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Annual 2011



Brisbane Lions

A comprehensive review of players
from the 2011 Premiership Season

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The reviews were completed prior to list lodgement for 2012. Catch up with the latest on any player on the [BigFooty Lions Roster Watch board](http://www.bigfooty.com/forum).

Photographers

[Mr Ripper](#) (aka Roger the Sheep) supplied all but one photo.

His Flickr Stream is here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/roger-the-sheep/>

[Jorgo](#) supplied the Josh Green photo.

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2012 Review Contributions

Look for announcements on the [BigFooty Lions Forum](http://www.bigfooty.com/forum) if you'd like to contribute to the *2012 BigFooty Lions Annual*.



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Jed Adcock - #7

By [jackess](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 20

Goals: 5

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 90%

Best and Fairest: 32.5 votes (=4th)

Dreamteam: 1597 points; \$304,600 (+\$42,100)

Supercoach: 1714 points; \$362,100 (+\$29,100)

After serious injuries interrupted 2009 and 2010 for Jed, all Lions fans would've only hoped for Jed to get through 2011 unscathed. His solid form this season was a bonus to go with him only missing the 2 matches with a broken thumb midway through the season. Jed played the vast majority of the season in the role of the general in the backline taking advantage of his leadership and defensive skills. His 20 possession a game average and unmeasurable skills such as leadership led to him being rewarded with equal fourth place in the best and fairest count.

Given the sole captaincy after injuries to Brown and Merrett, Jed was able to demonstrate his exemplary leadership skills. This was highlighted in the third quarter when he was given a rare run in the middle in which he willed the Lions to be in a strong position at three quarter time. Despite only the one win as captain this season at least it was an important one and resulted in Jed being the first Lions captain to receive the QClash trophy.

At almost 26 and with a strong preseason, including time in Arizona, it is fair to say that Jed is about to enter the peak stages of his career. I remain hopeful that he will be able to spend more time in the midfield and in the post Simon Black era will be pushing to be the Lions number 1 midfielder.



Matt Austin - #8

By [jackess](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 4

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 6

Time on ground: 79%

Best and Fairest: 2.5 votes (29th)

Dreamteam: 210 points; \$168,500
(+\$28,700)

Supercoach: 170 points; \$194,700 (-\$8,000)

NEAFL:

Games: 12

Goals: 11



Unfortunately for Matt after four seasons with the Lions he has been delisted after another season of disappointing performances. Matt came into the side in round 9 and played 4 matches in a row. Without any outstanding attributes Matt was unable find his role in the side and was shifted between half back and half forward in his 15 career matches.

His career highlight must be running down Chris Judd in the 2009 Elimination Final and that act of desperation that endeared him to many Lions supporters. Surprisingly he finishes his career with a winning record of greater than 50% which would be unlike most youngsters drafted in the last five years.

On behalf of all Lions supporters I would like to thank Matt for his service to the club and wish him the best for his future endeavours.

Todd Banfield - #18

by [Nuggo](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 19

Goals: 24

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 81%

Best and Fairest: 22 votes (8th)

Dreamteam: 1128 points; \$222,200
(-\$19,200)

Supercoach: 1198 points; \$266,600
(+\$5,600)

Pressure Act King

After playing 22 games in 2010 and finishing 10th in the Merrett-Murray Medal, Banfield was awarded an Australian jumper in the International Rules Series played in Ireland. We learnt two things whilst he was in Ireland – he can definitely play the hybrid game but can't shoot a clay pigeon to save himself.



Having a trouble free preseason all eyes were on the speed demon to see if he could become the complete player. Banfield looked impressive by adding some spark in the NAB Cup while spending some time in the midfield.

Round 1 against Fremantle saw him top the AFL list in Pressure Acts (a stat based on physical and implied pressure) with a total of 31. Whilst his defensive pressure was very good Banfield over the coming rounds started to lose confidence in his hands – both marking and collecting the ball off the deck. Rushing shots on goal were not helping his cause either.

Round 9 against North Melbourne in the wet saw Banfield turn his season around with a blistering second half. He continued that form the following round against Adelaide by kicking 3 majors and applying his signature pressure acts.

Round 11 against Sydney saw him get a [Goal of the Year Nomination](#). With what started with a defensive pressure act on a Sydney player, Banfield stole the ball, sped down the right hand wing then slotted the ball home with a superb right foot kick from 55m.

The Footy Gods threw the injury stick at the Lions again with Banfield sustaining a hamstring injury in the last quarter of Round 13 against Richmond. Round 16 against Hawthorn in Tasmania saw him return but he had a quiet game with his hands letting him down again.

