

OFFICIAL



PLAYER RATINGS

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PLAYER RATINGS INTRODUCTION



AFL MEDIA RATINGS DOCUMENTATION

8 May 2013

The aim of the AFL Media Ratings is to become the official answer to the question:

“Who is the best player in the AFL?”

Existing player accolades and awards, such as the Brownlow Medal, AFL Coaches Association Champion Player of the Year and AFL Players' MVP, are centred on crowning the best performing player within one specific season. The AFL Media Ratings removes this yearly cut-off, taking into account multiple seasons worth of performances to evaluate the current status of each player and how they compare to their peers. Revolutionary in-game ratings have been used to measure player performance, ensuring that the AFL Media Ratings are on the forefront of statistical analysis in Australian Football.

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

COMPILATION OF RATING

AFL Media Ratings are based on a rolling window of the previous two seasons. For example, after Round 6 of the 2013 season a player's rating will be based on matches from Round 7 of the 2011 season onwards.

From the 2011 and 2012 seasons combined, the top-50 players for disposals per game played an average of 39.98 total matches, including finals. This number was used as a guide to build in a buffer for players missing matches – through injury, suspension, omission or by not being involved in finals. Within the moving window of two seasons, a player's most recent 40 matches are used in the calculation of his rating.

A player's most recent 30 matches are given maximum weight in determining his rating and matches 31 through 40 are progressively scaled between 100% and 10%. Match number 31 is still worth 100%, match number 22 is worth 90% of one match, match number 23 is worth 80% of one match and so on, all the way back to his 40th most recent match being worth just 10% towards his overall total.

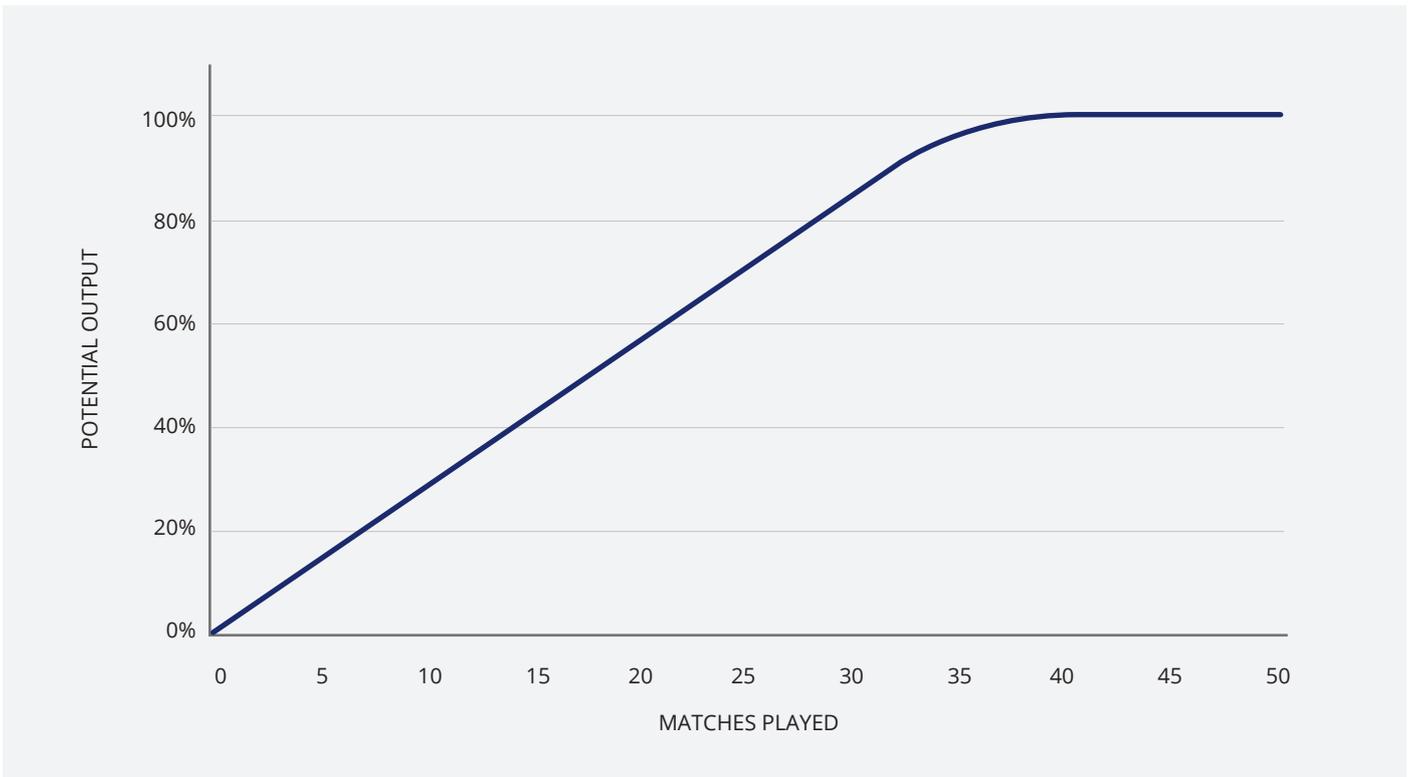
The table below shows a simple example of a player who scores 10 points in every match he plays. If he plays all 40 matches (or more) will have a final rating of 305.0 points. A player who misses five matches across two non-finals years will play 39 matches. Because of the reduced weight on the 40th match this one missing match results in just 0.5 missed points. Playing just 30 matches results in a total rating of 270.5 points, or 91.0% of his potential output. Playing just 20 matches results in a total rating of 200.0 points, or 65.6% of his potential output.

