

Eric Doig

..... played rugby union with the Lithgow Blue Bell Club in 1911 at the age of fourteen. He first played rugby league with the Gordons rugby league Club in 1913. It was only three years earlier that his older brother William "Pummy" Mantle and three other Lithgow players came down to Sydney to play rugby league with Wests and were subsequently banned by the Rugby Union for their trouble. In the intervening period, Pummy Mantle and others were working to establish rugby league in Lithgow, and 1913 was a watershed year when rugby league was established in the town and rugby union was disbanded.

In 1914 Eric Doig joined the newly formed Blue Bell Rugby League Club and remained with them until the 1920 season when he came to Sydney. He had a successful time with the Blue Bell Club, winning a number of premierships, and was subsequently selected to represent the Hartley District which played against other Country districts, winning the Pedersen Cup in 1918 and 1919. Before he left for Sydney in 1920, Eric joined, for a brief period, the newly formed Lithgow Diggers team which was mainly made up of returned soldiers, including his brother "Pummy" Mantle.

Eric Doig came to Sydney in 1920 and played rugby league with the Marist Brothers Kogarah A Grade team in the St George junior rugby league competition, although a news article in the Sunday Times newspaper on 10 April 1921 indicated that he was from Belmore. It is possible that he was residing at Belmore, which would have made him residentially qualified to play with Wests in 1921.

Eric made an impression in the A Grade competition in 1920 and was selected in the St George President's Cup team. He was graded with Wests in 1921, and joined with a number of up and coming players, most of whom were drawn from the local junior competition. He played five First Grade games and three Reserve Grade games in 1921. He also played seven City Cup matches with the First Grade team.

Eric was selected in Metropolitan teams in 1922 and 1923 that played Combined Universities, Queensland Firsts and Country Firsts. He was also selected for a Possibles v Probables match in 1924. However the highlight of his career was being selected for NSW against Queensland in 1925. The NSW team was a young combination and up against an experienced Queensland team. NSW was beaten and Eric never had the chance to further stake his claim for representative honours.

A news item in Rugby League News on 2 August 1924 gave the following account of Eric Doig's play; "Western Suburbs fine half, has been able to show what he really can do when well supported. He has given many capital exhibitions this season, and has also played a big part in West's later successes. Doig is a tiger in defence, and is quick to pick the weak spots in defence. As a half back he has shown wonderful improvement, and is sure to show up well in the City Cup competition. Doig is also an able goal kicker, but McMillan's success in this respect has given him fewer opportunities."

Eric played with Wests from 1921 until 1926, playing sixty seven First Grade games and five in Reserve Grade. He also played a total of fourteen City Cup games for the Club. He retired from top grade football at the end of the 1926 season. In 1927 he was elected to the Wests General Committee and presented with an Honour Cap for the contribution that he made to Wests. He was recorded playing in a trial match for Wests in April 1928, but nothing more was heard of him until he took up a Player/Coach position with the Nyngan Rugby League Club in north western NSW in 1930.

Eric Doig moved to Queensland in the 1960's and lived the remainder of his life there. He died at Wavell Heights Queensland in June 1971. He was privately cremated at the Mount Thompson Crematorium, Mt Gravatt, Queensland.