

My “Reframing” Guide and the Saints rebuilding moments:

My friend Rina and I have a great exchange program happening. I am helping her understand the subtleties of footy and fan-hood, and she’s helping me understand the subtleties of a positive take on life. After my “Wonderful Obsessions” exhibition, sitting for 7 days straight, and then unpacking it all, I have found myself as flat as a tack. It wasn’t just the week and all the adventures of manning an exhibition, it was the four-six months build up, the pure volume of work produced, the manic intensity of energy and all the exhaustive details. And then it was done.

And I felt done. Exhausted. Flat. A house full of paintings, cartoons and objects, most to be housed once again, shifting all the energy back into my home instead of a gallery. Most of the exhibition is now online, so it continues but in a more contained way. I struggled all week, feeling “depressed”, which I hadn’t felt for ages, with all the busy-ness and excitement.

Anzac Day was a busy one. The morning was spent at the photographer for the job I got from my call to SEN during the exhibition. Alan from Northcote heard my plug of myself, and came all the way from Reservoir to see the exhibition, and has commissioned a poster of his Northcote Park Footy Club Premiership, a WEG style celebration of his local club. He loves the finished product, and the photographer takes the picture that I then send to the printer who makes the print. All very illuminating and all learnt for this exhibition and beyond. Once that was done, I spent a pleasant afternoon with my eldest Rachel, enjoying the Gold Class Experience of Iron Man 3.

Meanwhile, Essendon did Collingwood. It was an ANZAC day celebration of footy at its best. We all then had the treat of another game, this time the first for four points, on foreign soil. Wellington New Zealand hosted St.Kilda vs Sydney Swans. It was indeed a history making day. For the first time for several years, I could only see the negative. Until my mate Rina arrived for the last quarter, and once again, shifted my point of view.

Rina saw the state I was in, and said, “You are not depressed, you are depleted”. With that gentle reframe, over the next few days, my axis rotated and I was finally able to sit down to watch the game in a more positive light. Instead of seeing all the losing, I could see all the effort. Instead of seeing that Saints were failing this year, like Scott Watters, I thought about them as rebuilding. And so the attention shifted onto what was good about the game. And what a difference a few different words make – depleted vs depressed. One speaks about having used up all the energy, and having to take care of oneself to replenish and re-energise, a way of thinking of oneself kindly as needing loving care not more pressure. If I could see myself in that light, I could see my beloved Saints in that light too.

So what did I see of my Saints on this day, finally watched lovingly all the way through on Sunday night, 5 days later? I loved that both teams went through the same banner. Young Brodie Murdoch for the Saints has his first kick in AFL, in New Zealand, Kosi marks and kicks the first goal in New Zealand. History made. Seb Ross follows this with his first AFL goal for the Saints. Neither young ‘un will forget this day. Sydney play well, getting two fast goals. Mumford, with his moustache, reminds me of Vince Vaughn. Robertson proves to be a good get for the Saints, a handy defender when so many are out injured. Stanley has played two straight games for the Saints without injury. Now THAT’S positive.

Riewoldt is playing well in defence and then kicks goals. He is playing a great Captains game. We get to see the reigning Premiers play, and they have a point to prove after going down to the Cats last weekend. Unlucky for us, but we only go down by a few goals. Way better than expected.

Kosi is taking some good marks. It is a close game. Against Sydney, this is very good. Seeing happy New Zealanders enjoying AFL, that's a sight to see. Scotty Watters, on "Before the Game" on Saturday night, sees a bunch of happy kids, one of which is a young, fast, high jumping young man who now has a scholarship with the Saints. He was with his mates enjoying the show of it all.

There's only two points the difference at quarter time. Geary is getting better each game, playing in defence and being strong and fast. Steven is taking over where Lenny has been, he is everywhere and very determined. Watching stars like Bolton, Goodes, McVeigh up close. Hannebery is good. Tom Lee is getting more experience. Can we be like the Doggies this year, give a year to our younger players and improve as the Bulldogs have shown. A very decent effort against the Cats.

I love the Kiwi Guernsey of the Saints, the beautiful artwork that makes the occasion special. A fantastic kick from Montagna to Riewoldt, to a space that Nick loves to run into. Another positive, Nick is kicking straight in New Zealand. Tom Lee showing effort.

Kieran Jack goals, having too much space. Lenny continues to be so hardworking that he leaves a trail behind him. His effort is awesome. Fisher is working hard, but Gilberts mistake gives McGlynn a goal and Sydney get further ahead. The Swans sweep ahead, but the effort is there from the Saints, many efforts, try and try again, and finally Montagna goals.

