

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

1908 - 114 YEARS AGO

Reference: 2022/9



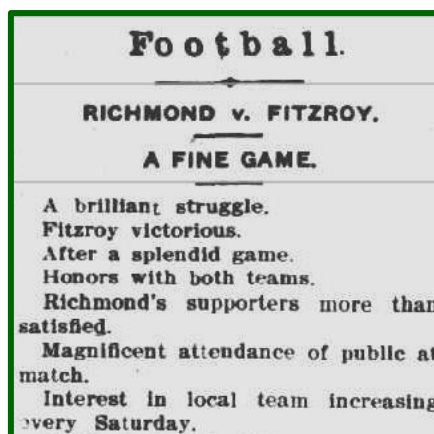
DOUG CHAPMAN-PART OF VFL FOOTBALL HISTORY IN 1908

One of Dromana's finest players of the 1900's Doug Chapman was the 'toast of the town' when he was selected to play for Richmond in Round: 3 in 1908. This photograph was taken in June 1908 when Richmond played Collingwood at Victoria Park . Doug was part of AFL/ VFL history as he played with Richmond in the club's first season in the VFL.

DROMANA'S CHAMPION DOUG CHAPMAN MAKES THE NEWS

Richmond and University entered the VFL in 1908 and these new competitors brought about a ten team league competition. Younger readers may be unaware that North Melbourne, Footscray and Hawthorn did not enter the VFL until 1925. It was headline news when the 'new boys on the block', Richmond defeated Melbourne in its very first outing in VFL; but the euphoria of that victory was short-lived when University (sometimes called the 'Professors') overcame Richmond in Round: 2 at East Melbourne.

Doug Chapman, Dromana's young champion took his place in the Richmond team for the Round 3 clash against Fitzroy at the Punt Road Oval. Doug was the youngest player that day (18 years). He had been a 'teenage wonder' at Dromana; and it is recorded that he had been a captain of Dromana before joining Richmond. Although Richmond lost the match, it was described as a 'brilliant struggle and fine game' in the 'Richmond Guardian' (May 23rd 1908)...



THE JUBILEE OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL OF 1908

The other nation-wide football news of 1908 was in relation to the Jubilee of Australasian Football which was held in Melbourne in August 1908. The Jubilee (better known as the 'Carnival') was a most significant event in the development of Australian football.

That carnival featured teams from Queensland, NSW, West Australia, South Australia, Victoria and a combination from New Zealand. The game of Australian Rules was gaining acceptance in New Zealand in that period; and it was hoped that the Jubilee would foster the game 'across the ditch.'

New Zealand performed creditably in the series and won two of its four scheduled games. Victoria won the carnival and was crowned 'champions.' That triumph came as no real surprise considering the number of VFL stars that took their place in the line-up. The VFL team included: Dave McNamara, Rod McGregor, Joe Pearce, and Bill Busbridge and, of course, the legendary Collingwood forward Dick Lee.



Tom Wright- The Captain of the New Zealand team in Melbourne in 1908.

Tom had played for Collingwood in 1906-07 and was regarded as a fine player for New Zealand at the 1908 Jubilee in Melbourne. Tom died on the 12th December 1916 at the Battle of Le Transloy, (Somme, France) during World War:1.

MEANWHILE BACK AT DROMANA IN 1908

The Dromana Football Club was finding its feet in 1908. Although formed in the 1890's, the small town faced problems in fielding a team each week, finding funds and acquiring basic equipment (footballs, boots, jumpers etc.)

In 1908, Dromana (a.k.a Excelsior's) was an affiliate of the Peninsula Football Association. The other members were Frankston, Tyabb, Hastings, Mornington, Somerville and Flinders. It appears that Flinders FC had joined the league at a late juncture that season.

The following match report was published in the Mornington and Dromana Standard on July 18th 1908. It is an illuminating piece of DFNC history as it reveals the entire list of Dromana players, who represented the club, that day. The game was played at Dromana; and it was a notable occasion because it was the first time that the Somerville Football Club had ever played a match at Pier Street...

"DROMANA v. SOMERVILLE...The above clubs met at Dromana on Saturday last. The visitors arrived in good time, and were accompanied by their president (Mr Taylor). This was the first occasion on which the Somerville players visited Dromana, and their gentlemanly and sportsmanlike conduct both on and off the field won for them the admiration of members and supporters of the local club who would be pleased to tender to them a most hearty welcome should they again visit Dromana." Source: 'Mornington and Dromana Standard' July 18th 1908.

The only disappointing aspect of the day was the weather; and it was described as cold, wet and generally an uncomfortable experience for those spectators who had braved the elements. It should be remembered that a century ago the Dromana Oval lacked the facilities that currently exist.

Readers, of this article, would need little imagination to 'get the picture' of a wintry day at Dromana in mid- July without a kiosk, bar, social rooms or covered area and seating.

