

Groundling Life

Contributed by The Jester

I feel very proprietorial about Block 313 at Subiaco Oval - it's been my home for Dockers home matches since 2002, and I react very grumpily to any attempt to move me elsewhere. Which is NAB Cup and finals time.

Still, it's quite nice to spend a pleasant February evening at ground level for something different. Especially when you find yourself within 1.5 metres of pinging jaffas at Michael Broadbridge as he walks to the coaches box, and not much more away from the Dockers benches. I'm sure many people will go on to rave about Rhys Palmer and Clayton Hinckley - but my first exposure to them was just that, as they proceeded to remove their jumpers and give the female attendees of Block 103 a thrill.

You certainly get a different perspective down there - the slap of hands as players come off and on, the words of encouragement, an impromptu shower from those mysterious mist fans, a detailed look at the blood streaming down DJ Headland's face, Aaron Sandilands barking at the midfielders around his knees. Not enough to trade my expansive aerial view from the miracle pocket, mind you, but not bad at all for a training run.

Which is what much of last night's match was, really. It's very difficult to muster genuine adversarial combat when The Enemy play a third of a team, and to possibly lose Hasleby for a while in those circumstances put a dampener on things (no, they'd removed the mist fans by then).

So Freo's application waxed and waned, but at full tilt, the new style of Mark Harvey was apparent. This is a running team as per usual - but in addition to running with the ball, we now appear to run at the ball if we do not have it. Some of the tackles were ferocious...and if you needed an indication as to the new way of doing things in Dockerland, the fact that a Pavlich tackle actually managed to stick and result in a supergoal warmed my heart.

Aside from quiet evenings by Peake and Tarrant, all the team shook a little rust off their games quite nicely. And aside from their shirtless interlude, Palmer and Hinckley showed promise. Well, Palmer mostly.

It's blatantly obvious that The Enemy care not one whit about the NAB Cup, and haven't for years. That's fine - we do, and we're looking OK for a more competitive battle with the Crows next week.