

Our 2010 Preliminary Final

We did it. The Saints passed “GO” with a brilliant display of 7 goals in the 3rd quarter. They were putting on a clinic themselves after a first half that I’d rather forget.

The forgettable half we only kicked 3.6 to Bulldogs 4.6, the first quarter worse, 1.5 11 to 3.1. 19. The Doggies looked quicker and hungrier and the faithful were tested.

Then, after half time, they came out to party and with such a display it confirmed that we were legitimate Grand Final contenders and the only team able to take it up to the Pies.

As they would say on “Game Day” show – the 3 things I learned from this match were:

1. I love going to the Footy by train. I love the crowds at the station, we were at Elsternwick by 5.30 so we had seats. I loved seeing all the variety of red, white and black (and a smattering of red, white and blue). I loved talking to complete strangers about our chances, having the same strangers take photos of us. I love our trains themselves. In 10 minutes we are at Richmond and pile off with the masses. We now go left at the walkway at Richmond, taking us the less crowded way via Hisense Stadium, the Tram line and over the foot bridge. (Though I do love the feeling of the crowd piling in and out of Brunton Ave and taking over Brunton Avenue and walking en masse as if we own the road and the world.)
2. I hate the opposition supporters who camp themselves behind and stand at the rails. We were only 2 rows in and so their vitriolic screaming was very annoying and disturbing. These mostly men, mostly drunk men by the end, and thank goodness, when we win, mostly losers in every sense, ignore the seats they have in the upper levels and get their sport by being total tools. When we arrived, there were four who we chatted to. With my sister Denise and her husband Doggie supporters, I have a soft spot for Western Bulldogs and wished them luck, but only if they could beat Collingwood next week. Which even they didn’t feel they could do. Horrible horrible men joined them and the practice should be banned. Do all teams do it? They insist on sitting behind the opposition, so are there Sainter fools who do it to Doggies supporters? (Almanacers – please advise).
3. That the Doggies wanted this and came out firing but we wanted it more. And that is that. Third quarter we found our voice as supporters as well. It’s a truly wonderful feeling to be up and away and playing like the winners I know we are. They tacked and scrimmaged and defended but what was most pleasing, is that we attacked. And attacked. And attacked, because without the pressure on the score board, it doesn’t matter how much we defend, we’ll be doomed.

I know on Game Day they have 3 items, but I have a few more:

4. I love the singing of the song and the waiting for the boys to go in and the club song in the rooms.

5. I love waiting for the crowds to disperse and slowly making our way back happy, excited and content.
6. I loved that last night, a Sainter rallied us in song on the train so we went another round of our Club Song.
7. I loved coming home, having a cuppa and watching the third quarter again, repeating all the brilliant plays a often as we needed.
8. I love that we're in the Grand Final, that I am now a true fair dinkum Al Mancer and life is good.