The game itself was quite exciting and interesting; and in a low scoring affair, Dromana hit the front early; and was never headed across one hundred minutes.

In the match report, Dromana's captain Wilson received kudos for his running goal in the second quarter and Ruddock, Gibson, Lacco and McLear came under notice for their strong play for the home side.

At half time, Dromana held a nine point lead but Somerville hit back hard in the third term with a string of goals in what was termed, by the journalist, as a 'gallant dash for victory.' By the final break, Somerville had cut the margin to a solitary point. However, the last quarter saw Dromana regain control of the game and keep the visitors goal-less...

"Only one point the difference. The supporters of the local club felt somewhat anxious at this juncture. For a defeat would put Dromana out of the competition.

However they rose to the occasion and playing together like Trojans gladdened the hearts of their supporters by kicking 3 goals 2 behinds to nil and thus ended one of the finest games of football witnessed in Dromana for a long time."

The quarter by quarter scores were:

Dromana: 2.1 3.1 4.2 7.14 (46)

Somerville: 1.0 1.4 3.7 3.7 (25)

Dromana's best players: As mentioned above, this newspaper report is indeed an important historic document as it listed **all** the DFC players and also ranked their performances on that day. The following comments are taken directly from the match report...

- **Rudduck:** is getting back into form, and played a sterling game.
- **M. Lacco:** showed brilliant football.
- **W. Gibson's:** work was faultless.;
- **J. McLear:** was fast and clever, and kicked a magnificent angle goal .
- **J. Wilson & W. Clydesdale:** on the forward line ...held their own.
- **G. McLear** and **Cleine:** also showed attractive football.
- **J. Murphy:**has been seldom seen to better advantage.
- **Wyatt:** played with judgment.
- **A. Griffith** and **Hoskins:** put in a lot of useful work.
- **S. George:** showed some dashing play.
- **W. Evans:** displayed clever handball.
- **S. Wilson:** played with his customary dash.
- **Purves** put in some useful work.
- **H. Clydesdale** was up to his usual form.

A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO 'ROVER'

The above match report for the 'Mornington Dromana Standard' was written by a local scribe who used the nom-de-plume (pen name), 'Rover'. The DFNC owe 'Rover' a vote of thanks for providing the club with such a detailed list of players of the 1908 season. The above match review helps DFNC put family names 'into place' in 1908. Match reports, such as 'Rover' submitted for publication, again underline the significance of such reviews in compiling club history.

A MODICUM OF SUCCESS AT PIER STREET IN 1908

A search of local newspapers uncovered the results of a several other games in which Dromana had played in 1908:-

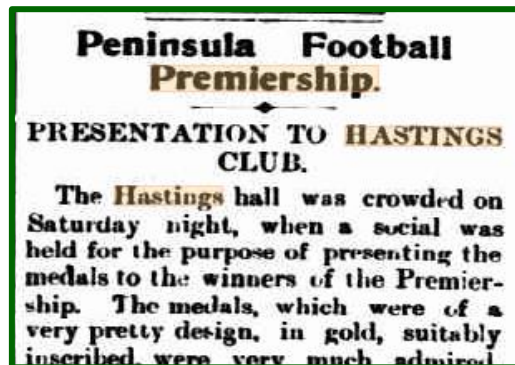
*Somerville: 10.14 (84) defeated Dromana: 5.4 (34)

*Hastings: 10.22 (82) defeated Dromana: 2.3 (15)

*Mornington: 5.2 (32) defeated Dromana: 2.10 (22)

Dromana tasted success in a brave fighting win against Frankston at Dromana in July that year. The game was played in dreadful conditions and Dromana hung on to clinch a well-deserved and badly needed victory by four points. The final scores were: Dromana 4. 5. (29) defeated Frankston 3.7. (25).

Hastings won the PFA premiership in 1908. In an exciting Grand Final at Somerville Hastings 5.12 (42) held off a most determined Balnarring team 5.8 (38) to carry off the pennant.



As is well known, Dromana won its first premiership in 1931; and it was a long and difficult haul to the top. In the 1901 Census, Dromana had a population of just 327 residents; and the club struggled in those 'foundation years.' During the First World War, the club went into recess; and the subsequent rebuild that took place in the 1920's was not without 'trouble and strife.'

UPDATED NOTES REGARDING DOUG CHAPMAN -2022



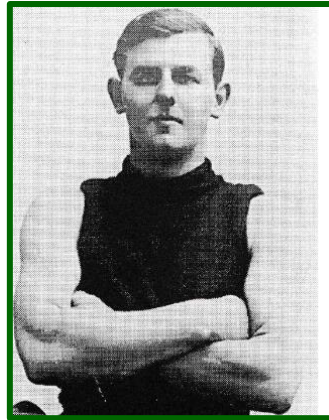
The Richmond FC team in 1908. Doug is on extreme left of the middle row.