Across the 2011 and 2012 seasons, 770 players played at least one match. Of these, 157 (20% of all players) played at least 40 matches and 290 (38%) played at least 30. Of the 298 players to average at least 15 disposals per game in that time, 119 (40%) played at least 40 matches and 194 (65%) played at least 30.

Match #	Match Score	Match Weight	Rating Points	Running Total
1	10	100%	10	10
2	10	100%	10	20
3	10	100%	10	30
4	10	100%	10	40
5	10	100%	10	50
6	10	100%	10	60
7	10	100%	10	70
8	10	100%	10	80
9	10	100%	10	90
10	10	100%	10	100
11	10	100%	10	110
12	10	100%	10	120
13	10	100%	10	130
14	10	100%	10	140
15	10	100%	10	150
16	10	100%	10	160
17	10	100%	10	170
18	10	100%	10	180
19	10	100%	10	190
20	10	100%	10	200

Match #	Match Score	Match Weight	Rating Points	Running Total
21	10	100%	10	210
22	10	100%	10	220
23	10	100%	10	230
24	10	100%	10	240
25	10	100%	10	250
26	10	100%	10	260
27	10	100%	10	270
28	10	100%	10	280
29	10	100%	10	290
30	10	100%	10	300
31	10	100%	10	310
32	10	90%	9	319
33	10	80%	8	327
34	10	70%	7	334
35	10	60%	6	340
36	10	50%	5	345
37	10	40%	4	349
38	10	30%	3	352
39	10	20%	2	354
40	10	10%	1	355

ABOUT THE PRODUCT



POSITIONAL CATEGORIES

In addition to comparing players at competition level to see how they rate relative to all players, we can also look at how they compare to their peers – those playing in the same positions. Some players may satisfy the criteria for multiple position types but each player has been assigned with a primary position. These classifications are reactive, based on what role a player has performed in recent matches and feedback from AFL club staff. In addition to weekly updates of some players a twice-yearly audit of every listed player is conducted – one in the middle of the year and one towards the end of the. A change in role for a single match will not result in a change in the player’s classification but after several matches it is more likely that the change will be permanent, so updates will be made accordingly.

Defender

- › Plays predominantly in a stopping role on opposition key forwards or as a creative player in the defensive half of the ground.
- › Examples: Josh Gibson, Ted Richards, Shannon Hurn, Corey Enright

Ruckman

- › Has the primary role of competing for the hitout at stoppages
- › Examples: Dean Cox, Aaron Sandilands, Ben McEvoy