Round 17 against Geelong Banfield kicked four goals (three coming in the third quarter). He strained his hamstring in Round 23 against West Coast and although was named to take on Sydney in the last round his hamstring didn't come up.

Banfield was nominated by Champion Data as being the best in the competition in the key statistical category of "forward pressure". For his reward he was selected in the ultimate "[Champion Team](#)". Not bad when you see some of the other slackers in the team.

Banfield has been upfront with his poor hand skills and admitted to having extra skill sessions with Simon Black (could there be anybody better). One can't help but feel if he can get this part of his game worked out than we will have one hell of a player on our hands.

Callum Bartlett - #13

by [kharis](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$97,600

Supercoach: 0 points; \$110,200

NEAFL:

Games: 4

Goals: 1

Summary of his Season:

With Karnezis being selected to play Round 13, 2011, Callum Bartlett became the only player on the Lions senior list who has never played a senior AFL match.

Injury Reports:

[2 Dec 2010] After overcoming a full knee reconstruction, Bartlett tragically ruptured the ACL on his other knee just over a month into his return with the Lions Reserves side mid-season. He has been slightly delayed in his progress after having some complications with his most recent operation. But the young midfielder should still be back on the field by mid next year.

[22 Mar 2011] He's tracking well. He started running a week ago and hasn't reported anything bad from that so he's going really well.

Callum Bartlett (knee) was officially moved to the Lions' long-term injury list last week. (To elevate McCauley)

[5 Apr 2011] Callum's knee is progressing as planned. At the moment we're looking for Callum to come back in the second half of the season.

[19 Apr 2011] He's still got some frustrations with his knee. He's obviously been out for a long period of time. We're hitting a couple of hurdles but it's nothing we can't overcome. It's certainly a long-term view to when he'll return to play.



[26 Apr 2011] Callum has returned to running. He's reporting no soreness so that's tracking along well.

[24 May 2011] Cal's tracking well. He's had a couple of weeks of running now and going through his progressions. He's looking to return in probably round 15.

[3 Jun 2011] Moving smoothly and briskly and doing full training with the reserves as we speak.

[14 Jun 2011] Callum's tracking along the same as Stakes. He's back in full training with the main group and will be around three weeks away.

[18 Jun 2011] Foot got stomped on at training on Saturday hence the "footwear". MRI clear - no damage and he trained today okay. On track for round 15.

[28 Jun 2011] Cal was on track for a Round 15 return but he's been held up a week with a little foot injury. He's moving along well though and should be back next week.

[4 Jul 2011] Voss "It's been pleasing to be able to see that we've had 10 debutantes this year. We've played about 36 of our list. The only one on our list now that I think hasn't played is Callum Bartlett. Hopefully, fingers crossed, we get to see Cal at some stage before the end of the year. That would be nice to be able to get. "

[5 July 2011] Callum Bartlett (knee) – test Nathan Clarke says he is definitely playing this week - 80 mins or so. Good luck Cal.

[8 Jul 2011] After two knee constructions and almost two years on the sidelines (with the exception of a few games with the Lions Reserves in 2010), the Lions' first pick from the 2009 AFL National Draft, Callum Bartlett, is set to make his return to the Reserves side this weekend against the GWS Giants in Sydney.

Reserves games:

NEAFL Round 15 vs GWS

[Game comments by dlanod] "Bartlett had a couple of nice touches and at least one shocker."

"Bartlett has been through the middle with a lot of time on the bench." "Bartlett played almost all that quarter, but little impact." "Polec and Bartlett both came into the game more in the fourth quarter. Bartlett seems to have a complete disregard for life and limb, laying really solid tackles and taking some big hits by bracing himself and just taking on tacklers."

Nathan Clarke: "Cal was really good. It's not like he dominated the game, but he showed us



everything we wanted to see. He was really aggressive and hungry. He just loves the contest. His first contest was a ripper. I was standing only five metres away from the contest and then a flash out of nowhere appeared out the corner of my eye. He went in really hard and gave away a free kick.”

“But immediately it was quite inspiring. He doesn’t look as though he’s lost that burst of speed. We will probably just have to be a bit careful with him this week and hope that ‘second week syndrome’ doesn’t catch up with him. We’ll monitor him closely so he doesn’t get a niggle. He probably ended up playing a bit more than we expected and I reckon he’ll be a great little find for us later in the year.”

NEAFL Round 16 vs Broadbeach

Nathan Clarke: “Callum Bartlett was very good in his second game back, but only played three quarters before he got a knock on his knee. He gave us a small scare at the time, but thankfully it proved nothing to be too concerned about. But we still decided to play it safe and kept him off for the rest of the game as a precaution.”