NOTE: The following notes regarding Doug Chapman were updated in April 2022 and add to the previous articles related to Doug.

Walter Douglas Chapman (born in Dromana in 1889) was a tall (191 cm) and skilled ruckman. Doug had been a captain of Dromana before joining Richmond.

This fact, in itself, is quite amazing as Doug was just 18 years when he made his debut for the Tigers against Fitzroy at the Punt Road Oval. Fitzroy won by 25 points.

The Richmond team had several notable players listed that day including Charlie Pannam (also Collingwood), Bob Bowden (also St Kilda-150 games), Dick Condon (also Collingwood-181 games) and Billy Schmidt who had played VFL football with St Kilda.



Doug Chapman's ability cannot be under-rated and his long kicking was said to be exceptional. As stated in the 'Standard Newspaper', one of Doug's five career- goals for Richmond was indeed a 'long bomb'....

"DROMANA'S BRIGHT YOUTH...Douglas Chapman from Dromana, was playing remarkably well in the League. Playing at Richmond, he kicked a goal 78 yards out. At the age of 17 years, just before he started with Richmond, he kicked a goal from 65 yards for Dromana at Mornington. 'The Standard' July 22nd 1921. Page: 4

In 1909, Doug returned to Richmond FC and played a further 12 games. It was a tough season for Doug as he only played in two winning Richmond teams that season (i.e. St Kilda twice).

For many years, it was a mystery where Doug played football after 1909. However, recent research has uncovered that he was cleared to a club known as Essendon Town (later called Essendon 'A') in the Victorian Football Association.

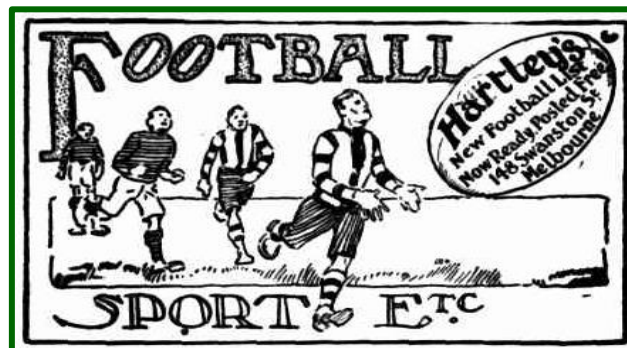
It appears that Doug played in the Essendon VFA in 1910-11-12. Doug is said to have been a member of Essendon Town's premiership team in 1912. On that day Essendon 'A' (or Town) played *Footscray (see below) at the **North Melbourne Oval in front of 25,000 fans. Doug Chapman received brief praise in the suburban magazine 'Punch' for his fine game in the ruck that day...

"Hoare was a fine rover for Essendon against Footscray, receiving able assistance from Sevier and Chapman, the latter of who followed nearly the whole of the game." 'Punch' October 3rd 1912 Page: 42

Note: Essendon Town played in the VFA from 1900-1921 and was known as the 'Dreadnoughts.' Essendon Town played its home games at the Essendon Recreation Reserve better known as Windy Hill.

It may surprise some readers that Doug actually returned to VFL football in 1913 and played with Melbourne. He was 23 years of age when he debuted for Melbourne against Collingwood at the MCG in Round: 1 that year...

"D. Chapman, who last week was granted a clearance by the Association to transfer from Essendon (Association) to Melbourne. The only difference is that Chapman has no residential qualification to urge in his favour. He originally played with Richmond before transferring to Essendon. Now, when he applies for a clearance to Melbourne he claims Clifton Hill as his residence. The inconsistency of the two decisions is being freely commented on." 'The Argus' May 1st 1913. Page: 5



being handy with a brace of sixers, whilst Kirby went three. Donaldson and Chalmers were in good fettle, as was John Watt for the Fuchsias, whilst Dug. Chapman still continues to show improvement.

Doug Chapman at Melbourne in 1913 said to be 'showing improvement.'

Doug played ten games with Melbourne; and his last game for MFC was against South Melbourne on August 2nd 1913. South Melbourne won easily in a low scoring affair.



This is the Melbourne team which meet Geelong in Round: 7 June 7th in 1913 at the MCG. The team list on that day indicated that Doug Chapman was selected in the team. Doug is probably in the back row but the quality of the print makes it virtually impossible to name Doug. Perhaps a reader has access to this photograph and can assist. While Doug kicked two goals that day, Geelong defeated Melbourne by 32points.

The MFC history website 'Demonwiki' also offers a clue as to where Doug went after playing with MFC. It seems that he crossed to Hawthorn in the VFA.