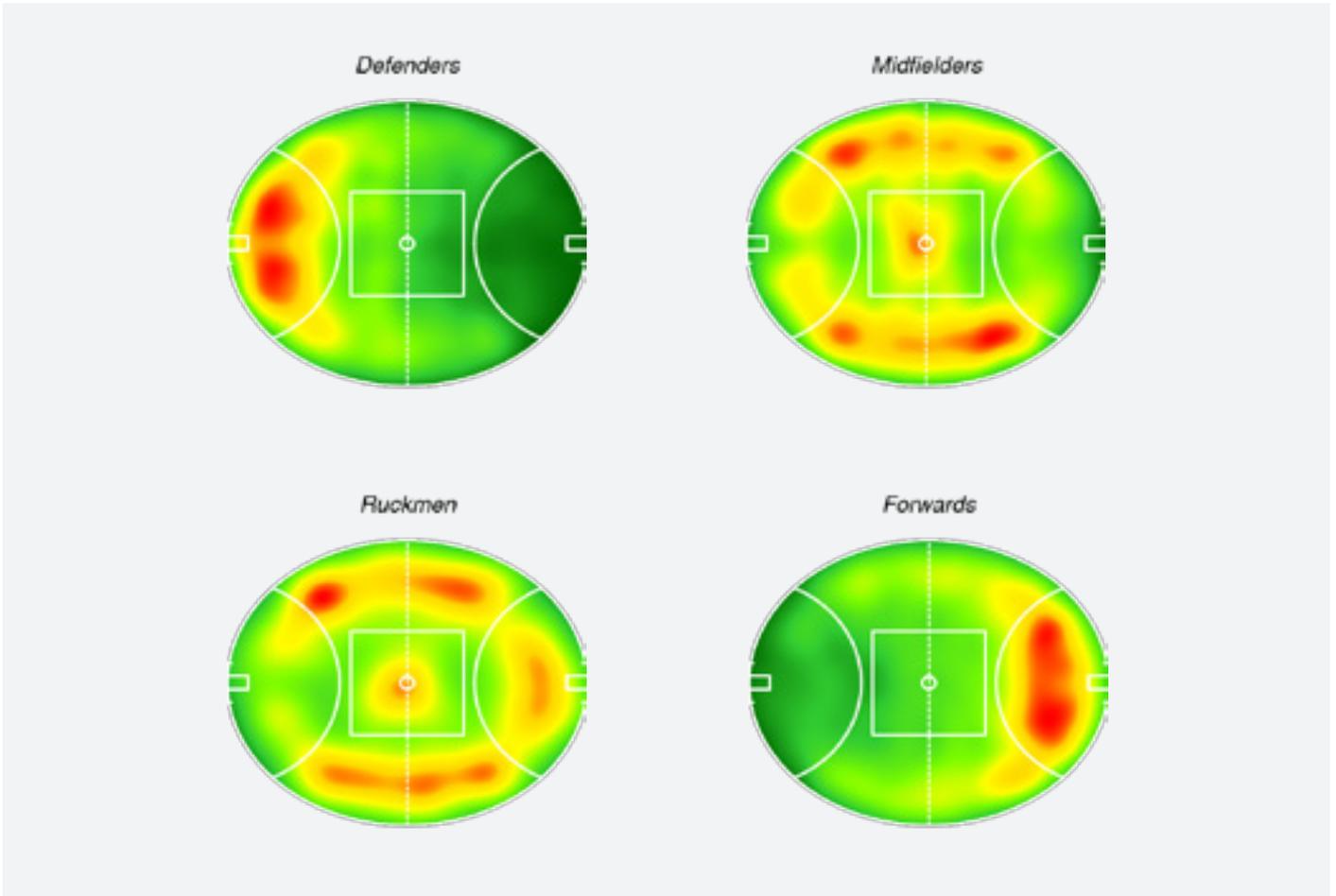
Midfielder

- › Plays permanently on ball or on a wing.
- › Examples: Gary Ablett, Scott Pendlebury, Marc Murphy, Brent Harvey

Forward

- › Plays predominantly in the forward half of the ground as an offensive player.
- › Examples: Lance Franklin, Matthew Pavlich, Stephen Milne, Chris Mayne

ABOUT THE PRODUCT



EQUITY RATINGS

The underlying measurement of a player's performance within a game is done through Equity Ratings – the total scoreboard contribution of a player's actions.

Should a goal kicker get the same reward for kicking a goal from two metres out in clear space as he does for a goal after breaking opposition lines, taking a few bounces and kicking from 50m out?

When a team takes the ball the length of the field from full back to kick a goal, six points are added to the scoreboard. Equity Ratings address the question of how those six points should be distributed to the players who were involved in the chain of possession. Actions that improve the position of the team will be rewarded with a positive value but those that put teammates under pressure or turn the ball over will be punished with a negative value.

Equity Ratings use the standard statistics collected by Champion Data and build on this information by using the locations of every event and the pressure applied to opposition disposals to give a complete (and accurate) account of a player's contribution.

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

KEY MESSAGES

Equity Ratings measure the net effect of a player's involvement in a game. A positive outcome can easily be cancelled out by a negative outcome five minutes later. Players who consistently produce positive contributions will be rewarded higher than players with a high volume of stats running at competition average or below. As an example, an 18 disposal game by Cyril Rioli can have more of an impact as a 42 disposal game by Dane Swan.

Actions close to goal have a high impact on the scoreboard so efficient ball use forward of centre, accurate kicking in front of goal and intercepting opposition disposals close to defensive goal are all rewarded highly. On the flip side, missing easy shots at goal, dropping marks at either end of the ground and turning the ball over deep in the defensive 50 all carry a heavy penalty. Lance Franklin may have 10 shots at goal every game but every behind he misses cuts into any points he has gained from kicking goals.

CALCULATION - EQUITY

To understand whether or not an action is positive we must first be able to place a value on the position of the ball before and after the action. Since 2007 the location on the ground of every possession has been recorded. For each of these possessions, the next score that happens in the game (negative if the opposition scores next) has been traced and from that information, the average next score (called the Equity) has been determined based on the location on the ground and the type of possession.

The below table gives a summary of marks taken in 2012 based on distance to goal, only counting those taken in a central corridor 10m wide (from goal line to goal line) to remove any bias for extreme angles. After taking a mark within 20m of goal the next score that happens is a goal 94% of the time and a behind 6% of the time, resulting in an average Equity of 5.7pts (94% x 6pts + 6% x 1pt). When taking a mark between 60m and 80m from goal the next score is a team goal 41% of the time and a team behind 38% of the time. This far from goal the opposition has a significant chance of scoring next, with 9% of these marks resulting in an opposition behind next and 11% an opposition goal. The average equity from these marks is then 2.1pts (41% x 6pts + 38% x 1pt + 9% x -1pts + 11% x -6pts).

