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# Annual 2011



## Carlton Blues

A comprehensive review of players  
from the 2011 Premiership Season

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## **Photography**

[Mister Carlton](http://www.bigfooty.com/forum) supplied our player photographs.

You can find his Flickr stream here: <http://www.flickr.com/acphotography18>

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## Andrew Walker - #1

By [Kramer1](#)

### Where the \*\*\*\* did that come from?

After struggling to overcome serious shoulder injuries for a number of years, and giving Carlton fans but flashes of his undoubted potential in that time it came as no surprise that Andrew Walker decided to 'test the waters' throughout the 2010 trade period. And of course by test the waters I mean shop himself



around like an Amsterdam red light special.

Two strong suitors emerged in the Western Bulldogs and Adelaide...the wisdom of hindsight suggests they may have erred in opting for Sherman and Tambling respectively over our Andy. Fortuitously for us seeing relative fringe dwellers given the nod ahead of him may well have been the smack with the reality stick the Walker needed to re-consider his position.

As has been reported a frank conversation would take place between player and coach. Walker expressed his frustration at being played out of his preferred position, and pushed hard for a move into the forward 50. Players making such demands are generally informed in no uncertain terms who calls the shots, but a three goal cameo in the elimination final against Sydney in 2010 may well have been the catalyst for Ratten to yield to the request.

Still Walker would enter season 2011 with more question marks than ever. Would the events of the trade period deflate his confidence further, or spur him on to greater things? Rising 25 how would he adjust to yet another role change? Would the spectre of injury derail yet another season? With the list batting deeper than it had for more than a decade could he absorb the pressure and fend off challengers for his spot.

A low key two goal haul in the opening round against Richmond didn't necessarily confirm the move as a masterstroke, though nor did it harm his chances. A handful a week later against the Gold Coast was perhaps to be expected against an overwhelmed opponent, but his laser like efficiency in kicking five straight raised a few eyebrows...this was never part of the arsenal before.

This would prove to be one of a number of pleasing developments in AW's game across the season. Let's start with the numbers...with a previous season best of ten goals it's fair to say none of us saw a 50+ goal season coming. 56 goals 27 behinds to be exact, good enough for equal fifth across the competition. Perhaps the most significant number was 24. The number of games played, and the just the second time Walker has logged a full complement of games.

The aforementioned accuracy is worth re-visiting. Kicking efficiency had never been a strong point and caused a few (including your correspondent) to question his place in the modern game. I've not seen a greater turnaround in kicking efficiency, a skill that is notoriously difficult to improve. His icing of the game with a late goal against St Kilda being the highest profile example of his improvement.

Consistent was not a descriptor often attached to AW's game either, except when prefaced by the words 'he needs to be more'. Somehow, somehow he found a way in 2011, kicking multiple goals in 17 of 24 games, taking more marks and applying more pressure acts than ever before. His ability to get up the field and into the play in those rare matches when things weren't working for him up forward was a highlight. So along with consistency I'll throw in 'work rate' to the list of pleasing developments.

And I for one will never forget being there in round 18 to witness Walker rise above Carlisle, and seemingly the upper deck of the Great Southern Stand, light towers, and into the stratosphere to pluck what would be impossible to dislodge as mark of the year...cept' it wasn't. Yet another example of delivering on something he first alluded to in his very first game back in 2004. So really there is nothing left to say other than congratulations Andrew on an outstanding season of football. Congratulations on being rewarded with three more years in Navy Blue, and no doubt you will be pushing yourself harder than ever to improve on the incredible benchmark you have set in season 2011.

## Jordan Russell - #2

By [EBIAC](#)

The years of faith shown by the Carlton selection panel towards Jordan Russell began to pay off in his breakout year of 2010, and he started the 2011 season in similar fashion to that of the previous. The sweeping half back took on a more aerial defensive role rather than just shutting down his opponents on the ground and coming away with the ball, adding to his growing repertoire of skills.



With the ability to float from flank to flank down the wings, Russell is a versatile defender that can also be used in both an attacking and tagging role.

Russell's most prominent highlights of the season include a 27-disposal effort against competition newcomers Gold Coast, another 27-disposal game against St. Kilda in which he influenced greatly, and a game-winning goal against Adelaide.

Although the mobile defender looked to be having a career-best season, injury troubles that include a hip problem attained through the pre-season caused Russell's form to rapidly decrease, coaxing him to make the decision to play with the reserves side, the Northern Bullants, until he found form. Although he was influential in a side that made the VFL Preliminary Final, Russell only played in one game after Round 16; a Round 24 defeat to St. Kilda.

The decision to spend time with the reserves rather than the senior side prompted rumours that Russell may be interested in a scenic change, despite being recalled later in the season. Russell later ruled out a move from Carlton, keen to reach premiership success with the club.

If Russell struggles to recapture form in the back half in 2011, a switch to the forward half would do him a world of good. Finding plenty of the football is the key to getting Russell back in the right frame of mind, and a sneaky goal or two here and there could very easily lift his spirits.

Looking on to 2012, Jordan Russell is an essential cog in the Blues' premiership aspirations. In order for Carlton to have its best attempt at winning a premiership, Russell will need to find his optimum fitness and reclaim the form that saw him place second behind Chris Judd in the 2010 John Nicholls Medal count.



## Marc Murphy - #3

by [blues4flag](#)

### Statistics

1st for kicks  
 2nd for handballs  
 1st for disposals  
 2nd for contested possessions  
 2nd for uncontested possessions  
 2nd for clearances  
 4th for goals  
 4th for goal assists  
 2nd for inside 50s  
 3rd for tackles  
 3rd for bounces



### Awards

- John Nicholls Medallist
- AFLCA Champion Player of the Year
- Carlton Board Player of the Year
- All Australian (half forward flank)
- 9th in the Brownlow Medal
- Carlton Finals Player of the Year

After an injury interrupted 2010, Murphy surpassed his 2009 brilliance that saw him finish in the All Australian squad by earning his first All Australian jumper. While no star shines as bright as Judd's cranium on a good day, Murphy's consistency was a sight to behold, polling in 22 of 24 games in the club best and fairest. He won the award by a substantial 209 votes over his skipper. He polled in 12 of 22 games in the Brownlow Medal. He is the only player in history to poll in so many games and not finish in the top 5 of the Brownlow (bar 76 and 77, when both umpires awarded votes), and also holds the record for the most number of 1 votes in a season, with 8.

His 2010 season was compromised by a niggling groin injury that saw him regularly miss training sessions for the first 14 rounds of the season, however a full preseason showed us just how good a player Murphy could be. Fully fit, Murphy emerged as one of the competition's hardest working midfielders, regularly driving his opponents to exhaustion through sheer gut running. While not a bash-and-crash midfielder, a harder edge saw him more effective in the clearances, while elite agility and an ability to come to screeching halt saw him maneuver his way out of congestion with consummate ease. His class around goals was a highlight, and while there were some costly misses in the losing semi final, he is the team's most reliable shot on goal while on the run. He managed 22 goals for the season, at an average of just under 1 goal a game. While in his early seasons his



disposal was only solid, he has developed into one of the game's most reliable midfielders, quick by hand and accurate by foot. The combination of his inside and outside games makes him one of the most well rounded midfielders in the competition, bettered perhaps by only Gary Ablett, marred only by a lack of marking prowess.

### **Best Game**

While Murphy played more great games than any other player at the club this season, when considering his best it is impossible to go past the elimination final vs. Essendon. In front of an insatiable crowd of over 90,000, dominated by the parochial Carlton faithful as the Blues jumped out to a 6 goal lead in the second quarter, the man of modest stature towered above every other player on the field. While brilliant all season, his form leading into the finals was a bit down on his usual standards, but as champions do, he rose to a new level when all the pressure was on Carlton. Not only did his 37 disposals equal his career best, it was 10 more than the next best on the ground. He worked hard in the clinches, with a game high 18 contested possessions (his best for the season) and 6 clearances. He was even more effective on the outside, working harder than any other player on the ground, also topping the uncontested possessions and propelling the ball inside 50 a game high 8 times, resulting in two goal assists and a goal of his own. While Dyson Heppell had an excellent debut season, culminating in the Rising Star award, he was taught a lesson in gut running by Murphy. The match committee were clearly appreciative of his game, rewarding him a 46 of a maximum 50 B&F votes.

### **Where to in 2012?**

It's hard to say where improvement will come for Marc Murphy. His fitness is already elite and he was the club's most consistent player. His outside game is as good as anybody's in the competition, and hits the scoreboard as often as any midfielder bar Gary Ablett and Dane Swan. While his inside game went to another level in 2011, it was at times supplementary to his outside game, which is understandable when he is so effective in space. At a height just above the legal definition of a dwarf's, Murphy's marking game will never be a feature.

## Bryce Gibbs - #4

by [Judderson](#)

### Key stats

548 disposals in 23 games, at an average of 24 per game (19th in the AFL for total disposals).

381 kicks (6th in the AFL for total kicks, 5th for average kicks).

174 marks.

21 goals for the season: a personal best.

12 Brownlow votes.

82 tackles.

### Expectations heading into 2011

Coming off a personal best season in 2009, there were massive expectations on Bryce to improve on this in 2010. However, with the Blues' defence at that point being its Achilles heel, Bryce was shuffled back into defence on a half back flank, and was believed to be held back, as he wasn't able to use his wonderful delivery forward of centre. However, with the recruitment of Duigan and Laidler, as well as Yarran moving to defence, there was a massive cry from the Carlton faithful to "RELEASE GIBBS!" and put him back into his rightful place in the midfield. Bryce didn't seem to have the greatest of pre-seasons, with those attending not necessarily but, nonetheless, Gibbs was primed for a big year.

### The 2011 season

Bryce's first two games of the season were very impressive, despite the fact that it was against lowly opposition in Richmond and competition newcomers Gold Coast. Nevertheless, Bryce polled in both of these games in regards to the Brownlow Medal, getting 1 and 2 votes respectively from the umpires. However, from this point, Bryce was given a new role of going head to head with the opposition's most dangerous midfielder, and attempting to both stem their influence while also hurting them offensively.

This role saw Gibbs match up on the likes of Scott Pendlebury, Adam Goodes and Brendon Goddard. While Bryce performed relatively good against the competition's superstars, even getting 3 votes for his game on Goddard, the cry from the Blues faithful was that Gibbs was a wasted talent as a tagger, and that a number one draft pick should in fact be tagged instead of tagging others. The subsequent games saw Gibbs being given a little more freedom, but at this point, he hadn't



necessarily fired or done anything overly inspirational, averaging a high amount of possessions but not really being as potent as he could be. He showed hints of his potential forward of centre on a couple of occasions, whether it was throughout delivery or finishing, an example being his goal against Richmond in Round 15, where he baulked past 2 Tigers and calmly slotted the goal from 50.

However, in Round 19 against North Melbourne, Gibbs exploded and never looked back. He kicked 4 goals and was potentially the vital man in the Blues fight-back in that match, showing just how dangerous and potent he could be if moved to the forward line, where he has expressed his desire to play. In the last 7 games, Bryce kicked 14 goals and played in some of his best games for the season, such as his game against Melbourne a week later and also the Elimination Final against Essendon. Gibbs' finishing was what Blues fans have been screaming out for in the last 2 years, and when it looked as though Gibbs would fire and become one of the most dangerous men in the competition as he had promised since day one, disaster struck.

A tumble in the goal square against Essendon in the last quarter as he searched for his 4th goal was all it took for Bryce's year to come to a sudden halt. While the Blues only played one game after that, Gibbs could've quite easily been the difference against West Coast at Paterson's Stadium. Nevertheless, Bryce didn't play and his year, along with the year of his teammates, was over. However, the signs he showed at the culmination of the season were enough to get Blues fans very excited for 2012 season.

### **Best Game**

Bryce had various highlights in one of if not his best year to date, such as the Round 2 domination against Gold Coast, Round 7 game against St. Kilda and the Round 13 game against Sydney at Etihad, among others. However, in my opinion, Bryce had two games in particular which were a class above the rest, and those two games were the Round 19 Friday night game against North Melbourne, and the Blues' biggest game in the last decade: the Elimination Final against the arch-enemy, Essendon.

Gibbs' game against North was very impressive to say the least. While he wasn't as prolific as he has been throughout his career, Bryce had a somewhat different role to what he has been used to in the past. Bryce was moved to the forward line after a relatively quiet first term where Judd, Murphy, Gibbs and Kreuzer had all been very quiet. Bryce's move to the forward line was instantly successful and produced results, kicking back to back goals to give the Blues the lead in the second term. Bryce finished with 4 (and could have easily finished with more) and received the 3 Brownlow votes, with the aforementioned potency in the forward line on full display.

Another one of Bryce's best games proved to be his last game for the season, which was the final against Essendon. After starting on the bench and watching his teammates dominate but not being able to convert their multitude of chances, Bryce was a pivotal part of the Blues' first quarter revival when Essendon seemed to be getting away. A one on two contested mark against Hille and Heppell in the shadows of quarter time set the scene for Bryce's day, who finished with 3 goals. However,

Gibbs' day in particular will be remembered for his goal square stumble in the last term, where his shoulder was driven to the ground, causing him to miss the Semi Final. Nonetheless, Bryce was very impressive even though he didn't get too much of the ball (17 touches), making Blues supporters wonder what might have been if Bryce was to play the next week.

### **Expectations for 2012**

The call prior to 2011 was to "RELEASE GIBBS". Now, after the last 7 games or so, the call is for Bryce to be played on a half forward flank with stints in the midfield, in an attempt to improve Carlton's developing forward stocks. Much like the case where Gibbs was moved into defence in order to provide a level and mature head, moving Bryce forward to become a 30 goal forward would be extremely beneficial for the Blues. While it isn't the case anymore, Carlton are perceived to one-dimensional when heading into attack, and with Bryce's delivery and marking, having him as an option would simply improve the Blues forward of centre. In the off-season, Bryce needs to, and has already started on by some reports, work on his technique when kicking for goal, as if he had managed to kick straight on occasion this season, he could have proven to be the difference, as seen by the game against Hawthorn in Round 22, where he kicked 4 behinds (although some were challenging)

While he is normally a beautiful field kick in some games he has struggled to convert set shots. If Bryce can manage to rid himself of this unwanted apparent habit the Blues forward line will be even more potent, giving the CFC the best chance heading into finals and in September itself.

## Chris Judd - #5

By [Blue DNA](#)



### Key Statistics

**Games:** 24 in 2011, 222 in career, 134 with West Coast

**Disposals:** 633, K 301, HB 332 (at 26.4,12.5,13.8), efficiency 66.5%

**Contested possessions:** 333 at 13.9

**Clearances:**159 at 6.6;

**Inside 50s:** 105 at 4.4

**Marks:** 69 (7 contested);

**Tackles:** 148 at 6.2

**Supercoach:** Average 115.6

**Quirky fact:** Drinks out of two drink bottles when on the interchange bench

### The Context

After an outstanding season in 2010 some of us wondered if Chris Judd could keep up his Brownlow winning form. Surely no player, even with the once in a generation talent of Judd, could keep shouldering the heavy midfield load that Chris absorbed? Fortunately, in 2011 his midfield *compadres* produced the best seasons of their young careers. Marc Murphy had a sublime breakout year, and Mitch Robinson crashed into every contest in a way that frightened his opponents, his parents, and probably his own teammates.

So did Chris take an easier road in 2011? Maybe rest up forward more often, play an outside midfield role a bit more? What's remarkable is that Judd took his game to yet another level in 2011. His contested ball work, his ability to create clearances where no human had a right to do so, his gut running, and his displays of sheer football brilliance left no one in doubt. In 2011 we had the

privilege of watching football genius at work. His peers in the AFL Players Association recognised this, overwhelmingly voting Chris the Most Valuable Player in the land, and Best Captain. He also came second in the John Nicholls Medal, and selected in the All Australian team of 22. The experts began debating where Chris Judd stood in comparison with the all time greats of the game. He was the runaway Brownlow favourite among virtually all observers – except it seems the umpires. Well, maybe the ledger has been squared with Dane Swan.

### **Performance**

In his fourth season in Navy Blue, Chris was Carlton's leading player in terms of contested possessions (333 at 13.9), clearances (159 at 6.6), tackles (148 at 6.2), handballs (332 at 13.8), and goal assists (33 at 1.4). He was second in total disposals (633 at 26.4), and third for inside 50s (105 at 4.4). Let's take a moment to unpack these stats. Judd's contested possessions and clearances from stoppages place him in a category only a few AFL players can aspire to. He creates enormous drive by winning the contested ball and handballing off to a teammate. If the opposition has the ball, then they better get rid of it quickly or Chris will lay one of his 148 tackles. He has a presence and influence in games that no doubt inspires teammates and earns the respect of opponents.

### **Best game/s.**

If we had to single out games to showcase Judd's prowess, then let's look at the Collingwood R17, Sydney R6, and Essendon R18 games. Against the Pies Chris had 35 possessions with a staggering 23 contested and 9 clearances. Against Sydney Judd went further. He finished with 25 contested possessions and 15 clearances. That is not a misprint. In one passage of play in Q4 Chris ran along the boundary line under intense pressure, kept his feet, controlled the elusive ball, and kicked to White in space near the goals. Brilliant. Carlton had not won at the SCG since 1993. It was a massive team effort and Judd played a major role in what was arguably a season defining come from behind win.

The Bombers game was football bliss for Carlton supporters. This is when AW did his *SkyWalker* thing. In the first quarter Judd contested for a mark in the goal square, gained possession somehow, then shaped to handball, but Garlett was in traffic, so Judd held back until Betts came streaming through to receive and then goal. All of this in just a fleeting moment.

### **Personal milestones.**

Chris played his 200th AFL game against Gold Coast in Round 2 and kept up his elite form through most of the season. He seemed to be moving more freely than in the recent past. But he picked up an ankle injury mid-season and yet had the tenacity to play through it.

