

Round 7 - Game Of Two Halves

Contributed by The Jester

First half: What a lovely autumn day here in Melbourne. The sun is shining, I have a great seat here at the MCG, I had a right old laugh at Melbourne's el cheapo pre-game entertainment of a guy in a scarf and a trumpeteer. Gee, Melbourne are diabolical. That's the worst skills level I've seen since the Freo/Swans game in 2001. Aren't Freo going well? Tarrant looks much better for his time in the WAFL. Ibbotson and Palmer look like they've been there for years. Great to see Andrew Foster back - I see he hasn't dipped in his enthusiasm and attack on the ball. PAVLICH IS BEW-TIFUL!!! Centre clearances looking good - Sandi hitting with a lot of elan. I must say that Austin Wonaeamirri looks dangerous, although Brock O'Brien is going OK on him. Possibly a bit lucky to be that far ahead at half time...still, this game is going to get our whole season back on track. I'll finally see my team win in person!

Second half: Grey skies overhead. My purple heart has been crushed into a million pieces. Again. I can't believe or understand it - how do you lose from 51 points up against the bottom team? HOW?!?! Why were we suddenly so swamped by the Melbourne midfield? If it wasn't for Pav, we could even have lost the lead by three quarter time. Austin Wonaeamirri WAS dangerous, I knew it. And Russell Robertson! I knew our defence was decimated, but surely somebody other than Doddy should have played on him if Supermac couldn't?! Are we ever going to recover from this? This day will forever be a true embarrassment to the Fremantle Football Club.

You couldn't have asked for two more disparate halves of football had you tried. I'm starting to wonder whether this is all some sort of Buddhist parable for the writer, teaching him not to spend worldly resources on the pursuit of foolishness. No matter - if 2008 is a writeoff, I'm vowing right now to do the whole bloody thing all over again until it works!

This is a particularly exquisite agony - not the same emotion as the Drum era, when 100 point beltings were normal and we were so often barely in the game at all. No - Harvey's "heroes" are competitive with anyone, anywhere. Competitive, but not dominant. Incompetent at coming back into the lead, and very incompetent at holding on to one. We're in matches for so long...but once you get the lead against us in the last, you will hold onto it forever.

I literally felt dead inside for hours last night. My mood wasn't helped by seeing many of the coaching staff and a few players acting only slightly subdued, as though nothing that terrible had happened, on the plane home to Perth. I don't doubt that their genuine pain and anger was thrashed through behind closed doors, in private, and I suppose that's as it should be. But for a long-suffering purple person, a rueful smile and a promise that it won't happen again might have eased the burden.

Credit where due, though, to the Melbourne faithful. We may stereotype them, but the true believers at the 'G yesterday never gave up, and were giving it some serious welly during the last half. You know, the kind of thing Freo supporters used to do before we became too diluted by bandwagoners, and too numb to try.

So after 7 rounds, Season 2008 for the Fremantle Football Club is essentially an ex-parrot, having joined the choir invisible. And the tragedy is that the players have dug their own grave. Mark Harvey has to stop talking about fixing the team, and actually DO it. What gives this Jester a little succour is the fact that I can head to the remaining 15 games knowing that my team can do it. In all likelihood they won't - but Chris Connolly did get it right that the FFC will never endure a time of such misery as 2001, without hope, ever again. Fremantle forever - no matter how hard it is!