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Black Ball of Muscle

Doug Nicholls Shows Form for Northcote

By "VICTOR"

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For speed, dash, untiring energy and spectacular leaping at the ball no player in Association football surpasses Doug Nicholls, who has been one of Northcote's best in this season's matches.

This dashing little wingman is the only aborigine playing senior football in Melbourne, and he cuts a picturesque figure in his green and gold guernsey and white trousers on the field.

Like the rest of his race, he is very neat in dress and looks a footballer from the head down when in his "war paint." On the field Nicholls is the most irrepressible ball of energy one could imagine.

He flashes through packs of big men, whisks around small men, leaps between followers flying for the ball, soars up and attempts marks at the back of any six-footer and, in all his games this season, at least, he has been succeeding in these risky but spectacular operations.

The pace and dash he shows as a footballer comes from his two seasons in a professional athletic world, where he is better known than in football circles. On his displays this season there is every possibility that he may make as notable a name in the football world as he has already made among the pedestrians.

His football sense is good, though it could still be polished and rounded off in one or two details. His kicking is very good and his passing excellent.

Nicholls is heart and soul in his two sports—football and running. Chatting to him about his wins in last season's athletic meetings, I found he was as delighted about his defeats as about his victories. "I got into the final," he told me enthusiastically of one or two runs, "but I didn't get a place. Still,

that's not bad to get into the final there, you know." He was quite pleased with the effort, though it brought him no material reward.

It is just the same joy for him to play football. He is always eager to be on the field and doing something. He revels in action and in the recollection of his sporting feats. It is a praiseworthy pride—born of the intense enthusiasm of the man.

There are few smaller men in the game than Nicholls. He is really a midget as an aborigine goes, being only 5 feet 2 inches tall. He is very strongly built, of an ideal physique as a runner, and weighs 10 stone.

A native of Cummeragunja, he was first introduced to football by his uncle, who was in charge of the State school at his native town. With his brother Howard, who was known to Northcote followers as "Darra," he came to Melbourne in 1927 at the end of the athletic season. Doug had played two seasons with Tongala in the Goulburn Valley competition, and the pair were invited to have a run with Carlton.

SERIES OF TRIUMPHS

The brothers did not catch the eye of the Carlton selectors, and Darra decided to join up with Northcote. He played one season. Doug was not a regular member of the side, but had several games. Last season he was more in the picture, and this season he has begun with very promising displays.

The past athletic season was a series of triumphs for Doug. His first success was in the Nyah Gift on New Year's Day. Running off 11½ yards, he beat Eddie Briggs (a cousin), Adcock, Knight and Gleeson. Then he was "pipped" in the Shepparton Gift by Alf Barton, who was off 12 yards, while Nicholls had been brought back to 9½.

He was unplaced in the final of the Wangaratta Gift. He also reached the final of the Melbourne Thousand. His next run resulted in a second to Eddie Briggs at Colac, and he topped off the season with a win at War-



DOUG NICHOLLS, Warracknabeal Gift Winner and Northcote wingman.