

Sandringham Gets Done:

It was a sunnier morning on Saturday when we were preparing for a local VFL game, Sandringham Zebras versus Northern Bullants. Having gone for the first time a fortnight ago, this time we knew what to prepare for. New provisions were our two fold out chairs for comfort, our two Saints blankets, our membership cards which got us in for free, and my new single leg camera stand from the camera shop, allowing my big lens to be balanced and the weight carried. I'd seen another photographer with it last time. On arrival, we found we were almost a quarter late as the game was being televised for the ABC (I rung home to get my daughter to record it) and it had started earlier. We had missed the 1.3 scored by Sandringham. There wasn't another goal until the last quarter. It was that kind of game for the Zebras.

We found DD and his very VERY big Alsatian Cuba and his family members, and sat nearby on the fence in the weak sunlight. I immediately developed lens envy, as the photographers all along the fence line had way bigger lenses and my greedy self, started planning for the future. But then I'd need a bigger camera, so I put the green monster back in the bag and enjoyed my toys and photographing our boys.

We were particularly interested in seeing how Michael Gardiner looked. We'd last seen him in 2010 Drawn Grand-Final and he went down injured. He said immediately after that he was retiring, but the fairies of the big men of football must have talked him around and here he was, re-introducing himself back to the rigours of VFL football, aged 32. He looked fantastic, very fit, very healthy. But also very tentative, and he only played the first half of the game. I'd missed his lopping run, his presence in the group. Siposs, Geary and McQualter weren't playing and DD said they'd been taken to be emergencies to South Australia. Rhys Stanley was also playing, and though he stayed on most of the game, wasn't terribly effective.

The Northern Bullants were brilliant, fast, confident, accurate and in the mood to win. It was like the opposite of playing the Collingwood VFL team a fortnight ago. Bullants are 4th on the ladder, Collingwood down much lower. Let me show you by the score line:

Sandringham: 1.3 1.4 1.6 2.7 (19)

Northern: 2.2 7.4 10.7 15.8 (98)

It was surprisingly a pleasant afternoon bar the terrible performance of the Sandringham group. I got some sun, some photos, something to write about. The Scores were in todays papers, and the best on ground were (according to the Herald Sun):

Sandringham: Eddy, Simpkin, Baker, Blake, Stapelton, Walsh.

Northern: Meese, Iacobucci, Davies, Dare, Cachia, Twomey

Tommy Walsh kicked the two goals for the Zebra, he's on the Saints 2011 rookie list. It was a bit sad seeing Baker and Blake in this side trying to find some form and keep fit. Archer is fun to watch, he is

gaining strength, as is Nicholas Winmar. Northern, their stars just kept belting the goals. They were accurate, ran as a team, turned the ball over less and kicked more accurately. At least we got to see the goal in the last quarter. Luxury.

We heard a man talking on his mobile phone reporting to a radio station covering the game. He was talking very loud, and like a reporter, and knew what he was talking about, but said it might be a close game (so he didn't know that much.) We saw Phil Cleary who had his microphone and was on the boundary interviewing coaches and players for the TV. We saw the many cameras, photographers, and fans around the ground. We saw one team play well. Up close and personal. We talked to DD in breaks and enjoyed his knowledge and experience of these boys. He left early to mow the lawn. It was that good a game.

Yvette Wroby

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