Jazz Chana is one of the original pioneers of South Asian involvement in rugby league — a respected player, mentor, and coach whose influence has extended across generations. Known as much for his leadership and character as his ability on the pitch, Jazz has played a significant role in shaping the culture of inclusion and belonging within the game.

Jazz's rugby journey began in Leeds through a chance neighbourhood connection. Growing up on the same street as Alan Boot, Jazz would tag along as Alan's sons played rugby in the road. A naturally strong youngster, Jazz was encouraged to attend training, placed in the pack, and quickly fell in love with the game. He went on to play junior rugby at Stanningley, open-age rugby at Queens, and later gave back to the game through coaching at West Leeds.

For Jazz, rugby league has always meant family. The sport created bonds that lasted well beyond playing days — relationships built on trust, shared experiences, and mutual respect. Many of his closest friendships were formed through rugby, and those teammates are now brothers for life.

As one of very few South Asian players during his era, Jazz faced racism on the pitch. Rather than allowing it to define him, he used those experiences to build resilience and mental toughness. Crucially, the support of teammates who stood up for him reinforced his belief in rugby league's values and strengthened lifelong bonds.

Beyond playing, Jazz has been a powerful mentor and coach to younger players. Through his work at West Leeds and his involvement with BARA, he has supported young people both on and off the field — offering guidance, encouragement, and perspective, and helping them navigate challenges with confidence and pride. Jazz's story reflects progress, perseverance, and the power of mentorship. Above all else, he remains proud to be part of the rugby league family.

" **JAZZ HAS BEEN A POWERFUL MENTOR AND COACH TO FORMER PLAYERS THROUGH HIS WORK AT WEST LEEDS AND HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH BARA HE HAS SUPPORTED YOUNG PEOPLE ON AND OFF THE FIELD** "

Jazz
CHANA
Heritage Profile