Distance to Goal	Number of Marks	Average Equity	Team Goal (+6)	Team Behind (+1)	Oppo Behind (-1)	Oppo Goal (-6)
0-20m	278	5.7	94.2%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%
20-40m	306	4.4	69.0%	29.7%	1.0%	0.3%
40-60m	215	3.3	52.1%	42.3%	1.4%	4.2%
60-80m	209	2.1	41.1%	38.3%	9.1%	11.5%
80-100m	248	1.8	41.1%	31.5%	13.7%	13.7%
100-120m	304	0.8	32.6%	28.0%	18.4%	21.1%
120-140m	490	0.2	29.4%	24.5%	20.0%	26.1%
140-160m	461	-0.3	25.4%	19.5%	25.6%	29.5%

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

Using two marks 15m out and 60m out we can look at an example by placing a value on goals kicked from those two locations.

After kicking a behind or kicking the ball out on the full the opposition gains possession. At a kick-in, the team with the ball has a negative Equity of -0.5 points, meaning that it is more likely that the defending team will score next. Likewise, the Equity for a boundary kick-in next to the behind post is -0.6 points. This means that kicking a behind gives your team one point on the scoreboard, plus the 0.5 expected points of giving the ball to the opposition with negative Equity, for a total of 1.50 points.

The reward for kicking a goal is higher for the more difficult shot from 60m and lower from the easier shot from 15m. The penalty for missing a shot is higher for the easier kick and lower for the more difficult kick.

Distance	Start Equity	Goal		Behind		Out on the Full	
		Final Equity	Rating	Final Equity	Rating	Final Equity	Rating
15m	5.40	6.00	+0.6	1.50	-3.90	0.60	-4.80
60m	2.40	6.00	+3.6	1.50	-0.90	0.60	-1.80

As another example, consider the lateral kick across the ground – from one corner at the back of the centre square to the other. If the player starts with the ball in general play under no pressure and gets the ball to a teammate via an uncontested mark it results in a positive change. Hitting an open teammate on the half-volley results in no change to the team’s equity and thus no positive or negative rating for the kick. Putting a teammate under pressure by sending the ball to a marking contest or to a ground level contest results in a negative rating because the team is worse off than at the start of the kick.

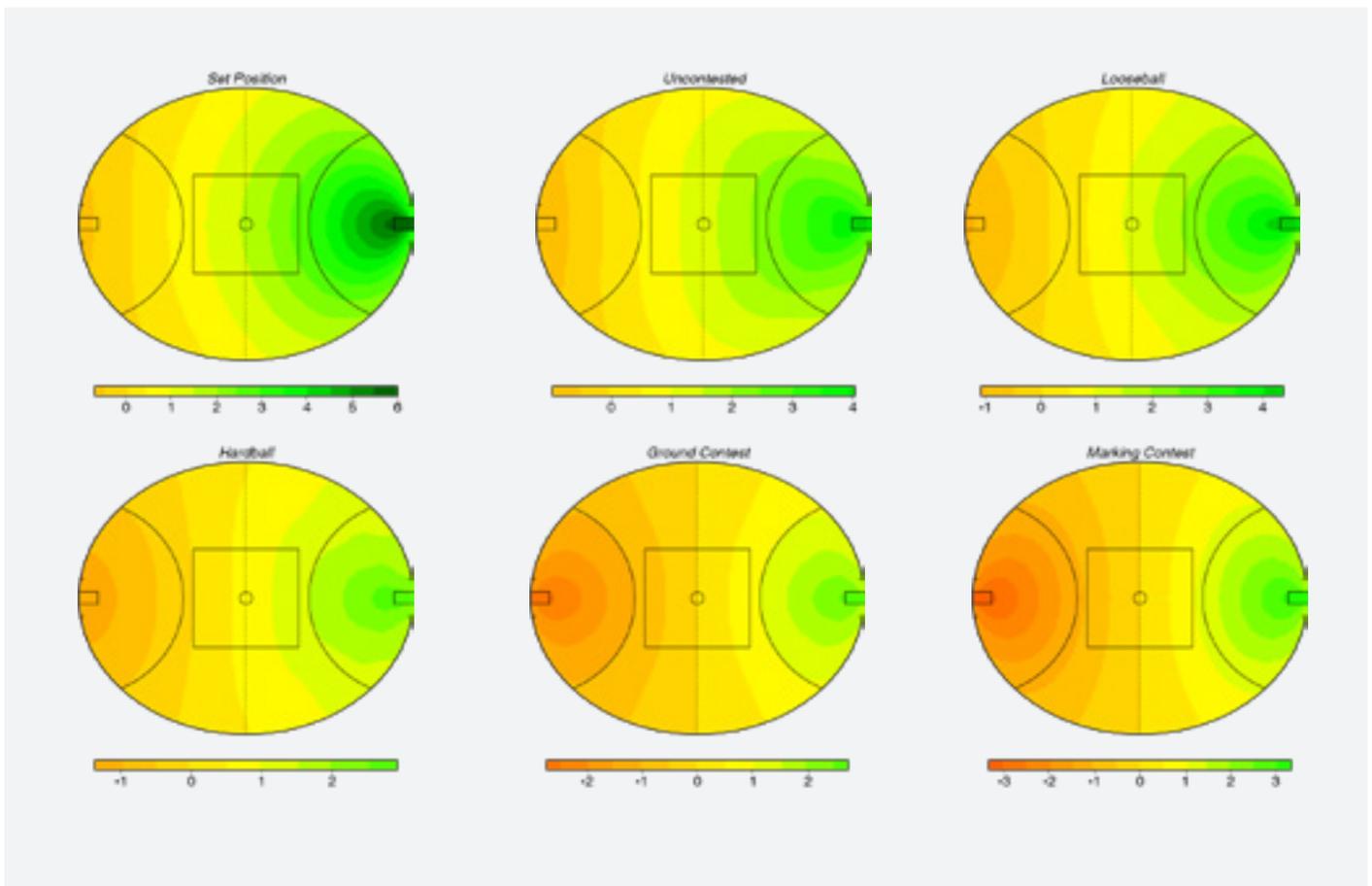
Result	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Teammate Uncontested Mark	0.64	0.76	+0.12
Teammate Gather (eg. Half-volley)	0.64	0.64	0.00
Ground Level Contest	0.64	-0.70	-1.34
Marking Contest	0.64	-0.79	-1.43

