

## SPORTING LEGENDS: ELLERY HANLEY

**SPORT: RUGBY**

**COMPETITIVE ERA: 1980 - 1999**

Ellery Hanley (born in Leeds in 1961) is a rugby league player and coach. He was capped 34 times by Great Britain and honoured by the Queen in January 1990 for his services to the game.



He signed for Bradford Northern from the junior club Corpus Christi in 1978. He had to wait his time before gaining a regular first team place but in the early eighties he exploded onto the scene as one of the top try scoring non-wing players in the history of the game.

Ellery played most of his games at stand-off or loose forward. In 1984-85 he became the first man to score more than 50 tries in a season since Billy Boston and the first non-winger to reach this figure for 70 years.

In 1985 he signed for Wigan for a fee of £150,000, with Steve Donlan and Phil Ford moving in the opposite direction as part of the deal. In his Wigan debut, the team lost two players with broken legs and lost the game to Widnes. But Ellery was soon scoring tries for Wigan and finished his first season with 35 tries.

He became a regular member and also captain of the Great Britain side, and the inspiration behind Wigan's domination of the sport in the late 1980s.

In his Wigan career, he won a World Club Championship, four Cup Winners Medals, Three Championship, one Premiership, four John Player Trophy Winners medals and four Lancashire Cup winners medals. He was also voted man of steel three times, twice as a Wigan player.

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During his early career, no other player could match Hanley's electric pace.

When the World League of American football was started it was reported that Ellery Hanley would play for the London Monarchs but this never materialised.

He joined Leeds in 1991 for £250,000 and had two spells with Australian club Balmain, leading them to the Grand Final in 1998, and one year with Western Suburbs.

After he finished playing he coached Great Britain, becoming the first black person to coach or manage a major national team in Great Britain. He later coached St Helens and led them to Grand Final success against Bradford in October 1999.

In October 2005, he was inducted into the Rugby League Hall of Fame.

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### Scott Burton's Final Thought

Ellery Hanley possessed a level of athleticism that pushed standards of rugby to the next level during the 1980s.

His pace, agility and strength were assets to be feared by opposing teams.

Many young players are often tipped as the new Ellery Hanley whenever they exhibit great potential - and this is a wonderful tribute to the man.



Hanley was tough to catch, and even harder to bring down!