

Looking at football
from a different
point of view

MAFL 2008

29th May
Round #10 2008

Round 10

ADE 65-0		Adelaide v Essendon (Football Park, 30th May 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.07	\$7.50	
	87% - 93%	7% - 13%	
Adelaide -42½ pts (\$1.90/\$1.90)			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	Adelaide by 37		
Quila	Adelaide by 41		
Shadow	Adelaide		
CTL	Adelaide		
MARS	Adelaide		
MM	Adelaide (43-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Super MM	Adelaide (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Adelaide		
Simplified	Adelaide		

COL 61-4		Collingwood v West Coast (MCG, 31st May 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.18	\$4.50	
	78% - 85%	15% - 22%	
Collingwood -27½ pts (\$1.90/\$1.90)			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	Collingwood by 23		
Quila	Collingwood by 31		
Shadow	Collingwood		
CTL	Collingwood		
MARS	Collingwood		
MM	Collingwood (39-4) (Dissenters: MM40,41,43,44)		
Super MM	Collingwood (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Collingwood		
Simplified	Collingwood		

HAW 65-0		Hawthorn v Bulldogs (Aurora Stadium, 31st May 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.42	\$2.70	
	63% - 70%	30% - 37%	
Hawthorn -13½ pts (\$1.90 / \$1.90)			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Line	Western Bulldogs 7.79% (10.28%)		
Chi	Hawthorn by 8 (Game of the Round)		
Quila	Hawthorn by 11		
Shadow	Hawthorn		
CTL	Hawthorn		
MARS	Hawthorn		
MM	Hawthorn (43-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Super MM	Hawthorn (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Hawthorn		
Simplified	Hawthorn		

KAN 56-9		Bris Lions v Kangaroos (Gabba, 31st May 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.20	\$4.20	
	76% - 83%	17% - 24%	
Bris Lions -25½ pts (\$1.90 / \$1.90)			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	Brisbane Lions by 16		
Quila	Brisbane Lions by 14		
Shadow	Kangaroos		
CTL	Kangaroos		
MARS	Brisbane Lions		
MM	Kangaroos (40-3) (Dissenters: MM2-4)		
Super MM	Kangaroos (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Brisbane Lions		
Simplified	Brisbane Lions		

GEE 62-3		Carlton v Geelong (Docklands, 31st May 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$6.50	\$1.10	
	9% - 15%	85% - 91%	
Carlton +39½ pts (\$1.90 / \$1.90)			
Heritage	Carlton 13.55% (13.64%)		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	Geelong by 11		
Quila	Geelong by 4		
Shadow	Geelong		
CTL	Geelong		
MARS	Geelong		
MM	Geelong (41-2) (Dissenters: MM2,3)		
Super MM	Geelong (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Geelong		
Simplified	Carlton		

SYD 65-0		Sydney v Richmond (SCG, 1st June 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.18	\$4.50	
	78% - 85%	15% - 22%	
Sydney -27½ pts (\$1.90 / \$1.90)			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	Sydney by 19		
Quila	Sydney by 10		
Shadow	Sydney		
CTL	Sydney		
MARS	Sydney		
MM	Sydney (43-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Super MM	Sydney (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Sydney		
Simplified	Sydney		

STK 65-0		St Kilda v Melbourne (Docklands, 1st June 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.28	\$3.50	
	71% - 78%	22% - 29%	
St Kilda -22½ pts (\$1.90 / \$1.90)			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	St Kilda by 21		
Quila	St Kilda by 25		
Shadow	St Kilda		
CTL	St Kilda		
MARS	St Kilda		
MM	St Kilda (43-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Super MM	St Kilda (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	St Kilda		
Simplified	St Kilda		

PA 60-5		Fremantle v Pt Adelaide (Subiaco, 1st June 2008)	
Sportsbet	\$1.90	\$1.85	
	46% - 53%	47% - 54%	
No market yet			
Heritage	-		
Alpha	-		
Beta	-		
Chi	-		
Line	-		
Chi	Port Adelaide by 10		
Quila	Port Adelaide by 12		
Shadow	Port Adelaide		
CTL	Port Adelaide		
MARS	Port Adelaide		
MM	Port Adelaide (40-3) (Dissenters: MM2,40,41)		
Super MM	Port Adelaide (14-0) (Dissenters: None)		
Uber MM	Fremantle		
Simplified	Fremantle		

This Week's Round in Review

MAFL Wagers

Just two wagers this week, with still no flicker of interest from the Alpha or Beta Funds, making it three rounds since Alpha and two since Beta have wagered. Chi's also resting, but it's his first wager-free round of the season since he began trading in Round 5.