Fisher and Dempster are steady in the back line, they have a lot to deal with. Sydney attack more but are more inaccurate. Thankfully. Gilbert is much more aggressive and forceful in his efforts, he's gotten better in defence. Saying that, Bolton goals another after two Saints fail to tackle. Saints can't seem to lock it in their forward line. Saints do a lot of spoiling but Swans are quick to recover each time. Thankfully, they are inaccurate. Geary yet again defends. The ball is slippery. It is hard to hold. Montagna to Riewoldt, who muscles his opponent out of the competition and kicks another poster, very disappointed. Ten points the difference. Saints working very hard in tackling and stoppages. Lenny wins another free, he is just so tough and he accurately gets to Riewoldt but Kosi can't mark. Saints really trying hard. Dennis-Lane showing effort. Nathan Wright is another Saint who is getting a chance to be a solid Sainter. Half time Sydney lead by 10 points. We are lucky they are inaccurate this quarter.

I love the kids playing – Kiwikick. So apt.

Saad is quiet, is he missing Milera and Milne? His other musketeers. It seems that there is so much effort but easier for Sydney to get it to Goodes, who goals. He makes it look easy. He is an unbelievable athlete. Sydney push it forward, always forward, we need to learn from them, they get it forward once again, McGlynn again easily goals. Suddenly, they are 23 ahead, and we are getting a lesson in pressure. Sydney push and push and it's up their end way too often now. Gilbert misses a handball and suddenly it is once again up Sydneys attacking end. They are everywhere. Great pressure. They are more accurate. I hope our boys go home and watch this match and the kind of work that Sydney does, the kind of pressure, and effort. Saints begin to make more errors, but thankfully Sydney scoring attempts are not very accurate. When it gets up the Saints end, Saad is being too well held. Too easily back up Swans end, and when it returns to Saints, we have no one there to receive it. Sydney have no such problems. Their kicks seem to stick.

Josh Saunders, another newbie, is subbed on as Tom Lee puts on the red vest. A few good kicks and Saints go forward and Saad gets a high hit and a free. We need the goal but his magic work doesn't pay off this time. He's putting on a show for the New Zealander, but not one he'll want to remember. Josh Saunders has number 35, Robert Harveys number. The commentators note Siposs's absence.

Finally, Nick Del Santo goes for goal but misses. We need something special. Saunders gets a mark, can he goal with his first kick, in New Zealand no less. Good kick but too far to the right. Another new young man being blooded. After some good play, Dennis-Lane goes for goal. And nails it. We can thank McEvoy for that turnover and goal. Geary defends and punches through what would have been a sure goal. Nick Riewoldt kicks in. But after more push and shove, Parker kicks another Swan goal. Saunders gets one forward but Sydney defends. Dennis-Lane again misses. Kosi seems fitter and more able to give contest. Sydney lead by 25 at last quarter.

Jetta on for Sydney, Everitt off. Geary again involved, Riewoldt tackles again and again. Some good defence keeps the ball in Saints end, Saad just can't make the ball work for him tonight. Jetta gets a 50 metre free but they miss again. Riewoldt marks again, Armitage, Saad, but it's touched on the line. Just no luck tonight for the Saints. Ross gets caught with the ball. Gilbert for the third time pushes forward but to no avail. It's back up for the Swans as Parker gets his second. Saints supporters can't leave the ground. They're in New Zealand and stay for the long haul.

Ross to Riewoldt to Saad. Can he goal this one? New Zealand get to see Saads long march home to goal, too long, takes too long even for Sainters but misses after all that effort. Montagna to Riewoldt to Geary who finally goals for the Saints. It's been a long time. Only 22 points behind. Wright defends, Steven goals. That's more like it. Some energy. Some attack. Some pressure.

Again forward from the centre. Jones pushes it forward but Richards marks. Fisher defends. Sydney defends and Goodes pushes it forward. Jones again pushes it forward, back again, forward again. I'm getting dizzy. Saints bodies being thrown in, they are trying so hard. Ten minutes to go, 13 points the difference. Saunders goes forward again but Nick Riewoldt outnumbered.

Watching this game again with more energy myself, I see the effort that the Saints are putting in, the last desperate minutes. Saunders is again pushing. I didn't see this the first time, the negative framework completely changes what is seen. Riewoldt again, the boys are trying so hard in the last minutes. To no avail. There is another goal to both teams, Montagna for the Saints after so much effort, then one for Sydney after Mumford gets a free in front of goal, so the end result is the 16 points.

IN the scheme of things, though disappointing, a 16 point loss to Sydney is a good effort for a rebuilding, in need of replenishing, team and supporter.

Yvette Wroby

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