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Tigers star believes jury is still out on Magic Weekend

Castleford Tigers captain Ryan Hudson is still to be convinced as to the merit of moving Magic weekend to the start of the season.

The event has traditionally been held in May since the inception four years ago, but for the first time ever, all 14 Super League teams kicked off the campaign in the Welsh capital.

The showpiece spectacular also returned to the Millennium Stadium after being staged at Murrayfield in Edinburgh for the previous two years.

Hudson thinks there is a case to be made for switching the weekend to a venue in the heartlands of the sport such as Old Trafford, due to the distance and expense involved in travelling.

Hudson, who guests on the latest **PROBIZ Tryline**, the Independent's Rugby League podcast, said: "I thought it would be packed for the first games of the season, but it wasn't. Personally I thought the atmosphere was pretty poor. It was pretty dead to be honest!"



"When people go down there and pay for a ticket for the day you would have thought they would watch all the games, but fans were watching their team and then going off. I can understand what they are doing by going away from the heartlands, but it would be interesting to see how many people from Wales did come and watch a game as opposed to fans from the M62 corridor."

However, the evidence would suggest otherwise, as the attendance for the opening day on Saturday, which featured four matches, pulled in an aggregate of 30,891 spectators, while 29,323 saw the three games on the Sunday.

The combined attendance of 60,214 is higher than the total for the inaugural Millennium Magic in 2007 (58,831) and an increase on the crowds for the events held in Scotland.

It was the action on the pitch that was of more concern to the Independent's own Dave Hadfield, who also features in the latest podcast with a review and preview of all of the matches.

The newspaper's Rugby League reporter said: "The quality of rugby on Saturday was quite poor, there was a real pre-season feel to it, but Sunday was good."

"The atmosphere was a bit strange at times. You could hear more from fans of clubs that weren't playing than those that were. But something needed to be done to the start of the season as it's been a bit of a mess for the last couple of years, so we started with a bang which is a good thing."

More positive comments on Magic Weekend come from a slightly unusual source on this week's podcast. Ryan's sister, Lucy Jo, who used to play Katy Harris in Coronation Street, believes that this kind of event is unique to Rugby League. She said: "It is a family orientated sport. Everybody can sit together and have a drink, enjoy the games and I love that about rugby."

And you can hear more from Lucy Jo, who has recently signed up with the Co-operative as a Rugby League ambassador in the latest **PROBIZ Tryline**. Also airing his views along with the other contributors is Lucy Jo's actor husband Alan Halsall, better known as Tyrone Dobbs from Coronation Street.

The programme is available to listen to on [the Independent's](http://www.the-independent.com) website and through iTunes.

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