On 26 July, Chris and Rebecca welcomed the arrival of their first child, Oscar. Some BigFooty wags congratulated Bec for her timing. The early arrival on Tuesday meant Chris could play the Friday game against North. Others noted that Oscar is definitely a Judd – the nurses put a tag on him almost immediately.



**What now for 2012?**

Carlton supporters will be hoping that Chris' body holds up and allows him to continue to express his talents. Hard bodied taggers have been repeatedly pitted against him. The Club has tried to find personnel to share the load, and to an extent this is happening, but more work needs to be done to assist the champion.

It's hard to talk about deficiencies in his game given how good Judd is. Yes his efficiency is not great at 66.5%. But if we look at how congested the play is when he wins the ball, then turnovers are hardly surprising. Kicking at goal is a more genuine area that could be improved with 14 goals 16 behinds. And when the time does come for him to play more up forward then accuracy is an area Chris could work on.

In 2011 we had the privilege of watching Judd's contribution to the Carlton Football Club. It is the hope of many that, sometime soon, the heroic efforts of Chris Judd and his teammates will be rewarded with that sweet taste of success in September.

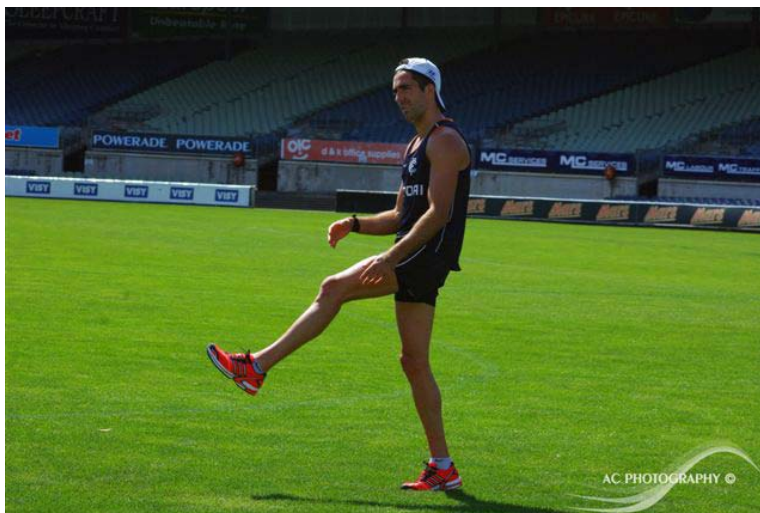


## Kade Simpson - #6

By [Blue and Silver](#)

### Key Statistics

- **Games:** 24
- **Disposals:** 22.3 (15 ki, 7.3 ha)
- **Marks:** 6.1
- **Tackles:** 3.3
- **Goals:** 17
- **Inside 50's:** 4.8



### Expectations for season 2011

It's hard to label what the expectations for Simmo were in 2011, coming off his best year to date in 2010 but still flying way under the radar thanks to the attention paid to Juddy, Murphy, Gibbs and a whole host of other bigger names.

Nevertheless the VC was out to show that as ever he is ridiculously consistent, now holding the consecutive games played for Carlton record, and that he can impact games when it counts.

### Overall Performance

Simmo had an impact on many games in 2011 and was involved in several crucial plays including his brilliant handball to Russell to kick the winner against Adelaide and his brilliant long goal against Essendon, Round 3. While Simmo varied in output from game to game, not winning as much of the ball as he had last year, he remained a crucial part of our set up, being no.1 for inside 50's at the club, and at times making an impact up forward, kicking two sets of 3 for the year. His best game came at the death of the regular season against St Kilda, with Simmo racking up 40 touches, 16 marks and a goal, to be the only man actually trying to win for Carlton after half-time.

### Where to From Here?

Simmo's consistency wavered at times this year, and it must be said that numerically his ability to consistently gather the ball is in question. Despite this, Kade's best attribute, his heart and dedication, saw him stand-out when he was involved in play and it is hard to see him losing that suddenly. Given that he is known for simply not missing games it is fair to assume that Simpson will just keep on playing next year and will form a big part of our campaign.

## Matthew Kreuzer - #8

By [Jeremias](#)

### Post-2010

Unfortunately for the Carlton Football Club, the individual, and the league itself, Matthew Kreuzer succumbed to a serious knee injury in round 13 of the 2010 season against the Fremantle Dockers at Etihad Stadium.



Whilst we all love this great game, it is an unfortunate reality that many players have their careers cut cruelly short due to serious injury, and some may have justifiably believed that Matthew was going to be another to add to that list. However, in the years he has been at the club, Matthew has shown that despite his quiet nature, he is incredibly determined and there was little doubt that he would leave no stone unturned to return, bigger and better than ever, to senior football in 2011. The impact such an injury can have not only on the individual, but the team as a whole, cannot be underestimated.

It was clear that when Matthew went down, so too did the intensity of the team. It seemed as though they had lost a leader out on the field. Such is the quality of the player and the individual that despite his age, he sets a magnificent example for the rest of his team mates on how to conduct themselves both on and off the field, and it looked as though for a number of weeks the entire playing group struggled with having to adjust to Matthew not being out on the park by their side.

### 2011

Matthew finally made his much anticipated comeback to senior football in round 12 against the Brisbane Lions. After a number of weeks playing for VFL affiliate the Northern Bullants, Matthew had returned in Navy Blue.

Whilst the entire Carlton community smiled when we saw him run out for the senior side for the first time it was his game the next week against Sydney in round 13, incidentally exactly 1 year to the day that he ruptured his ACL, that made heads turn.

Carlton staff, officials, players and supporters, and indeed the entire AFL fraternity, licked their lips at the potential of the young man as he managed 24 possessions and two 2 goal – an instrumental performance in a resounding victory for the Blues. Whilst I do not necessarily believe statistics are accurate indications of a player's impact on a game, that effort is certainly one to highlight. Whilst Matthew failed to reach those heights in his remaining games, the mere fact that he was out there

and managed to get 12 games behind him will warm the hearts of many and hold him in good stead as he heads into the future.

Unfortunately, Matthew suffered a mysterious foot injury in round 24 which ruled him out of having any impact on Carlton's finals campaign. Whilst he was not back to his best prior to succumbing to this latest setback, there is no doubt that his presence – his skill and incredible efforts – were sorely missed.

### **Outlook for 2012**

It often takes at least two full pre seasons for a player coming off a serious knee injury to get back to anywhere near his best.

All reports suggest that 'Kreuz' is over the injury troubles which ground his 2011 season to an abrupt halt, and he's ready to make a serious assault on season 2012. It is clear that the fitness staff has instructed Kreuzer to slim down significantly from his 2011 frame, as he readies himself to play an integral role in Carlton's quest to lift premiership number 17. His positioning is the topic of much debate amongst Carlton supporters, with many split as to whether he should play in the ruck or up forward. We are spoiled enough to have one of him, and requesting another would be plain greedy. The general consensus is that his best football is played as a ruckman who can have damaging stints resting in the forward line, rather than as a permanent forward.

Whilst the nature of his role will not be resolved until the 2012 season is upon us, two things are for certain – **Matthew Kreuzer is back and we can't wait to see him out there.**

## Kane Lucas - #9

By [HARKER](#)

**1126th** player to represent the Carlton Football Club

### 2011 Stats:

Games: 2

Ave. Disposals: 14

Ave. Marks: 5

Ave. Tackles: 2



### Entrée:

Kane Lucas was touted to have been regarded as high as a no #7 for the CFC in the year of his draft and we were all very happy with what we saw of Kane in 2010.

Some of us even suggested we may well have a future Jimmy Bartel on our hands, as Kane showed great judgement and poise in the games he played.

Unfortunately for Kane though, a severe hamstring injury not only curtailed his momentum in 2010 but played part in derailing his 2011.

### Main:

Kane's year didn't start off all that well against The Tigers in round one, as he seemingly struggled with the legacy of his hamstring injury from the year prior and was duly sent back to the reserves after an ordinary game.

Kane largely played out the year with the Bullants, where a knee injury on top of the ongoing hamstring issue made him look like the shell of the player whose class was on display only 12 months earlier.

Kane's kicking was shallow and wayward and his running style looked completely off-balance.

During one particular Bullants match at Visy, Kane became visibly distressed at his efforts, after a series of less than standard disposals

Being within earshot I heard a trainer consoling and comforting Lucas as he gently guided him back to the centre, after a soft effort resulted in an opponent's goal.

Things did pick up for Kane late in the year though, as he was selected for the last match of the year against The Saints, where he showed glimpses of the player he really is.

Sadly though, as good as Kane's game was, it was not enough for to be considered for the rigours of finals football.

It was a funny old year for Lucas where he played just the two games book-ending the home and away component of the season.

**Dessert:**

Any talks of putting Kane up for trade were dismissed early on and we can now confidently look forward to next year, to witness the player we believed he would become.

We shouldn't put Lucas's situation down to second year blues but rather a frustrating season he had to endure through the course of these injuries.

Let's hope that what didn't kill Lucas in 2011, will make him stronger in 2012, as we should confidently expect him to now become part of our regular best 22.

## Matthew Watson - #10

By [Juddernaut08](#)

### 2011 Stats

- Games Played: 3
- Average Kicks: 9.7
- Average Handballs: 3.0
- Average Disposals: 12.7
- Average Marks: 3
- Average Tackles: 0.7
- Miscellaneous: Watson is yet to give away a free kick at AFL-level.



### A little bit about 'Watto'

Drafted in 2010 with Carlton's first round selection (pick 18), Watson was drafted primarily as a KPD. He quickly became known as the kid with the big head.

Now it may seem strange to start a player review by discussing his head size, but really, this needs to be discussed. To be frank, it is enormous. Some people have speculated that the reason behind it's size is that he has extreme football smarts. Others believe that he was originally an identical twin, but his head absorbed his sibling in the womb.

### Performance

Watson made his debut against the Gold Coast Suns in Round 2. He excited fans with his long, accurate left-footed kicks out of defence, and as a result, Carlton fans shout "woof!" whenever Watson kicks the ball, bringing back fond memories of Ang Christou. It was a good day for the Blues, with Watson playing well, and celebrating his first win. The club is rumored to have used 4000 bottles of Gatorade trying to cover his head back in the rooms.

The other 2 games of 2011, Watson was a bit exposed by Collingwood's gun forwards. Although Watson already has the size for AFL level (195cm, 102kg), he still has excess body fat, and he needs to work on his strength, conditioning and one-on-one body work. Muscle tone and definition will come in time. Watson was also exposed for speed on the lead a few times, and will have to work on his tank, and running ability over the pre-season.

In the formerly known Northern Bullants, Watson had several strong performances, culminating in his Rd 17 call-up to face the Pies a 2nd time.



## **2012 and beyond**

Still, what has excited fans the most is his 60m pin-point arrows that are already such a weapon. Because of his perceived defensive weaknesses, some have speculated that he would be better suited as a CHF.

In my opinion, he should be groomed as a defender, perhaps playing on the 3rd tall at AFL level, whilst being groomed as a CHB in the *Northern Blues*, to perhaps release Lachie Henderson to the forward-line for 2014 and beyond.

Whatever the case, Blues fans and the players alike love this kid. You can be sure that we'll be seeing much more of Matthew Watson's head in 2012.



## Robert Warnock - #11

By [BluesMan](#)

### 2011 Stats:

- Games- 20
- Disposals (avg) – 11.5
- Hit-outs (avg) – 29.6
- Marks (avg) – 2.1
- Tackles (avg)- 2.55
- Goals – 4



### 2011: The build up

Robbie was a player who promised a solid ruck position who would take most of the duties after coming across from Fremantle in 2008. Injury, lack of fitness and satisfactory form made it hard for him to hit the 22 in previous years, but eventually managed 12 games in 2010. 2011 was to be the year that Warnock stood up and was counted for. His prospects blossomed when the demise of another ruck teammate Matt Kreuzer broke down with injury opening the door for the big “Nocker” to start the season for himself. So with more opportunity and an uninterrupted pre-season Robbie looked set for a big year.

### The Season of 2011

Robbie start the season like a house on fire with a 17 touch, 30 hit-out and most importantly 6 tackle game against the Tigers. Although he wasn't up against much competition his build stood up on the first day of the year which enlightened many. His first part of the season was rolling smoothly until he hit the spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

Round 9 saw the blues lose to the Cats in an epic Friday night clash at Etihad. Robbie was to take a free kick roughly 15m from goal on a 45' angle. His kick, which was in the dying seconds missed, which would have won the game for the Blues, made it 9 in a row for the Cats, and fans were fuming. In a bizarre twist it was later reported he suffered concussion to earn the free kick, and spent the night in hospital. He didn't regain his spot till round 14- the Eagles clash. He was thrown into the ruck with teammate Kreuzer, against the strength of Cox and Naitanui. He managed 24 hit-outs but didn't feature much in the game that turned the Carlton season.

He picked up his game in round 15 where he once again dominated the Richmond rucks with a season highs of 40 hit-out 18 touches and 4 marks (equal with other rounds). Robbie is generally criticized for his lack of marking ability which is outlined with his best of 4 in one match for the year. The lack of presence around the ground for the big man was the result and fans were still in debate to whether it should be him or Hampson to be partnered with Kruezer in the ruck, until Hampson was struck with injury in round 13.

But as the blues hit the finals, Kreuzer was struck down with injury as well; leaving Robbie to ruck by himself, which he revelled in and in the Elimination final game against the Bombers, he was outstanding as he dominated Hille and Ryder. This lifted his credentials to ensuring him as our number 1.

**For the Future**

Robbie will need to step it up once again in 2012, as his tank grows which is directly proportional to his confidence. He needs to stamp himself on more games, and take more marks around the ground. His tap work is top notch, but will need to provide a service up forward for a rest in stead of the bench.

## Mitch Robinson - #12

By [blues4flag](#)

### Achievements

7th in the Carlton best and fairest

9 votes in the Brownlow Medal

Spirit of Carlton Encouragement Award

Blues Coterie “Fierce Award”

### Statistics (at Carlton)

5th for kicks

5th for handballs

4th for tackles

3rd for contested possessions

5th for uncontested possessions

3rd for clearances



Mitch Robinson has been one of the big improvers of 2011. While he's always played with a reckless abandon and has had genuine claims to being the game's most courageous player since his very first game back in 2009, he's also suffered from inconsistency and less than polished disposal. Many doubted he could ever transition from a flanker into a more substantial role in the midfield, due to a perceived lack of footy smarts.

This season however, a physique more suited to his style of play has seen him move from half forward to a more permanent role in the midfield, where his bash and crash football has been a highlight of the season. He showed he has the nous and ability to be a genuine in and under midfielder, while his big frame and kamikaze approach makes him a more than competent contested mark.

Few players elicit the same response from the crowd that Robinson does. His unconditional and often reckless attack on the footy is a sight to behold, throwing himself onto the Sherrin akin to a pauper onto a dollar coin, anyone unfortunate enough to be between him and the ball be damned. He's been known to get a few heavy hits to the head but his ability to take a blow, dust himself off and just keep going would put most professional boxers to shame.

He's also had roles up forward, most notably his game against Dustin Fletcher in the elimination final, where he completely negated the wily veteran whilst having an impact himself. Robinson's fiery determination and will to compete held him in good stead – while many might be less than enthused about being asked to do a shutdown role, Robinson met it with the same fervour that he seems to bring to every aspect of his life.

A representative of the 2011 Australian squad to take on the Irish, Robinson played with his characteristic enthusiasm, while most of his teammates failed to fire a shot. Even before the ball had been bounced, Mitch found himself in an altercation with Carlton teammate and assumedly good friend, Zach Tuohy. Tuohy wouldn't be the only Irishman to feel the wrath of his intense, beady eyes. At one instance, Robinson and a poor Irish fellow who'd never laid eyes on the red headed inferno attacked the same footy. Robinson went in lower and harder, leaving his Irish counterpart on the ground while he jumped to his feet and went on his way.

Of course, the man does have his flaws. He's still prone to the odd quiet game, however that's become a far more infrequent occurrence, particularly as the year went on. His disposal is improved though at times he does throw it on the boot haphazardly when under pressure. While he has no issue finding the ball to have a shot on goal, his accuracy was an issue this year. Last year he managed 14 goals 4, converting at an excellent 77%. This year, despite having significantly more shots on goal, he only managed 10 goals 21 behinds, converting at a dismal 32%. The drop off in accuracy is bizarre, however if he can turn that around to 21 goals 10 behinds next season, it'll be an excellent return for a midfielder resting forward.

### **The Future**

Like Chris Yarran, he's a young kid having just completed his third season of football, with much improvement ahead of him. His 2011 season has made believers of his critics amongst Carlton supporters, proving that he's more than capable of playing a key role in the side for years to come, even if some opposition supporters still scoff at his name.

## Chris Yarran - #13

By [Squida25](#)

### Key Statistics

- **Games** – 23
- **Disposals (ave)** - 17.8
- **Disposal Efficiency** - 76%
- **Marks (ave)** - 3.4
- **Tackles (ave)** - 3.3
- **Goals** – 8
- **Running Bounces** – 122  
(#1 in AFL)



### Expectations for 2011

After a 19 goal season playing in the forward line in 2010 it may would have been fair to have expected more of the same with some brief stints in the midfield as Yarran's fitness base improved. However this was not to be as Brett Ratten surprisingly moved Yarran to the half back line where he would be given a license to run and carry the ball.

### Overall performance

Chris Yarran absolutely dazzled right from the outset in the NAB Cup playing from the half back line, showing everyone what he's capable of with blistering runs through the middle of the ground whilst showing poise and finesse in the backline with his clean disposal.

After being essentially tagged out of the contest in Carlton's round 1 game against Richmond he silenced the critics with solid performances in the following weeks and throughout the rest of the season, constantly providing highlight after highlight along the way. Not many players have the ability to break lines like Yarran through defence and to top it off Yarran occasionally ran the ball 30-40 metres straight out of defence from the kick off!

