

# **A CENTURY AGO**

## **THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS**

### **1923**

(Reference: 2023/16)



**A CENTURY AGO**

A photograph from the 1923 Grand Final between Essendon and Fitzroy.

## **INTRODUCTION – LOOKING BACK - 100 YEARS AGO**



This is a photograph of the fans watching the 1923 VFL Grand Final. On that day, 46,566 people witnessed the match. Meanwhile, small coastal towns like Dromana and Hastings were hoping to find enough fit and able players to field a team in the local competition. The 1920's were particularly tough times for all country football clubs after the Great War; and Dromana FC was no exception as it battled to rebuild, 'stay afloat' and prove competitive in the austere post-war years.

## **1923- DROMANA JOURNEY TO HASTINGS**

The following report of a match between Dromana and Hastings in 1923 was unearthed in the 'Frankston and Somerville Standard' (8<sup>th</sup> June 1923); and It is another important discovery in DFNC's history as the review:

1. Provides a most detailed description of the game.
2. Lists numerous players from both teams of that era.
3. Gives an insight into the spirit of community football in that era.

The match report, as shown below, has been reprinted in good faith but there have been changes in font, punctuation, inclusion of paragraph breaks, spacing and headings so as to enhance the article for the DFNC History website.



In earlier years, Hastings FC struggled to find enough players to field a team during the winter months. The population of Hastings in 1921 was just 758; and in 1923 the club was forced to withdraw from PFA late in that season.



'Frankston and Somerville Standard' Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June 1923. Page: 3.

## HASTINGS v DROMANA.

(By 'Ol Boy,' Hastings).

After three successive defeats, Hastings opened their winning account at the expense of Dromana at Hastings on Saturday last. The ground was in good order after the recent rains, and there were a good many spectators present to witness the match. Dromana were well on time in arriving, and as they took the field with a good representative team.

It was remarked that they would give the local boys a good go for it and so it proved, as it was a good, fast, clean game from start to finish with not much separating the teams, though the home team won by 17 points, but Dromana missed several easy chances to score, which, if made the best of, the finish would have been very exciting.

### FIRST QUARTER

The game opened with the home team kicking towards the eastern goal, and though there was a slight wind blowing it did not affect the play much, as the play opened up fast as the ball was soon travelling all over the ground, each team trying to make the best of their opportunities,

and good play was witness on both sides. Knox, Storey, Jack Bros., Denham, Holley, Romeo, Mills, Goodwin and Campbell doing well for Hastings; whilst McLear Bros., Clydesdale, Birch, Patterson, Dyson, Singleton and Allen working hard for Dromana.

The home team made the best use of their opportunities in the first term, scoring 3.3 to 1.4; the goal-kickers being F. Jack, A. Campbell, and H. Jack for Hastings; and W. Patterson for Dromana.

## **SECOND QUARTER**

On change of ends it was thought that the visitors would make up the leeway, as they went off with great dash, striving hard to score the full points, but the home team slightly held, the ad-vantage, though the scoring in this quarter was fairly even, Hasting scoring 2.1 to Dromana 1.1. Goal-kickers were for Hastings: M. Mills, R. Storey. Dromana: W. Patterson.

## **THIRD QUARTER**

Not much time was lost at the interval as both captains agreed to play on, and Umpire Osborne taking them at their word, soon set the ball in motion again.

On the bounce, Dromana opened up the attack with the home team defending, and good, fast foot-ball was witnessed, and Dromana playing better together than in the first half, as their passing was slightly better than the home team, but the boys in blue were holding their own, hence the level scoring in the third quarter, 1.2 each.

Goal-kickers were Dunne for Hastings, and W. Patterson for Dromana.

## **FINAL QUARTER**

Hastings started the last quarter with a lead of 17 points, but the visitors were not discouraged, as they set off to wipe off the margin if they could, as both teams being on the bottom of the list, each wanted a win, but the home team were not to be denied and though the quarter was very evenly contested and each side scoring 2.1, the home team still held the advantage of 17 points at the finish, though the visitors fought gamely on to the end, thus giving Hastings their first win of the season. The goal-kickers in the final term were Hastings: Amy, and Campbell and for Dromana: Allen and Patterson.