1. Line Fund: Western Bulldogs, 7.79% @ \$1.90 +13½ against Hawthorn

The Line Fund's had a shocking start to the season, winning just 1 of 5 wagers leaving its share price at just under \$0.76. It's been quiet for the past 2 weeks during which, let's hope, it's been recalibrating itself for a profitable mid and late season.

As I type this the Bulldogs' are now priced at \$1.75 on line betting, so there would appear to be a considerable weight of money supporting ours.

2. Heritage Fund: Carlton, 13.55% @ \$6.50 against Geelong

The Cats surely can't lose two in a row. Stung and shamed by last week's loss and determined to atone, they'll hit back this weekend and produce a four-quarter performance that will re-establish them as The Team Most Likely, blowing away the Blues in the process.

That, I'd suggest, is a very human point of view and it is not one shared by the Heritage Fund, which sees past – especially recent – defeat as an indicator of future vulnerability, and wagers accordingly. That's why we have the season's largest bet on the Blues this weekend at \$6.50 at Docklands.

You might at first blush wonder why we're wagering on a team that the AFL have designated as the away team. The reason's simple: the game is being played at Docklands, which shares little in common with Kardinia other than a vowel and three consonants, and which is one of the two grounds I recognise as a Carlton home ground.

Here too we appear to have made a wager that's been heavily supported by other gamblers: Carlton's head-to-head price is currently down to \$5.75.

The summary results for each Investor based on 100,000 simulations of the weekend's games looks like this:

MIN #001	MIN #002	MIN #005																																													
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So, Investors with the Recommended Portfolio have an expected loss of 0.33% this weekend, a worst case 5% loss and a best case 23.64% profit. In all, they have a 15% probability of finishing the weekend ahead (ie the implied probability that Carlton wins).

Tips

Here are the underdog tips of the leading tipsters (with the current tipping score shown in brackets after the tipster name):

Tipster (Record)	Underdog Tips
BKB (54)	None (of course)
Chi (52)	None
MARS (52)	None
MM2 (51)	Carlton & Fremantle
Simplified Über Model (51)	Carlton & Fremantle
CTL (51)	Kangaroos
Quila (50)	None
MM7 (50)	Kangaroos
SM3 (49)	None
SM5 (49)	None
SM6 (49)	None
SM23 (49)	None
MM5 (49)	None
MM8 (49)	None
MM17 (49)	None

Adelaide v Essendon (Adelaide 65-0)

No support here for the Dons, which is probably understandable given last weekend's feeble efforts.

Collingwood v West Coast (Collingwood 61-4)

Only four of the very long-term MM models are supporting the Eagles this weekend. Oh how the mighty ...

Hawthorn v Western Bulldogs (Hawthorn 65-0)

Even though this is 1st plays 3rd the tipsters are united behind the Hawks. Neither Chi nor Quila, however, are especially confident; Chi's made it his Game of the Round.

Brisbane Lions v Kangaroos (Kangaroos 56-9)

The bookies have the Lions as very strong favourites but our tipsters mostly see it the other way. That said, the very best of our tipsters tend to agree with the bookies.

Carlton v Geelong (Geelong 62-3)

It's been quite a while since the Cats have not enjoyed unanimous support amongst the MAFL 65. Predictably, it's the fickle MM models – MM2 and MM3 – that have been the first to jump ship. Far less predictably, the Simplified Über Model's tipping the Blues too.

As well, Chi and Quila are both predicting only small victory margins for the Cats.

Sydney v Richmond (Sydney 65-0)

Sydney are firm favourites with the bookies and are also the MAFL tipsters' unanimous choice.

St Kilda v Melbourne (St Kilda 65-0)

The Saints are one of four teams to enjoy unanimous MAFL tipster support this weekend. It's hard to see them losing.

Fremantle v Port Adelaide (Port Adelaide 60-5)

Fremantle have, it seems, forgotten how to win, and the vast majority of MAFL tipsters have responded accordingly. Only MM2, MM40, MM41, the Über Model and the Simplified Über Model think differently (or, if you're an Apple marketing exec, 'think different').