NEAFL Round 17 vs Gold Coast Reserves

Callum Bartlett was pretty good up until he got a knock to the ribs in the second quarter,” Clarke said. “The knock probably took 5-10% off Callum and he faded away a bit and didn’t have the same impact he did earlier. But he got another 100 valuable minutes under his belt.” “I think the Bye has probably come at the right time for Callum. He’s had three good weeks, but now it’s time for a break.”

NEAFL Round 19 vs Morningside

Nathan Clarke “Callum Bartlett put in probably his most complete performance since coming back from a second knee reconstruction. He got through the whole game and even went forward and kicked a goal.” “He did the right things at the right time.” He also received 4 votes for this game in the Grogan Medal.

Captain and Coaches comments:

1 JUL 2011 Jonathan Brown: “Callum, yet to play at AFL level, was our first pick in the 2009 draft at No.27 and would have gone first round but for his first knee reconstruction. He’s an inside midfielder with blistering speed, and if you want to see what we’ve missed for the last 18 months, look him up on YouTube. I’ve never seen a young guy with a more positive approach and he deserves a bit good fortune.”

27 AUG From the world of twitter voss03 Michael Voss

Keep an eye on Bartlett nxt yr. Is now out for year and on ice but one to watch for 2012.

Conclusion:

I put a lot of the week by week medical details leading up to his first reserves game in this season review because this has been Callum's reality for most of the time he has been with the Lions over the last 2 years. I hope you got the sense of frustration that he has lived with constantly and has had to overcome just to get back to playing.

It was wonderful to see him finally get to play midyear and I with many others were hanging out to see him crack into the seniors – being the only senior player who had not done so. It was not to be. After four games, the last being his best he was put on ice until next year. The coaching staff had seen what they wanted to see and now look to him having a uninterrupted pre-season. It left me (an others) a bit frustrated ... know how you felt Cal.

Next year I believe that if Callum can keep fit and healthy he will show us all that he is another great young gun Lion. All the best and may we see your best.

Clay Beams - #17

By [BigCat2](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 5

Goals: 5

Sub: on = 1, off = 1

Emergency: 3

Time on ground: 60%

Best and Fairest: 2 votes (=30th)

Dreamteam: 217 points; \$136,000 (+\$43,500)

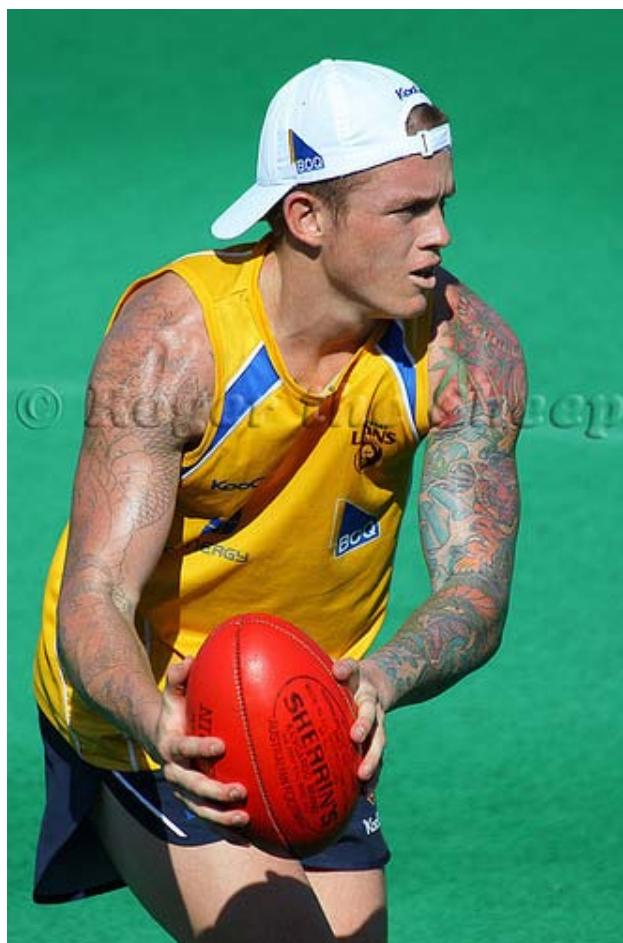
Supercoach: 186 points; \$137,000 (+\$33,400)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 2

Goals: 3

Clay Beams was elevated to the Senior List after just 1 year as a Lions rookie and playing in the reserves. After splitting time between football and cricket, he had emerged as a well rounded midfielder who was unlucky not to get a game.



Clay made his debut in Round 1 when Luke Power was a late withdrawal, and he immediately impressed, providing a marking target around and inside forward 50, and kicking a couple of classy goals. However, he was also hurt in that game, which caused him to become the first ever Lions player to be subbed off. The lingering effects of this severe hip cork limited his impact over the next couple of games, and he was dropped after Round 3. He was recalled for a further 2 games where he showed glimpses as a midfielder and small forward, but his year ended prematurely in late May when he sustained a navicular fracture in his foot, which required operation.

