



## **MARCH 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Offiah Wants Rugby League to be “Aspirational”**

Former Wigan Warriors and Great Britain star Martin “Chariots” Offiah believes it is time for Rugby League to make itself a sport that everyone wants to be part of.

Offiah is convinced it is a great product which has a worldwide appeal, and sights matches like Sunday’s [PROBIZ](#) World Club Challenge between the Warriors and St George Illawarra Dragons as a prime example of the excitement and value the game has to offer.

However, the Rugby League legend’s belief is tempered by his concerns that not enough is being done to prevent Super League’s best talent from being lured away by clubs down under or the promise of bigger pay days in Rugby Union.

Offiah was a guest at the DW Stadium this weekend, in his new role as an Ambassador for the sport for the competition’s sponsor, in a game that saw two of his former employers going head to head.

He watched Wigan start the match brightly before an eventual turnout saw the Dragons claim a 21-15 victory and a third successive world club title for the reigning NRL champions against their European counterparts.

Speaking in latest [PROBIZ Tryline](#) podcast, Offiah said: “Rugby League is a game that has a lot of respect from a lot of sportsmen, a lot of people and a lot of the British sporting public but we want to try and make this game aspirational.

“Rugby League has been respected but not aspired. People haven’t been inspired to play the game as they feel that maybe, it is a lot of work for not too much reward but with the television deal being up shortly, it is time to get that renegotiated.”

Offiah also offers up his views on Kyle Eastmond, a player he used to represent but hasn’t for a couple of years now, who’s future has been a subject of much debate for weeks.

His impending departure to [Bath Rugby Union club](#), which hadn’t been confirmed at the time of the interview, sums up Offiah’s thoughts on the challenges facing 13-man game perfectly.

The Sky TV pundit, who also starred in 2004 on ‘Strictly Come Dancing’, also added “I always tell players it about the football. The reward for endeavours will come. Kyle is a talented player and I wish him all the best. He’s having a tough time at the moment and it’s a hard decision.”

Elsewhere in a compelling [PROBIZ Tryline](#), listeners will be able to hear an update from Pat Richards as last season’s Man of Steel’s targets a comeback from injury.

All in all, this week’s podcast is a little bit different to previous editions as the main content of the show focuses largely on the PROBIZ World Club Challenge, but is told in a chronological order from start to finish and recorded on the day of the fixture itself, and features a host of other contributors including fans from both clubs.

As ever, your team will also get plenty of airtime as we pack in all the recent news from Super League, while the Independent’s Dave Hadfield will give you the lowdown on the latest round of action as well.

The programme is available to listen to on [the Independent’s](#) website and through iTunes.

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