So, this week's most-favoured MAFL tipster teams are as follows:

- Adelaide (Favourite)
- Collingwood (Favourite)
- Hawthorn (Favourite)
- Kangaroos (Underdogs)
- Geelong (Favourite)
- Sydney (Favourite)
- St Kilda (Favourite)
- Port Adelaide (Favourite)

During the week I got to thinking: "I wonder how well the MAFL tipsters, in aggregate, have performed this season". Or, more precisely, "I wonder what the relationship has been between the strength of MAFL tipster support and the accuracy of the prediction".

It turns out that, in aggregate, MAFL tipsters have been good but not brilliant, scoring 48 from 72 (66%) (see table at right), a score that would be considered exceptional in just about any other recent season.

Support	Correct	Draw	Incorrect	Total	% Corr
< 56	12	1	10	23	54%
56 - 64	17	1	8	26	67%
65	18	0	5	23	78%
Total	47	2	23	72	67%

(In this table, "Support" refers to the number of tipsters supporting the majority tip).

With suitably arbitrary cut-offs, as shown in the table above, the aggregate MAFL tipster performance is reasonably well-calibrated. So, for example, those teams that have enjoyed unanimous MAFL tipster support have been successful on 18 of 23 occasions; those that have had between 56 and 64 supporters have been successful 17½ times in 26; those that have had 33 to 55 supporters have been successful only 12½ times from 23.

Our three dogs (see table at right) have a slightly better record when they all agree (38½ from 49) than the majority MAFL tipster result, and an overall record of 50 from 72, regardless of whether the minority or majority opinion is taken for those games where the three dogs are not unanimous.

Game Type	Result	# Games
<i>Dogs unanimous</i>	79%	49
<i>Dogs split</i>	50%	23
Totals	69%	72

The Monash Tipping Competitions

A couple of weeks ago, I wrote about the Monash competitions that appear [here](#).

Here's some of what I wrote then:

"In Monash's Gaussian competition, tipsters must provide two numbers for each tipped game: a predicted margin and a number (technically, a standard deviation) that indicates how confident he or she is with the predicted margin. The points that a tipster receives for a game increase the nearer his or her tipped margin is to the actual margin and, assuming he or she is close, the smaller the standard deviation he or she supplied.

To give you some idea of how this works, the table at right shows how many points you would score for a particular game depending on how far your tipped margin was from the actual margin and on the standard deviation you provided, reflecting how confident you were about that margin.

		Absolute Difference Between Tipped and Actual Margin										
		0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Tipster	20	3.35	3.17	2.63	1.73	0.47	-1.16	-3.14	-5.48	-8.19	-11.25	-14.68
Provided	25	3.03	2.91	2.57	1.99	1.18	0.15	-1.12	-2.62	-4.36	-6.32	-8.51
Standard	30	2.77	2.69	2.45	2.05	1.49	0.76	-0.12	-1.16	-2.36	-3.72	-5.25
Deviation	35	2.54	2.49	2.31	2.01	1.60	1.07	0.43	-0.34	-1.22	-2.22	-3.34
	40	2.35	2.31	2.17	1.95	1.63	1.23	0.73	0.14	-0.53	-1.30	-2.16
	45	2.18	2.15	2.04	1.86	1.61	1.29	0.90	0.44	-0.10	-0.70	-1.38
	50	2.03	2.00	1.91	1.77	1.57	1.31	0.99	0.62	0.18	-0.31	-0.85

As you can see, if you're confident about the margin you provide and you're right, you're rewarded handsomely. Equally, though, if you're wrong, you're severely punished. On the Monash site it's suggested that, through trial and error, people have found that 40 is a good value to choose for the Standard Deviation.

In Monash's Probabilistic competition, each tipster must select a favoured team and that team's probability of winning (a draw can also be predicted). By inference he or she is at the same time providing an estimate of the probability of the other team winning, equal to 100% minus the probability he or she provided for the favoured team. So, if I said that I thought Geelong had a 90% probability of winning this weekend, by implication I'm also saying that the Lions have a 10% chance.

Given the scoring system that's used in this competition (which, it turns out, is related to surprisals) it can be mathematically proven that the optimum strategy for any tipster is to accurately estimate each team's probability of victory. In other words, in the long run, teams to which he or she attaches, say, a 60% probability of victory would, optimally, win 60% of the time.