Two games stand out for Yarran above all others in 2011. Firstly in round 7 against St Kilda Yarran was instrumental in sweeping up loose balls in defence and rebounding effectively out of defense, he notched up a career high 27 disposals in Carlton's 3 point win. His other stand out game came in round 19 against North Melbourne where he managed to carve up the oppositions forward line and midfield on multiple occasions burning off anyone who gave chase, he equalled his career best 27 disposals in this performance.

Along with these best games from Yarran you could almost pick out a highlight from every game this year featuring Chris Yarran, some that come to mind straight away are his one handed pick up in defence at speed against Collingwood (round 3), his blistering run where he completed a series

of 1-2 passes with numerous team mates against Essendon (round 4), his sidestep goal against Port Adelaide (round 11), burning off Lewis Jetta to kick a goal (round 13), chasing down Jack Watts and forcing a stoppage (round 20), beating 2 Fremantle opponents in defence in a 2 on 1 contest and winning the ball (round 21) and many many *many* more.

Despite his inexperience playing in defence (and playing at the AFL in general) he's already begun to draw comparisons with some of the competitions best running defenders such as 2011 All Australians Corey Enright & Leon Davis, some even likening him to a young Andrew McLeod. Hopefully it is a given that the more he plays and the more he gains experience will result in improvement to Yarran personally and benefit Carlton.

### **Future Expectations**

Whilst being spectacular for the most part when he had the ball in his hand the most exciting aspect about Chris Yarran is the fact that he's still only 20 and 2011 was only his third year.

One of the two main points that Yarran can vastly improve on in the future will be his defensive work. Occasionally Yarran was dragged back to the goal square by his opponent in an attempt to curb his run out of defence and try exploit his weaker defensive traits, hopefully in the future Yarran will be equipped to counter these sorts of moves.

The other main point of improvement is Yarran's fitness level, while it was greatly improved in 2011 it would be great to see an even greater improvement in the years to come. With greater fitness levels Yarran would have the ability to burn off opponents for 4 quarters and perhaps become a bit more versatile in being able to move into the midfield at times if required.

One of the most exciting things is what Yarran will be capable of as he gains more experience and continually learns how to read the play better and thus utilizing his weapons (speed, finesse) to their maximum potential. For example on numerous occasions in 2011 Yarran would run himself into trouble however as he continues to learn he'll be able to summarize situations better and take the best option whether that be honouring a lead or passing into space. Consequentially as his read on the play will improve his defensive game will improve and it would be exciting to see him use his speed to chop off passes and effect spoils.

The potential Chris Yarran has shown in 2011 has been incredible and if he can continually improve he'll be a daunting prospect for any opposition and hopefully a key component in Carlton's bid at premiership success.



## Brock McLean - #14

By [HARKER](#)

**1124th player to represent the CFC**

### Season 2011 Statistics:

Games Played..... 4  
Ave. Kicks..... 5.25  
Ave. Handballs..... 9.75  
Ave. Goals..... 0.25  
Ave. Tackles..... 5.75



### Odd Fact:

McLean got his first run in the seniors this year in round 9 against Geelong and was dropped after the following game, against his old team in Melbourne. He was then brought back for the round 19 match against North and then dropped after the following match against Melbourne, again.

### The Lead-up:

A lot has been said about Brock and his recruitment by the CFC and we can expect a lot more to be said before his tenure is over.

His 2010 pre-season was terrific and all indications were that a good call had been made, as McLean looked to be the hard body that would finally take some heat off Judd, in heavy traffic.

After an early injury that year, McLean's form also tapered off and questions were starting to be raised.

The hope was that Brock would get his body right, in order to take on the next year at full tilt.

### Season 2011:

Brock started the season with the Bullants and the form was quite good, giving rise to the probability at resuming with the seniors soon enough.

Making life a little more difficult for McLean though, was the form of a rookie in Ed Curnow, whose impact at senior level was nothing short of amazing in the first 6 rounds of the year, until a shoulder injury was sustained in round 7.

McLean's opportunity came soon after but that was short lived with only two matches played before he was once again sent back to seconds' football.



Brock positioned himself quite well at centre contests and had no problems getting his hands to the ball, but that sharpness in execution was just not there, as he often had to follow up in order to clean his own mess.

It's possible to cite McLean's best game as the round 20 match against Melbourne, but even that was not good enough to keep him wearing the Navy Blue the following week.

All in all, a very frustrating and disappointing season for Brock, the CFC and for the supporters that expected more than what has been achieved, to date.

**The future:**

Hard to say for sure, but it isn't looking great for Brock.

Unless there were injuries or body issues there that restricted him from playing at his full level, the CFC may be forced to cut their losses.

Brock is a proud man and will not lie down easily, but it may be fair to say that he truly has a lot to go right for him, in order to cement himself a future with the CFC.

## Jeremy Laidler - #15

By [HARKER](#)

### Player 1131 to represent the CFC

D.O.B. 5.07.1989

Height: 189cm

Weight: 88kg

### 2011 Stats:

Games played	19
Ave. Kicks	10.5
Ave. H'Balls	5.5
Ave. Marks	5.5
Ave. Tackles	5.7

### Brief History:

Jeremy was traded from the Geelong FC in 2010 where he had played only 2 games for the senior club and 50 games for their VFL club.

He would have been best described as a versatile, hardworking, left-footed back-man that was geared towards being an eventual replacement for an ageing but ever durable Darren Milburn: Nothing too flash, but just a solid and reliable type.

It did then come as somewhat of a surprise through last year's trade week, where we bargained into attaining Jeremy along with selection #41, for our selections #36 & #53.

Most of the Carlton faithful had not seen too much of Laidler, so it was a little bit hard to gauge as to the value of this trade.

Fortunately though, it didn't take too long to find out just what a recruiting master stroke this was to be.

Jeremy's pre-season was impressive, but a certain Mr. Duigan was getting all the accolades for his efforts throughout that period.

### Season 2011:

Jeremy made his senior debut for his new club in the first game of 2011, against Richmond on a fine Thursday night at the MCG. In front of 60,000 fans, the Blues accounted for the Tigers by 20 points, and Laidler's reborn career was up and running.

Physically strong and good in the air, Jeremy was consistently effective throughout the first 9 rounds of the year, highlighted by his first career goal in Carlton's draw against Essendon in Round



4, and an outstanding game against his former club in Round 9, where he collected 21 possessions and took 6 marks in Carlton's narrow loss to the unbeaten Cats.

Then however, a strained medial ligament in his left knee, suffered early in The Blues Round 10 victory over Melbourne, brought an unfortunate halt to his progress.

Thankfully, he was back patrolling across half-back for the Blues in Round 15 against Richmond, working in tandem with his fellow recruit Nick Duigan as the pair continued to win the admiration of Carlton fans for their old-style guts and determination.

Then in September, Jeremy capped off his first season at Princes Park as one of Carlton's best in an agonisingly-close Semi-Final loss to The Eagles. Very little more could have been asked of him in his first 19 matches, and he seems set for a long and successful career.

### **Season Summary:**

As the season progressed, Jeremy showed an increasing amount of confidence in his own abilities and an understanding with his fellow back-men.

There were many games that the back-line performed well above all expectations, when our staple tall backs were not available for one reason or another, that very much being a result of having Laidler and Duigan picking up the slack and playing roles earmarked for much taller players.

### **Future:**

Jeremy clearly has a long future with the Carlton Football Club and has already shown himself to be a leader amongst men.

With 10 good years still left in him, the CFC will look back on Laidler's acquisition with great fondness and probably one of the better ones in its history.

I do though have the feeling that Laidler will make peoples most underrated player lists for some time to come.

That can't be a bad thing though, can it?

## Andrew Collins - #16

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A Little bit about Andrew

Andrew Collins arrived at Carlton in 2011 after a trade with Richmond that saw Shaun Grigg join the Tigers. Andrew stands at 187cms tall and weighs around 80kgs. He calls himself a midfielder who can go up forward and try and kick a goal or take a mark. He had an injury interrupted pre-season, but was fit enough by the time round one came along.



### Season 2011

Andrew debuted for the Northern Bullants in round one against the Bendigo Bombers. He played a great game and was named in the best. Official stats showed that he finished with 33 disposals & 11 marks. Carlton's match committee was impressed with his game and he was called up to make his Carlton debut in Round three. He became the 1,333rd player to represent the Carlton Football club in the AFL when he ran out against the Pies. He was named as the substitute and came on during the third quarter. He made an impact and finished the game with 9 disposals, 7 marks, 1 tackle and 1 behind. Andrew played the next week against the Bombers. He matched up on Kyle Hardingham and finished with 9 disposals, 4 marks, 4 tackles and 2 behinds.

He returned to the Bullants the week after and played a good game. He hurt his shoulder and was out for a month. He returned to the Bullants in late may and played a great game against the Box Hill Hawks, kicking three goals.

In early June it was decided that he would undergo surgery on his injured left shoulder. His injury had restricted his pre-season program and the early part of the season, so surgery was the best option. The surgery meant that he would miss the remainder of the 2011 season.

### Where to from here?

Andrew made a good start to his career at Carlton. His shoulder injury meant he could not play to his full potential. Fans didn't really get a chance to see Andrew at his absolute best. Andrew had surgery on his shoulder early on in the season, which means he has the time to recover and have a chance at completing a full pre-season. This will give Andrew the best chance at earning his place in the senior side in 2012 and showing the Carlton faithful what he can do. He works really hard and gives 110%. I can't wait to see him really shine in the future.

May your career be long and successful at the Navy Blues Andrew.

## Setanta O'hAilpin - #17

By [The Old Dark Navy's](#)

### Stats

**2011 Games 8, Career 80**

**2011 Goals 11, Career 67**

**2011 Average Disposals – 13**

**2011 Average Marks – 4**

**Career Brownlow Votes – 2**



### 2011 Best games

**Rd 10** v Melbourne 14 possessions, 5 marks, 3 goals, 8 hitouts

**Rd 24** v St Kilda 11 disposals, 6 marks, 4 goals, 6 hitouts

**Rd 7** v St Kilda 15 disposals, 8 marks, 1 goal, 10 hitouts

**Quirky Career Stat** - Kicked a goal on debut with his first and only kick of the 2005 season.

**Quirky 2011 Stat** - Kicked his only career finals goal, that being the heart-in-the-mouth play-on-and-snap in the goal square that started Carlton's first quarter comeback in the Elimination Final against Essendon.

### Introduction

From the outset I have had to part ways from our standard season review format and take a look at O'hAilpin from a career perspective as well, due to his unfortunate delisting at the end of 2011. The big guy deserves no less.

Affectionately nicknamed 'Carlos' by fans (looking to avoid tripping over their own tongues pronouncing his real name), after the Latin guitar maestro Carlos Santana, the 199cm Australian born Irish/Fijian has always been somewhat of a cult hero at Carlton. As a 20 year old hurler from Cork, he was taken as an International Rookie in 2003 and endeared himself to Blues supporters right away, whether in actuality or through urban myth, by asking his teammates 'When does the fookin' hitting start?'

### Career

He was elevated to the Carlton senior list in 2004, but was struck down by injury at the wrong time and had to wait until 2005 before playing his debut match. Setanta was elevated to the Carlton senior list in his own right in 2006 and started out playing in defence.

His onfield passion soon became evident including one match where he tried to ruffle Essendon spearhead Matthew Lloyd. Aside from his passion, Setanta also became known for his predictability in being unpredictable. Not blessed with a natural feel for the game, it was commonplace to see him play on after a mark while under pressure or other similarly baffling decisions. This was often counterbalanced by acts of athletic brilliance that summed up the enigma that was Setanta O'hAilpin.

After that original stint in defence, O'hAilpin was able to demonstrate his utility value as he became a back up ruckman and a forward as the occasion called for it. This utility value saw Setanta play all 22 games for the Blues in the 2007 season.

During this time Setanta's brother Aisake had joined the club, he too taken as a rookie for the 2005 season. Alas, after four seasons Aisake failed to play a senior game and was delisted.

Setanta infamously had an altercation with teammate Cameron Cloke in a 2009 intra-club match, in which blows were landed and a prone Cloke suffered the indignity of copping a kick where he sits from the big Irishman, an act the Carlton Football Club themselves were to repeat on the hapless Cloke come list lodgement time at the end of that season. Setanta was suspended by the AFL for four weeks over the incident, a curious decision in that the incident was between teammates in an intra club match, but one largely backed by shocked supporters and football club officials.

In 2010 Setanta played what was probably his best game in the AFL, picking up 18 disposals and 5 goals against eventual premier Collingwood.

### **2011 Season**

In 2011 Setanta played his first game for the season in Round 6 against Sydney and played 5 of 6 matches during this period, stringing together some of his better games to that point in his career.

However like most of his career when either form or his body let him down, he endured another lengthy spell out of the side before, ironically, injury concerns over others saw him return to the side in time for the finals.

Setanta played his first final and kicked his first finals goal in the Elimination Final against Essendon. But in true Setanta style it was a goal that left supporters gasping as he took a mark and played on only a few metres out from goal with a defender lunging, searching for a touch.

### **Future**

Despite providing a valuable focal point up forward during the last few games of the 2011 season, and being a solid depth player in a side not blessed with established tallers, Carlton's Irish experiment that commenced all the way back in 2003, was finally ended as list places in an ever improving side were at a premium, and O'hAilpin's stop start career and his age in comparison to other potential delistees counted against him.

It is with a heavy heart, but with 80 games of bewildering, exhilarating, and definitely appreciative memories, that we bid a fond to the guernsey kissing, fist pumping, temper flaring, always-had-time-for-the-fans, cult hero, Setanta O'hAilpin. The place just won't seem the same for a while.

*Setanta was selected by GWS in the 2011 National Draft. Keep an eye on the Giants debut season in 2012 to see a continuation of the Irish experiment. Good luck Carlos.*



## Paul Bower - #18

By [HARKER](#)

**Draft history:** 2005 NAB AFL Draft  
2nd round selection (Carlton) No.  
20 overall.

**Player 1096** to represent the CFC

### Stats 2011

**Games:** 3  
**Kicks:** 4.3  
**Handballs:** 2.3  
**Marks:** 2.7



### Season 2011

Where do you start with Paulie for this year?

The hope was for Bower to be able to put his 2010 injury riddled year behind him and to look forward to getting back to the 2009 form that had him being touted as a possible AA defender. Instead it just went from bad to worse, as ongoing soft tissue injuries stifled any chance of him having the fitness base to make an impact in 2011.

The concerns for these injuries were such that Bower was reportedly sent to the AIS mid-season, in an attempt to amend his running gait to take strain off his delicate quads.

Bower spent most of the 2011 season playing for the Bullants where he did seem at times to be just going through the motions rather than throwing himself around with the intent of making his way back into the seniors.

That's not to say he didn't show any form at all, but rather his efforts were somewhere around the 80% mark that indicated he was in preservation mode, just slowly building up to full fitness.

Bower was though given three games through the course of the year, but given just limited game time, it was evident that he was only plugging gaps whilst others were injured.

Bowers last few games with the Bullants showed him getting back to some freedom with his body and glimpses were there of the 2009 model we knew and loved.

**The future.**

Bower was up for trade and a 30 something pick, may have well had him moving camp. Fortunately though that did not eventuate and Bower will be with the CFC for 2012 at the very least.

There's no hiding the fact that next year is do or die for Paulie, as only a one year contract was on offer, but given his recent efforts and commitment there is every reason to feel confident for that contract to be extended, come this time next year.

Bower's recent efforts in Qatar earned him the plaudits of fellow Carlton players, who adjudged him the elite trainer at the camp.

That makes for a huge endorsement from the playing group that clearly see Bower as being an important part of the team.

It's also a huge endorsement for the man himself, to take up the challenge even at this early stage as a big pre-season now beckons.

Only injury will hold Bower back from giving us many reasons to be thankful we didn't lose him.

**In his own words:**

"I'm really happy to be at the Club for another year, and look forward to repaying the faith the club has shown me," he said.

"I'm going into this pre-season injury free for the first time in a while and feel really good with the way I'm training. I'm looking forward to the season ahead."

## Eddie Betts - #19

By [Judderson](#)

### Key stats for Eddie

50 goals, 22 behinds for the season  
(average of over 2 goals per game,  
69% efficiency)

Second in the Blues' goal kicking

84 tackles

39 marks inside 50

26 goal assists, second behind Chris  
Judd

Top 10 at Carlton for contested possessions



### Expectations and Pre-Season

Ever since his debut back in 2005, Eddie's stats- particularly his goal kicking- had been increasing at a steady rate every year. Naturally, the expectation of Eddie was that he would improve on his 42 goals which he kicked in 2010, especially considering the team was expected to improve in 2011. A fairly uninterrupted pre-season meant Eddie had basically no excuses heading into his seventh season, which proved to be not only his team's most successful in that time, but also his.

After a dominant middle part of the 2010 season, where at one stage he had kicked 14 goals in the space of 3 games, Eddie's form dropped off a little bit as the season wore on. Many believed it was the fact that he had just signed a new multi-year deal to stay with the Blues, while opposition supporters were more than happy to raise his inconsistency. Nonetheless, Eddie had some doubters heading into the 2011 season, and rightfully so, with both his form and goal-kicking conversion in question.

With his buddy Chris Yarran heading to the half-back line, Andrew Walker moving to the forward line and the likes of Waite and Henderson missing from the 2010 forward line at various stages, Betts and his other buddy Jeffy Garlett found themselves in different surroundings, but were still expected to be as potent as ever if the Blues were to make a real challenge in September.

### 2011 Season

The man with the baggiest shorts in football started the 2011 season in a blaze of glory, booting 3 first-half goals against Richmond in the Thursday night season opener, two of those being trademark snaps. The doubts over his goal-kicking resurfaced in the last quarter, however, as he kicked three behinds from which were all gettable chances. The next week, Eddie kicked 2 goals in the utter obliteration of the Gold Coast in what was essentially a practice run, yet was relatively quiet for the duration of the game. Queries over Eddie's form were then raised after his

disappointing performance against the reigning premier and arch enemy Collingwood, with his ability to perform in big games being questioned, kicking a junk time goal when the game was truly done and dusted.