“ Doug ChapmanDebuted for Richmond ...and played two seasons there before joining the Essendon Association VFA side. After winning a premiership with the Dreadnoughts in 1912 he returned to the VFL for one season with Melbourne. After 10 games he was cleared to Hawthorn in April 1914.”

H.F.C.
 Prior to entering the playing arena, A. Gough (coach) was elected captain, with J. Kiker vice-captain to Hawthorn.
 Chapman, from Melbourne, was a tower of strength to Hawthorn, his play as follower and forward being excellent, whilst Gough (ruck), Wilkinson, Murphy (wing), Sewart and McConville (centre), Ventrick (hook)

Doug Chapman played with Hawthorn VFA in 1914. Doug played 29 games and kicked 22 goals for HFC 1914-19. Source: 'Hawthorn and Camberwell Citizen' April 17th 1914. Page: 2.



This image was discovered in the State Library archives and is a rare photo of Hawthorn FC in 1914. The club was affiliated with the VFA in that period. This historic photograph lists Doug Chapman as absent that day. It is disappointing Doug is not shown in the line-up but the fact that he is named in the group confirms that he played for Hawthorn following his departure from Melbourne FC at the end of 1913.

It is documented that Doug played with Hawthorn in the VFA from 1914-19. According to MFC archives he also played with Brighton in 1920 and then was cleared to Prahran (1921-1922) as stated below...

“Centre half-forward and ruckman who debuted for Richmond in 1907 and played two seasons there before joining the Essendon Association VFA side. After winning a premiership with the Dreadnoughts in 1912 he returned to the VFL for one season with Melbourne. After 10 games he was cleared to Hawthorn in April 1914 and spent two years there. After the war he played for Brighton in 1920 and Prahran from 1921 to 1922. “Source: ‘Demonwiki’ website.

SUMMARY OF DOUG CHAPMAN’S CAREER

The table below tries to summarize Doug’s journey from Dromana to the ‘big smoke’ of the city and his time with at least six suburban football clubs.

YEAR	CLUB	LEAGUE	GAMES	GOALS
1907	Dromana	PFA	?	?
1907	Richmond	VFA	1	1
1908	Richmond	VFL	11	0
1909	Richmond	VFL	12	5
1910	Port Melbourne **			
1910	Essendon	VFA	15	7
1911	Essendon	VFA	20	10
1912	Essendon	VFA	21	19
1913	Melbourne	VFL	10	7
1914	Hawthorn	VFA	12	14
1915	Hawthorn	VFA	12	7
1919	Hawthorn	VFA	2	0
1920	Brighton	VFA	4	0
1921	Prahran	VFA	12	3
1922	Prahran	VFA	15	2

DOUG CHAPMAN’S REMARKABLE CAREER 1907-1922

Looking back at Doug Chapman’s life in football, it is fair to say that he was a talented journeyman who loved the game with a fierce passion. He played senior football from 1907 until 1922; and played over 100 games at VFA level. It is fair to that Doug, was arguably, the best Dromana footballer of his generation...

“Doug was a centre-half-forward and ruckman. He was signed by Richmond after winning a Mornington Peninsula kicking contest. He later played in back-to-back Premierships with Essendon’s VFA team.

Away from football, Doug served with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade for 42 years, 22 of those as an Officer” Source: ‘Tigerland Archives’

NOTE: 1 ** The VFA archives / history project indicates that Doug may have played at Port Melbourne in 1910 but further details could not be found.

NOTE : 2 Football was suspended in 1916-18 because of World War: 1

CONCLUSION

Doug Chapman died at Box Hill in 1975, aged 86 years ; having served with the MFB for 42 years, Doug’s funeral was probably a big affair. Unfortunately there are no records of his burial service uncovered for this article.

In conclusion, the football lovers of Dromana should ensure that with the passage of time, Doug’s significant achievements are never forgotten. In these busy times, it easy to forget but, Doug, like so many early players at Pier Street, deserves to be remembered for setting the foundation for the club’s future.

Doug began his football at Dromana a century ago; and there are several seasons where ‘things’ are vague and may require further substantiation. I offer my apologies if inaccuracies exist in the difficult research of Doug’s later years in the VFA but trust that the article sparks interest in the life and times of a champion (in the true sense of the word).

Any further photographs or information regarding Doug would be greatly appreciated by the club. Thank you. Roger May 2022.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: DFNC Records-VFL archives-The VFA Project- State Library of Victoria-Rosebud Public Library-Hawthorn FC archives-Richmond FC ‘Tiger land’ Melbourne FC ‘Demonwiki’- Personal files and texts- Doug Dyall: Historian for the MPNFL.

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Written and researched for DFNC by: Roger Spaul- May 2022

DFNC website administrator: Graham Stelling. DFNC Registrar-Board Member.

Email contacts:historian@dromanatigers.com.au. or admin@dromanatigers.com.au