Prob.	Favoured Team ...		
	Wins	Losses	Draws
50%	0.00	0.00	0.00
55%	0.14	-0.15	-0.01
60%	0.26	-0.32	-0.03
65%	0.38	-0.51	-0.07
70%	0.49	-0.74	-0.13
75%	0.58	-1.00	-0.21
80%	0.68	-1.32	-0.32
85%	0.77	-1.74	-0.49
90%	0.85	-2.32	-0.74
95%	0.93	-3.32	-1.20
99%	0.99	-5.64	-2.33

To give you an idea of how scoring works for this competition I've created the table on the left.

Imagine you tipped St Kilda to beat Richmond this weekend and you attached a probability of 65% to your tip. Then, if St Kilda won, you'd score 0.38 points (and wish you'd felt more confident). If they lost you'd score -0.51 points and if they drew you'd score -0.07 points.

For me, one of the fascinating things about these two competitions is that a 'good' but overconfident tipster will almost certainly lose out to someone who tips fewer winners but who has a more accurate handle or his or her own abilities."

So, you might wonder (or not – your choice): how are Chi, Quila and BKB doing in these competitions?

Well, let's first review the Gaussian competition. The table at right gives the detail. At this point, using 40 as the standard deviation measure for all three tipsters, BKB leads on 123.9, a score that would have it 5th in the Monash Competition. Next comes Chi on 121.7, a score that would place him 8th then Quila on 121.3, which would place her just behind Chi.

	Chi		Quila		BKB	
	Round	Cum	Round	Cum	Round	Cum
Round 1	11.68	11.7	11.71	11.7	13.05	13.0
Round 2	7.18	18.9	5.79	17.5	8.71	21.8
Round 3	16.79	35.6	16.32	33.8	16.05	37.8
Round 4	13.30	48.9	14.08	47.9	10.95	48.8
Round 5	17.16	66.1	17.04	64.9	18.02	66.8
Round 6	14.35	80.4	14.34	79.3	16.06	82.8
Round 7	14.74	95.2	15.03	94.3	15.45	98.3
Round 8	14.80	110.0	14.68	109.0	16.10	114.4
Round 9	11.71	121.7	12.29	121.3	9.54	123.9

So, say what you will about my dogs, but they are demonstrably very well-calibrated.

Across the 9 rounds so far, Quila has won 2 of them, Chi 1, and BKB 6. Despite this apparent BKB dominance, if we drop Rounds 1 and 2, Quila has the best record, then Chi, with BKB last of all. So how come we're losing money in the Chi Fund then?

Looking next at the Probabilistic competition, we first must decide how we'll convert Chi and Quila margins into probabilities. Experience suggests the table at right is a good way to do this. Note that we still assign a probability greater than 50% to the favourite even when Chi or Quila tip the underdog.

Chi tips ...	Assign following probability to favourite ...
Underdog	60%
Favourite by 18 points or less	70%
Favourite by 19 points or more	80%

Quila tips ...	Assign following probability to favourite ...
Underdog	75%
Favourite by 5 points or less	65%
Favourite by 6 to 17 points	70%
Favourite by 18 points or more	80%

For BKB we use the inverse price, adjusted for over-round, to determine the probability with which he tips the favourite.

Given all this, the table at right gives the Probabilistic scores for the three tipsters.

These scores would place Chi 8th, Quila 13th, and BKB 23rd in the Monash competitions. Last week's unpredictability hurt Chi, Quila and BKB, with each returning negative scores for a round for only the second time this year.

	Chi		Quila		BKB	
	Round	Cum	Round	Cum	Round	Cum
Round 1	-0.41	-0.405	0.28	0.275	1.38	1.383
Round 2	2.85	2.448	2.75	3.021	2.15	3.530
Round 3	1.82	4.272	1.95	4.973	1.44	4.975
Round 4	0.79	5.066	-0.37	4.599	-0.69	4.286
Round 5	2.05	7.116	2.17	6.767	1.89	6.177
Round 6	3.46	10.581	3.15	9.917	3.64	9.820
Round 7	1.44	12.020	1.07	10.986	1.06	10.884
Round 8	4.05	16.066	4.17	15.160	3.70	14.585
Round 9	-1.23	14.837	-0.89	14.270	-1.15	13.437

Team Rating System

The MARS Predictor System agrees with the bookies this week.