Eddie did himself no favours the next week, kicking a measly two behinds in the heart-wrenching draw against Essendon. As always with Carlton fans, there were calls for Eddie's head, yet Ratten and the match committee decided to stick by him for a little while longer. It looked as though his yips were behind him, kicking a goal in the first 30 seconds against Adelaide, making a statement, yet he was quiet for the remainder of that match. Betts was believed to be on his last chance, and he came out with a bang the next week against Sydney in Round 6. Eddie kicked the first goal, before setting up Waite's, yet the turning point of Eddie's year, as well as the match, were his third quarter heroics, kicking 3 goals in a matter of minutes on a hapless Nick Smith.

From this point onwards, Eddie's year turned on its head and he had some of the best games of his flashy career, including hauls of 4, 5, 6 and 8 goals as the year progressed. As always with small forwards, there were some games where Eddie was quieter than others, but he loomed ever dangerously and provided some exquisite moments for the Blues' 2011 highlight reel, with countless pressure acts, overhead marks which are very uncommon for small forwards, and, of course, amazing goals, including one which was nominated for goal of the year in the Round 18 game against Essendon, which was an amazing game in its own right (but more on that later).

## **2012 Expectations**

Since the culmination of a successful 2011 season, Eddie has gone over to Qatar with some of his other teammates to make use of the astonishing facilities at the ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence. As seen by Collingwood's trips to Arizona, high performance training has been extremely beneficial for all those who partook in it, so hopefully Eddie, along with the other boys, can reap the rewards from what is undeniably a gruelling experience. It will hopefully result in Eddie being at the best physical capabilities of his career to date, which will more than likely be extremely beneficial next year, especially when the season is drawing to a close and the team with the best aerobic capacity often goes the furthest.

Along with this training camp, the Blues are expected to improve in almost every facet of the game next year through natural improvement to their younger players. Resultantly, Eddie will have a higher amount of quality players by his side in 2012, meaning more delivery and, hopefully, more goals. With the Blues predicted to be a force next year, Eddie has to live up to the high standards which he has set himself in the past 7 years, and continue improving as he has since day one. While he did kick 50 goals this year, a slow start and some quiet games prevented him from scoring even more, and in 2012, it is perfectly justifiable to think that Eddie can and will improve on his impressive 2011 season. If Eddie gets off to a perfect start in 2012, he will play his 150th game against GWS in Round 6, which could be even more special for Eddie if Chris Yarran misses one game at the start of the season, which would mean it would also be his 50th game.

## Best game for 2011

The 2011 season, as previously mentioned, contained some of Eddie's best games in the Navy Blue, such as the 4 goal game against Sydney in Round 6, a 4 goal Elimination Final in the romping of Essendon, and a second best 6 goal haul against Fremantle at Paterson's Stadium. However, as Eddie himself would probably admit himself, his personal best game of both the year and his career came in Round 18 against Essendon when the Blues won by 12 goals on a chilly Saturday night. While the night will go down in history as the night that Andrew Walker won the real Mark of the Year and Chris Judd polled yet another three votes, Eddie had an amazing night on the MCG, booting 8 goals.

After starting like a house on fire, booting 3 goals in the opening quarter including the first goal of the game, Eddie was somewhat quieter in the second quarter before he lifted in the third quarter just like the rest of the Blues team. While Eddie booted two for the quarter the pressure of the Blues was up a fair amount compared to the previous quarter and Eddie was influential in this. Also, he kicked a goal to remember in the third term, ducking, weaving and sidestepping two ultimately fooled Essendon players, Eddie was tucked in on the left goal post but calmly slotted it through with a right foot snap which sent a wave of delirium through the Blues faithful.

Eddie kicked another 2 in the last quarter to bring his tally up to 8 for the night and a personal best (previously being 5), as chants of "EDDIE, EDDIE" rose around the 'G. Eddie had the chance to mark and kick his ninth with seconds remaining, but he dropped the mark, and was forced to settle for eight goals straight, the first 8 goal haul at Carlton without Brendan Fevola.



## Rhys O’Keeffe - #20

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A little bit about Rhys

Rhys O’Keeffe arrived at the Blues in 2009 as a running half-back who was pick 65 in the 2008 draft.

He has struggled with injury throughout his short career at the Blues and only managed a handful of games in 2009 before his first injury struck. He had Osteitis Pubis, which meant the end of his first season.



Rhys had complications after his surgery, problems with his hamstrings and a stress fracture in his lower lumbar spine and therefore only managed to play 2 games for the Bullants. At the end of 2010 after two injury-riddled years at Carlton on the senior list, his contract had expired and many thought he would be delisted, but the Blues had seen enough to know that he was worth keeping and decided to move O’Keeffe from the senior list to the rookie list. The move took the pressure off Rhys and allowed him to work on getting his body right without having added stress.

### Season 2011 for Rhys

Rhys finally got his body back to full fitness which allowed him to train well and complete a strong pre-season. It was beginning to look like the third time lucky. He’s hard at the contest and a long and accurate kick. His booming left kick is a dangerous weapon and we were all eager to see ‘ROK’ in action. Rhys contributed strongly in the first six games of the season and managed three goals. He took two weeks off before returning against Box Hill in what was a quieter game for him. His next three weeks were pretty good. He got a lot of the ball, but also struggled at times to find space to use the lethal left foot of his.

During the first quarter of the Geelong game down at Skilled stadium Rhys left the field early with what looked like a hip injury but after a nervous wait he returned to the field and played out the match. We witnessed a strong third quarter from Rhys in which we saw a great goal. He broke away from a pack before running inside fifty and getting it straight through the middle. The last quarter saw him kick a nice goal on a tight angle. . He was hard at it all day and played one of his best games for the Ants and was beginning to justify the club’s faith.

A long term injury to Andrew Collins saw Rhys elevated to the senior list and named on the extended bench for Carlton for the West Coast game in round 14. He was selected in the final squad and Sunday June 26th was a day the fans thought would never happen. Rhys became the 1135th Carlton player to debut. He began as the sub and came on during the second quarter after an injury to Michael Jamison. Rhys made it through unscathed and finished with 8 disposals.

Rhys returned to the Bullants the next week and played strongly. During the Ants bye weekend we saw a twitter post from DocSherrin which stated that it looked like Rhys' career was over as he had hurt his back again. In what was a devastating blow for fans, we were left wondering if it would all be over just a month after his AFL debut. The reports turned out to be false and Rhys played on, maintaining his consistency.

Rhys finished the year strongly by working hard and playing some great shut down roles. He finished 2011 with a games total of 15. His damaging disposal and his strong decision making will hold him in good stead for the future.

### **Where to From Here?**

Rhys came along in leaps and bounds in 2011. His development over the past 12 months has given the fans a reason to smile. We are hopeful that his injury-riddled days are behind him and he can have another strong pre-season and put his hand up for a spot in the senior side. After the first two years, which were hell for Rhys, he put his head down and continued to work hard when many others would have given their dream of playing AFL football away.

He delighted the coaches with his application and professionalism and I for one am extremely excited about Rhys' future.

May 2012 be your strongest year yet Rhys.



## Mark Austin - #21

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A Little bit about Mark

Mark was selected in the 2006 AFL Draft in the third round by Carlton (pick 35 overall). He is a school friend and Glenelg team mate of Bryce Gibbs selected at number one in the same draft. Mark stands at 193cms and weighs around 95kgs. He is an athletic defender.



Mark was the 1107th player to appear for Carlton when he debuted in 2007. He played 14 AFL games between 2007 and 2009 and did not play a senior game last year.

### Season 2011 for Mark

Mark didn't have an exceptional start to season 2011. His round one match was fairly quiet. His 2nd half was much stronger than his first half. Mark injured his arm in round 2 but played out the game. He managed to kick one goal, but couldn't have an impact on the game because his arm was definitely affecting him.

Mark didn't play again until round 9. He played a really quiet game down back but improved slightly when he was moved forward. In round 10 Mark began to find some form. He played up forward, presented well and finished with 3 goals. In round 12 Mark played a strong game and was named in the bests. This form saw him elevated into the senior squad to play against in Carlton's round 14 match against West Coast. He struggled to find his way in to the game and finished with only 8 disposals. He returned to the VFL the next week.

Mark played a good game and was named in the bests again. He struggled to find consistent form over the next month.

Once finals time came around something changed in Mark, he began to find more of the ball and was using it more effectively. His best game for the year came in the last game of the season, which was the prelim final against Port Melbourne. Mark was grabbing hold of everything. He was leading really well and knew when and where to run. He finished with 2 goals in what was a really impressive game.

### **Where to from here?**

After a tough 5 years Carlton chose not to renew Mark's contract and he was delisted. There is no denying that his career was made more difficult due to a combination of injury and bad luck. Over time Austin was pushed down the list of preferred to defenders due to the improvement in Thornton and Jamison and the recruiting of Duigan, Laidler and Henderson. Mark managed just 15 games in 5 years.

Mark was given permission to train with the Western Bulldogs in mid November and was picked up by the Dogs in the Rookie Draft.

All the best in the future Mark.

## Shaun Hampson - #22

By [ThePine](#)

### 2011 Expectations

With Kruezer out for the first half of the season and Jacobs leaving for Adelaide, Hampson was in line for an automatic selection in the ruck partnering with Warnock.

Hampson spent most of 2010 as the fourth ruck option with playing just 8 games and his season ending when being dropped for the final against Sydney.

Many were hoping Hampson would make strides in his development with the game time he was now afforded. Due to his size he was seen as a possible tall forward option while rotating through the ruck.

### Stats

Games 9 (Career 44)

2011 Season Avg		(High)
Hitouts	21	(36)
Disposals	8	(13)
Marks	2.3	(5)
Goals	0.3	(1)

### Season

2011 started with a big clunk from Hampson 20 metres out against Richmond in round 1. The only problem is he failed to convert (3.5 for the season) though later in the game he did redeem himself with a last quarter goal in a come from behind victory. His 3 shots on goal and 5 marks would sadly be his season high for both statistics.

Hampson opening rounds of the season were solid as the second ruckman but he was dropped in round 6 as a late change for the wet conditions with O'halphin preferred. This then saw him play 3 weeks in the VFL and showing enough form to be reselected for round 10 when Warnock was ruled out with concussion as a result of the round 9 Geelong game.

The promotion to the seniors in round 10 and the first ruck position seemed to spark Hampson's best form for Carlton. Although his opponents were a Jamar-less Melbourne and an ageing Brogan, Hampson was dominant in the ruck with 34 and 36 hitouts. He also picked up more



disposals around the ground with 12 and a season high of 13. The return of Kruezer in round 12 saw his stats dropped slightly as he shared the duties but his form when on the ball was great.

Unfortunately just as Hampson looked to be turning the corner it all came to an end in round 13 against Sydney where he sustained a knee injury which would see him not return to the senior side for the remainder of the season. However he did show some late form in the VFL with 6 goals in a final for the Bullants.

## **2012**

With 2 seasons in a row of less than 10 games, Hampson would be hoping for an injury free 2012.

Brett Ratten has said he will be training with the forward group to hopefully improve his work up the ground and may be groomed as a full time option which he may need to get a regular game in the seniors with a fully fit Warnock and Kruezer ahead of him in the pecking order.

2011 is the season that could have been but never was. Here is hoping 2012 fares better.

## Lachie Henderson - #23

By [Judderson](#)

### Season stats

Games played: 15  
Disposals: 173 (ave.11.5)  
Kicks: 103 (ave 6.9)  
Handballs: 70 (ave 4.7)  
Marks: 70 (ave 4.7)  
Tackles: 34 (ave 2.3)



### 2010

Lachie Henderson had a great end to the 2010 season, kicking 10 goals in his last 4 games. He could've proven to be the difference in the Elimination Final against Sydney if it weren't for some dropped marks, which was to be a major focus of Lachie's in the pre-season.

When the Blues began pre-season training, Hendo was one if not the best on the track pre-Christmas, having Carlton supporters very excited about Henderson's 2011 at Centre Half Forward: a position which Carlton needed to be filled immediately if they were to push for the glorious number 17.

However, disaster struck for Lachie as a hip injury brought his promising preparation to a halt. As his teammates partook in a gruelling pre-season which many described as their toughest but ultimately their most rewarding, Hendo was forced to watch from the sidelines in rehabilitation. Slowly but surely Hendo began to make his way back onto the track but was forced to start off the 2011 season playing with the Northern Bullants.

### 2012

Lachie earned a recall for the Round 4 blockbuster against Essendon, but he was clearly underdone, and had only 3 touches, before being subbed off to the Bronx cheers from Blues "fans". Lachie was once again dropped back to the reserves to find some form and fitness. After kicking 9 goals in 3 weeks and an injury to Jarrad Waite, the door opened for Hendo, who was recalled to the side for the Round 12 game against his former side Brisbane.

After starting well early, Hendo drifted out of the game but did some nice things and kicked a goal, and against Sydney in Round 13 also, having a very promising third term, but being quiet for the majority of the contest. Hendo started at Centre Half Forward against West Coast in Round 14, but was bereft of opportunities in a team which was dominated in the midfield and practically all over the ground.

However, what proved to be a blessing in disguise, in-form full back Michael Jamison went down with an injury in the first quarter, as Hendo was forced back onto Josh Kennedy, who was kept goalless in the second half by Lachie. With Jamo ruled out for 8 weeks, Henderson found himself as the permanent Full Back, doing jobs on the likes of Jack and Nick Riewoldt, Barry Hall, Travis Cloke, Michael Hurley, Drew Petrie, Lance Franklin and Kennedy. Hendo was respectable against these opponents in the early going and grew in the role as the season progressed, keeping both Riewoldt and Hurley goalless in Round 24 and the Elimination Final respectively.

Hendo wasn't merely a stopper, however, providing run out of the backline and at times was a link-up man and initiated attacking plays. This was at its most obvious against Drew Petrie in Round 19, where he had Petrie for pace all night and was one of the Blues' best, keeping the in-form Petrie to just two goals. Hendo was dubbed as too slow and too weak by Carlton supporters to be a Centre Half Forward, but he has gained confidence in himself ever since being swung back, and has on multiple occasions proven too quick for his direct opponent.

Hendo managed to turn around his form in the second half of the season, and his much maligned contested marking was an obvious development in his much improved overall game. A full pre-season is vital for Hendo- although that could be said for practically anyone- as his potential was there for all to see not only in the latter stages of 2011 at Centre Half Back, but also in 2010 at Centre Half Forward. A defence with a fit Michael Jamison and an experienced Lachie with the likes Chris Yarran, Nick Duigan and Jeremy Laidler in support could take the Blues all the way, and has Blues fans very excited.

Hendo's second half of the year was one of the best at the Blues, and he had the largest discrepancy between the first and second halves of the season in regards to form and output, although this can be attributed to his hip injury. However, to Lachie's credit, he didn't once let the injury be an excuse for his poor start to the year, instead putting in a massive effort not only to earn and hold his spot in the side, but also to be one of the most consistent performers.

This was evident in Lachie's stats, where at the Blues he was in the top 10 for Rebound 50s and Contested Marks, as well being in the top 5 for one percenters for the season, despite only playing half of the season. Hendo will play his 50th AFL game in Round 1 next season (provided he plays), as 2012 promises to be a big one for Hendo, and Carlton as a whole.

### **Best Game**

Whilst Lachie had some very impressive games in the second half of the 2011 season, arguably his best game was in Round 24 against St. Kilda. In essentially an irrelevant game for the Blues and one with massive ramifications for the Saints (a home final or travel to Sydney), Lachie completely nullified the Saints skipper Nick Riewoldt.

While Riewoldt had had a relatively quiet year compared to his normal illustrious standards, the man they call Roo completely tore up the North Melbourne defence just a week prior, and signs looked ominous as Riewoldt seemed to be hitting his stride on the eve of the finals. However,

Hendo blatantly obliterated an ultimately frustrated Riewoldt, keeping Roo goalless (he kicked one behind for the game) and either broke even or won in the 50/50s with Riewoldt, who more often than not wins them. It gave the Blues and Lachie great hope for the finals series, with Hendo maintaining this form in the following two weeks in the finals.



## Patrick McCarthy - #24

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A Little bit about Patrick

Patrick was selected with pick 34 in the 2010 National Draft. He stands at 196cms and weighed 84kgs when he arrived at the Blues. Patrick is an athletic tall defender who can also play as a lead-up key forward. He has a very good football brain and reads the play well. He has stunning composure as well.



### Season 2011 for Patrick

Patrick played 11 games in the VFL this year. He made his debut in round 2 and made a good start to the season. He did some nice things and moved really well for a guy his height. He made some mistakes, but learnt from them pretty quickly. He continued to be hard at it and read the play beautifully. Round 9 saw Patrick shine. He took the game by the scruff of the neck and did some extremely good things. In one passage of play he ran straight up through the middle of the round to get the ball and knocked over 2 Hawks players in his way. He had a little quiet patch in the middle of the season, before finding some form again. In round 13 against the Roosters Patrick spent a half up forward and played fairly well. One of his best games for the year was in round 14 when he played the majority of the game up forward. He led well and marked strongly and finished with two goals. Patrick maintained consistency throughout the year and showed some really promising signs for the future.

### Where to from here?

Patrick excels athletically, he has good pace and agility. He has a strong vertical leap. Patrick was quite skinny when he arrived at the Blues, so will definitely need to bulk up. He is a very good young player with a lot of potential, but he will take time due to his build. Patrick showed that he can play both down back and up forward. He will need to work on when and where to lead up forward and on his work around stoppages.

Patrick has an exciting future ahead of him.

All the best in 2012 Pat!

## Luke Mitchell - #25

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A little bit about Luke

Luke was selected with the Blues third pick (selection 42) in the 2010 Draft. When he arrived at the club he was 198cms and weighed 94kgs. He is a very tall forward who is dangerous around goals. He kicked 5.4 in the Calder Cannons grand



final win last year and he got Carlton fans extremely excited about the future of our forward line. Luke missed the 2010 NAB AFL U18 Championships due to shoulder surgery. He played 5 TAC games last year after he had surgery on his right shoulder and he had surgery on it again late December 2010.