Beams is a good athlete, with decent pace and excellent endurance despite his nuggety physique. He is equally adept at winning the hard ball as well as running through the lines, and his disposal by foot is usually spot on. He has also shown a thumping kick from set shots and can kick clever goals from the pocket.

While navicular fractures have ended the careers of players such as Matthew Egan and Trent Croad, the prognosis for Beams is better. This was a stress fracture, and diagnosed early. This should mean that there won't be long term complications. Look for him to be part of the on-ball brigade for the senior side in 2012.

Rohan Bewick - #43

by [GingerGreatness](#)

Games: 12

Goals: 5

Sub: on = 4, off = 3

Emergency: 5

Time on ground: 58%

Best and Fairest: 4.5 votes (=24th)

Dreamteam: 568 points; \$178,500 (+\$80,900)

Supercoach: 461 points; \$173,800 (+\$63,600)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 4

Goals: 4

I have had the privilege of speaking with Rohan on two occasions since he was traded to the club last year. The first was at the Lions Springwood launch when, after only a few weeks of pre-season training, he walked in on crutches, wearing a 'moon-boot'. "Stress fracture in my foot - it'll be right in a few weeks" said Rohan. Bugger, I thought, a mature ager with an interrupted preseason.

But after watching him present on the wing time and again, taking a couple of strong grabs and working incredibly hard in a very impressive NAB challenge game against the Suns (22 disposals, 13 marks) I was thinking the sky was the limit for our new number 43. He then made his debut in Round 1 and in his first minute of AFL footy, put the ball on Brownny's chest, who booted home the first goal of the Lions' season. Wowee.

Unfortunately, Bewick's delivery proved to be wanting throughout the year as amongst the roses, there were a fair few thorns.

As of round 3 (vs Melbourne) Rohan played his first game as a sub and gathered an impressive 15 possies in the 25 minutes he played. The 'burst' he provided that day could well have been a curse though, as he went on to become our most subbed on/off player of the year. This statistic seems strange, with the impressive beep tests and pre-season reports all pointing to his key strength being that of endurance.

This oddity may also have been injury or fitness related. Rohan picked up a cork in round 5 against St Kilda and was sidelined for 2 weeks. He came back against the Bombers and wasted no time leaving an impression, taking a mark of the year contender over the head of Melksham in the first 3 minutes of the game. As good as it was, his next kick resulted in a turnover.



The boom or bust delivery had its moments though. At home against North Melbourne, one passage of play in particular where he took a clean over the head grab running back with the flight out of defensive 50, then a long bomb lace out onto a leading Brown's chest on the forward 50, in the rain, was superb IMO. The skills were all there.

Bewick's last game in the seniors for the year was Round 16 vs Hawthorn, playing the year out in the reserves. The "fade out" in his season is of some concern. The second conversation I had with Rohan was at the Lion's sponsorship function mid-August where he mentioned that he had been in the bad books during the year for his skin fold results (but was stoked, in his laid back way, to have finally achieved his fold target the week prior).

Bewick turns 22 on the 10th of October and has a year to run on his contract. I, for one, am still excited about his potential.

Simon Black - #20

by [POBT](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 22

Goals: 4

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 80%

Best and Fairest: 35.5 votes (2nd)

Dreamteam: 1936 points; \$366,000 (-\$15,100)

Supercoach: 2004 points; \$444,800 (-\$10,200)

AFL Life Membership

Players Player of the Year

Members Player of the Year

BigFooty Lions Player of the Year

Marcus Ashcroft Medallist

MVP nominee



Veteran Simon Black continues to prove that he is one of the most durable champions in Lions history. Runner-up again in the Merrett-Murray Medal and topping the Lions Brownlow count (as well as taking out the BigFooty Lions Player of the Year award!) demonstrated the ongoing value Black provides to this young, developing side.

Whilst Black continues to dominate the Lions midfield, it is fair to say that his form is not quite what it was at the peak of his powers. His running capacity seems diminished, particularly when it comes to the gut running defensive efforts that are so much a part of modern footy. He also suffered a noticeable decline in his disposal efficiency. It was clear, especially in the first half of the year, that Black has become more prone to missing targets, often putting the team under pressure with critical turnovers.

What hasn't diminished is Black's capacity to win the football time and again. He remains one of the elite players in the comp when it comes to doing the tough work in and under. This season, he had a massive 50 more contested possessions than his next best teammate and over 30 more centre clearances. For many games in 2011, he carried the Lions inside midfield with his attack on the footy and ability to win a contest. He is still heavily tagged by the opposition each week. Despite that, he remains the Lions' premier ball winner.

