

My mother warned me not to stare into the Suns. Shame I never listen to my Mum.

Gold Coast Suns vs St.Kilda  
Metricon Stadium  
Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013 6.45pm

This is my third attempt to write up Saturday nights Gold Coast Suns vs St.Kilda game. It is hard to keep the positive focus, but here's to trying. I have watched three matches over this weekend. The first was the wonderful Doggie revival against the Brisbane Lions on Saturday afternoon. It was a ripper of a game, if you weren't a Lions supporter. Then I watched us being totally eclipsed by the Suns on Saturday night, and could barely bare to watch as they decimated my beloved team. Lastly, on Monday afternoon, I watched the Geelong Cats once again triumph over the hapless Hawthorn Hawks. The Hawks can't win a trick against their old foe and I don't know what they put into the water in Geelong but I wish the Saints could drink from THAT fountain.

So here are some thoughts. St.Kilda are like the lesser lights of tennis, say the Lleyton Hewitt of the league, got almost there but was playing at an era where Federer, Nadal, Djokovic and others were the Geelong, Hawthorn, Collingwood and Swans equivalent. We were up against the best but we were not the top players, not the top team. We will be remembered as the "almosts" and not the champions. History is unkind. It is the Saints 140th year. Thank the footy gods for 1966, otherwise the Saints may have gone under the ground and become something else. There's that little bit of hope that you get when it's 1/140.

Listening to the radio, hearing Cam Mooney talk about the pain of 2008, after they had won in 2007 and the team swore that they would never lose to Hawthorn again. Did the Saints make such a promise? Is it that particular group of men, that particular club, Geelong, that has a culture of never say die. We bounced back in 2010, against a different opposition, but again, got pipped at the post.

OK, I did say it was hard to write something positive. With those thoughts thus presented, all I want to do now is talk about how awesome the Suns were. Credit where credit is due. Gary Ablett is a superstar and a force to be reckoned with. He was fabulous at Geelong, and now he's fabulous with the Suns. He, and his fellow team mates, gave us a lesson we need to learn from. And it wasn't just Ablett.

How about their big man Charlie Dixon? Or the ever improving Karmichael Hunt, or Jarrod Harbrow or Harley Bennell. Hell they were good. When I began to watch the replay, I saw three minutes in that Steven and Ablett were running back into the game after the ball went out of bounds. Ablett looked great, Steven already looked spent. This reflected the whole night. We looked bugged. The Suns were having the time of their life. I was at the Dogs game again except WE WERE the Lions and not the victors. We, like Carlton and Richmond last year, were burnt badly and left dazed and bruised. And a little confused. Were the Suns that fantastic, or were we really not so good? Is this like 2012 when Port Adelaide thumped us first game? Can we take this as first game jitters and settle into a better team next week against a confident and able team of Richmond. I hope so.

While they were so good, I dare to utter those magic words...we really missed Goddard in our defensive line up. We missed Fisher and Montagna and Dempster and Schneider and even Simpkin who has been very good in the back line. We also missed Milne, Milera and Saad, who were hardly seen. We missed some strength in the centre, and lost most of the hit outs. We missed the glue that

held us together. We missed our grumpy Brendon Goddard who would demand the best of himself and his team mates.

Suns players Hall, Russell, Shaw, Swallow, Prestia, O'Meara 'Brennon. All fast. All more confident. All more accurate. All young and hungry. All names to keep watching. Talented bunch growing up together, under the leadership of the son of god.

I liked Siposs at times, he seems to have stepped into some of Goddards roles, Geary was great in defence, Steven was good in the middle, worked hard all night. I missed Dunnell who played well in our centre last year. Newnes was quiet. Armitage OK, but missed Dempsters presence. Something just didn't gel for the Saints as it did with the Suns. We couldn't hold the ball in our forward line. We couldn't kick man to man, went back to bombing which is like a brain fade part of the Saints habits, and we started kicking backwards way too often.

When we played pressure football, when we kicked to kicked, when we passed the ball to men NOT under immediate pressure, we looked OK and we did keep catching up. There were five goals in the second quarter that showed great team work and you'd think that the Saints had settled and would run away. But that was just it. We were playing catch up rather than dominate the game, dominated and then tired. Milne kicked two posters but Gold Coast didn't kick a goal for 30 minutes. Even Meister seemed off his game after his first goal, whereas during the NAB Cup, he looked fabulous for longer.

In third quarter, the game shifted again.

The Suns deserved their win and their giant killer reputation. They manage to put doubt in the minds of enough of their opposition to upset the apple cart. It will happen more often now they are growing in body strength and appetite for success. I remember what that felt like.

Yvette Wroby  
(having taken some Goddard grumpy pills)  
2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013