### Season 2011 for Luke

Luke didn't have an extremely good start to his AFL career. He injured his good shoulder in early March which meant he would miss two months. His long awaited first game didn't come until May 21st, where he debuted for the Northern Bullants reserves. All eyes were on him as Carlton fans hoped he would get through the game unscathed and he did just that. He ran hard and tackled well which was really great to see. He backed up his first game with another game in the reserves the week after.

It was a much better game for Luke. He found more of the ball and his confidence grew as the game went on. He finished with 2 goals and was named in the best. Just as things were looking up for him, injury struck again. He had to undergo a second operation on his left shoulder and was placed on the long term injury list. He had rehabbed well from his first operation to the point where he was able to manage a couple of games, but he didn't gain enough confidence in his body and the club decided his best option would be surgery at that point in the season. It would allow him to get his body 100% right and really attack a full pre-season without any injury concerns. Although his playing season was over, Luke continued to work extremely hard on his rehab. He was back training with the main group before the end of the final series and was looking to be in good shape.

### Where to From Here?

Standing at 198cms tall and weighing around 94 kgs Luke is the ideal fit for our forward line. Hopefully the surgeries that Luke has had will hold him in good stead for the future. With a good pair of hands and a body built like a tank, he definitely has the ability to slot straight into FF. He has tremendous athletic ability and decision making but needs to work on his leading patterns.

Carlton fans have been eagerly awaiting his debut from the minute he walked through the club doors late last year and hopefully an injury free 2012 will lead to the highly anticipated debut for Luke in the Navy Blue.

He is a talented young player with a bright future ahead of him.

## Andrew McInnes - #26

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A Little bit about Andy

Andrew was selected with pick 67 in the 2010 National Draft. Andrew is a medium defender who can play on tall or smalls. He is very competitive and disciplined. He stands at 191cms and weighed 86kgs when he arrives at the Blues.



Andrew is a left-footer who loves to run and create play and can also take a strong contested mark.

### Season 2011 for Andy

Andy played 9 VFL games in 2011. Round one saw a solid performance from Andy at half back. Scott Gumbleton was blanketed by Andy who looked the goods. Andy didn't play in round 2. He had quiet games in rounds 3 and 4 where he did his job, but didn't stand out. Andy played forward in round 6. He took some nice contested marks and showed off his pace with a great chase and tackle. He played another quiet game in round 7. Andy didn't play in rounds 8 or 9, but came back in round 10 and kicked a nice goal. He had yet another quiet game in round 12. Andy started round 13 really strongly. He played mostly as the third tall and was an outstanding one on one defender. Sadly Andy dislocated his shoulder and did not play out the game and scans later confirmed it was season over for him. Throughout the season Andy was fairly consistent, some performances were better than others.

### Where to from here?

Although Andy's season was cut short he showed the Carlton fans a lot. He can read the play really well and has the ability to play at either end of the ground. Andy is better suited in defence. He is a strong one on one defender and with some more hard work and dedication he can become a strong part of Carlton's defence in the future. Andy is hard at it and always has a go and you know he is going to give it his all each week.

Hopefully 2012 is an injury free season for Andy. All the best Andy.

## Dennis Armfield - #27

By [Malifice](#)

First off the bat, Army has always been a favorite of mine. You always have a soft spot for a bloke that is prepared to take the game on, show some mongrel, and do the team thing.

In review, 2011 was somewhat of a transitional year for Army, with a deliberate move into the midfield rotations, and his frequent use by the Coach as our nominated substitute. No doubt this was a deliberate ploy by Ratts to both ease him into the midfield role, and to take advantage of his main weapon - pace and attack on the ball and the opposition - a legacy of his rugby union background.

In light of this, 2011 saw him play in a fair few games as a substitute, and moving him further up the ground than his usual position of locking down dangerous small forwards in the back pocket.

His more attacking role was highlighted in his stats this year; despite being restricted to playing just the 15 games due to a nasty ankle injury mid season, and spending a lot of time on the bench as the 'super sub', he averaged 2.4 I50's per match and bobbed up with a career high of 3 goals in the round 18 match against Essendon - a game where he also racked up 21 touches and 2 inside 50's.

On that ankle injury, I was relieved that it wasn't more serious - I recall posting in the game day thread that my initial reaction was that he had broken his leg - it looked that bad in slow motion. I was as relieved as any to see him back up and running later in the match, however it did keep him out of the side for a bit, and restricted his running (his main weapon) while he got the leg right.

Criticisms of Dennis have always been directed at his accuracy at disposal by foot - no-one questions his courage or his desire to take the game on - but his kicking has (at times) let him down. Considering he only took the game up from a Rugby background not that long ago, its more than understandable. What is absolutely remarkable is his improvement in this area. Its been noticeable from year to year as he has developed on our senior list. While still not by any means 'elite', he clearly has invested a lot of work on this area of his game, and has improved his disposal by foot to a very good AFL quality in no time. This year, he was as reliable by foot as any player on our senior list, and was particularly accurate in front of goal, kicking 7.1 despite limited time on the ground.

On a related note, he is also still clearly learning the finer points of his new role in the midfield and up the ground (and its a tough place to earn a spot in Carlton circa 2011!) and is still getting his positioning and reading of the play down pat - but, like all other areas of his game, is showing clear



and steady (and remarkable) improvement. I don't know Dennis personally, but I suspect he would be a coach's dream.

It seems Ratts agrees with me - in good news for the club, and recognition of his hard work, Army signed a two year contract extension in September, taking him through to the end of the 2013 season.

Dennis is an important part of our team, and clearly fits into Ratts attacking game plan. His defensive work is brilliant, and he has shown time and time again his willingness to put his body on the line, and to take the game on, break the lines and run. I look forward to watching him play for the Blues in 2012 and beyond.

Finally, I am somewhat reminded of Colin Wisbey's summary of Army's characteristics and strengths pre AFL drafting. Wisbey rated the following as Dennis's strong points:

1. Intensity, courage, physicality, mental toughness and confidence
2. Accountability to any opponent, not just his own.
3. Ball-carrying take-them-on dash
4. Overhead ability
5. Upside.
6. Quick instinctive brain under pressure
7. Versatility
8. Leadership potential

I reckon Wisbey got it *spot on*.



## Jaryd Cachia - #28

By [Blue Girl 4 Life](#)

### A little bit about Jaryd

Before arriving at the Blues Jaryd co-captained the Vic Metro Under 16's team with Tom Scully. He was described as a really hard in-and-under stoppage king who tackles like a demon and does what he's told. He played his first TAC cup game with the Northern Knights in 2007 at the age of 16. Jaryd was drafted by the Blues with our first round selection in the 2010 rookie draft (Pick 15 overall). He was 184cms and weighed 84kgs when he arrived at the Blues.



### Season 2011 for Jaryd

Jaryd played 18 games in season 2011. He had a good start to the season, working his way up to a best on ground performance against Casey Scorpions in Round 6. He finished with 30 disposals, 6 marks, 6 clearances, 4 tackles and thrived in the wet conditions. He continued to play well and was named in the bests in round 9 against Box Hill and in round 15 against Sandringham. He was a real hard at it midfielder who worked hard and was good at bringing teammates into the game. Jaryd read the play well throughout the season and had good vision. He maintained consistency throughout the year and had a magnificent work ethic. His year overall was really good.

### Where to From Here?

The club chose not to keep Jaryd and he was delisted at the end of the season after failing to play a senior AFL game. A lot of people thought he had plenty to offer the club. He is a coachable person and has a strong work ethic. Too many players were ahead of him in the pecking order and sadly Jaryd had to leave the Blues.

### According to Twitter: (His gf's)

Jaryd returned his attention to rugby, has started a pre season with the ACT Brumbies in Canberra and is enjoying it so far.



## Heath Scotland - #29

By [Blue DNA](#)

### Key Statistics

- **Games:** 24 in 2011, 223 in career
- **Disposals:** Total 617, kicks 346, handballs 271 (per game: 25.7, 14.4, 11.3)
- **Marks:** 163 (14 contested); Tackles: 73 at 3.0
- **Supercoach:** 105.7
- **Disposal efficiency:** 80.4%
- **Quirky stat:** Attracts free kicks but rarely gives them away: FF 22, FA 10



### The Context.

Heath Scotland plays an unassuming brand of football. He has never been a flashy player and his highlight reel is not full of spectacular hangers and goals. Heath started his career with 53 games for arch enemy Collingwood but he was in and out of their side so he came to Carlton for more consistent game time. In these early years some arm chair critics questioned his picking up possessions across half back and his ball use. But after 146 games in seven seasons with the Blues, Heath had developed into a solid and regular defender for Carlton. At the start of the year, Blues fans had high expectations for the club but few would have singled out Scotland to have a stand out year in 2011.

### Performance.

But as season 2011 rolled on, Heath exceeded expectations. He played his 200th AFL game in Round 1 and had a massive year in 2011. In game after game across half back and in the midfield, he used his football smarts to find the correct position, accumulate a huge number of possessions, and use the ball well to set up a forward play. A legion of experts marvelled at Scotland's performance and consistency across the season and endorsed his selection in the All Australian squad of 40. Many neutral observers were surprised he was not officially given the nod in the AA team of 22. But those who watched closely could easily see Heath was in elite category this year, averaging an outstanding 25.7 disposals per game at a ridiculous 80.4% efficiency. Carlton recognised his stellar year with Heath coming fourth in the John Nicholls Medal behind only two No.1 draft picks and Chris Judd. He polled 8 Brownlow votes, and Supercoach placed Heath at 105.7 second among all AFL defenders behind only Brendon Goddard at 107.9. Not bad for a bloke his young teammates call "Fossil".

### **Vindication.**

So why the past doubts about Heath Scotland? One reason is his nothing fancy style of footy. If they were looking for highlight reel footy then Scotland was not their man. But I think there is a deeper reason at work with Heath. He played a lot of his footy with Carlton in the Dark Days. We seriously lacked talented defenders, especially tall, and Scotland at 182cm had to shoulder more of the defensive load than expected of other outside half back flankers. Our back line was constantly under siege. We would continually see the younger defenders flick handballs around under pressure trying to create space. I think Heath took on the role of designated kicker out of defence. Often this was also under pressure and hence turnovers. I think Scotland can feel vindicated this year. Our 2011 back line is certainly the best in many years, there was more system and fewer panic disposals. It is no coincidence that 2011 is Scotland's best year for the Navy Blues: he has had fractionally more time to kick long and find a teammate in space.

With 617 disposals for the season, Heath was third highest behind Murphy 699 and Judd 633. With 163 marks he was second only to Gibbs with 174. His tackle count, 73, is not too shabby, and, surprisingly, compares well with our regular defenders. He delivered the ball inside 50 metres 90 times. Combined with his elite efficiency, Heath was definitely a potent weapon who flew under our opponents' radar. Further, it would be a mistake to say that Scotto is only an outside player. He was fourth in contested possessions with 192, behind only our A-grade midfielders, Judd and Murphy, and our designated hard man, Mitch Robinson.

One notable feature of Heath's game in 2011 is that he seemed to do his best work against quality opposition. He was Carlton's highest disposal winner against Geelong, West Coast and Hawthorn. He performed well against other top eight sides as well including Essendon (2nd highest twice), Collingwood (3rd R3, 6th R17).

### **Best game/s.**

Clearly, a hallmark of his game this year was his consistency. Scotto rarely gathered less than 23 highly efficient disposals per game. The Geelong game was outstanding (34D 9MK 9CP at 79%). He repeatedly won the ball under pressure and found a teammate. His handball over the top of the pack to Carlos to set up a goal showed great poise and vision. In the Eagles game the team was outsized and looked pretty lethargic. We couldn't get the run and spread going. And then we lost Jamison. Demoralising. But Scotland just never gave up: 32 disposals 12 contested, 7 marks and efficiency at 91%. Amazing.

### **What now for 2012?**

Carlton has a young brigade of defenders coming through. They are getting quicker and Scotland is not. The doubters might say that Scotland's best footy is behind him. The younger ones will overtake him in 2012. I'm not so sure. Heath has a steely determination. What does a never-all-that-quick 31 year old player they call Fossil do when he hears the footsteps of his younger

teammates hurrying near? If you are Heath Scotland, you take up extra-curricular boxing twice a week. He says it's to keep his reflexes sharp. And in boxing you pay a price for slow responses.

Now that we have assembled a formidable defensive structure, Scotland could defy the critics once again. With less reactive panic across the backline we might see Scotland again finding field position and having composure to kick long and effectively upfield to a teammate in space.

There is one deficiency that needs to be addressed. His two lowest possession games, both with 17 disposals, were against Fremantle and the West Coast final – both in Perth. With apologies to WA Blues fans, it might pay to rest Scotto for games across the Nullarbor.

Could the doubters be right next year? Will his body show signs of wear? Maybe. But I wonder if the Geelong GF banner might also apply to Scotto: Too Old. Too Slow. Too Good!

## Jarrad Waite - #30

By [Blue DNA](#)

### Key Statistics in 2011

- **Games:** 12 in 2011
- **Disposals:** Total 174, K 116, HB 58 (at 14.5, 4.8, 9.7), efficiency 63.8%
- **Contested possessions:** 85 at 7.1
- **Marks:** Total 83, contested 28 (at 6.9 and 2.3)
- **Scoring:** G 16 B 19 (at 1.3)
- **FF/FA:** 9/23
- **Supercoach:** Average 78.1
- **Quirky stat:** Played only 12 games but still topped the team with 28 contested marks



### The Context.

Jarrad Waite has been part of Carlton all his life. As son of the much loved former Carlton player, Vin Waite, you could say Carlton is part of Jarrad's DNA. Vin played in the 1970 and 1972 premierships for Carlton and his thumping kicks out of defence made him very popular with the Carlton faithful. While Vin was a regular part of the Blues' defence, Jarrad has been used more of a swing man. During the Dark Days when Carlton was struggling at the bottom of the ladder, and when we were desperately short of tall forwards and backs, many Blues supporters wanted to clone Jarrad so he could fill gaps down back and up forward at the same time. At 194cm and 94kg, with strong marking ability and wonderful athleticism, the coaches placed Jarrad where they thought he was most needed. Sometimes both forward and back in the same game. In mid 2009 Jarrad tore his ACL and did not return until the start of the 2010 season. The knee reconstruction was successful and his wonderful form in 2010 was welcomed with applause by Carlton fans. Though his four reports and two suspensions in that year were not. After debuting in 2003 by the end of 2010, Jarrad had accumulated 131 games with Carlton. At the beginning of 2011 all those around the club were looking forward to an injury free and suspension free contribution from one of our famous Sons of Carlton.

### Season 2011

Jarrad started the season a little slowly after being concussed in the R1 game against Richmond. But he came back and booted 2 goals in each game against Gold Coast R2 and Collingwood R3. He has not been a noted high possession player but when he plays down forward Waite provides a focal point. His athleticism stretches many opponents and he frequently manages to get away from them

to take possession up toward the half forward line and wing area. His other strength is his contested marking. Against the Pies he took 5 contested marks. Jarrad finished with 28 contested marks for the season. He played only 12 games in 2011 and still finished ahead of Bret Thornton and Nick Duigan both on 21 contested marks.

As the season progressed, Jarrad continued to provide a target on our forward line. He picked up 21 disposals and he was a damaging player in the win against St.Kilda R7. One of his best games was against Geelong R9. Carlton supporters came away from this game with a feeling that we could mix it with the top sides. We narrowly missed defeating the Cats that night at Etihad when Robbie Warnock missed a shot at goal at the end of the game – then went off to hospital with concussion for a few days. Carlton really took this game up to eventual premiers and showed a great deal of fortitude. Waite played a marvellous game with 11 marks, 4 contested, had 16 kicks and finished with 2 goals and 3 behinds.

Unfortunately, from round 11 Jarrad's season went sour. He hurt his hamstring in the R11 game against Port Adelaide and missed three matches. His return against Richmond R15 showed enormous promise for the season ahead. He took six contested marks, 13 in total and booted 3 goals, finishing with 20 disposals.

We are not sure if Jarrad came too close to black cats or broke mirrors at this stage in the season since a week later Jarrad injured his hip. Although it was not realised at the time, this injury sidelined Jarrad for the rest of the season. He struggled to recover and fans lived in hope for a return before the finals but it wasn't to be.

In 2011 Carlton lacked tall, contested marking options up forward. Our preeminent defender Michael Jamison suffered a season ending injury mid season. Accordingly, Lachie Henderson was successfully moved down back and did an outstanding job to cover for Jammo. Unfortunately, this left a hole up forward that we tried to fill with ruckmen, Hampson and Kreuzer, with limited success. In this context Waite's contested marking and ability to provide an option as a dangerous forward was sorely missed. Clearly, Carlton is a more formidable side when Jarrad is fit and playing well. There is probably one Perth based team that was quietly pleased Jarrad didn't return in September.

### **Expectations for 2012**

Jarrad Waite has been a pivotal player for the Carlton Football Club. Our stocks of KP defenders and forwards have been thin in recent years and we have looked to Jarrad as a key part of the solution. He is a wonderful player when he is on song. He is the type of player that can really trouble opponents who have difficulty finding a match up for his height, mobility and marking abilities. Unfortunately, there are some aspects that have prevented us from seeing the best of his capabilities being displayed week in and week out. The first is the bad luck that injuries have caused him to miss large chunks of recent seasons. The other issue is that Jarrad's enthusiasm, passion, attack on the ball and opponents have led to his fair share of reports and suspensions. Third,

arguably, Jarrad gives away too many free kicks (FF 9/FA 23). While his attack on the ball is to be admired, it would be better for him and the club if Jarrad used his aggression in a more measured way. Stay on the park please Jarrad – that's where we need you.