Black is still capable of producing elite performances reminiscent of his career best form. He won the Marcus Ashcroft Medal for best on ground in the local derby against the Gold Coast in round 21. However, it was the game against Richmond in round 6 that underlined that he remains a wonderful footballer. For almost 3 quarters, Black singlehandedly took on the Tigers' midfield, keeping the Lions in the contest by consistently winning the ball against a dominant opposition midfield. While he finished with 34 possessions, it was only in the last quarter, with Black exhausted and unable to keep contributing at a high level, that Richmond was able to gap the Lions. That the

Lions were in the game for this long was testament to the efforts of the champion who simply refused to be beaten.

The hope for Lions supporters is that the reliance on Black will end in 2012 and he can contribute more as a sideline act than the main performer. Certainly, the fact that his 2nd place in the B&F was bookended by a couple of rising midfielders in Rockliff (1st) and Redden (3rd) is a positive sign, along with a number of other young mid's that the Lions are developing. However, the fact remains that Black is still a wonderful footballer at an age when he should be considering putting the feet up. As supporters, we are privileged that he plays for our club.

Jonathan Brown - #16

By [PattyKisagun](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 10

Goals: 22

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 91%

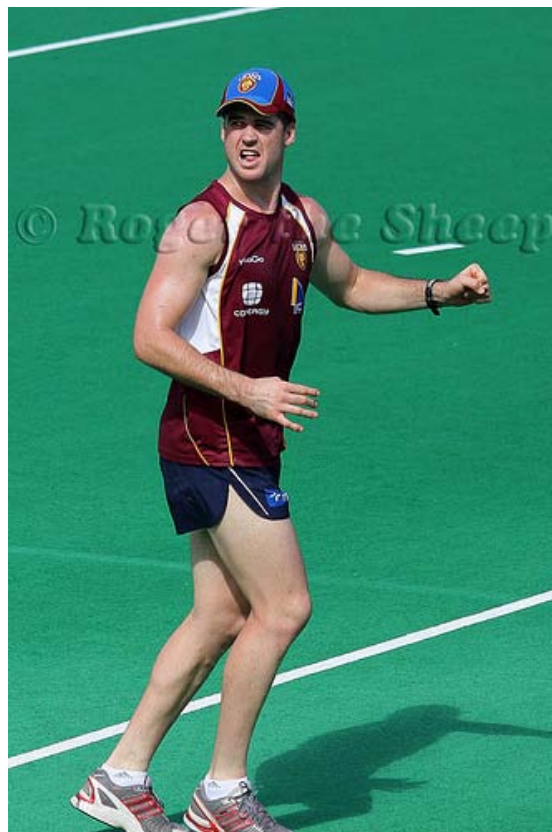
Best and Fairest: 11 votes (18th)

Dreamteam: 670 points; \$281,400 (-\$79,600)

Supercoach: 734 points; \$339,500 (-\$135,800)

AFLPA's most courageous player.

2011 signalled yet another injury-disrupted season for our inspirational skipper Jonathan Brown. An act of courage coupled with a moment of sheer bad luck at the start of the season restricted the great man to only ten matches, yet in these matches were some great performances.



The start of the year was, as always, exciting. A decent crowd travelled to the Gabba for the anticipated season debut against Fremantle, with many unsure, but hopeful, about what the season could bring. And near three quarter time, things seemed to be going well.

With just over a minute and a half left on the clock, we were ahead by four points – a lead very respectable considering the Lions had finished thirteenth the previous year and been involved in the great Fevola debacle over the off-season, while Fremantle had been looking to build upon a strong sixth placed finish that had taken them to the second week of the finals.

We looked headed for a win, and all of a sudden the season ahead seemed much brighter. But then it happened. The moment that sunk the heart of every Lions supporter. Luke McPharlin's stray knee sickeningly collided with Brownny's face as he went for the ball. He was diagnosed with multiple facial fractures and rushed off to the hospital while his beloved Lions lost the game by a heartbreaking two points. But it was the diagnosis that filled many Brisbane fans with dread – 8 weeks.

Saturday May 21 was an interesting day worldwide. American evangelist Harold Camping had predicted the return of Jesus Christ to much scepticism.

Unsurprisingly, the apocalypse never showed up that night. But for all Lions tragics, the saviour did return. After a horror eight weeks had passed since his injury, Brownny led a win-less team out onto the Gabba against North Melbourne. From the opening bounce, he seemed to invigorate the whole

team. With four goals and an immeasurable inspirational impact, he led us to our first victory of the season.

