

Jack Arnold

.... was noticed by metropolitan selectors after two First Grade games. He was selected to play in a Metropolitan representative team against Newcastle on 9 May 1936. The following week, 16 May, he was selected as a second row forward in a City Possibles v City Probables team that played in front of a crowd of 36,021 at the Sydney Cricket Ground. This match was a prelude to a NSW v Queensland interstate match.

The Possibles v Probables match had some of the games highest profile players as well as emerging talent like Jack Arnold. The match was reported to be of high quality that ended in an 18-18 draw. Jack Arnold was recorded taking a long range penalty shot at goal just on full time to win the match. Unfortunately the kick was unsuccessful.

The week following, the Sydney representative team undertook a tour of Western NSW where Jack Arnold played against Wellington on 23 May and Dubbo on 24 May. The month of May 1936 would have been an exciting but exhaustive experience for a 16 year old Jack Arnold.

Upon his return to Sydney, Jack played only two more First Grade games for Wests. In mid-July he was sent off and received a three week suspension which appeared to affect his momentum for the remainder of the year.

SYDNEY CRICKET GROUND—1.45 p.m. Saturday, May 16, 1936	
CITY PROBABLES v. CITY POSSIBLES	
PROBABLES (Colors—Royal Blue and White)	POSSIBLES (Color—Green)
FULL-BACK: 13—H. DAVIES (Newtown)	FULL-BACK: 13—J. BEATON (East. Subs.)
THREE-QUARTERS: 12—A. MITCHELL (Canterbury-Bankstown)	THREE-QUARTERS: 12—S. GOODWIN (Balmain)
11—T. NEVIN (Newtown)	11—C. PEARCE (Capt.) (West. Subs.)
M. RYAN—10 J. DUFF—9 (St. George) (St. George)	A. CRIPPEN—10 (North Sydney)
HALVES: 8—C. BROWN (Newtown)	A. BIRTLES—9 (North Sydney)
H. MORK (Capt.)—7 (Newtown)	HALVES: 8—P. WHITE (West. Subs.)
FORWARDS: 6—R. JOHNSTONE (Newtown)	L. MEAD—7 (West. Subs.)
4—L. KELLY (St. George)	FORWARDS: 6—A. NORVAL (East. Subs.)
G. MacLENNAN—5 (Newtown)	4—J. ARNOLD (West. Subs.)
3—J. DAVIES (Newtown)	H. PIERCE—5 (East. Subs.)
2—A. FOLWELL (Newtown)	3—S. GRIFFITH (Balmain)
H. PORTER—1 (Canterbury-Bankstown)	2—F. NOLAN (North Sydney)
RESERVE: 14—E. FINUCANE (South Sydney)	W. WHEELER—1 (West. Subs.)
15—H. THOMPSON (South Sydney)	RESERVE: 14—F. TOTTEY (East. Subs.)
Forwards: 16—J. MARKS G. KILLHAM—17 (University) (South Sydney)	15—J. SHARMAN (West. Subs.)
	N. FERRIER—16 (North Sydney)
	M. NIXON—17 (East. Subs.)

City Probables v City Possibles - May 16, 1936

A column in Rugby League News from 1936 commented on Jack Arnold's entry to top grade rugby league. It noted that;

"Probably the youngest First Grade player in the competition, Jack Arnold of Wests, will not celebrate his seventeenth birthday until late this year. This young giant is six feet three inches in height and tips the beam at fourteen stone. He went right into the Reserve Grade from the local juniors, and after

two games in the lower grade was elevated to First Grade and played like a veteran against Balmain. Local supporters are hoping and suggesting that the lad will turn out to be a second George Treweeke."

A news article in 2009 noted the extraordinary selection in First Grade of a 16 year old halfback by the name of Jordan Rankin by the Gold Coast Titans. He was a Gold Coast student and was half back for the Australian schoolboys. It was noted that only Eastern Suburbs player Ray Stehr in 1929 and Wests Jack Arnold in 1936 have made their First Grade debut at a younger age. In the modern game, it is most unlikely that we will ever see forwards playing First Grade football at such a young age.

In 1937, Jack did not rise to the expectations placed on him in 1936. He played with Wests in the lower grades as well as the City Cup, but that was the end of Jack's time with Wests. In his two seasons at Wests he played four First Grade, eight Reserve Grade, three Third grade and ten City Cup games.

Jack joined Eastern Suburbs in 1938 and his career took off. He remained with Easts until 1949, playing 115 First Grade games and was a major contributor to Easts success over the years. Ironically, Jack Arnold achieved representative honours while he was playing with Wests at the beginning of his career but further recognition eluded him. He did tour with a Combined Eastern Suburbs team to New Zealand in 1939.

There is no doubt that Jack Arnold was a tough man, playing against some of the best at a very early age, so it is ironic that the NSW Police Force would not accept him into their ranks. The Daily News on 28 March 1940 reported the following;

"Jack Arnold Not Fit? - If rugby league fans were asked to nominate an ideal type for the Police Force, who would look beyond Jack Arnold? The Eastern Suburbs forward is 19 years of age, scales 16.2 stripped, and stands 6ft.2ins. in his socks. Yet Arnold cannot enter the Force. He has been told he is unfit. The reason - an appendix scar! The scar does not worry Arnold when he is battling against Henry Porter and 'Bumper' Farrell in the rucks." The Police Force loss was the Fire Brigade's gain. Jack went on to become a Fireman.

Jack Arnold was also a competent boxer. The Australian Worker newspaper on 11 February 1942, reported; "Redfern gymnasium proprietor, Dick Kerr has two leading footballers, Jack Arnold (6ft. 3ins. tall, and weighing 17-0) and Herbert Haar (14-0) training for fights with McNabb, Ray Stehr, Herb Narvo or Frank Price."

Jack lived most of his adult life in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs where he worked as a Fireman. Later in life he relocated to the Wollongong suburb of Oak Flats where he died in October 1997.