## **FINAL SCORES:**

- **Hastings: 8.7(55) defeated Dromana: 5.8 (38).**

There was not a player on either side who did not do his bit during the game, and others worthy of mention were: Armstrong (doing great

work on the back line), Jones, Robinson (full back), I. Hurley; whilst for Dromana: W. Taylor, Dyson Bros., and Davern worked hard to save defeat.

The game was played in the same friendly spirit as is the case when these teams meet, and the Dromana boys took their defeat in true, sportsmanlike spirit, and had they won would have begrudged them their victory, as they play the game.

Umpire Osborne had charge of the game, and gave a good exhibition of umpiring to the satisfaction of both sides.

## FOOTNOTES ON 1923

1. In 1923, football on the Mornington Peninsula was divided into two associations. The PFA First Association teams were: Frankston, Mornington, Hastings, Naval Base, Somerville and Dromana. The Second Association comprised seven teams: Tyabb, Balnarring, Somerville, Moorooduc, Frankston, Seaford and Langwarrin.
2. The President of the MPFA was H.J. McCulloch and the Secretary/Treasurer was Tom Hutchins. Lou Carrigg, one of the leading dignitaries, of the Dromana township, was a Patron of the PFA in 1923.



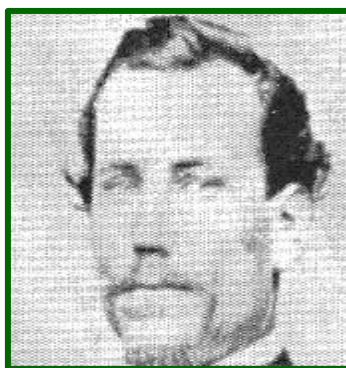
**Mr. H.J. McCulloch a key figure in local football in that era.**

3. Although Dromana was not represented at the AGM of the league in 1923 it is known that the McLear, Taylor and Osborne families were actively involved in maintaining and overseeing the club.
4. The Dromana team members (i.e. family names) mentioned in the above match report were: McLear, Clydesdale, Birch, Patterson, Dyson, Allen, Singleton, Taylor and Davern. In at least two cases, of the above listed names, there were siblings who took the field for Dromana in that match.



**Dromana's eminent supporter Lou Carrigg- Patron of the PFA in 1923**

5. The umpire in the above match was Mr Osborne. It was probably George Osborne who had arrived in Dromana, from Newcastle, in 1919.
6. The 1923 season commenced on May 12<sup>th</sup> and the Home & Away series concluded on August 18<sup>th</sup> that year.



**A foundation member and unfaltering service to DFC: George Mclear Senior.**



**George Mclear : A.I.F Service No: 49 Bombardier 36th Heavy Artillery Brigade. George was an iconic figure in the history of the Dromana community. He was a champion on the field, a dedicated committee member, active community identity and a distinguished soldier who enlisted for service in two World Wars.**

7. As shown in the match report Patterson (believed to be Bill) kicked four of the team's five goals. Bill went on to win the club award for goal kicking that year. He was the best Dromana forward of that era; and took out the goal kicking trophy in 1923-29-32-33-34, and 1935 when he kicked 66 goals.



8. Despite being competitive against Hastings that day, Dromana struggled throughout the 1923 season; and could only muster one victory from 13 outings (i.e. by early August). Hastings which defeated Dromana that day fared badly that year and could not field a team late in the season and was forced to withdraw from the competition.
9. The four top teams in the First Association in 1923 were: Naval Base, Mornington, Frankston and Somerville. The finals were played at Somerville; and it was reported that a special steam train ran from Frankston to carry supporters to the final against Somerville that year.
10. The Grand Final received a comprehensive report in the newspaper; and the results were: Frankston 10.6. 64 defeated the Navy 6.13. 49.
11. Family connections are always intriguing when researching football history; and perhaps Phil Kidgell, who starred for Frankston that day, was related to Henry Morley Kidgell (ex-Dromana and South Melbourne...see below ) who made a name for himself at Pier Street in earlier times.
12. In 1923, Essendon won the VFL premiership. The scores that day were Essendon: 8.15 (63) defeated Fitzroy 6.10 (46). Younger readers may be interested to know that the following season; the Brownlow Medal was instituted in VFL football.



