

## Kicking the Dog

It's been a long week between games, a long week on the home front. The footy draws me out of those other places, especially when I read on the Saints website about the Saints Train. This train was another step in St.Kilda Football Clubs attempts to reach and give the supporters THE LOVE. This vehicle of love was going to leave Frankston Station, carrying a special Saints guest, music and face painting. We joined at Caulfield Station, and were given badges: "I rode the Saints Train" and posters for Brendon Goddards 200<sup>th</sup> game to wave at the ground and some lucky people got normal posters as well. There was a young man playing the ukulele on the platform. It was pretty low key but kinda cute. A number of trains passed by and finally the Saints train, looking exactly like all the other trains, collected us. Expectation is a funny thing...I was looking for more pizzazz.

Once the train left Caulfield, we saw we had Fraser Gehrig on board as our mystery guest, plus the Saints mascot plus a man and his microphone to let us be revved up. Perhaps it wasn't just me feeling flat. They only got one good round of "Oh When the Saints" from the carriage, a prize being awarded by Fraser to an older enthusiastic lady. We got a photo with Fraser. I couldn't believe how tall he was. He's a landscape gardener now, and I hope he's doing well. He was just finishing up playing when I returned to games. Once Fraser moved up to another carriage, it was just a normal train ride. There was a shy 5 year old boy with his Dad, who had come all the way from Frankston, who'd missed out on the badges. I gave him mine, thinking I might pick one up at Southern Cross. But there weren't any more badges so mine has gone to someone who will remember the kindness of a lady on the train.

Once at the ground, it was business as usual. No nervousness today. I thought we could win. I thought we could win well, and in the end, we did win, bullying those poor Dogs by 76. We needed to win. We needed the senior players to step up, according to Scotty Watters who was very cranky indeed after our unnecessary concession against the Swans last week. My Uncle Bob was at that game, with his wife Betty and his daughter, son in law and grand children. They have moved up there for work, and so my Uncle took them all to the footy and felt the 100-1 outnumbering left a lot to be desired, especially when we played so poorly.

Today, the old guard did step up. Steven was the only newer player to kick a goal. Hayes, the superstar, got 3, Montagna 1, Riewoldt a very handy 4, Schneider 2 before hurting his hamstring and being subbed off, Kosi a very powerful 2, Del Santo 2 and Milne was gifted one from Kosi who could have taken a third but he handed it across to his buddy and thankfully he snapped it through to join the party. Saints ended up with 16.22.118, Dogs 6.6.42. It was a thumping, a beating of the Dogs so thoroughly done that the glory of a good win was slightly jaded. The Dogs six goals were from Gilbee, Giansiracus 2, Tutt 1, and Dickson 2. They didn't see it much up their forward line.

It would be more fun tonight if we'd beaten some of our earlier foes like Port Adelaide (we lost by 4 points), or a top team like Fremantle, we lost by 13 points, Hawthorn we lost by 38, West Coast by 30 points, Richmond by 8, Adelaide by 4, North Melbourne by 33, and Swans by 29. Most were winnable games we managed to lose. We are good at beating the struggling teams. It just feels out of whack. I'll take the wins any day, but we play the Pies next week, and I am not feeling hopeful.

Some things I did like tonight made the game OK. There was Kosi scooping the ball from the air near the boundary, to keep it into play, it being picked up by Del Santo and goaled. Seeing Rooy getting four good ones, the first three of the game. He missed three but it just showed how many attacks he tried. I liked seeing Lenny kick three goals. I liked seeing Lenny full stop. My Uncle asked me who my favourite player was. It's Lenny, it has to be Lenny.

And I liked seeing the fire back into Brendon Goddard again, he played with meaning and purpose, getting many possessions and influencing the game like he did two years ago. Firey and more accurate. More concentrated. He played on the Bulldogs best, captain Matty Boyd. McEvoy continues to take fabulous marks, as does Riewoldt and Kosi.

I love watching Dahlhaus. He's fast, he's determined, he is wonderful to watch. He will keep the Western Bulldogs fans engaged while they rebuild their team. He's threatened to cut his hair. I hope he doesn't. But I can understand why he might. My sisters favourite Murphy was very good on Milne, keeping him quiet the whole game.

I liked seeing Nick Riewoldts jumper being ripped off his body and seeing a little Saints skin. And it not being a scandal.

I liked watching the great flows of play, whether it was when the Doggies grabbed the ball and moved it fast and accurately up to their forward line or more when we answered and pulled it back before they goaled, and we showed our own speed and accuracy and toughness.

I laugh at Saads routine before kicking for goal. He brings a lightness and speed and enthusiasm to the team. He's so serious about his routine. I wonder what he thinks as he takes all those steps. I like how he taps to get the ball and suddenly the other team is deprived and he is off. I like his soccering too, but he didn't do that tonight.

I liked all the goals. Lots of goals. Heaps of goals. Too many points that could have been more goals. I like the attacking St.Kilda team of now.

I didn't like seeing Daniel Cross hurt his shoulder in a tackle from Wilkes. His season is now over and he has a painful time ahead of him.

I liked catching DD at half time, and talking footy and a bit of life and a bit about the love of our furry four legged dogs we are so attached too. I love writing for the Almanac and the community who I share the footy, and lifes, ups and downs.

I loved when we were on the train on the way home and chatted with a random, lovely African man with a beautiful smile who asked us the results and he was a Pie supporter and will be at next weeks game. I said I find it highly unacceptable that I keep meeting nice Pie people. He took my hand, showed his black skin against my white hand, and said, "that's why I barrack for Collingwood, those two colours bring us together". I said, it needed some red but I saw his point. Mind you, I might have just liked my hand being held by a sweet, handsome younger man.

Yvette Wroby  
30<sup>th</sup> July 2012