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

Every possession is classified in one of six categories:

- › Set Position – Taking a mark or winning a free kick
- › Uncontested – Gathering the ball at ground level under no pressure or receiving a handball in the clear
- › Looseball – Winning a disputed ball but without physical contact from an opponent
- › Hardball – Winning a disputed ball with physical contact from an opponent
- › Ground Contest – Ball at ground level, up for grabs by either team
- › Marking Contest – Ball in the air with both teams having a chance to take a mark

For each of these possession classifications we have calculated the value of having possession, based on the location on the ground. In the plot below dark green indicates an equity of 6.0 points (or a near certain goal) and decreasing shades of green and yellow show changes of 0.5 points per colour band. Where the equity is less than zero, this means that even though your team is in possession of the ball, the opposition is more likely to score than your team.



ABOUT THE PRODUCT

CALCULATION – EVALUATING ACTIONS

The general theme of evaluating the effect of a player's action is that we are measuring the change in Equity, or the change in the position of the ball from every event. Close to 80% of the points given out during a match are tied to the movement of the ball – via disposals and possessions. Other events that either carry less value or are less common include free kicks, tackles, hitouts, spoils and errors such as dropped marks and missed tackles.

DISPOSAL

Disposals are rated based on the change in the position of the ball from the start point of the kick or handball and the result at the other end. Where the ball is sent to an uncontested teammate the disposal player is given the full value of the change in ball position from the point of the kick or handball to the next possession. The exception to this is kicks sent to a leading player. Where a lead mark is taken the kicker and the marking player share the change in equity 50/50. When the disposal results in a contested possession, the disposal player is rewarded with the change in value of getting the ball to the contest and the points from the contest to the eventual next possession are given to the next player. When the disposal results in an uncontested turnover the disposal player and the intercept player share the change in equity 50/50.

The below table gives an example of a kick from set position from the centre of the ground to a point 30m out from attacking goal, directly in front. The start equity of the kick in this case is 1.58 points to the team in possession. The final equity is based on the result of the kick.

The best outcome for the kicker would be to find a teammate via an uncontested mark. The worst outcome would be kicking to an uncontested mark by the opposition.

Result	Start Equity	Final Equity	Event Rating
Teammate's Uncontested Mark	1.58	4.33	+2.75
Teammate's Gather	1.58	3.02	+1.44
Teammate's Mark on Lead	1.58	4.33	+1.38*
Contested Mark (Either Team)	1.58	2.10	+0.52
Spoil (Either Team)	1.58	2.10	+0.52
Looseball Get (Either Team)	1.58	1.78	+0.20
Hardball Get (Either Team)	1.58	1.78	+0.20
Stoppage Called	1.58	1.78	+0.20
Opposition's Gather	1.58	-0.05	-0.82*
Opposition Uncontested Mark	1.58	-0.13	-0.86*

* Change in Equity shared with the player winning possession at the other end of the kick

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

The starting equity for a disposal (1.58 in the above case) is based on the level of pressure recorded. Champion Data records pressure on disposals in six categories, outlined from least pressure to most pressure in the below table.

Pressure Level	Definition	Possession Level Equivalent
Set Position	After taking a mark or free kick	Set Position
No Pressure	In general play with no opponent in the vicinity	Uncontested
Corralling	With an opponent guarding space but not directly approaching the ball carrier	Looseball
Chasing	Running in space with an opponent in pursuit gaining ground	Looseball
Closing	With an opponent attacking the ball carrier but not getting close enough to apply physical pressure	Looseball
Physical	Direct physical contact at the point of disposal	Hardball

For higher levels of pressure there is a bigger reward for hitting a target and a smaller penalty for missing a target. The below table looks at the same example as above, with a kick from the centre of the ground to a point 30m out from attacking goal, directly in front. The two cases shown are the best/worst scenarios from the previous example, with an uncontested mark to both teams and the resulting rating based on the level of pressure on the original kick.