Andrew Hamilton is a man who rarely receives much love from Lions fans, but on this occasion he summed up Brown's influence on this game brilliantly. "It wasn't the brilliance of his effort - he will play many better games - it was the way his presence made his side believe again."

Following this drought-breaking victory, Brown's rejuvenation of our squad continued. We looked like a whole new team in the following week's match against Adelaide. He may have ended up with 0.3 in front of the goals for the day, but that he had an enormous influence on his side getting up for their second win for the season – and for the second week in a row – was undeniable.

Following this, he, along with the club, experienced some ordinary form, with very disappointing losses to Sydney, Carlton, Richmond and Fremantle. Being Jonathan Brown, though, he still managed eight goals in these four games. Then came our third win for the year, where another four goal performance from the big man led us to victory over Port. The following week, we stuck with Hawthorn for three quarters in Tasmania, and despite losing, we displayed competitiveness and skill as a side that many others had failed to produce against the eventual third placed team on the ladder.

And then it happened again. After signs of improvement had started to show in most of our young brigade, we approached the biggest challenge currently in AFL football – Geelong, the eventual premiers. Some went into that game expecting a thrashing, while others were hopeful that we could pull off a miracle. And late in the third quarter, just like in the Fremantle game, we looked like we were on the brink of an upset. A Brisbane Lions team that in many ways looked the best they ever had as this current group were holding their nerve against the dominant team of the past five years, and Brown's influence in this – goalless, as it may have been – was clear to all watching. We were heading towards an unlikely victory, and we were led by him.

But then the moment that has been played ad nauseum since it happened. Running back into a contest, Mitch Clark's elbow collided with Brown's cheek, and for the second time in the year, he lay concussed on the Gabba turf while the medical team ran out to assist him. He was stretchered off to hospital while the team collapsed to lose the game by twenty-nine points in the final quarter.

This was the moment that ended the season for Jonathan Brown in 2011, a season cut far too short by these two horrific injuries. A debate ensued in the media about whether Brown was too courageous for his own good, with Sam Newman even accusing Brown of being stupid and of doing the wrong thing by his team – something us Lions fans know he is incapable of. Vossy stood up for him, and as soon as he was able to speak, Brown spoke for himself, stating quite plainly that if a ball was there to be marked, he would attempt to mark it. It is, after all, his job.

This attitude is what has earned him great respect among not only Brisbane fans but the entire AFL population. His courage, passion, and dedication to his team are unparalleled in the competition. The AFL Player's Association fittingly awarded him the Most Courageous award for the year 2011 –



the third team he's won an award of that kind in his career. He earned three Brownlow votes for his inspirational performance against North Melbourne in his round nine return, and ended up with eleven votes in the Merrett-Murray Medal voting, a very respectable total considering his lack of games played.

2011 was undoubtedly a disappointing year for our inspirational skipper, as more than half of it was spent on the sidelines, a place that neither he, nor Lions fans, want him to be. He still managed twenty-two goals for the year, but it is a season he will want to put behind him as he enters the pre-season injury free and ready to make an impact next year.

Similarly to every year, the prospects of the club relied on Brownny and the number of games he was able to play, with three of our four wins coming in games he played – an impressive feat considering he played less than half of the total games played by the club.

The idea of a fit and firing Jonathan Brown is, as always, an absolute fantasy – one we all hope can be realised next season. While some have predicted the end of his career to be soon, Lions fans know that all it takes is Brown to get on the field and be properly put together for him to be the most influential player in the competition. With our young midfield developing and, similarly, their delivery into the forward line improving, a full season by Brownny next year could well see us challenge for a spot in the finals.

Amon Buchanan - #33

by [kharis](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 5

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 3, off = 0

Emergency: 10

Time on ground: 52%

Best and Fairest: 2 votes (=30th)

Dreamteam: 243 points; \$237,000 (-\$4,500)

Supercoach: 247 points; \$266,700 (+\$6,800)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 10

Goals: 10

NEAFL Team of the Year member



Summary of his season:

Amon made history this year as being the Lions' first ever sub. What was interesting was that he remained as the sub in game two, even when Beams replaced Power in the starting line up. The strategy seemed to be to use his key attributes of hardness, aggression and mature body to impact the game. His impact statistically in game two of 24 disposals, 6 clearances and 6 tackles didn't tell the true story. His disposal and decision making was terrible and he kept shanking high floaters whenever he kicked it. He was dropped after this performance.

When dropped to the Reserves, Amon did not drop his bundle but really put in the big ones. He produced 14 weeks of top drawer consistency, demonstrating commitment, effort and hardness at the contest. Starting with Round 4 vs Southport when he had a 4 vote game in the Syd Guildford Trophy he included a 30-plus possession game in Round 9 vs Labrador and a whopping 47 possessions game Round 13 vs Mt Gravatt. Only the prevailing "Youth Policy" kept him out of the seniors this long. He lined up with the seniors in Round 18 vs North Melbourne.