During the 1960s and 1970s Vin Waite wore the No.30 guernsey with distinction. Unfortunately, Vin passed away all too young at 54 years old in 2003. Jarrad chose to wear the same number as his father, and he has done that guernsey proud. The Son of Vin has been a star for Carlton in his own right, and all Blues supporters are proud of the heritage that Jarrad Waite personifies. We hope that in 2012 Jarrad will remain injury free and at some stage soon he will share the joy his father has twice felt in winning a Carlton premiership.



## Marcus Davies - #31

By [Judderson](#)

### Expectations heading into 2011

Marcus broke into the Carlton team in 2010 in the game against Essendon in Round 19, which was ultimately a 13 goal win. Marcus went onto play the next 4 games of the season including the Elimination Final, where he played well on

Sydney danger man Ryan O'Keefe. Perceived as a fringe player, a big pre-season for Marcus was vital if he was to become regular in the Blues line up, especially considering there was now an abundance of players vying for a role across half back, such as Jordan Russell, Chris Yarran, Nick Duigan, and Jeremy Laidler to name a few.



### The 2011 season

Unfortunately for Marcus, the aforementioned players (with the exclusion of Russell) had a superior pre-season to his: resultantly, Davies was relegated to the Northern Bullants. While he put in some respectable performances, they weren't overly convincing, meaning his return to the seniors would have to wait. As the season progressed, however, Marcus' performances improved, including being named in the best against Collingwood, North Ballarat and Sandringam. Along with injuries to members of the Blues backline, Marcus' good form resulted in him being recalled to the seniors, once again for a big night game against Essendon.

Davies struggled with the pace of the game in the early stages, being run down and taking too long to get the ball away, seemingly still stuck in VFL mode. However, as what happens on most occasions with those recalled to the seniors after a lengthy period in the VFL, Davies soon adjusted to the tempo of the game, finishing with 13 disposals, 7 tackles and a near miss in yet another romping of Essendon, Similar to 2010, after starting his season against Essendon, Davies held his spot and did some nice things in the games that followed, including kicking his first career goal against Fremantle at Subiaco in Round 21.

Towards the end of the season, Marcus was the "22nd" man- in other words, the sub- in Round 24 and also the Elimination Final. Davies was then recalled to the starting line up for the Semi Final against West Coast at Paterson's Stadium, which ultimately turned out to be another interstate do-or-die final heartbreak for the Blues, given the task of shutting down the ever dangerous Mark Lecras.



### **Best game**

While Marcus' game in the Semi Final will be known for his brain fade in the second quarter against Jack Darling in the Eagles' goal square, Davies performed admirably in the gut wrenching 3 point loss to West Coast. As mentioned, he was given the big role of playing on the West Coast danger man in Mark Lecras. In recent years, the Blues had had big trouble in coping with small forwards, with players such as Lindsay Thomas, Jarryd Blair and Hayden Ballantyne being best on ground for their teams in games against Carlton in the last 2 years.

However, on this night, Marcus had the better of the Eagles small forward, keeping him to just 12 touches and 1 goal, including a lowly 2 touches prior to half time. As mentioned, Davies was directly responsible for a goal to Jack Darling which put the Eagles in front after slinging him to the ground immediately after a Josh Kennedy goal. He has unfairly been blamed for being the reason for the Blues not progressing to the preliminary finals, especially considering his job on Lecras was influential to say the least in the game being so close.

Marcus was also impressive in the come from behind win against North Melbourne in Round 19, playing on sharpshooter Aaron Edwards at Centre Half Back. While Davies only had 9 disposals, he restricted Edwards to only 11 touches and 1 goal.

### **The season ahead**

In many phantom best 22s ahead of next year, not many Blues fans are giving Marcus the nod in regards to him making the team. With the development of Tuohy and potentially Lucas on a half back flank, the hopeful return to fitness for Russell and Bower as well as Henderson and Yarran making the backline their home, it is hard to see Marcus slotting in the lineup if fully fit. Instead, Davies is perceived to be a fringe player and good insurance. As can be seen by the Blues list, Brett Ratten and Co. seem to have a particular liking towards half back flankers, and Davies brings something to the team which has been the Blues trademark this season: ruthlessness and aggression. As a result, I wouldn't be too surprised to see Davies make his way into the team, perhaps early in the season if he has a promising pre-season, which is vital for everybody in today's day and age. Or, otherwise, he could come into the Blues lineup in Round 21 against Essendon, as the last two times he has come into the side against Essendon, Carlton has won by over 70 points. I'm sure Carlton fans will be more than happy if that happened.

## Bret Thornton - #32

By [Jeremias](#)

Bret Thornton's season in 2011 was, quite simply, astonishing. I dare say that there was no more intriguing player on the Carlton list in 2011 than Bret.

### Post 2010

It would be fair to say that the 2010 season was an absolute disaster for Bret Thornton. Once seen by most as an integral part of our best side due to his good work in the backline, T-Bird fell out of favour massively and found himself well and truly on the footballing periphery. Whilst the cause of this rapid downfall is largely unknown, many attribute it to a falling out with Brett Ratten and the Carlton coaching staff. The truths behind this fallout are largely unknown. What is known, though, is that as recently as 12 months ago many Carlton supporters were certain that 2011 was to be his last season in Navy Blue, whilst others were amazed that he remained on the senior list for the season just passed. Despite months of rumour and innuendo, Bret remained on the Carlton list for another year, and what followed can only be described as astonishing.

### 2011

Knowing the events that occurred throughout the 2010 season with Bret, what followed in 2011 was a min-miracle. The turnaround in his form was enormous, which is a real credit to everyone at the club. However, no-one deserves more credit than the man himself, who has seemingly dragged himself off the scrap heap and reinvented himself as one of the most improved players in the competition. From the football equivalent of dead man walking, Bret transformed himself into an important cog in a side that ventured further into September than they have for a decade. Playing 20 games, he spent time at both ends of the ground and had games where he was effective in both positions. Had games where he returned to the Bret that we know in the backline, and had games where he was the Bret that we don't know in the forward line – presenting as a marking target and kicking goals. All in all, Bret really showed his true worth as an effective swing-man in a team that has often had a dearth of talls capable of playing at either end.

### 2012

So the question is: where to now for Bret? I dare say that attempting to predict anything is a futile exercise, as Bret himself is testament to the fact that form one season means nothing for the next. What can be said, however, is that the conjecture surrounding his place on the senior list of the Carlton Football Club is a thing of the past, for now at least.



Having worked incredibly hard on his game and improved his on-field flexibility immensely, Bret is arguably better placed going into season 2012 than he has been in any previous year. The vast majority of our talls are still very young and inexperienced, so it is fair to say that Bret will, once again, play a very important part in Carlton's 2012 season and the quest for premiership number seventeen.

## Ryan 'Hoops' Houlihan (Retired) - #33

By [Claypigeon](#)

### Key Career Achievements

- Past Player Encouragement Award 2000
- Top 10 John Nicholls Medal 2003, 2004, 2007 (4th)
- Club Life Membership
- Guernsey #33 Games Record Holder
- Never once suspended by the tribunal



### Expectations

Ryan started 2011 on the back of mixed success in his 2010 season. 2010 saw him have great early success as a defensive forward with memorable roles on the players the ilk of Goodwin, Fisher and Enright. In 2010, he finished 12th in the John Nicholls Medal despite only playing the 13 games.

Season ending knee surgery saw him not play another game after round 13, in 2010. Much maligned, in the past, Houlihan had won over many of the Carlton faithful to his game style. Yet there were still detractors with their main attack his hardness on the ball.

The 2011 hope. .. He would regain fitness, prove the remaining detractors wrong and help Carlton go deep into September. .. It was not to be. ..

### 2011 Performance

After working his way steadily back to fitness in the early pre-season, Houla was struck down with injury again, this time a strain to his calf. Keen to get back into the action as early as possible he was foiled time and again with recurring calf issues. In the mean time the Carlton side was going from strength to strength with new found forward Andrew Walker making his mark as the Carlton premier mid sized forward.

Returning through the Bullants side along side Kreuzer, both sporting significantly bigger builds, Ryan played some solid football but was not overly impressive. Eventually he would return to the Carlton side in Round 13, nearly a full year since his last senior game in 2010. Selected to play sub, he didn't come on to the field until late in the game, with Carlton having all but won the game. Additionally, with the heat out of the contest, Sydney had the momentum, so Ryan did well to accumulate the eight disposals that he received.

Round 14, against West Coast, would sadly prove to be his highlight game of the year with a shut down role on Hurn. Ryan amassed 19 disposals and 6 tackles while he kept Shannon to just 10 disposals. However Ryan could not hurt the Eagles on the score board, kicking only the one behind, in a match most of the Carlton side would prefer to forget.

Number 33 would return to the sub role in the following round and some thought that he could have made a strong go of playing the sub role come finals in what was looking more and more like his swansong year.

The sub role would become a curse for him, after only one more decent length game he was dropped and appeared stranded on 199 games. He would however return in round 19 for his 200th playing the game as a sub which while a nice gesture kind of put a downer on the end of a long and self sacrificing career for The Carlton Football Club.

He would go on to play one more game, again as Sub to finish the season and his career on 201 games. With the writing on the wall and the club needing to shed players from a strong list, Ryan Houlihan would announce his retirement, before the finals and finish the year playing for the Northern Bullants. Kicking no goals for the season and only playing 6 games, 4 as sub, it was a slight blemish on his 201 game career. A career of a player that had struggled through the darkest years of the club's history and came out the other side to enter 2011 as the current longest serving stalwart of the club.

### **Where to now?**

Off the field Hoops was generally sort after for sporting calendars, recognised as one of football's best looking players. So maybe there is a future for him in a related pursuit.

Ryan has always been regarded as one of the most skilful players playing during his career and could play a role in Carlton's VFL side or another side as a mentor and skills coach for 2012 and beyond. I for one at least hope he sticks with the Bullants and can clinch a Premiership in Navy Blue of the soon to be named Northern Blues.

## Nick Duigan - #34

By [The Old Dark Navy's](#)

### Stats

- 2011 Games 22
- 2011 Goals 1
- Avg Disposals 16.1
- Avg Marks 6.0
- Avg Tackles 2.3
- Avg Game Time 83%
- Brownlow Votes 2



### 2011 Season

Taken at pick 70 in the 2010 National Draft as a 26 year old from Norwood, you could forgive supporters for questioning the recruitment of Nick Duigan. Let's face it, the majority of us would not have even heard of him. Possessing a Masters Degree in Psychology, Duigan himself was all but on a plane to Kenya after volunteering to do some drug and alcohol counselling, when he got the call from the Blues saying we were looking at picking him up.

Duigan impressed from the outset and won a spot in Carlton's round 1 team against Richmond. From that point, there was no thought of dropping him. He played 22 of 24 games for the season, and only missed the other two games due to a calf muscle injury.

Duigan reads the play well and as such is one of the best exponents of the spoil in the side, and often denies even the tall opposition forwards of the ball as a result. He disposes of the ball well (77% disposal efficiency) and has no qualms about putting his body on the line. On top of that, he is a mighty fine defensive runner and rebounder. He has also settled into the side like a veteran and exhibited leadership skills already in his first season at the elite level. Just ask Denis Armfield who wore the brunt of Duigan's backing of his own beliefs, when he chastised Armfield for not getting back fast enough to help out on the last line of defence.

On six occasions in 2011, Duigan amassed 20 disposals or more, culminating in a superb performance against St Kilda in Round 24, in which he had 27 possessions, 10 of those contested and took 9 marks. However it was his round 4 game in the drawn game against Essendon where Duigan scored his first Brownlow Medal votes, in being adjudged second best on ground with 23 possessions, 10 contested, 10 marks, 3 of those contested and 5 rebound 50s in a masterful display.

In the Round 19 clash against North Melbourne, Duigan took the Mark of the Week when he took a courageous mark running with the flight of the ball despite an impending collision with rampaging Roos big man, Drew Petrie.



Aside from a few jitters along the way, especially when trying to come to terms with the deliberate out of bounds rule, Duigan has formed part of what is becoming an extremely strong defensive unit, along with Jamison, Henderson, Yarran and fellow newcomer Jeremy Laidler.

Such was the level of impact that Duigan had on our 2011 season, that he was voted Carlton's best first year player. A fantastic effort by a player that was almost never going to be a part of the AFL just a year earlier.

### **Future**

His future in the game may not be as long as others due to his late start to AFL football, but he was also a late start to SANFL football so you would have to think he could go on for another 5 years at least. One thing is for sure, this is a guy with a lot of strings to his bow, and he will only continue playing as long as he is getting the best out of himself. With the confidence he has inspired in the supporters, I am sure Nick Duigan's reputation will only continue to grow and that he will be an integral part of Premiership #17, should it come to fruition. One thing for sure, through the confidence gained in unearthing late bloomers such as Nick Duigan, the club's prospects are at a high not seen for a long time.

## Ed Curnow - #35

By [Judderson](#)

### Key Stats for Ed

- Average of 19 disposals in 11 games (excluding the St. Kilda game)
- Average of 5 tackles per game
- Average of 7 contested disposals per game
- Top 10 at Carlton for Inside 50s



### Expectations and Pre-Season

At the beginning of 2010, Ed Curnow was ready to partake in a season with the Box Hill Hawks, desperate to make a name for himself in the VFL competition in an attempt to achieve his dream of being an AFL player, much like James Podsiadly did a year previously. The dedicated Curnow started the season in stellar form, which was reflected in his polling in the VFL Liston Trophy, finishing second for the season. However, the fortunes of Ed could have been a lot different if it wasn't for a season-ending broken ankle in Round 13, as at this stage, he was ahead in the Liston count. This didn't stop Ed from becoming the victor of Box Hill's Best and Fairest, and his early season form was enough to see him picked up by the Navy Blues in their first pick of the Rookie draft.

A perceived deficiency of Carlton's was their lack of quality midfielders who could assist the great Chris Judd in becoming an outside player where he could damage the opposition even more so than previously. Though, despite this, at the start of 2011 year, Ed seemed to be behind the likes of Brock McLean, David Ellard and to an extent Mitch Robinson in terms of inside midfielders, and was potentially considered to be "making up the numbers" on the rookie list. Ed's initial priority was to get over his ankle injury, and then make his way into full training in order to potentially gain senior selection.

As recognised by many keen observers at Carlton pre-season training, Ed was one of if not the best trainer on the track, often being one of the first on the track and close to the last to leave. Initially, Ed was stuck to rehabilitation and subsequently simply run-throughs pre-Christmas, as he joined in on full training with the majority of his teammates after they came back from their break. Ed partook in the intra-club matches, and was a particular standout in the second game in what was torrential weather, revelling in the wet conditions. Ed was also in the squad for the 4 NAB Cup and Challenge weeks, and was impressive in the final Geelong game.

## 2011 Season

Ed was rewarded for his strong pre-season, and with some luck due to the persistent injury of McLean, Ed received a spot in the Round 1 line-up against Richmond as the nominated rookie. To add to this feel-good story, Curnow kicked the first goal of Carlton's season, and was mighty impressive, racking up 24 possessions and 7 tackles. However, what was even more telling was the fact that the superstars of Murphy, Gibbs and Judd were arguably the three best players for the Blues on that Thursday night season opener, all managing to hurt the valiant but ultimately unsuccessful Tigers with their outside game, which can be attributed to Ed's inside work.

Curnow continued to impress throughout the next month and a bit, averaging a bit over 24 disposals as his midfield buddies in Murphy and Judd were arguably in career-best form. However, disaster struck in Round 7 against St. Kilda, where Curnow injured his shoulder in a tackle in the first quarter of the Monday night game. To add insult to injury, a completely dog act by Leigh Montagna bumping into Curnow undeniably aggravated the injury, causing even Judd to retaliate, sparking a quarter time melee. Ed attempted to return to the field but wasn't fit enough to do so, and questions were raised regarding why Curnow would return, considering it was quite obvious that he wasn't fit to play. This highlighted Ed's importance to the team, as Blues management were intent on getting him back on, although in hindsight it wasn't the best decision.

Ed was out for a month before he returned to action against Port Adelaide in Round 11 and played for the next 2 weeks, but he clearly wasn't right. Ed was sent back to the Northern Bullants and played only 2 more matches for the season, those being against Collingwood and Essendon, but he was unable to find the amazing form which he had at the start of the year. Ed seemed to be conscious of his shoulder in these games, especially in his return game against Port, and thus received what Carlton supporters have since dubbed the "Andrew Walker surgery".

## 2012 Expectations

Looking onto 2012, Curnow could still prove to be a vital cog in the Blues line-up provided he stays fit. If history is anything to go by with this particular surgery, Ed should seemingly have no worries with his shoulders, but his seemingly injury-prone nature has Carlton supporters worried and uncertain about whether or not Ed can stay on the park on a regular basis. However, the nature of the inside game is seemingly taking its toll on Judd, and Ed may be needed next year so the skipper can stay on the park and dominate just like he did with the West Coast Eagles in their glory years. Ed's importance to the Blues was highlighted in the John Nicholls medal count, polling in his first six games and being on 4th on the count before his shoulder injury.

## Best Game for 2011

Whilst any of the opening six games could easily have been recognised as Ed's best game, the Round 6 Friday night game against Sydney may very well have been his finest. In what was a drought breaker, with it being the Blues' first win in Sydney for 18 years, the conditions in Sydney and resultantly the SCG suited Ed perfectly. The first half was essentially a scrap-fest, where no

goals were scored in the second quarter by either side, yet Ed was a highlight. While the night is renowned for both the Blues breaking their drought (in torrential rain) and royalty reigning supreme and being in the spotlight (that is, Chris Judd's dominance and not the Royal Wedding), Ed also starred, racking up 24 disposals, 10 tackles, 5 marks and 4 clearances. Ed was one of the many heroes on this night, which was one of the highlights and pivotal points of the Blues' 2011 season when it was still in its infant stages.

