

80 YEARS AGO- A MIGHTY VICTORY

THE 1940 PREMIERSHIP FLAG

Ref: 2020/9



Dromana 'broke the ice' in 1931 to win its first flag ; and in 1937 defeated Frankston by three goals to take out the honours.

The club's next premiership flag came in 1940 when Dromana overcame a gritty Red Hill combination at Frankston Park. For some unknown reason , few details of that stirring win have ever been documented in club history; and the following article tries to bring some light on that thrilling victory.

In 1940 , the Peninsula Football League comprised the following teams which were grouped into two divisions. .

- There were seven teams in '**A** Grade': Frankston, Mornington, Sorrento, Naval Depot, Hastings-Tyabb, Seaford-Carrum, and Somerville-Baxter.
- '**B** Grade' was comprised of the following teams : Dromana, Sorrento, Rosebud, Hastings-Tyabb, Red Hill, Pearcedale, and Somerville-Baxter

Peninsular Has 14 Teams

The Peninsula Football League received final nominations from clubs desiring to enter teams in the A or B grade. Both competitions will be as strong as last year, with seven teams in each grade.

"A" grade teams consist of Frankston, Mornington, Sorrento, Naval Depot, Hastings-Tyabb, Seaford-Carrum, and Somerville-Baxter.

"B" grade, Sorrento, Rosebud, Dromana, Hastings-Tyabb, Red Hill, Pearcedale, and Somerville-Baxter.

Peninsula players who may happen to be away in military camps will have till July 31 to register. Should any club desire to play any member of the military who is not a local resident, but who is in camp on the Peninsula, a permit must be secured.

1940- A TESTING SEASON FOR SOME CLUBS

1940 was a difficult year for all sports . The 'War Effort' and declining numbers of men , due to service enlistment made fielding a team a challenging proposition . At one stage of that season, things were so difficult for some clubs that it was suggested to truncate the season and play the finals in July. That idea was rejected by club delegates but it was decided to play 16- a-side matches in the B Grade Division in the hope of assisting smaller clubs 'survive' the season .

Football To Continue

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B Grade Proposals

Football on the Mornington Peninsula is likely to continue for the coming season. At a meeting of the Mornington Peninsula Football League, held last week, delegates decided to make every effort to continue the season.

Mr. F. Volk, of Red Hill, told the meeting that his club was having great difficulty in fielding a team each week. Half the Red Hill team had enlisted. Rosebud delegates said their team was having a similar difficulty.

Mr. Volk moved that the home and home matches in the B. section be terminated on Saturday, June 29, and that the semi-finals in this grade be commenced on July 6. The motion was defeated. Mr. Volk submitted to the meeting that it should be possible to reach an arrangement among the B. grade teams that where a team could field only 15 players, that the opposing team should do likewise.

16 A SIDE.

In a discussion on this proposal it was resolved to make application to the National Football Council for permission to field 16 men a side in the B. Grade competition.

MORNINGTON CARRIES ON.

In spite of rumours that low finances would force the Mornington Football Club to withdraw from the competition, players, officials, and supporters came forward in a true sporting fashion at a special meeting last week, and guaranteed £4 a week to enable the club to continue till the end of the home and home matches, which conclude after five more playing Saturdays.

Standard (Frankston, Vic. : 1939 - 1949), Friday 5 July 1940, page 1

Throughout the season , reports indicated that Dromana had been a solid but unspectacular force; and judging by the 'B' Grade Ladder after 14 rounds that season, Dromana 'headed the table'. The Naval Depot sat second on the ladder with ten wins and three losses. It is interesting that Pearcedale, which finished fourth , had actually defeated Dromana by five points in the last game in the 'Home and Away' series .

RESULTS	
A GRADE	
Frankston 13-13	d. Sorrento 6-13.
Seaford-Carrum 11-21	d. Somerville Baxter 10-5.
Naval Depot awarded match v. Hastings-Tyabb.	
B GRADE	
Naval Depot 15-18	de. Sorrento 3-9.
Red Hill 18-19	d. Somerville-Baxter 7-15.
Pearcedale 7-7	d. Dromana 6-8.
Rosebud	d. Frankston (walk-over).