North Melbourne v Brisbane Lions

Buchanan had 10 possessions in 1 quarter and 4 mins. Only 3 of them were effective. He was dropped back to the reserves.

NEAFL Round 20 vs Gold Coast Reserves

The Lions started well, with Amon Buchanan and Josh Dyson busy in the midfield. While Buchanan and Dyson were still winning a glut of midfield ball, past experience convinced Clarke to lock down on the Suns. Rowan Bewick kicked two goals for the Lions before leaving at three-quarter-time as

the senior emergency, but Buchanan covered with an outstanding four quarter performance. "Amon had a lot of the footy - his reckless attack on the footy was inspiring," Clarke said. "Amon Buchanan and Ryan Harwood were exceptional with their hard-ball gets and clearances."

Round 24 vs Sydney

Amon was recalled for the last game of the season against his old team Sydney, where he again played as the sub and when he came on attacked the ball and player with reckless abandonment. His jarring bump on Ryan O'Keefe was vintage 1970s style football.

Voss: Amon Buchanan came on late, I know he's probably more in the older brigade, but his impact on the contest was superb. He was making a few people a bit nervous including our own players I think at one stage.

Coaches comments:

Adrian Fletcher's Coach's Report:

"Amon played a few games, then lost his position in the side, but we know Amon is brave, he's improving his fitness, he's improving his decision-making, so he'll be pushing for that half-forward position next year."

Jade Rawlings (prior to the Sydney match):

"16 weeks of consistency now and he's finally been rewarded. He's held his nerve really well. It's difficult with the situation where the team isn't going that well, being a mature age player, sometimes you are seen as not being the future. But he's consistently performed in competitiveness, and spiritually. He's really bought into what we're trying to do as a club this year and also how Nathan Clarke wants the reserves to play. He comes in at a good time. Amon's probably been a form player for a long time. He comes in and will be a pretty hungry player I would have thought."

Michael Voss:

I admire Amon Buchanan, he has not had a lot of opportunities but he's turned up every single week and keeps cracking in every single week.

Conclusion:

Amon has demonstrated consistent and sustained effort across the season, even when dropped to the reserves, this speaks a lot about his character and will is a major plus as a clubman. However, in spite of Amon's best efforts, I believe the game at the AFL level has passed him by. He is not failing due to a lack of effort as we have seen with some. He simply can no longer get the ability out of himself to play at the level required. His form in the reserves was good enough to earn senior selection, but his senior form wasn't good enough to maintain that selection.

My feeling in watching Amon play is that he is trying too hard - hanging on to the ball too long and trying to do too much with it. As an experienced player he needs to play smarter and use his

experience to make better decisions. His mistakes when in the senior team make him a liability even with his hardness at the contest.

The only thing that may save him is still being contracted for next year.

But in MHO he is on borrowed time as a senior player at the club.

Jamie Charman - #19

by [Gibbo 88](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$97,600

Supercoach: 0 points; \$110,200

NEAFL:

Games: 1

Goals: 1

Farewell to another premiership player and time for 3KZ to drive another player's bandwagon 🐑

All year the injury reports on Charman were that he was building up his running and strength. Many Lions fans were hopeful that we would get to see one of the fan favourites make a return to senior team. Unfortunately it was not to be, after having surgery after the 2010 season he was hoping to be ready to return to playing reserves early in the year but his ankle did not respond as quickly as he had hoped for. He was aiming for a round 10 return to full training but had a few more setbacks before finally returning for half a game to the reserves in round 17 of the NEAFL against the Suns reserves.

A couple of days later he announced his retirement after he pulled up sore from the game and realised his body wasn't quite up to it anymore. Charman was involved in the coaching of the ruck department for a lot of the year and [Leuenberger](#) has credited Charman for his development which says a lot considering the year he had.

Some of the highlights of Jamie's career were 21 possessions against the Bulldogs in 2007 and his 3 goals against West coast in 2007 and Carlton in 2006 along with him crashing into any ruckman. You can tell from the tributes that [Brown](#) and [Black](#) gave him after his retirement that he was an entertaining character and he will be missed dearly around the locker room.

On a personal note, I have met Jamie a number of times and he's one of the friendliest guys you will ever meet and is always up for a chat. Unfortunately for Jamie because he hasn't played over 150 games he will not get a farewell at the AFL grand final along with Bradshaw which he deserves. I wish Jamie all the best for the next stage in his life.



