton Park's number 13 scored a try and the conversion was successfully kicked resulting in a

7-0 start to Broughton Park. Shortly after, a second try for Broughton park came from their number 14 with the conversion being unsuccessful making the score 12-0. After 20 minutes into the game Hoppers scored their first try for the game by Sarah Lovejoy. This made the score 12-5.

For the remainder of the first half Hoppers held their ground and played with 100% effort but no more tries were scored by either team.

The second half of the game for Hoppers was not reflected in the score as Broughton Park went on to score 6 more tries despite also having a red card which was given to one of their players.

Hoppers were able to show their improvements as they played with grit and determination. This was rewarded when another try was scored by Hoppers own Grace Handley towards the very end of the game. This made the final score 42-10. Despite the score, every Hopper came off the pitch proud of the team effort that was shown in the game.

Preston Grasshoppers Women's next game will be away at Ashfield on the 12th December.







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> You can also text HOPE to 85258 at any time, any day for free confidential support.

> You are never alone. There is

FIXTURES/RESULTS 2019/20										
1 <sup>st</sup> XV 2 <sup>nd</sup> XV										
2019	OPPONENTS	H/A	RES	WLD		OPPONENTS	H/A	RES	WLD	
7 Sept	SEDGLEY PARK	н	20-30	L		Chester 2	A	78-14	L	
14 Sept	Fylde	A	24-24	D		CALDY 2	н	31-38	L	
21 Sept	SCUNTHORPE	н	48-24	W		Fylde 2	A	33-27	L	
28 Sept	SHEFFIELD TIG'S	н	10-9	W		ROSSENDALE 2	н	12-31	L	
5 Oct	Wharfedale	A	20-19	L		Sedgley Park 2	A	53-7	L	
12 Oct	HUDDERSFIELD	н	22-27	L		Lymm 2	A	39-17	L	
19 Oct	Tynedale	A	34-5	L						
26 Oct	STOURBRIDGE	н	20-17	W		Macclesfield 2	A	Post	ooned	
2 Nov	Hinckley	A	27-17	L						
9 Nov	CHESTER	н	10-27	L		BLACKBURN 2	н	24-28	L	
16 Nov	Caldy	A	49-21	L		Caldy 2	A	57-17	L	
23 Nov	LOUGHBOROUGH	н	21-34	L		FYLDE 2	н	17-11	W	
30 Nov	Luctonians	A	29-3	L		Rossendale 2	A	Post	ooned	
7 Dec	HULL	н				SEDGLEY PARK 2	н			
14 Dec	Otley	A				LYMM 2	н			
21 Dec	FYLDE	н								
2020										
4 Jan	Scunthorpe	A				MACCLESFIELD 2	н			
11 Jan	Sheffield Tigers	A				Blackburn 2	A			
18 Jan	WHARFEDALE	н				CHESTER 2	н	·	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
25 Jan	Huddersfield	A								
1 Feb	TYNEDALE	н		27						
8 Feb	Stourbridge	A								
15 Feb	HINCKLEY	н								
22 Feb	Weather Weekend									
29 Feb	Chester	A								
7 Mar	CALDY	н								
14 Mar	Weather Weekend									
21 Mar	Loughborough	A								
28 Mar	LUCTONIANS	н								
4 Apr	Hull	A								
11 Apr	Weather Weekend									
18 Apr	OTLEY	н					3			
25 Apr	Sedgley Park	A								

	NATIONAL LEAGUE 2 NORTH Green background is the promotion place. Blue background is the play-off place. Pink background are relegation places.											
		P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	TBP	LB	PTS	ADJ
1	CALDY	12	12	0	0	452	167	285	8	0	56	
2	FYLDE	13	10	1	2	429	248	181	9	2	53	
3	SEDGLEY PARK	12	10	0	2	332	253	79	6	2	48	
4	LOUGHBOROUGH	13	8	0	5	391	301	90	6	3	41	
5	SHEFFIELD TIG'S	13	8	0	5	292	266	26	4	3	39	
6	TYNEDALE	13	6	2	5	354	296	58	6	4	38	
7	STOURBRIDGE	13	6	0	7	334	304	30	6	5	35	
8	CHESTER	12	6	1	5	270	247	23	5	3	34	
9	HINCKLEY	13	6	0	7	286	306	-20	6	4	34	
10	OTLEY	13	5	2	6	236	317	-81	1	2	27	
11	HULL	13	4	2	7	249	273	-24	3	4	27	
12	WHARFEDALE	13	5	1	7	257	324	-67	2	2	26	
26	LUCTONIANS	13	3	1	9	299	351	-52	5	6	25	
14	HUDDERSFIELD	13	3	3	7	279	383	-104	4	1	23	
15	HOPPERS	13	3	1	9	240	351	-111	2	2	18	
16	SCUNTHORPE	12	0	0	12	198	511	-313	3	2	5	

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