THE 'B' GRADE LADDER AT THE END OF THE 1940 HOME & AWAY SERIES

As can be seen from below , the 'Top Four' teams on the 'B' Grade Ladder that season were: Dromana, Naval Depot, Red Hill and Pearcedale. Readers should be aware that three of the bottom club (Sorrento, Somerville- Baxter and Frankston) also had teams playing in the 'A' Grade division,

FOOTBALL				
HOW CLUBS STAND				
A GRADE				
	P	W	L	Pts
Somerville-Baxter	12	9	3	36
Sorrento	12	7	5	28
Seaford-Carrum	12	7	5	28
Naval Depot	12	7	5	28
Mornington	12	6	6	24
Frankston	12	5	7	20
Hastings-Tyabb	10	2	8	8
(Places subject to protest.)				
B GRADE				
Dromana	14	12	2	48
Naval Depot	13	10	3	40
Red Hill	14	10	4	40
Pearcedale	14	10	4	40
Frankston	12	3	9	12
Somerville-Baxter	13	3	10	12
Rosebud	13	2	11	8
Sorrento	13	2	11	8

THE 1940 FINAL SERIES

League details of that series were limited but using the information, as published in the local newspapers of that time, the results of the final series were:

- **First Semi Final:** Red Hill: 12.9 (81) defeated Pearcedale: 11.11 (77).
- **Second Semi- Final:** Dromana defeated Navy Depot in convincing style to advance to the 1940 Grand Final. The fact that the game was played with 16-men per side was indicative of the times, and nature of 'B' Grade football.

DROMANA WIN EASILY
 Only a small number of people assembled at Mornington on Saturday to witness the match between Dromana and Naval Depot. Each side played 16 men. The game was won in confident fashion by Dromana, who proved too good for their opponents. Although the standard of football was not high, there was a number of Dromana players who showed good form. The Navy played their best football in the last quarter, but they never had any chance of overtaking Dromana, who, on their form, appear to have the premiership at their mercy. The best players were:—Aust, Williams, Pittock, Cornish, Burke, Loder, Murley, and Guy. For Naval Depot:—Buck, Cazaly, Olson, Muir and Monad. Dromana goalkickers:—Brown (3), T. Murley (3), Loder, Glover and Hazeldene. Depot goalkickers:—Muir (2), Buck (2), Deacon, and Hurley.

- The 1940 'B' Grade Preliminary Final : This final was to be played between Red Hill and the Navy Depot but, as shown in this press cutting , the Navy (for reasons explained below) was forced/obliged to withdraw from the match...

SORRENTO AND NAVAL DEPOT
 Naval Depot and Sorrento, who will compete in the M.P.F.L. football final at Mornington to-morrow are expected to stage a thrilling game, and with a continuance of the fine weather conditions, a large crowd is expected. To date, attendances at the finals have been disappointing, and should there not be a larger crowd at the next matches, the League will have no alternative but to impose a levy on all clubs to meet the expenditure incurred.

"B" GRADE FINAL
 As Naval Depot delegates stated at this week's meeting of the League that they would be unable to field a team for the final against Red Hill on Saturday, the team was granted permission to withdraw without penalties. Red Hill will meet Dromana in the grand-final at Frankston to-morrow.

Standard Friday 23 August 1940, page 6

NAVY WITHDRAW FROM THE FINALS RACE.

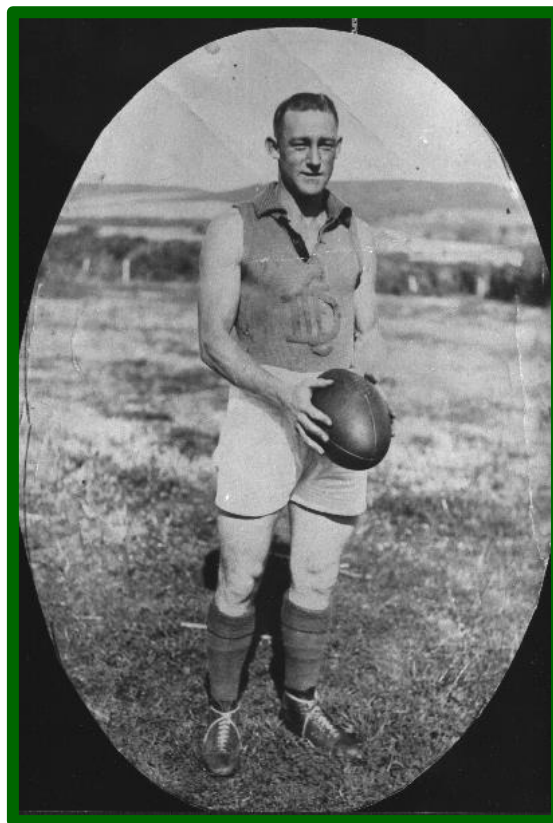
It can be a little puzzling, when reading the details of the 1940 final series. For example, a little known fact about the 1940 Grand Final is that Red Hill won its way, into the 1940 Grand Final, **without** playing in the Preliminary Final.