Pressure Level	Teammate's Uncontested Mark			Opposition Uncontested Mark		
	Start Equity	Final Equity	Event Rating	Start Equity	Final Equity	Event Rating
Set Position	1.58	4.33	+2.75	1.58	-0.13	-0.86
No Pressure	1.31	4.33	+3.02	1.31	-0.13	-0.72
Corralling	1.15	4.33	+3.18	1.15	-0.13	-0.64
Chasing	1.15	4.33	+3.18	1.15	-0.13	-0.64
Closing	1.15	4.33	+3.18	1.15	-0.13	-0.64
Physical	0.68	4.33	+3.65	0.68	-0.13	-0.41

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

POSSESSION

Players winning contested possessions are rewarded with the gain in equity from taking the ball out of dispute. No reward is given to players for winning the ball uncontested from a teammate's disposal, since the full gain in equity is given to the disposal player. The exception is where an uncontested mark is taken on a lead. In this case the gain in equity is shared equally between the kicker and the leading player.

The below example shows the different values of winning possession 30m out from attacking goal directly in front from a teammate's kick in the centre of the ground.

Possession Type	Start Point	Player Winning Possession		
		Start Equity	Final Equity	Event Rating
Contested Mark	Marking Contest	2.10	4.33	+2.23
Looseball Get	Ground Contest	1.78	3.24	+1.46
Mark on Lead	Teammate's Kick	1.58	4.33	+1.38*
Hardball Get	Ground Contest	1.78	2.13	+0.35
Uncontested Mark	N/A	4.33	4.33	0.00
Uncontested Gather	N/A	3.02	3.02	0.00

* Change in Equity shared with the kicking player

The below example shows the different values of winning possession 30m out from attacking goal directly in front from an opposition kick-in. When a player wins the ball back from the opposition in an uncontested manner, the player shares the decrease in equity from the opponent's kick with the kicker. Winning a hardball get might be seen as the most difficult possession type to win, but because of the high congestion and the reduced likelihood of scoring this is the least valuable way of winning the ball back from the opposition from a single player's point of view.

Possession Type	Start Point	Player Winning Possession		
		Start Equity	Final Equity	Event Rating
Contested Mark	Marking Contest	2.10	4.33	+2.23
Uncontested Mark	Opposition Kick-in	0.50	4.33	+1.92*
Looseball Get	Ground Contest	1.78	3.24	+1.46
Uncontested Gather	Opposition Kick-in	0.50	3.02	+1.26*
Hardball Get	Ground Contest	1.78	2.13	+0.35

* Change in Equity shared with the kick-in player

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

FREE KICKS

Similar to the above, free kicks are rewarded or penalised based on the context of the free kick and the location on the ground. The change in equity is shared between the free against player and the free for player. Again using the example of the point 30m from goal directly in front, if the defender gives away a free kick he is giving the ball to the attacking player in scoring range, resulting in a big penalty. Similarly for when the forward gives away a free kick, he is giving the ball away and losing the chance at a shot at goal, also resulting in a big penalty.

	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Defender	-2.10	-4.33	-1.12
Forward	2.10	4.33	+1.12

	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Forward	2.10	-0.13	-1.12
Defender	-2.10	0.13	+1.12

Free kick in marking contest

Free Against	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Defender	-1.78	-4.33	-1.28
Forward	1.78	4.33	+1.28

Free For	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Forward	1.78	-0.13	-0.96
Defender	-1.78	0.13	+0.96

Free kick at ground level

SPOILS

Spoiling the ball denies opposition players the chance to take a mark. In all instances spoils are valued by the difference in equity between a marking contest and a ground level contest but in the case where the ball goes directly to a teammate the spoiler also shares half of the points gained by the teammate winning possession.

TACKLES

Tackles are paid when a player either prevents an opposition disposal or forces an ineffective disposal. Where the player prevents an opposition disposal by winning a free kick or forcing a stoppage he is rewarded with the increase in equity from the state before the tackle was applied and the ball being in a ground contest. Tackles forcing an ineffective disposal are not credited with any points since they will be counted in the Pressure Applied category.

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

PRESSURE APPLIED

In addition to recording the level of pressure on every disposal Champion Data also records the players applying pressure. Where the equity at the point of disposal was lower than the equity when the player took possession, the player applying pressure is credited with half of this decrease.

The table below shows the rating for applying pressure to an opposition disposal 30m out from their defensive goal, based on the possession type before the disposal.

Possession Type	Closing/Chasing/Corralling			Physical Pressure		
	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Set Position	-0.04	-0.32	+0.14	-0.04	-0.71	+0.34
No Pressure	-0.04	-0.32	+0.14	-0.04	-0.71	+0.34
Looseball	-0.32	-0.32	0.00	-0.32	-0.71	+0.20
Hardball	-0.71	-0.32	0.00	-0.71	-0.71	0.00

HITOUTS

When a player goes up in a ruck contest and wins a hitout this can be graded as a hitout to advantage, a hitout sharked or a neutral hitout. Because the ruckman relies a lot on the midfield group at his feet the points for both hitouts to advantage and hitouts sharked are shared with the player winning the next possession. For a hitout to advantage the ruckman is assigned 67% of the points and the midfielder is given 33%. For hitouts sharked by an opponent, the midfielder is given 67% and the ruckman is given 33% of the decrease.