## Rohan Kerr - #36

By [HARKER](#)

- D.O.B. 17.11.1991
- Height: 184cm.
- Weight: 80kg.
- Yet to Debut

### Introduction:

Not quite yet 20, Rohan was recruited with our selection 59 in the 2009 draft as a lively half-forward midfielder from the Dandenong Stingrays.



Speaking after the draft on Carlton's website Recruiting Manager, Wayne Hughes, said, "Bit of a speculative pick, young Rohan. He had a very good finals series for the Dandenong Stingrays.

Missed the first half of the year with an ankle injury, but has really good skill, kicks a lot of goals, good use of the footy.

I think he'd be the most surprised player tonight, I would have thought, getting drafted. But I just think he has a little trick that it'll be good for us, so we'll give him a chance."

### In his own words:

What type of player are you?

Versatile player, exciting forward who can push into midfield, creates space well and looks dangerous when near the ball.

Which AFL player do you most resemble, and why?

Alan Didak, because he is an exciting player who presents well in the forward 50 and up the ground.

What are your strengths as a footballer?

Pace, creating space, kicking, football smarts, reading the play, opposite side on both hand and foot.

Who has been the biggest influence on your career so far, and why?

Family - without them, I would not be at every training session or every game, and without their support at games, I would not be the player I am.

**The Player:**

Rohan's season started rather slowly with the Bullants this year and while the skills were on show at times, the endeavour just seemed to be lacking.

Rohan looked capable of taking the game on, yet that rarely transpired into effect which must have frustrated his coaches.

The perception of Rohan is that he is not the most enthusiastic of trainers and interestingly he stated that himself in the above Q&A.

Something did click though at about the half-way mark of the year. His work-rate lifted, as did his possession count accordingly and Rohan's game in general, improved enormously.

Rohan's attack at the ball was something not seen earlier in the season as he finally opened up his bag of tricks, to the point the CFC could not avoid considering him for a debut, naming him as an emergency in a late season match.

The debut did not eventuate, but it may just not be too far away either, if Rohan continues this rate of progress.

**The Future:**

It seems Wayne Hughes' early summary of Kerr was very much on the mark.

The kid has talent and tricks to burn, but Rohan does need to lend himself wholly to the CFC in order to reach his potential, as by his own admission, he seems incapable of lighting his own fire.

Will he ever reach the player he feels he resembles most? Maybe not, but given a full commitment from Kerr will determine just how close he gets.



## Joe Dare - #37

By [Blue Girl 4 life](#)

### A little bit about Joe

Joe joined the Geelong Falcons in 2009 at the age of 16. After a standout season he was awarded the best and fairest. He was drafted by the Blues with our second round selection in the 2010 rookie draft (Pick 31



overall). He was 188cms and weighed 81kgs when he arrived at the Blues. Joe was described as a versatile player who could play forward or back who has strong hands and reads the play well. Joe played 14 games in 2010 and was named in the bests twice.

### Season 2011 for Joe

Joe played 19 VFL games in 2011. He played 17 games in the seniors and 2 in the reserves. Joe started off the year slowly in the seniors, just doing his job. He played 6 weeks in the seniors before dropping back to the reserves against Box Hill on May 29th. He had great composure in the backline, put himself in the right positions and was named in the best. He returned to the seniors the week after and found some really strong form. His confidence grew and he was named in the best two weeks in a row. Joe then returned to the reserves for a week. He played an outstanding game against Williamstown, was best on ground and was straight back in the seniors the next week. Although the team had a 10 goal loss against Box Hill Joe played quite well and was named in the bests again. His form began to drop off throughout August and he lost a bit of confidence in his ability. After struggling for around a month Joe found some form against Casey and was named in the bests.

The seniors made the finals and that's when Joe shined. He was a fantastic decision maker and really set up the play. Joe showed us courage beyond his years in the game against North Ballarat. He was collected after he marked the ball and was on the ground for quite some time. When he was helped up by the trainer he fumbled around quite a bit and his legs were going from underneath him. Blood was pouring from his face and many thought that was definitely the game over for him. Joe soldiered on and later returned to the field to play out the game.

Joe was rewarded for an outstanding year with a top 5 placing in the Bullants B&F. He was also awarded the Best Finals Player which was well deserved.

### **Where to From Here?**

After a sensational year in the Bullants many were surprised to see him let go at the end of the season. Joe has a great attitude and still has a lot to offer. If he continues to work hard at his game there could be an opportunity for him at another club.

Joe, we thank you for your talent and your courage, which was nothing short of inspirational. Hopefully there's a spot for you somewhere at another club.

Best of luck in 2012 and beyond.

## Jefferey Garlett - #38

By [Claypigeon](#)

### The Stats

2011 Games: 24 (Career 54)

### 2011 (average / season high)

**Disposals:** 12.2 / 19 (Rd 3 v.

Magpies)

**Goals Contributed:** 2.5 / 6 (Rd2 v.

Suns, Elim. Final v. Bombers)

**Marks:** 3.5 / 6 (4x Suns, Cats,  
Bombers, Hawks)

**Tackles:** 4.0 / 15 (Rd 15 v. Tigers)

**Goals\*:** 2.0 / 5 (Rd 2 v. Suns)



\* Third behind Walker & Betts in 2011 for Carlton (17th in the AFL)

### The Elevation

After coming off a solid but ultimately flawed 2009, Jeff put a club suspension behind him and turned things around in the 2010 pre-season. This would ultimately earn him a place on the senior list as one of Carlton's nominated rookies for the year. He never looked back and went on to play 20 games, including the Elimination final against Sydney where he was able to hold his head up high despite the loss.

In 2010 he kicked 39 goals at a touch under 2 goals a game and showed a lot of defensive pressure with 73 tackles at a little over 3.5 a game. This was enough to earn him a full time place on the senior list for 2011 and left supporters salivating with the thoughts that between him, Eddie Betts and Chris Yarran, Carlton would see a potent 'Mosquito Fleet'-like forward line in 2011.

Jeffie was already becoming a favourite for his defensive pressure; blinding turn of pace; and ability to find the goals, all with a cheeky grin that delighted the supporters.

The expectation was that he would step up again and perhaps release Betts and Yarran to play further up the ground.

### The Year

Jeff would start the year in the same good form that he ended 2010 in. However while 2010 saw a lot of somewhat cringe worthy talk of: The three amigos; Setanta's little helpers; and the three indigenous boys, the 2011 AFL Season would see Jeff become his own man.

Jeffie's role was subtly changed to a high half forward role allowing him to get behind the ball and use his pace, gather and field kicking to great affect. This left Betts to continue his goal line brilliance along side a new forward in Walker and Yarran to flip position and slide seamlessly into a new back line role.

He rode a wave of consistency, considering the plight of a small running forward, with only slight troughs between his consistent peaks for most of the year. Gathering possession numbers akin to a fledgling midfielder and maintaining his scoring average from the previous year 2011 can be measured a success.

He did however become less affective, in the latter part of the regular season, where his confidence in his kicking took a hit and he was unable to kick the longer goals that he was delivering earlier in the season. Importantly, he turned this around in the finals and showed, once again, that unlike other more highly regarded small forwards he could step up when it mattered most.

### The Blur

The game against the Gold Coast, in round 2, was a bit of a circus and Jeffie didn't disappoint kicking 5 goals. However it was one of his behinds that had the Carlton faithful going manic over the week that followed. Gold Coast youngster Seb Tape took a solid defensive mark and played on, confronted by Jarrod Harbrow he tried to slip a hand ball to Jarrod Harbrow, the following was the result:



### The Game

Some may argue that his highlight of the year was the aforementioned Gold Coast game however the opponent was weak and Carlton dominated the game. For mine his best game was the Collingwood game in Round 3.

This was a tough hard fought game and but for a brief period in the second quarter Carlton were on par if not slightly ahead of their more fancied opposition across the rest of the match. The game was an arm wrestle and Jeff showed he can be one of the muscles in the side.

Gathering a midfield like 19 possessions and kicking 3 goals when most of the other forwards were well held, Garlett showed that he can once again step up against tough opponents and in big game to do well.

This is not what is expected from flashy forwards in hard games. However this emphasised and continued to show that Jeffie is not just a flashy forward and houses a hardness that his small frame belies.

### **Crystal Ball**

Jeffie Garlett did his reputation no harm in 2011 and continued to come out from the shell that the cheeky shy kid persona exudes. Going forward the crystal ball gazers will be expecting him to continue to push up the ground and contribute more to the midfield without losing any of his forward line edge. Whether or not he manages to do this, he will still be an important cog in the Blues best 22 for 2012 and beyond.

Additionally the recruitment of Rowe; The good early fitness and presence of Mitchell; and hopefully the rebirth of Hampson as possible forward targets will see our big stocks rise in 2012. So the likes of Garlett could come into the game yet further, meaning exciting times to be a Carlton Blues supporter.

## Wayde Twomey - #39

By [HARKER](#)

### 2011 Statistics:

Games-----2

Ave. Kicks-----5

Ave. Handballs----1.5

Ave. Marks-----3.5

Ave Tackles-----4.0

Ave. Goals-----0.5



Rookie drafted with **pick no. 51**

**Former Clubs:** Swan Districts/Werribee

**D.O.B.** 21/01/1986

Player 1136 to represent the CFC

### Pre-Season.

The Pre-season started off with plenty of solo running for Twomey but as the weeks rolled over, he slowly got more involved with the group at large. Not sure why that may have been the case other than Wayde may have had to build his fitness base up before being thrust amongst the senior group.

### Season 2011.

Wayde showed himself to be quite capable at VFL level from day 1, used predominantly around the wing and half forward flank.

Not one to shirk the contest Wayde used his body very well in the contest and was more than capable of slotting a goal on the run.

He may have not been the flashiest of players, but rather a disciplined one, as his work rate and efforts would have pleased his coaches.

Wayde's opportunity finally came along late in the season in Round 17, with a call up to play amongst the big boys, on the biggest stage of all and against the most traditional of foes, in Collingwood.

It didn't take long for Wayde to get involved as his first goal at AFL level came about in the first quarter of this match.

His tackles stuck and Wayde played a fair game in all, showing no nerves and more than capable of dealing with the physical aspects of the game at this level.



Unfortunately though, Wayde played only one more game before being sent back to the seconds, after a quiet effort against the Dons.

Wayde's subsequent games with the Bullants were of a good standard, but not good enough to get him back into the main team for the rest of the year.

### **The Future.**

Sadly for Wayde, there will be no future for him at the CFC, as he was delisted after only the one year on the rookie list.

Wayde just didn't have the tricks required at the top level, but let's hope that for Wayde's sake that his experience was a good one, with lifelong friends made and lifelong memories to behold, after all:

There wouldn't be too many players in the world that could say that the average crowd they played to was in excess of 80,000 fans.

Good luck Wayde and thanks for the memories.

## Michael Jamison - #40

By [Wickzki](#)

### Key Statistics

Season

- **Games:** 14
- **Disposals:** 176 @ 12.6 (8.1 k, 4.4 hb)
- **Marks:** 71 @ 5.1
- **Tackles:** 26 @ 1.9
- **DT/SC:** 713 (59.4) and 821 (68.4)

### Expectations for season 2011

Jamison enjoyed his first injury free season for Carlton in 2010 displaying the ability to be a lockdown defender at full back. He was considered one of the emerging young leaders in the team and a potential captain sometime down the road. What Jamison lacked before 2011 was an attacking game. His game was that of a methodical, gutsy and determined shutdown defender. Carlton fans were hoping that the natural development of his game would allow him to add dimensions to his games and to continue on his path to becoming one of the elite full backs in the AFL. Given his propensity to fall victim to bad luck injuries and our lack of experienced depth at KPD Carlton fans were hopeful that Jamison's body would hold up for the season.

### Overall Performance

Jamison missed the opening two rounds of the home and away season out of the Carlton team due to a suspension in a preseason trial game. Carlton fans were left disappointed as throughout the season other players were either let off or received lesser penalties for similar infringements. However, when Jamison returned to the Carlton team for his first action of season 2011 it was clear that he had grown enormously as a player over the previous summer.

Jamison started the season on fire. It would be a fair (and in my opinion accurate) assessment that he was not beaten over the first half of the season. Not only was he not beaten as a defensive stopper but Jamison had added a beautiful attacking side to his game that in time will place him among the league's elite two-way key position defenders. Without doubt, Jamison's first half of the year was the calibre that would have made him a shoe-in selection to the All-Australian team. Further, it would be amiss not to suggest that Jamison's development had placed him in the top handful of players in terms of importance to the club.

Standout individual statistical performances for Jamison came in round 3 in a loss to Collingwood (20 possessions, 10 marks), round 5 against Adelaide (16 possessions, 8 marks) and round 13 against the Sydney Swans (18 disposals and 7 marks). As a defender, Jamison kept Cloke to two



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goals in round 3, never allowed a goal against Sydney and Melbourne (rounds 6 and 10), kept Riewoldt goalless (round 7) and dominated Jonathan Brown when he was played on him in round 12 (Brown kicked late goals when the match had been already been well decided).

Unfortunately for Jamison his season came to a shattering stop when he was injured early in the June 26th round 14 game against the West Coast Eagles at Etihad Stadium. Not only would Jamison miss the remainder of the game and the following seven rounds but the loss (one of many impacting the club in the second half of the season) robbed Carlton of a top four finish. The Blues were left to ponder what could have been had they had Jamison and Waite over the final two months of the home and away season. Their loss very well may have been the difference between the loss to the Eagles in the second week of the finals (which Jamison did indeed play) and victory and a preliminary final against eventual premiers Geelong.

Jamison returned in round 22 for the loss against the Hawks before once again missing the Blues final game of the season in round 24 against the Saints. He also played both finals games, the crushing victory over Essendon in the Blues first Melbourne final in a decade and the season ending loss to the Eagles in Perth the following weekend.

All in all, Michael Jamison has had a tremendous year that was ultimately cruelled by injury.

### **Where to From Here?**

With Jamison's development over the past twelve months the only thing that Carlton fans can be hopeful for is that injury doesn't strike him down in season 2012. Jamison will play an absolutely vital role in any challenge that Carlton puts forth in order to bring premiership #17 back to Princes Park over the next few years.

We can watch for the continued improvement of the rebounding game that was displayed throughout the first half of season 2011 and for him to return to his All-Australian calibre play. The only other thing that we can ask of Michael Jamison's continued improvement is for he and Lachie Henderson to develop together as the key position defender partnership in the years to come. Both men are absolutely outstanding A-grade performers and it will be a lot of fun for Carlton fans to watch how the two are able to grow together.

Without doubt in my mind Carlton has their next famous key position partnership and Jamison is a fantastic teammate, a great club man and a potential captain of this mighty football club.

## Levi Casbault - #41

By [EBIAC](#)

The developing 198cm and 103kg Levi Casbault has come along in leaps and bounds. Last year Casbault struggled to find consistent form and made a habit of spraying his kicks in front of goal, but the potent power forward became a reliable big forward target all season with the Northern Bullants.



Casbault came close to receiving a call-up late in the season but was edged out of selection. However, he went on to be one of the Bullants' best in the VFL finals series.

In a career-best performance, Casbault kicked 5 goals in the Bullants' come from behind win in their Elimination Final, a number of which came when the Ants were crying out for a target in the second half.

Known as a hard and dedicated trainer in the gym, Casbault's big body is his most prominent weapon coupled with a solid pair of hands, however he sometimes lacks the desire to chase and win the hard ball. When it falls to ground, he can lose his way and resemble a chicken with its head cut off.

Looking forward to 2012, Casbault needs to take the next step to secure his position on the Carlton list. He has shown that he is capable of magnificent things in the forward line, but he needs to lift his output in order to make his debut.

If Casbault continues to develop as well as he did in season 2011, he could be in for a breakout season and provide Carlton with the big forward target they are in desperate need of.

## Zach Tuohy - #42

By [HARKER](#)

1134th player to represent the Carlton Football Club.

### Season 2011 Statistics:

- Games:.....11
- Goals:.....3
- Ave. Kicks:..... 6.7
- Ave. H-Balls:.....5.8
- Ave. Marks:..... 2.8



We all know where Zach came from and now we have a pretty good idea as to where he's going. The whispers were already doing the rounds well before Zach's first game, as for the young Irishman was making a mess of his opponents whilst playing with The Bullants.

It was just a matter of time before the Match Committee conceded to give him his first run in the Navy Blue Guernsey. That finally came about in round 11 against Port Adelaide at their home ground.

Zach was the sub for his first game and vision to the bench showed a nervous young lad who couldn't wait to finally get a run on the ground.

That came late in the third quarter and as it panned out, Zach's first possession was one to remember, as he collected the ball on the half back line and decided to take the game on. Unfortunately for Zach, he forgot his own strength as he pounded the ball into the ground for his first bounce that came back to him like the launch of an exocet missile, only to smack him straight into the mouth.

That incident somehow had a message in itself, signalling that things were going to happen when this kid had the ball in his hands and so that has played out accordingly.

Zach's second game was against Brisbane at Etihad where he collected 20 possessions and played a terrific sweeping role from the backline. The kicking was razor sharp, the tackles were jarring and the smarts in taking up the best option were there for all to see.

The highlight though occurred late in the last quarter when Zach took possession outside 50, took a couple of steps and kicked truly from a distance that most could not manage.

That was a moment for us all to savour, as the celebrations for his first goal were akin to the celebrations reserved for a veteran kicking his 100th.

Right at that point in time we all knew that we'll be seeing a lot more of Zach Tuohy in the navy blue.

Zach played another 10 of the next 13 games, showing good signs in most of those matches, showcasing his precise kicking and strength throughout.

Zach must have been disappointed upon missing out on the first final after a solid match against the Saints the week before, as were most Carlton supporters.

Zach was though recalled for the second final against The Eagles in Perth.

All reports were that Joseph was to be the sub and that Zach would be granted a full game, but that was not to be.

Zach was then given the worst job in senior football by being given the Green Jacket. Never an easy situation to take up, let alone for a green kid from Ireland in only his second year of AFL football.

Zach was finally given his run, late in the third quarter and was asked to make an impact upon a match that was slipping from our grasp.