As a consequence of the Navy Depot's inability to field a team (because of RAN roster duties) that weekend, Red Hill won the 'right' to play Dromana in the Grand Final . It appears that the 'B' Grade Final was played one week earlier than had been originally fixtured by the PFL earlier that year.

As mentioned in the extract (above), quite rightly and sensibly, the Naval Depot was not penalized for its 'non appearance' ; and who could object when 'bigger matters' dominated the lives of sailors at that time. It is fair to say the men of the Naval Depot had more ' important battles' to fight in 1940.

Note: As the press clipping shows, the Naval Depot played in the 'A' Grade Preliminary Final that weekend. Sorrento won that match by 21 points but were resoundly defeated by Somerville in the 'A' Grade Grand Final on the following Saturday. Somerville 20.11 (131) defeated Sorrento 10.15 (75).

The fact that Australia was on a war footing may explain the lack of publicity given to local football matches at that time . The question as to whether young men should play football while others had enlisted in the services sharply divided public opinion throughout Australia at that time.



The Champion of Pier Street – Wally Guy

THE 'B' GRADE GRAND FINAL TEAMS

According to MPNFL records and the 'Standard' newspaper, the teams that day were:

Dromana: Wally Guy, Bert Aust, Jack Cornish, Vin Hazeldine, Jack Glover, Jack Hazeldine, Ted Loader, Elgar Pittock, Norm Osborne , J & T Murley, Bill Clydesdale, T. Lovell, Spencer Brown and Rueben Griffiths,

Red Hill: Fred Volk, Les Wiseman, Merv Edwards, Harry Trewin, L. Murray, George Fox, Roy Setter, Rueben Edwards, Stan White, Alan De Ross, Ken Skidmore, Robert Trewin, Jack Russell, Bob Wilson , Lindsay Rigby and Jim Clarke.

UMPIRE ROY DORE

According to the newspaper extract and MPNFL archives, Roy Dore umpired the match. Roy was a 'giant' in the history of Peninsula football and Carrum FC. Once described as a 'living legend', Roy was admired and respected by all those who knew him.

His community involvement and leadership included Justice of the Peace, Captain of the CFA, Carrum FC President, player, club coach and he was also a Life Member of the local life-saving club. **Note:** In 1985 the reserve at Graham Road was named in his honour.



Roy Dore

The following quotation was taken from an article entitled the 'Tale of Two Champions'; and is part of a recent interview given by Roy's daughter...

" Roy's involvement in the community was prolific, from being a player, umpire, trainer and president of Carrum Football Club to his captaincy of Carrum Fire Brigade and presidency at Carrum Surf Life Saving Club. "He was a great community man, captain of the fire brigade for 37 years and a member of the football club since age 15... We were always involved in the community, from church and calisthenics to local football." His words of advice were: "If you're in an organisation, you must contribute and not sit on the sidelines."

As can be seen in the match report, Roy Dore's decision, in the dying seconds of the game, was crucial and was regarded by some spectators as controversial. Unfortunately, there is no way of re-visiting the dying moments of that Grand Final; and Umpire Dore's judgement, on that decisive mark, is now part of local football folklore.

THE GAME - CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

The game was played at Frankston Park and it would be interesting to know the gate receipts that year. In that era, the journey to Southern Peninsula to Frankston would have presented a few challenges for people; and there is every chance that some supporters desisted from attending that game

However, those fans who made the journey witnessed an exciting match. At every 'break' that day, the game was 'up for grabs'; and, as is the case in all sporting contests, close finishes are memorable. Once again, the 'old DFC firm' of Guy, Aust and Griffith stood tall for Dromana across four quarters; while Red Hill suffered a setback when its champion Fred Volk sustained an injury sometime during the third term.

	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	Final
Dromana	3.1 (19)	7.7 (49)	9.14 (68)	10.19 (79)
Red Hill	2.1. (13)	5.8 (38)	8.13 (61)	10.15 (75)

DROMANA'S PREMIERSHIP

Red Hill's Game Fight

Supporters of Dromana and Red Hill, who saw the grand final of the "B" Section at the Frankston Park on Saturday, were treated to some exciting football, when Dromana, who had led for most of the game, were in danger of being overtaken in the last few minutes. While the final bell was still ringing, a Red Hill forward marked the ball 35 yards out. Umpire Dore refused to allow him to take his kick. Although the umpire was correct, his decision caused some comment among Red Hill supporters, whose team was only 4 points in arrears.

