

## Harold Boyle

.... was a regular member of the Reserve Grade team in 1908 after playing in the First Grade team during the pre-season trials. Ironically, his name was reported correctly in those team lists.

Western Suburbs.—Full-back, Mawson; three-quarters, Gormley, Dale, Lamkin, Boyle; five-eighth, Meicalfe; half, James; forwards, Duncan (captain), Pitt, M'Millin, Crawford, Crowe, Tattersall.

Pre-season Trial (April 1908)

When it came to his one First Grade appearance in 1908, Harold was listed as Boyleau or Boyldan in various newspapers. The Rugby League Project does not list him at all in the match results for the round four clash against Newcastle. However, Western Suburbs Heritage #19 has been allocated to a player with the surname of Boyleau.

WESTERN SUBURBS v. NEWCASTLE.  
Played on the Agricultural Ground.  
Western Suburbs.—Full-back, A. Brown; three-quarters, R. Gormley, Boyleau, C. M'Fadden, P. Franks; half-backs, B. Duggan, E. Ellis; forwards, Abercrombie, C. Mount, E. Meade, J. Slack (capt.), R. Ellis, W. Elliott.

rough play. The ball now travelled up and down the field, when play was interrupted for a few minutes, Boyleau colliding with two Newcastle men. After a scrum Western

Sunday Sun 24 May 1908

The name Boyleau does not appear in any available public records from this period. It is evident that the name was not spelled correctly and that it was Harold Boyle that took the field against Newcastle in 1908.

Harold Boyle continued playing in 1909 and 1910 and he did make another First Grade appearance in 1909. He played in the centres against Eastern Suburbs in round two and this was initially thought to be his First Grade debut for which he was allocated Wests Heritage number #35. Given that he did make his First Grade debut in 1908, his actual Wests Heritage number should be #19 and not #35.

Harold joined the Annandale Rugby League Club in 1912 and played mainly Reserve Grade with the odd appearance in First Grade in both 1912 and 1913.

So, who was Harold Boyle? A search of public records did not locate a H. Boyle of the right age or who lived in the right location to might have played for Wests. However, an extended search of these records located a James Harold Boyle living at Ashfield and of the correct age.

James Harold Boyle and his wife Jane had a child, Harold William Boyle, born in 1909 but who sadly passed away in 1910 at the age of 7 months. The death notice in the Sydney Morning Herald referred to the "beloved son of H. and J. Boyle." It appears that James Harold Boyle was commonly called by his second name of "Harold." Most of the newspaper reports of the time listed Harold Boyle as H. Boyle.

J.H. Boyle was a member of the Western Suburbs Amateur Athletic Club where he participated in the high jump and other events. He was evidently a fast runner and, in those times running races were often held with prize money offered to the winner. Harold Boyle appeared to be involved in these events as noted in a news item in the Referee of October 1908.

H. Boyle writes me : "Enclosed please find £5 (£5 enclosed—Ed. "Referee"), which I wish you to hold as a deposit, to be covered by G. Fletcher (Burwood) if he still wishes to run me 75yds both off the mark. As a report has been circulated that I backed out of my former negotiations with Fletcher, I hope that the above deposit will prove that I am in earnest—as I have been all along. I am willing to make a match for anything from £10 to £25, distance to be 75yds, and the race to be run on one of the Sydney ovals."

Referee 28 October 1908

Harold Boyle enlisted with the AIF in May of 1917 and was posted to the 3rd Field Company Engineers. The Field Company Engineers were part of each Infantry Division and was responsible for a range of tasks including construction of defensive and gun positions, excavation of trenches and dugouts, erection of wire and other obstacles, preparation of command posts, signalling and water supply. They also undertook road and bridge construction, maintenance and obstacle breaching and crossing.

Harold embarked for the Western Front, landing at Glasgow in October 1917 and after spending several months in England, he was transferred to France in April 1918. His unit was with the Australian 1st Division at Hazebrouck near the French/Belgium border.

After several months, the troops were moved south to Amiens in time for the push to the Hindenburg Line. Harold Boyle survived the war unscathed and returned to Australia in August 1919.

Harold Boyle lived the remainder of his life at Campsie NSW, and he died there in March 1955.