Zach obliged early in the fourth when he ran across the front of a pack, with arms extended skywards, took the ball in front of much taller opponents, hit the ground running, heading goal-wards.

He set sail from 50 meters out, spiralling the ball straight through the big sticks for a much needed goal.

That was the moment that the Carlton faithful realised that this game was not beyond us, yet.

We all know how that game finished and as a possible opportunity was lost, another one was found thanks to Mr. Tuohy.

The highlights package has only commenced and there'll be plenty of jigging for years to come, as we watch Zach doing his thing.

To be sure, to be sure.



## Simon White - #43

By [Judderson](#)

### Expectations heading into 2011

Simon was recruited as a mature age rookie at the culmination of 2009, and made his debut against Adelaide in Round 4 in 2010. Simon was serviceable in his time in the team, and showed his capability as a swingman, moving forward in the third quarter against Collingwood in Round 6. White provided a strong marking target, and kicked a memorable first goal in the third quarter fightback. White played his last game for the season in Round 9 against Hawthorn, where he obtained a hip injury, and with a combination of other injuries, White was unable to make his way back into the lineup. However, White had shown enough to be promoted to the Blues senior list at the end of 2010. With the backline of Carlton being perceived as their major weakness ahead of the 2011 season, Simon's fitness was vital for the Blues, whether it was so he could be in the best 22 or depth for the Blues in case Carlton's key position stocks were struck by injury.



### The 2011 season

With the likes of Jamison and Bower out due to suspension and injury respectively for the season opener against Richmond, White was given the difficult task of matching up against Jack Riewoldt, the previous season's Coleman Medallist. The fact that Simon was able to get onto the park was an accomplishment in its own right, considering White's injury prone nature. However, Round 1 wasn't the most ideal for Simon, as Jack kicked 6 goals on Simon and a number of other opponents.

White managed to play the next 5 games of the season, being once again serviceable and doing some nice things in that time, whether it was in the forward line or in defence. Unfortunately for Simon, however, his year was affected by injury, and had to withdraw from the Monday night game against St. Kilda following the season defining win against Sydney a week and a half prior.

Due to a combination of injury, personal form and the impressive form of others such as Lachie Henderson in defence, White only managed one more game for the rest of the season, that being the 103 point romping of Richmond in Round 15. However, in a situation all too familiar for Simon, he succumbed to injury in the third quarter and was subbed off for Ryan Houlihan. This spelt the end of White's year, with queries of his durability once again being raised.

### Best game

Simon is seen to be a bit of a role player for the Blues: that is, if a position pops up, White is the go-to man due to his versatility. Resultantly, Simon doesn't need to be necessarily flashy or the best on

ground to retain his spot, but rather he needs to fulfil his role. However, in two games of his six games, White was particularly impressive, those being the Round 4 draw against Essendon, and the Round 6 win against Sydney.

In the Round 4 game against Essendon, the key falls of the Bombers loomed to be the major factor in the game's result, with the Blues having the superior midfield. While on the day the Blues forward line essentially malfunctioned with the exception of Jarrad Waite, White and his cohort Michael Jamison managed to maintain a rotating forward line of Michael Hurley, Paddy Ryder, Stewart Crameri and Tom Bellchambers, keeping them to just 2 goals between the 4 of them.

The Round 6 game is perceived by Carlton fans to be the win which shaped the season. It was the night where Chris Judd was at the peak of his powers, and Eddie Betts returned to form. Many of the other Blues players managed to play their role in torrential Sydney conditions, and Simon was one of those men. While his game may be remembered for missing a relatively easy set shot after *that* piece of play by Judd, Simon finished with 16 disposals, 6 tackles and 1 goal, meaning it was a pretty good night for the Blues and Simon particularly, especially considering the conditions did not suit key position players at all.

### **The season ahead**

As mentioned, Simon is perceived to be a bit of a role player at the club. White's fitness in 2011 was vital for him in cementing a spot in the Blues lineup, but unfortunately he wasn't able to get his body right, much like many of Carlton's other key position players. Whilst injured, Simon followed in the footsteps of the likes of Heath Scotland and Bryce Gibbs, assisting with the Northern Bullants as they progressed throughout the Finals series. It is evident that Simon has a passion for football and is willing to assist the club in any way, whether it is through playing for Carlton (obviously his primary goal), playing in the Northern Blues or in a coaching or development capacity. Simon gives the Blues an important secondary option if one of the key position players go down, which was a frequent occurrence in 2011. While I'm not sure if Simon will have his contract renewed at the end of next season, his assistance will surely get him some recognition and a chance to stay at the Blues in some capacity. If not, he is doing alright for himself on the relationship front, as displayed at the Carlton Best and Fairest.

## Andrew Carrazzo - #44

By [raymagoo](#)

**Age:** 27

**Games:** 140

**Height:** 187cm

**Weight:** 84kg

**Position:** natural

midfielder/defensive

fwd/defender/mr fixit

**Drafted:** Pick 2 2003 Rookie Draft



### 2011 key stats

18 games

averaged 23.6 **possies**

4.2 **marks**

0.3 **goals**

5.3 **tackles**

3.3 **inside 50's**

### PRE 2011

Andrew came to the Blues during our lean years. He was originally rookie listed by the cats & made his way to us via the 2003 rookie draft. From memory he debuted late the next year & had an instant impact. From then on has been a solid contributor to our starting 22.

Is a standout for leadership & is a ball magnet but much maligned for his clanger count. Started the 2010 season as stand in captain for the suspended Chris Judd, just to show how far he has progressed.

### 2011

2011 loomed as an important year for Carrots, with a young & pressing midfield many people couldn't find a spot for the ageing ball magnet. His obvious on field leadership & tenacious attitude saw him play every game when fit.

Missing round 8 (?) & missing another 5 games later in the year to a soft tissue injury.

At the start of September Carrots was involved in a small car crash & subsequently missed a few more games. Colin Sylvia was not spotted at the scene.

During these games i feel Carlton missed his versatility & leadership hence dropped a few games.

When playing Carrots only dropped below 20 possession twice & stamped his spot in the team. His 1%ers were really noticed when not in the side. His possession is still an issue but he seems to be learning his limitations more & he makes up for it with his dedication. He is definitely a frustrating favorite of mine!

### **2012 & beyond**

Poor Carrots is expecting triplets early in 2012 & this is the only factor that I can see maybe damaging his ever improving game!

Is an absolute must for our team & very underrated when the blues are flying. He is more than happy to put his body on the line and I feel is integral towards lifting number 17!

## Aaron Joseph - #45

By [Jellycup 84](#)

### Key Stats:

Games: 11

Kicks: 79 – avg 7.2

Handballs: 51 – avg 4.6

Disposals 130 – avg 11.8 (0.1 above last year)

Goals: 4

Tackles: 28 avg 2.6



After a rising star nomination in 2009, a top 10 placing in the John Nicolas medal in 2009 and 2010 Joseph would have been entering the 2011 with high expectations from the club, supporters and himself. Hoping to become a permanent fixture to Carlton's best 22 and cement his spot as the team's number one tagger Joseph found himself struggling to break into the side after a switch of Yarran to the backline, and the recruitment of Laidler and Duigan which pushed him into the midfield rotation queue which is a very long queue.

### The season:

Joseph began the season playing for the Bullants where he began the season extremely well featuring in their best players for the first three rounds. It was this performance that allowed him to try and force himself into the senior side starting as the substitute in round 5 v Adelaide. But after several lacklustre performances he found himself back in the Bullants side. Towards the end of the season Joseph seemed to come back to the Joseph of old, with a return to the senior side in rounds 16 and 17 and back again in round 20 against Melbourne where he took to the sky to take a great mark and a classy goal, reminding us of his junior days playing for Tasmania.

From round 20 onwards Joseph began to cement his spot in the 22 featuring in all remaining games including a career high 21 disposals against St Kilda in round 24, a game in which he was fined for standing on Stephen Milne's fingers and a stellar defensive role on Cyril Rioli in round 22. Joseph also featured in the finals campaign for Carlton and played quite well showing more versatility including a breakthrough the pack running goal against West Coast.

### 2012 and beyond:

After recently signing a contract which will see him remain at the Varsity Park till 2013 Joseph, as hard as it may be needs to try and crack into the midfield and become one of the game's elite taggers, this is where he plays some of his best footy. To do this he needs to work on his disposal and his ability to win the ball and hurt the opposition on the rebound. This task is easier said than done

with Carlton producing one of if not the best midfields in the competition with upcoming players like Lucas and Ellard. Another option Ratten may wish to consider is the occasional move to the half forward flank as it has been proven that he can kick the odd classy goal, he is good at ground level and is tough footballer who will put his body on line.



## David Ellard - #46

By [Claypigeon](#)

### The Stats

2011 Games: 19 (Career 27)

2011 (average / season high)

**Disposals:** 14.6 / 25 (Rd 5 v. Crows)

**Goals Contributed:** 1.0 / 4 (SF v.

Eagles)

**Marks:** 3.1 / 7 (Rd 5 v. Crows)

**Tackles\*:** 6.0 / 15 (Rd 16 v. Bulldogs)

**Goals:** 0.8 / 4 (Rd 20 v. Melbourne)



\* Second, to Judd, in average tackles (16th in the AFL) in 2011 for Carlton

### The Expectations

Spent the majority of 2010 in the Carlton's VFL affiliated Northern Bullants side and after 3 years on the rookie list was staring down the barrel of delistment. However his undeniable character shone through and he finally earned a game in Round 17 2010 at Subiaco Oval. After this Ellard hard work and determination was rewarded with senior selection for the rest of the year before finishing the season with his eventual draft elevation.

The expectations of Ellard were mixed, some thought his midfield grunt and workhorse play is exactly what Carlton required along side the silky play of Murphy, Gibbs and associates. Others thought he would only be a bit player, holding a spot until some of our higher fancied recruits stepped up. Some go further in either direction however that is mostly biased hyperbole.

My personal expectations were that while his work on the bottom of packs is a highlight of his game and much needed, it was his ability to float forward and kick the occasional goal that added the necessary string to his bow and felt it was here that he would be valuable in 2011 and beyond.

### The Season

Unexpected competition for his spot had the Carlton faithful singing the praises of a new grunt midfielder however Ellard was the incumbent and a good pre-season had most expecting him to start the season in the first 22. It was not to be however with a rough conduct suspension during a challenged cup match costing Ellard the opening match of the season.

New rookie recruit Mr Ed Curnow was the major recipient of Ellard's absence and he grasped the chance firmly with both hands. Although Lucas, another possible beneficiary, didn't grasp his own chance the week off left Ellard with the job of earning his way back into the team.

Due to positive form from several players, most notably Andy Collins, it took until round 5 for David to break back into the senior team, despite also showing good form in the VFL. Surprisingly it was the omission of Armfield, a victim of the sub rule and the failed attempt to blood Andy Collins, that opened the door for Ellard. He decided to kick in the door with a solid 25 possession, 2 goals and 5 tackle game, creating good drive into the forward line and burrowing into every pack.

Typical of the work ethic of Ellard, he didn't rest on his achievement and continued to put the team first at most every opportunity and stayed in the side until the round 24 St Kilda game. Ellard looked flat in the previous game against Hawthorn in Round 22 and ironically was replaced by Dennis Armfield as the substitute for the game.

After some rest and a run in the Bullants, Ellard was once again brought back into the team for the elimination final against Essendon. With the match free flowing, generally in the Carlton direction there was not a lot required of David for the first final however he was solid enough a contributor to earn a place in the final match versus West Coast.

Ellard generally plays well in his home state and while the result was not a highlight, he could hold his head up after the match. Ellard was responsible for setting up Scotland and scoring one of the early goals that gave Carlton a great start to the match. West Coast would eventually get back on top mid way through the match however it was partly due to the efforts of Ellard and his second goal from a 50m penalty that assisted Carlton's belated come back sparked by a stellar goal from Zach Tuohy.

### **The Match**

Apart from the final versus West Coast, Ellard's matches in the wet against Sydney (Rd 6); against Brisbane (Rd12); Bruise Free MkII v Melbourne (Rd20); and at Subi against Freo (Rd21) were obvious highlights of the year, however the return match versus Adelaide in Round 5 was probably his most memorable.

Bringing solid VFL form into the game David gathered 25 disposals for this match, including 15 kicks showing that he can impact the middle of the ground. To add to this he was ruthless around the packs with solid tackling and would quite often find himself on the bottom of the packs when a ball up was called. It was up forward as part of the forward press that really put his stamp on the game. He pumped the ball forward, inside 50, on several occasions to good effect.

His memorable moment and one of the highlights of the match came well into the final quarter. Adelaide had somehow found themselves in front, much to the dismay of the home crowd, before Ellard got on the end of a handball to bomb a long goal from outside 50. Importantly this would level the score and form the backdrop for the moment that stole the show with Simpson and Russel combining to kick the winner shortly after.

This match propelled Ellard's season, with regular contributions following for the rest of the year. Hopefully his career brings more matches like this for many years to come.

## The Future

It is easy to forget that David Ellard has only played 27 senior games for Carlton with 19 of those coming in 2011. He has now played 3 finals games and after another season could be a vital cog in Carlton's midfield, especially with Ratten's search for more ruthlessness in 2012. He will hopefully continue his accurate goal kicking and inside 50 work which saw him contribute an average of a goal a match in 2011.

Competition for spots is going to heat up in the next few seasons and Ellard might once again find himself playing a few VFL games, especially with the rotation policy earmarked. Has shown before that he can step up even when the team is not playing well which should hold him in good stead. For his career to continue, he will need to maintain the intensity that has forged a place in our current best 22.

Whatever happens we know that Ellard will give 100% effort to whatever goal the team is accomplishing at any given moment. We should all look forward to his contribution to our side in 2012 and beyond as we push for real recognition and number 17.

A well earned 50 game milestone beckons in next years finals series if he can continue to prove himself.

## Mitch Carter - #47

By [Blue Girl 4 life](#)

### A Little bit about Mitch

Mitch was selected with pick 66 in the 2010 Rookie Draft. He describes himself as an outside player who provides run off the half-back flank and uses a penetrating kick to break the lines.

He has skills on both sides of his body, (both hand and foot). Mitch stands at 183cms and weighed 76kgs when he arrived at the Blues.



### Season 2011 for Mitch

Mitch played 16 games in 2011. He played 13 games in the seniors and 3 in the reserves. His year saw him in and out of the VFL seniors. He debuted with the seniors in round one and got a bit of the ball, but his disposal was below par. He played for the reserves in round two and was named in the bests. Mitch returned to the seniors, playing until round nine, and played pretty well throughout these games, only kicking the one goal. He provided run off the half-back flank, but struggled to maintain consistency. He then played another game in the reserves before returning to the seniors for the second time. Mitch began to find consistency in the seniors and played well until going back into the reserves for the third and last time for the year. He played a good game. Once returning to the seniors he had a really good patch where he kicked 5 goals in three games. A strong game against Box Hill Hawks on 29th May, where he kicked two goals, saw him named in the bests. He played his last game for the season against Geelong on August 13th.

Overall he had a fairly good season. As a 19 year old in his first year on an AFL list, he did pretty well. He showed us that he has the ability to play strong roles in games and has great skills on both sides of his body. Maintaining his consistency was probably his biggest fault early on in the season, but once he found his rhythm he was playing better and better each week.

### Where to from here?

As a rookie, there weren't extremely high expectations on Mitch as he entered his first season in the AFL. He still needs to work on his ability to play a strong part in the game and not drift in and out. His speed and agility is coming along well. The main thing for Mitch to work on in season 2012 is to maintain his consistency throughout the year. If he puts his head down and really works hard, who knows what could happen for Mitch in 2012.

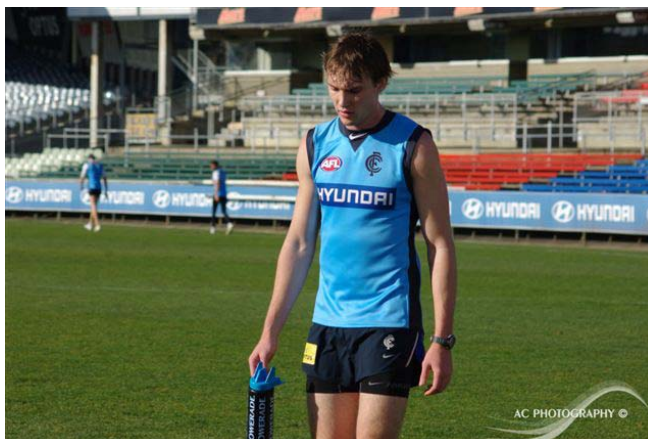
I wish him all the best. Keep working at it Mitch!

## Blake Bray - #48

By [Blue Girl 4 life](#)

### A Little bit about Blake

Four years ago Carlton spotted Blake Bray's potential and signed him to an AFL-funded scholarship. At the end of last year he was named as Carlton's NSW Scholarship rookie and was picked up with the club's fifth selection and pick 78 overall. He was unavailable for senior selection in 2011 but trained with the Club on a full-time basis and played for the Northern Bullants. His Bio on the AFL website described Blake as a tall forward who can take a good grab. He has immense power and speed for someone of his build.



### Season 2011 for Blake

Blake played a total of 10 games throughout season 2011. He played 9 games in the VFL reserves kicking 9 goals and he played one game for the VFL seniors in which he kicked a goal. He can take a mark in the forward line and has the pace to push up the ground a bit. He showed some promising signs for the future. Blake spent the mid part of the season on the sidelines after injuring his shoulder in late May.

### Where to from here?

Blake is a shy kid who moved interstate at the end of last year at the age of 18. He is quite skinny so will need to spend some time in the gym bulking up. His 2011 season was a sneak preview for fans. If he continues to bulk up and work on his game he could be a real long term prospect for us. As we all know KPP players take time and that is exactly what he needs. Blake needs time to get his body right, develop his game further and gain confidence in his ability.

Keep working hard Blake. All the best for 2012.

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