**The triumphant Essendon team of 1923.**

13. Although Dromana had experienced a challenging season, the club was looking to the future with a degree of optimism; and a newspaper article recorded that Dromana was hoping to field another team in 1924.

## **REGARDING GEORGE MCLEAR IN 1939**

The following press cutting was found recently; and further exemplifies George MClear's dedication to the football club. The article was published in the 'Weekly Times'; and, consequently would have been read by thousands of people across Victoria.

Families (e.g. McLear, Rudduck and Osborne) were the backbone of small country clubs in those days. Dromana's population in that era was approximately 500 permanent residents, so the hours of work, for the small band of volunteers, in organizing the club would have been considerable.

George McLear was a dynamo in the 1920's and 'saddled up' for another stint as DFC President in 1939. One can only admire George's dauntless courage and drive as he served in the military during World War: II as well as in the Great War,



Source: 'The Weekly Times' June 24<sup>th</sup> 1939. Page: 65.

## A RARE PHOTOGRAPH OF HENRY MORLEY KIDGELL

It is difficult to verify but Henry Morley Kidgell may have been the first Dromana footballer to play VFL. This photograph, from 'The Punch' newspaper 1904, shows Henry Kidgell (second from the right) blocking the famous Gerald Brosnan of Fitzroy in a match at the Brunswick Street Oval.



**Caption: 'McKay has a fine opportunity. The anxious Brosnan is baulked by Kidgell.'**

**Source: 'Punch Newspaper' August 25<sup>th</sup> 1904. Page: 17**

Henry Morley Kidgell (1881-1948) was born in Sandridge (the early name for Port Melbourne) to William Kidgell and Hettie Morley. Henry attended Scotch College from 1895-1898; and, in next to no time, he carved a handsome reputation for himself in cricket and football.

Henry Kidgell played football for Dromana Football Club before heading to the 'big smoke' to further his football career with South Melbourne. He made his debut for South Melbourne FC in Round 11 1904 against Geelong at the Lake Oval. AFL Records show that Henry played five games in 1904 before returning to play at Pier Street.



Henry Morley Kidgell was a star with Dromana FC; and he also played football with South Melbourne in 1904. Henry can be seen in the above photograph of the 1898 Scotch College Cricket team. Henry is on the left in the front row. Source: 'The Australasian' December 24<sup>th</sup> 1889. Page: 26.

## VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS REQUIRED FOR DFNC HISTORY

So much of the history of our club's early years has been lost; and the foundational years of DFNC history are elusive. Photographs of early players and their families add much to our archives and would be greatly valued. Thank you for any help you can offer in this regard. Please contact Graham or Roger if you can assist. Thank you.



'Change is the only constant in life'. This photograph of earlier days of Dromana is part of the Dromana & District Historical Collection. The Dromana Football Club has always played an important role in community life; and it something of which to be proud. The club would appreciate any photographs of players /teams and newspapers cuttings of match reports/events from the club's formative years. Thank you.



## **REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION**

Sources: MPNFL records-DFNC files-NLA- 'Frankston-Somerville Standard'- 'The Australasian'-Weekly Times'-AWM-Scotch College archives.

Article reference: 1923-'The Battle of Hastings'- Reference 2023/16

Researched and written for DFNC by: Roger Spaul- July 2023

DFNC website administrator: Graham Stelling-DFNC Life Member

Email contacts: [historian@dromanaticgers.com.au](mailto:historian@dromanaticgers.com.au) or [website@dromanaticgers.com.au](mailto:website@dromanaticgers.com.au)