The below table shows the points gained/lost from centre bounce hitouts.

Hitout Type	Ruckman		
	Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
Hitout to Advantage	0.00	1.15	+0.77
Neutral Hitouts	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hitouts Sharked	0.00	-1.15	-0.38

Midfielder		
Start Equity	Final Equity	Rating
0.00	1.15	+0.38
0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	1.15	+0.77

SINGLE PLAYER – FULL MATCH EXAMPLE

Lewis Jetta – 2012 AFL Grand Final

Despite winning just 12 disposals (equal 30th on the ground) and failing to kick a goal Lewis Jetta was the 15th highest rated player in the grand final. All but three of his disposals were positive outcomes to the team and one free kick against was his only other negative.

See next page.

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

Time	Dist. To Goal	Stat	Result	Dist. To Goal	Start Equity	Final Equity	Event Rating	Running Total	
1	4:16	24m	Handball Receive						
1	4:17		Kick	Behind	0m	2.12	1.50	-0.62	-0.62
1	5:38		Corralling Pressure			0.94	0.69	+0.12	-0.50
1	14:02		Chasing Pressure			0.98	0.86	+0.06	-0.44
1	16:27		Corralling Pressure			1.01	0.88	+0.06	-0.37
1	18:24	137m	Handball Receive						-0.37
1	18:25		Kick	Teammate Unc. Mark	128m	-0.21	0.25	+0.46	+0.09
1	18:36		Corralling Pressure			0.77	0.66	+0.06	+0.14
1	18:40		Chasing Pressure			1.21	1.09	+0.06	+0.20
1	21:20		Corralling Pressure			0.92	0.68	+0.12	+0.32
1	24:57	146m	Handball Receive						+0.32
1	25:08		Free Kick after Disposal		104m	-0.68	0.00	+0.68	+1.00
2	0:08		Physical Pressure			1.31	0.68	+0.32	+1.31
2	4:42	84m	Hardball Get			0.19	1.01	+0.82	+2.14
2	4:45		Kick	Marking Contest	25m	1.01	2.25	+1.24	+3.37
2	7:35	63m	Looseball Get			1.10	1.51	+0.41	+3.78
2	7:39		Kick	Marking Contest	6m	1.51	3.29	+1.78	+5.55
2	11:38	125m	Handball Receive						+5.55
2	11:39		Kick	Teammate Unc. Mark	95m	-0.04	1.08	+1.13	+6.68
2	15:11	97m	Looseball Get			-0.05	0.72	+0.77	+7.45
2	15:13		Kick	Marking Contest	69m	0.72	0.72	-0.00	+7.45
2	18:29	110m	Contested Mark			-0.51	0.71	+1.23	+8.68
2	18:35		Kick	Teammate Unc. Mark	95m	0.71	1.11	+0.40	+9.08
2	20:23		Chasing Pressure			1.13	0.89	+0.12	+9.19
2	24:00	102m	Handball Receive						+9.19
2	24:01		Kick	Teammate Gather	58m	0.65	1.99	+1.34	+10.54
2	29:03		Chasing Pressure			0.61	0.33	+0.14	+10.68
3	3:10		Corralling Pressure			1.21	1.09	+0.06	+10.74
3	3:35	95m	Uncontested Mark						+10.74
3	3:38		Kick	Teammate Unc. Mark	63m	1.08	2.27	+1.19	+11.92
3	19:32		Corralling Pressure			2.05	1.97	+0.04	+11.96
3	22:50	76m	Handball Receive						+11.96
3	22:51		Kick	Ground Contest	61m	1.27	0.73	-0.54	+11.43
3	23:06		Closing Pressure			0.41	0.23	+0.09	+11.52
3	24:30		Chasing Pressure						+11.52
3	28:20		Corralling Pressure						+11.52
3	28:26	69m	Free Against			-0.03	-1.44	-0.70	+10.82
3	31:11	123m	Spoil			-1.08	-0.90	+0.18	+11.00
4	12:48	54m	Knock-on			0.86	2.28	+1.42	+12.42
4	27:52		Corralling Pressure						+12.42
4	30:56	47m	Uncontested Mark						+12.42
4	31:26		Kick	Marking Contest	18m	2.93	2.59	-0.34	+12.08
4	33:20		Corralling Pressure						+12.08
4	33:21	94m	Smother			-1.55	-0.52	+1.03	+13.11

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

NEW PLAYERS

Every currently listed player is given a rating based on the number of games played over the last two seasons. Debutants will gain a rating from their very first game and will quickly move up the list if they consistently play every week. Of the 623 currently listed players to have played a game in the last two seasons none who have played at least 20 games are in the bottom 180 players in the competition. At the other end of the scale, none of the top 140 players have played 25 or more matches. Using this as a guide, a first year player who plays roughly half the season (9-13 games) will finish the year in the range of 400th to 600th, depending on the quality of his games. A first year player playing close to a full season (18+ games) can expect to be in the range of 200th to 500th, again depending on the quality of his games.

