



WALTER DOUGLAS CHAPMAN 1889-1975

(Ref: 2018/8)

1908- NATIONAL BACKGROUND

1908 was a significant year in the history of Australian Football because in August, that year, a national carnival of football (promoted as the 'Jubilee of Australasian Football') was organized in Melbourne. The sides that took part in that football extravaganza were: **Victoria, Tasmania, West Australia, New South Wales, Queensland** and a combined team from **New Zealand**.

The **Prime Minister of Australia, Alfred Deakin**, played a prominent role in the pre-carnival festivities; and the series of matches gained plenty of coverage in the newspapers. **Victoria** dominated in all matches and thrashed the hapless New Zealand combination by more than 20 goals.

In 1908, **Carlton** won the VFL premiership; and **Dick Lee**, the Collingwood legend, won the goal kicking with 54 goals.

Younger readers may not be aware that the **Brownlow Medal** was not instituted until 1924; but the leading players in that era included : '**Pompey**' **Elliott (Carlton)**, **Bill Busbridge (Essendon)** , **Jim Sharp (Fitzroy)**, **Vince Coutie (Melbourne)** and **Dave McNamara (St Kilda)**.

THE LOCAL CLASH-110 YEARS AGO

While the local fixture between **Dromana** and **Flinders** could hardly boast the same amount of ceremony and pageantry as the **1908 Jubilee of Football**, it was never-the-less an important game between two coastal towns on the Southern Peninsula.

Note: Flinders would best be described as a 'coastal village' in those years. According to the official Census of 1901, there were only 181 permanent residents of Flinders (87 men ; 94 women) and just 34 occupied dwellings. On the other hand, the population of Dromana, in the same census, was given as 736 people including 372 men.

In 1908, Dromana competed in the **Peninsula Football Association**. The other affiliates were: **Frankston, Tyabb, Hastings, Mornington, Flinders and Somerville**.

The match was played at Flinders and, as can be imagined, the occasion aroused a degree of local interest. The review was published in the '**Mornington-Dromana Standard**' on the 10th October which infers that the game took place in late September or possibly in early October.

There seems to have been a degree of ad-hoc organization to the fledgling local competition in those days; and it is known that Flinders FC joined the league well after the actual season had commenced. It is documented that, in order for Flinders' to field a team that year, the club had recruited several men from **Shoreham**.

DOUG CHAPMAN RETURNS IN TIME

Dromana FC had experienced difficulties early in 1908 as two of the club's stars **Ernie Ruddock** and **Doug Chapman** were unavailable. Ernie, who had played at **Collingwood** in 1907, was said to be 'otherwise busy' and Doug Chapman was playing with **Richmond**.

For Dromana FC, 1908 had started unsteadily but had gone from bad to worse as season unfolded. One reliable source stated...

'At the half way mark Dromana had only one win and that was a forfeit...'

Just when things seemed hopeless, the 'cavalry', in the form of **Doug Chapman**, arrived to save the situation.

According to AFL records, Doug Chapman had played eleven games for **Richmond** in 1908 (see below) ; his last VFL game for that season was against St Kilda in Round: 18 on September 5th at Punt Road.

The date is important because Dromana had played Flinders after that date which, consequently, allowed Doug to play with DFC.

Dromana officials were delighted with Doug's return from the 'big smoke' but at least one other club (see below) believed that his selection should have been disallowed.

THE MATCH

The match report, as carried in the newspaper, was short on detail but it was described as an 'exciting affair.' It was a close contest and Dromana hung onto overcome Flinders in a dour battle by seven points. As can be seen, Doug's Chapman's influence on the outcome was substantial.

The final scores were:

Dromana 7.9.51 defeated Flinders 6.8.44

Goal kickers for- Dromana: D. Chapman 4 McLear Lawrence McDonald

Goal kickers- Flinders: Eadie 2 Cleave 2 O'Neil 2

Best players- Dromana: Chapman Wyatt Gibson Hoskins Evans MacDonald Callanan Clydesdale and Wilson.

Best players - Flinders: O'Neil and Eadie.

It was noted in the newspaper that Doug Chapman had...

"...rucked for four quarters and was always prominent and finished with 4 goals."