At the end of the first quarter Dromana was ahead, scores being 3-1 to 2-1.

Play was still very even in the next term, and both sides had 10 shots for goal, but Dromana's greater accuracy placed them further ahead. Half-time scores were: Dromana 7-7; Red Hill 5-8.

Red Hill suffered a severe blow when their captain (Fred Volk) was forced to withdraw with the recurrence of a leg injury. He had been one of the outstanding men on the field and was the inspiration of many of their drives. The team, however, rose to the occasion and played tenacious football. A bout of inaccuracy by Dromana decreased their lead and scores at the last change were:—Dromana 9.14; Red Hill 8.13.

Attacking round the wing, Dromana quickly increased their lead by 1-1 to place them 14 points in front. Red Hill were far from finished, however, and for most of the remaining time, took the initiative. Cool and clever play by Guy, Aust and Cornish turned many of their attacks. Red Hill's dash at this stage of the game was a tribute to their training. More co-operation on the forward lines would have made their task of winning easier. Edwards goaled and another goal was scored from a scramble in front of goals. Dromana, in their answering rallies, could only manage behinds,

and the final bell rang with the Hill still attacking. Final scores:—
DROMANA 19-19—79 points.

still attacking. Final scores:—
DROMANA 19-19—79 points.
RED HILL 10-15—75 points.

Congratulating Dromana after the match, Red Hill's captain expressed pleasure at the spirit in which the game had been played. His injury was "all in the game."

The Dromana captain (B. Guy) referred to the sporting manner in which Volk had taken his disappointing injury. He hoped that the teams would meet again next year. Both teams played 16 men a side.

Best players were:—Guy, Aust, Cornish, Glover, Holderness and Griffith.

For Red Hill:—Volk, Edwards, Wiseman, Murray, Skidmore, Wilson and Trewin.

As can be seen (above) ,the 1940 Grand Final was a 'nail-biter' that went down to the very last kick. The newspaper's match review provides an insight into the dying seconds of the game when an un-named Red Hill forward gained possession ball on the siren but Umpire Dore disallowed his mark.

The best players for Dromana were; Wally Guy, Bert Aust , Jack Cornish, Jack Glover, Rueben and Griffith .

Note: In the newspaper report (above) a name 'Holderness' is listed among the club's best players. This may have meant to be Jack Hazeldine. (It is important to remember that the match report, as filed at the printers, was probably hand written.

DROMANA GOES INTO RECESS

The 1940 Grand Final was to be the last game that the Dromana Football Club would play until 1946. For the next five years, DFC went into recess (as most clubs did in those desperate years).

Across the land , football clubs went into a form of 'suspended animation' while war rage across Europe and in the Pacific.

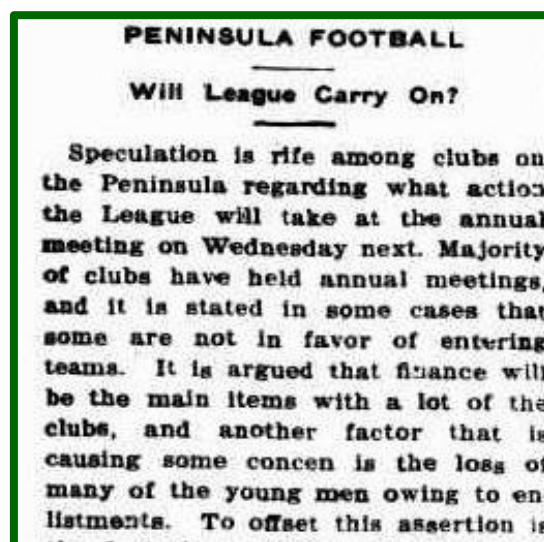
As history has shown organized football leagues during war time (e.g. VFL) became the source of great division and much angst...