For the MARS-favoured teams to at least preserve their current Ratings Points they need to win by the following margins:

- Adelaide by 22 points or more
- Pies by 12 points or more
- Hawthorn by 8 points or more
- Lions by 5 points or more
- Geelong by 20 points or more
- Sydney by 15 points or more
- St Kilda by 15 points or more
- Port by 4 points or more

With the exception of Port, for whom at this stage no handicap market is available, the bookie handicaps suggest that all these teams should record victory margins at least as large as is shown here.

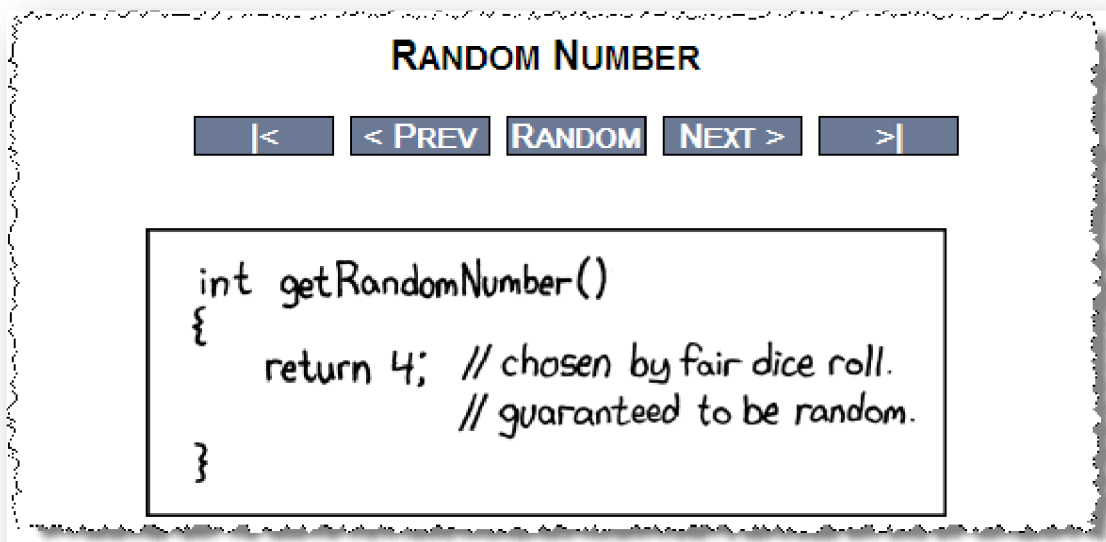
A clear MARS Top 8 now seems to be emerging, with only the Roos having a reasonable chance of popping into the Top 8 this weekend should results go resoundingly their way. The Top 4 is not quite as settled, with Collingwood only very narrowly trailing the Crows.

Team	End R9
Geelong	1,032.2
Sydney	1,021.0
Hawthorn	1,020.4
Adelaide	1,013.3
Collingwood	1,013.1
Port Adelaide	1,007.7
Brisbane Lions	1,007.4
Western Bulldogs	1,007.3
Kangaroos	1,001.1
St Kilda	993.6
Fremantle	993.1
Richmond	991.4
West Coast	990.0
Carlton	977.9
Essendon	967.8
Melbourne	962.7

Looking at the size of the ratings changes we've seen this season, the table below summarises the movements from the 72 games that have been completed this year and compares them with the 185 games of last season.

Characteristic	Season 2008	Season 2007
Average Ratings Change per Game	2.52	2.49
Standard Deviation Ratings Change per Game	1.92	1.68
Ratings Change per Game – 10 th percentile	0.30	0.43
Ratings Change per Game – 25 th percentile	0.86	0.98
Ratings Change per Game – 50 th percentile (median)	2.33	2.34
Ratings Change per Game – 75 th percentile	3.72	3.58
Ratings Change per Game – 90 th percentile	5.37	4.82

Whilst, broadly, this year's results are quite similar to last year's, there has been some additional variability as demonstrated by the higher standard deviation of the Rating Change per Game and also by the much higher value for the 90th percentile.



Yet another strip from www.xkcd.com.

This one's a bit troublingly deep for a statistician.

(If '4' was random yesterday when I rolled the die, why isn't it still random today?)

