

DT Must-Haves for 2012

(Midfielders)

With the start of the Nab-cup less than a month away it is high time we started looking at potential candidates for our teams. Regardless of your strategy to combat the utter disaster the bye rounds (11-13) will prove to be a winning team will have a mixture of these stars or as I affectionately dub them 'DT Sluts'.

Dane Swan:

I doubt you will need much convincing on the highest averaging player of last year but I will pump him up regardless. He has averaged over 119 points a game over the past 3 seasons and has not dipped below the 100 a game average mark since 2005. His 2011 season scores clearly show this trend with an incredible season high of 171 against the Bombers in round 19. Another impressive string to Swans' bow is his tendency to score big with him going past 130 points 8 times last year. Swanny is also incredibly durable as he has managed to play 129 out of a possible 132 in the past 6 seasons. Swan's consistency record also boasts 3 straight season without missing a game (other than this year of course). Seriously, this bloke is as safe as houses.



As for negatives I cannot think of a single one, seriously. Sure he is the most expensive player this year at \$598,300 but he is worth every cent. It is the simple matter of you get what you pay for and for spending top-dollar on Swan you get top-dollar results. What about Ablett I hear you cry, it's simple, get both. The only reason Swanny would not make your team is if you had a perverse hatred for the pies (which I know quite a few of you would have).

In summation, Dane Swan should be the very first player you pick, he was mine.

Gary Ablett Jr:

Speaking of safe as houses, this bloke is in the same league as Swan. Coming off what could be considered a 'down-year' for Ablett, even though he still managed to average 112.1 compared to 119 the year prior. During Ablett's first year at the Sun's he had a few teething issues such as a few niggling injuries and having to play with kids that had never experienced the top-tier of footy before. While both he and the entire Suns team had a slow start to the season where he only averaged 101 between rounds 1-10 (he also missed 3 matches in that period). After this sluggish start Ablett turned it on like only the elite can. In this time he averaged 126.1, minus the injury-affected 23 against the Swans in round 16. I believe that because of these factors Ablett's average dropped ever so slightly but he will fight back this year and significantly improve his average and push to reclaim his title of best Dream Team player in 2012.



When it comes to negatives for Ablett there are few if any at all. Sure, the Suns team is weak and will struggle to win a handful of games again this year but Ablett has already proved to us that he can hold his own, regardless of who his teammates are. Another minor niggle with Ablett is well, his minor niggles. These sort of injuries tend to see Ablett missing a game or two each season with him actually missing 10 in the last 4 seasons. I know it's not a huge deal but it definitely doesn't help.

All in all Ablett is the best of the best and should definitely be lining up along with Swan as round 1 lockout begins.

Scott Pendlebury:

"The winner of the 2010 Norm Smith Medal is ahhh, Sco--ott Pernerbry", the not so coherent words of the blissfully ignorant awards announcer at the 2010 Grand Final awards ceremony. While he may not have had a clue who Scott Pendlebury is we as Dream Teamers most certainly do. As the second highest averaging player of last year at 116.6, Pendles should be at the top of every budding DT coaches list. One of the most remarkable aspects of this young man is coincidentally his age. At only 24 Pendlebury has already managed to achieve a huge amount of success that some other star players had strived to obtain throughout their entire career. This success comes in the form of a premiership medallion, a Norm Smith medal and 2



consecutive Anzac day medals. Now that is impressive. While this is all well and good what does it mean for Dream Team? It's simple, he still has improvement in him and in an ever-improving Collingwood team he will inevitably score higher too!

Along with Scott's amazing ability to always find time to dispose of the ball is his uncanny ability to always score well. This is highlighted by 18 games where he scored 100+ along with a season high 166 against Essendon on Anzac day and a streak of 12 matches where he topped the 100 mark, these occurred between the rounds of 9-21. Along with these highs are lows, even though Pendlebury's lows aren't particularly low at all with a season trough of 87 against the Western Bulldogs in round 6 (seriously, that was his lowest).

Like the other two blokes on my list there is bugger all I can say negatively about them. Pendles is young, in a great team and still has room to improve. There is no reason why you shouldn't pick him, other than those dreads he used to have. I can't believe he ever thought they looked good.

Overall Pendles is an incredibly safe pick just like the others on this list and as such shows a large amount of value for those savvy enough to pick him up.

Honourable Mentions:

While I have only selected 3 midfielders in my list there were a couple of players that were unlucky to make the cut. These players include:

Matthew Boyd:

AVG: 116

Games Played: 22

+: Third-highest average, Is incredibly consistent.

-: Turning 30 in August, Bulldogs are an average team so little team-mate support

Tom Rockliff:

AVG: 112

Games Played: 20

+: Only 21 (22 in February), will always run for cheap possessions

-: Not much support in a poor Brisbane team, may cop a harder tag this season

Sam Mitchell:

AVG: 112

+: Best season to date, Plays in a strong team, could be a unique pick this year

-: Is turning 30 (in October), is known to go missing occasionally

Will start working on a Ruck 'Must-Haves' section soon!