This also applies to players returning from injury. Lenny Hayes, who missed most of the 2011 season through injury, started the 2013 season outside the top-200 in the competition. Even without any improvement on 2012 numbers, Hayes should rise to at least the top-70 in the competition with 20 or more games in 2013.

RETIREES

The AFL Media Ratings only consider currently listed players. For this reason the end of season placing for players may be significantly different to their placing at the start of the following year if players above them are no longer listed.

PLACING BY POSITION

One of the aims of the AFL Media Ratings is to be fair across all position types. That is, if two players of equal quality were playing in different positions, they should have the same Rating. There is still a heavy bias towards midfielders at the top end of the AFL Media Ratings, but this is consistent with nearly all player awards. Fans and industry people are quick to cry foul over how often defenders are overlooked and discriminated against using purely statistical measures, but even subjective assessments of players like Coaches Association, Players Association and media awards are rarely kind to key defenders and heavily favour midfielders. While it is possible that a Key Defender could rise to the top of AFL Media Ratings, the numbers that are produced by the current crop of defenders suggests that it is highly unlikely.

One other reason for midfielders often appearing at the top of awards lists is their sheer number. Of the players with an AFL Media Rating heading into the 2013 season 191 are midfielders – comfortably more than any other position.

Position	Players
Midfielders	191
General Defenders	136
General Forwards	86
Key Defenders	65
Key Forwards	65
Ruckmen	48
Mid-Forwards	32

PLAYER CASE STUDIES

Cyril Rioli

Because of the high value of possession in the forward half of the ground and inside 50, efficient use of the ball forward of centre is highly rewarded. Cyril Rioli's kicking efficiency was the best of the top-80 ballwinners in 2012. When Rioli kicked the ball into the forward line he found a mark 31% of the time – ranked third of the top-75 players for inside 50 kicks. Rioli ranked first in the competition for tackles laid inside the forward 50 of players to play five or more games in 2012 and ranked sixth for total pressure applied in the forward half of the same group. He also ranks No.1 for score assists and 18th overall for total goals, and his shot at goal accuracy of 59.3 per cent is among the highest in the competition.

ABOUT THE PRODUCT

Nic Naitanui

It may be a surprise that Nic Naitanui places as high as he. Naitanui finished his 2012 season as the starting ruckman in the All Australian team, polled more brownlow votes than any other ruckman and more votes in the AFL Coaches Association Champion Player than any other ruckman. Below is a table of seven ruckmen and where they ranked in 2012 in certain stats of the 37 ruckmen to have played five or more games. Naitanui has the best hitout to advantage win percentage, ranks second for contested possessions and third for pressure acts and goals. Excluding uncontested possessions, which gain very few points in Equity Ratings, no other ruckman is in the top-three in more than one category, let alone coming close to Naitanui's four.

Player	Mt	Hitout to Adv. Win %	Contested Possessions	Uncontested Possessions	Pressure Acts	Tackles	Goals
Nic Naitanui	22	1st	2nd	34th	3rd	9th	3rd
Patrick Ryder	15	4th	9th	5th	12th	18th	2nd
Shane Mumford	17	11th	16th	25th	2nd	1st	8th
Dean Cox	24	7th	11th	1st	30th	31st	1st
Ivan Maric	21	9th	5th	3rd	8th	4th	20th
Sam Jacobs	24	2nd	20th	2nd	29th	32nd	24th
Aaron Sandilands	14	8th	1st	23rd	37th	37th	16th

Brent Harvey

Similar to Rioli, Brent Harvey's ball use forward of centre was elite in 2012. His kicking efficiency of 71% ranked third in the competition of players with 100 or more kicks in the forward half. Harvey's accuracy in front of goal was also a standout, kicking 35 goals from just 50 shots at goal – the best shot at goal accuracy of any player in the competition. Harvey kicked nine goals from 10 set shots (90% compared to the AFL average of 55%) and 26 goals from 40 shots in general play (65% compared to the AFL average of 45%).

Daniel Rich

Daniel Rich's long kicking is the feature of his game, having kicked 13 goals from outside 50 in 2012 – more than any other player. He averaged the 14th most metres gained from kicks in the competition and had the fifth best retention rate of the top 15. Over the past two seasons he has averaged 33 metres gained per kick – ranked 12th of any player with 200 or more kicks.

Future Development

Since AFL Media Ratings are new to the market the first few years might see some slight tinkering with the underlying algorithm with a view to maintain an accurate representation of player performance. This will be done to ensure that the ratings maintain an accurate representation of player performance. Also, by leaving room for improvement and adaptability we can ensure that AFL Media Ratings keep up with potential changes to the way the game is played and take full advantage of any new information that is recorded about the game. Any changes will be performed during the offseason and will be fully communicated to the public.