Bookmakers' Prices

As you'd probably expect, the bookies are taking more and more teams off the board for various bets. Two teams can no longer be wagered upon to make the Final 8, eight teams cannot be wagered on to win the Spoon, and six teams are unbackable to Miss the Final 8.

Geelong remain favourites for the Flag, but the gap to the Hawks is diminishing. The Pies' victory over the Cats last weekend has moved them to the third line of Flag betting despite their being 7th on the ladder.

Team	Bookmakers' Prices (28th May v 21st May)							
	Premiership Winner			Final 8		Wooden Spoon		Miss 8
	TAB	Centrebet	Domebet	TAB	Centrebet	TAB	Centrebet	TAB
Geelong	2.70 L	2.75 L	2.60 L	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -
Hawthorn	3.20 S	3.00 S	3.25 S	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -
Collingwood	9.00 S	9.00 S	11.00 S	1.25 S	1.20 S	No Price -	No Price L	3.25 L
Sydney	12.00 S	13.00 S	15.00 S	1.16 S	1.14 S	No Price -	No Price L	4.25 L
Western Bulldogs	13.00 L	13.00 L	14.00 L	1.05 L	1.05 L	No Price -	No Price -	No Price -
Brisbane Lions	13.00 S	15.00 S	17.00 S	1.18 S	1.16 S	No Price -	No Price L	4.25 L
Adelaide	15.00 L	15.00 L	17.00 L	1.08 L	1.06 L	No Price -	No Price -	10.00 -
Kangaroos	34.00 S	26.00 S	51.00 S	1.80 L	1.80 S	No Price -	No Price L	1.80 -
Port Adelaide	34.00 L	34.00 L	41.00 L	2.10 L	2.20 L	201.00 -	201.00 S	1.55 S
St Kilda	61.00 L	61.00 L	67.00 L	2.50 L	2.20 L	251.00 S	251.00 S	1.45 S
Carlton	81.00 S	101.00 S	151.00 S	3.50 S	3.50 -	201.00 L	251.00 L	1.18 -
Richmond	101.00 S	126.00 S	151.00 S	3.75 S	3.75 S	101.00 L	201.00 L	1.13 L
West Coast	151.00 S	151.00 S	251.00 S	7.00 S	7.00 S	9.00 L	13.00 L	1.03 L
Fremantle	301.00 L	501.00 L	501.00 L	13.00 L	11.00 L	9.00 -	7.00 S	No Price -
Essendon	2001.00 L	1001.00 -	3001.00 L	101.00 L	51.00 L	2.10 S	2.25 S	No Price -
Melbourne	2001.00 L	1001.00 -	3001.00 L	101.00 L	101.00 L	2.00 S	1.90 -	No Price -
Over-round	20.6%	20.8%	11.8%	7.6%	9.4%	22.2%	20.8%	5.9%

(\$10 for Adelaide to miss the 8 looks a little attractive at this point.)

If you've faith in the MARS Predictor System, Port and perhaps the Roos represent value in the Final 8 market.

Of the 120 possible GF Quinellas 48 are now are \$1,500, 40 more are \$100 or higher, 30 more are priced between \$10 and \$100, and only 2 are priced at less than \$10. Collingwood have moved sharply into GF focus, with a Cats v Pies GF now on the 2nd line of betting.

	Haw	Col	Syd	Bri	WB	Ade	Kan	PA	StK	Car	Ric	WC	Fre	Ess	Mel
Geelong	3	8	11	12	12	14	20	32	57	76	95	145	285	1500	1500
Hawthorn		10	14	15	15	17	24	39	71	94	120	180	355	1500	1500
Collingwood			42	46	46	53	75	125	225	300	370	555	1200	1500	1500
Sydney				62	62	72	105	170	300	400	500	750	1500	1500	1500
Brisbane					67	78	110	185	330	435	545	815	1500	1500	1500
Western Bulldogs						78	110	185	330	440	545	815	1500	1500	1500
Adelaide							130	210	380	500	630	940	1500	1500	1500
Kangaroos								300	535	710	890	1330	1500	1500	1500
Port Adelaide									1160	880	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
St Kilda										1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Carlton											1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Richmond												1500	1500	1500	1500
West Coast													1500	1500	1500
Fremantle														1500	1500
Essendon															1500

"The laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular".

Edward Gibbon

'til Sunday,

Tony

29 May 2008