FOOTNOTES REGARDING DOUG CHAPMAN & OTHERS

1. **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 in 1908. 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.

2. 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

3. It is believed **Henry Morley Kidgell** was another Dromana footballer who played VFL football with **South Melbourne** (5 games) in 1904. His last game for South Melbourne was in round: 17 against Geelong at the Corio Oval. It is difficult to unearth more about Henry as a footballer but the name 'Kidgell' is prominent in local community affairs in those years.

4. A mentioned above, **Ernie Rudduck** played VFL football with Collingwood in 1907. His first VFL match was against Essendon in Round:5 and Collingwood won by 9 points. It must have been an enormous thrill for the 23 year debutant from Dromana because Collingwood was star-studded outfit with players such as: **Jock McHale**, **Eddie Drohan**, **Arthur Leach**, **Bob Rush** and an amazing teenager named **Dick Lee**.

5. 'The Standard' newspaper in July 1921 stated that **Ern Rudduck** had also played for Richmond but there is no evidence that he ever played a senior match with the Tigers. In later years, Ern Rudduck became a highly enthusiastic and committed official at DFC and he worked incessantly to lift the club.

6. The match report intimated that '**Wattie' Gibson** had been injured in that game. There is some possibility that 'Wattie' and **Billy Evans** may have trained with VFL club Fitzroy but there are no VFL records which can verify this. One of the things that makes the history of Dromana FC so difficult to piece together, during the formative years of the club, was the lack of official league and club documentation.

7. In the earlier clash between the two clubs that season Dromana had won 12-15 (87) to Flinders 2-6 (18). It was stated in the match report that, in the second quarter, Ern Rudduck played for Flinders to try and even-up the proceedings. The fact that Ern played for Flinders supports the earlier view that local football was vastly different to modern times. **George**

McLear kicked 3 goals that day and the club's best players were listed as: **Gibson, Clydesdale, Hoskins, Murphy** and **Hazeldine**.

8. A search of local newspapers uncovered the results of a few 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)

9. Dromana tasted success in a brave win against Frankston at Dromana in July that year. The game was played in dreadful conditions and Dromana hung on to clinch a narrow Victory. The final scores were: Dromana 4. 5. (29) defeated Frankston 3.7. (25).

10. Doug Chapman played in that game (much to chagrin of the Frankston officials) and the stars in the victory were: **McLear, Clydesdale, Wilson** and mention was made of two players **Garvey** and **Vickers**. The issue of Doug Chapman playing (while a registered VFL player) was said to have been 'taken up' by Frankston officials. FFC protested about Doug playing for Dromana. The result of dispute is not known.

11. In 1908, Dromana wore black and yellow colours and listed family names known in that season included: **McLear, Clydesdale, Gibson, Hazeldine , Purvis, Murphy, Rudduck, Chapman, Evans, Callanan, Wilson, Griffith, Wyatt, Cleine, Hoskins, Lacco, Counsel** and **George**.

DOUG CHAPMAN IN LATER YEARS

In 1909 Doug returned to **Richmond FC** and played a further 12 games. It was 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 his football after 1909. However, records indicate 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 warm but 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 whom 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. Doug's decision to cross to Melbourne after a lay-off of some three years caused a few ructions...

“ 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

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

The MFC history website ‘Demonwiki’ also offers a clue as to where Doug went after playing with MFC. It seems that Doug crossed to Hawthorn (VFA) at the a start of the 1914

“ Doug ChapmanDebuted 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.”

Note: Hawthorn *Footscray and **North Melbourne (see above) did not affiliate with the VFL until **1925**. It is difficult to say, with certainty, but Doug probably played with **Hawthorn** in the VFA or perhaps with the **Hawthorn Rovers**, which competed in the **Eastern Suburbs Football Association**.

In summary, during his VFL career (1908-13), Doug Chapman played 33 senior VFL games and kicked 12 goals. He was 24 years when he stepped down from VFL football.

Doug Chapman died at Box Hill in 1975, aged 86 years.

THE END

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION

Sources: DFNC archives –National Library of Australia - Personal files & DFNC publications- Demonwiki website- ‘Encyclopedia of AFL footballers’- AFL Tables.

Researched and written for DFNC by: Roger Spaul –April-2018.

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

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