“ As was the case during World War: 1 , there was an extended debate to whether the game should continue at all...” Source: 'Up there Cazaly' Page: 117

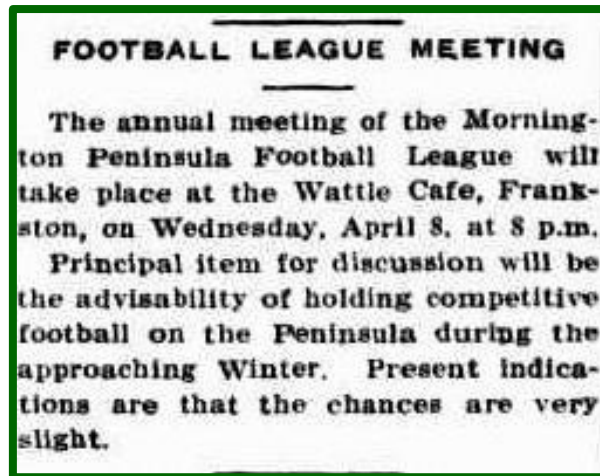
In small towns like Dromana there was simply no argument because it was virtually impossible to find enough men to form a team as many locals had enlisted for war duty.

There were some moves to keep the game of football 'alive' but they were half-hearted attempts; as football had lost its 'sheen and attraction' while young men were losing their lives in far flung battlefields.

As can be seen from the extract ('Frankston Standard' March 21st in 1941) organized football on the Mornington Peninsula faced great obstacles...

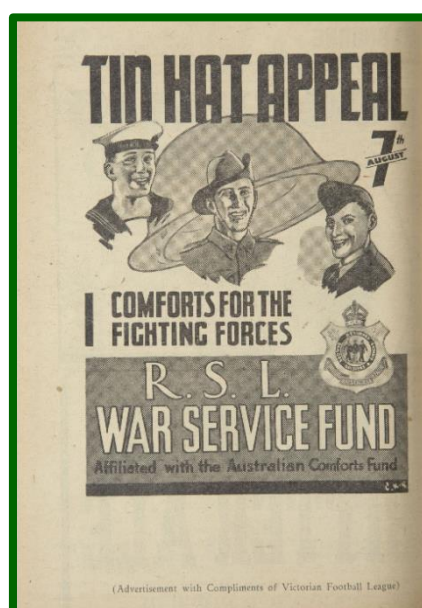


By May 24th 1941 , there were only eight clubs involved in the PFL; and it is safe to say it was an 'ad-hoc' football league . The clubs who continued to play on were: Hastings-Tyabb, Seaford, Frankston High School, Carrum, Naval Depot (2 teams), Pearcedale and Frankston.



As the full ramifications and gravity of the war 'hit home' across the towns, thoughts of organized football steadily dissipated; and by April 19th 1942 the makeshift competition was abandoned.

" There will be no Inter-club football on the Mornington Peninsula this Winter or for the duration of the war. The Mornington Peninsula Football League's decision at its annual meeting on Wednesday night, to' go into recess for the duration of hostilities', was unanimous; and will cause little surprise amongst football followers on the Peninsula."
Source: 'Frankston Standard'



An advertisement from the 'Record' in 1942

FOOTBALL RE-COMMENCES IN 1946 & HAND KNITTED JUMPERS

The Dromana FC (and hundreds of other suburban and country clubs) ceased playing football and 'sat out' the war; and it wasn't until the winter of 1946 that the re-vamped local competition (MPFL) recommenced operations. Football lovers who read of this article, will fully appreciate how difficult it must have been for die-hards to have football 'mothballed' for five seasons during wartime.



Following the cessation of hostilities and the coming of peace , Dromana was able to re-form and a new and exciting chapter in the story of the club began.

In 1946 Dromana was one of seven teams affiliated in the **MPFL 'B' Grade Division**. The others were: Frankston, Hastings, Red Hill, Pearcedale-Baxter Rosebud and a newly established club- Rye.

In the first game of the 1946 season, Dromana played Red Hill at Pier Street in a 're-run' of the 1940 Grand Final. A 'lot of water had flowed under the bridge' since that game but memories, of that disputed mark after the final siren, may have probably lingered on the minds of some supporters.

Finally, younger readers will be amazed to discover that the club's 'new' post-war green and gold team guernseys were hand knitted by a group of loyal, local ladies ...How things have changed at Pier Street, since those austere times, for all players and officials.

DROMANA.
The Dromana club promises to field one of the strongest teams in the B. Grade competition. A smart young side will be fielded. Wonderful support is forthcoming from the public, donations to date having reached the £100 mark. Lady enthusiasts are knitting a new set of guernseys in the club colors, green and gold.
Bill Guy is captain and coach, with Alan Hosking, vice-captain.
The president (Ralph Wilson) and secretary (Bert Aust) are particularly pleased with the way things are shaping. The match to be played on Saturday against Red Hill is being eagerly awaited.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION

Sources: Local newspapers- DFNC archives –NLA - Personal files .

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