Mitch Clark - #1

By [Snuka](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 17

Goals: 28

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 86%

Best and Fairest: 15 votes (16th)

Dreamteam: 1224 points; \$272,900 (-\$40,500)

Supercoach: 1316 points; \$356,500 (+\$2,100)

Lions leading goal kicker

How do we solve a problem like Mitch
Cla.....never mind.

Wellity, wellity, well! Honestly, I wasn't near as convinced as others that Clark wouldn't be a Brisbane player in 2012 when I 'courageously' volunteered for this review, and I am pretty disappointed that he won't.

I don't really possess the angst that other supporters do. We put more years into Brennan and I don't think he even gave us one full year as good as Clark's in 2009 particularly comparing them at the same age, yet we are more happy to see the back of the latter than we were the former. Either way, these reviews are as much about looking optimistically to the future as they are about an examination of the past 12 months. It makes this one seem frustratingly, depressingly pointless. And on that cheery note...

We all had high hopes for Mitch this year that he would get close to his outstanding 2009, but since the ditching of Fevola and injuries to Brown & Staker in round one, it was always unlikely, at least in the same position he played. The Lion's hand was forced into giving him the opportunity to play where he (supposedly) has wanted to play all along. It would be hard to argue that he has made the most of his chances. 27 goals was enough to make him leading goal kicker at the club but not enough to convince these admittedly unqualified eyes that he is yet a top class forward, let alone one that can be the main target at any team. Had times were he looked like tearing a game apart for 10 or 15 minute periods but often couldn't get anywhere near it in the latter halves of games. Just didn't seem to work hard enough on his leads throughout a full game and often looked to be sitting in the goal square waiting for the big pack mark that seldom came.



His kicking for goal was really the only noticeable improvement as his 27.13 record shows but then it also says that he didn't get a whole of shots on goal for a player that spent a lot of time as the number 1 target. At times looked lazy and supporters sometimes wondered at his body language, particularly towards the end of the year (3 B&F votes in the last 13 rounds says it all). The laconic style doesn't play well in losing teams. Suggestions that he didn't want to be out there now perhaps more accurate then I had initially though.

Had a few really good if not exceptional games earlier in the year. 11 marks against the Dees (28 possies, 1 goal, 2 tackles, 10 inside 50s, 3.5 B&F votes) playing around the ground and bagged 4 goals against the Saints (12 possies, 4 goal, 4 marks, 0 tackles 2, inside 50s, 2.5 votes) spending a lot of time up forward gave a bit of hope that we could show some consistency. Round 10 though was exceptional, putting on perhaps the best performance of any Lion's player this year against Adelaide (2 goals, 24 possies, 8 marks, 6 tackles, 7 inside 50s, 4 votes). In that game he was everywhere, roving the centre bounces, kicking goals, taking marks down back. It was 2009 all over again and funnily enough he was playing that utility role that he doesn't want to play. For most of the year though, he was given a lot of time up forward but couldn't deliver those 4 or 5 goal games that could have been the difference in the close ones.

Not sure whether the footy world or Mitch himself will admit it just yet but maybe he's justyou know...a really good utility. And would that be a bad thing, doesn't seem to bother Adam Goodes. With Mitch just about a lock to be playing with Freo next year, it wouldn't surprise me if he is given that same role, if not straight away. And if he plays as well as he can, it's just as likely that Mitch & Freo will forget all the silly 'want to play forward' talk ever happened. But since Mitch has made it clear he does not want to be a part of the Lion's future, who really gives a shit.

Xavier Clarke - #15

By [GingerGreatness](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$103,800

Supercoach: 0 points; \$111,900

NEAFL:

Games: 7

Goals: 1

So close to completing a full preseason until going down with a ruptured ACL, Clarke continued his hard luck story in 2011.

After 15 minutes of senior game time in his time with the Lions, and having not played a senior game for 18 months prior to coming to the club in 2009's trade week, one can only imagine the head games another long term leg injury would have caused for Clarke.

To add insult (or perhaps injury) to injury, Clarke moved off the 'indefinite' injury list with the assistance of LARS to play in the reserves' convincing win against Redlands, only to strain his hamstring 5 minutes into the following weeks game against the Gold Coast.

Back in the reserves mix a few weeks later, he was reportedly in good form and managed to string another 5 games together, including a speccy taken against Mt Gravatt, before he tore a tendon in his left foot the following week, ending his season. The Lions announced his delisting post-season.

Without doubt "X" is a much loved figure around the club. Even when he was one of three in the Lions' "ACL club", he played a mentor role to our younger brigade and was a credit to club culture. As of his June comeback this year, opinion from club officials was that his kicking distance, accuracy and sheer class on display in the reserves would see to it that he would be back in the senior mix imminently.

Happy birthday X - he turns 28 today. An All Australian at under 16 and under 18 level, he has played 106 AFL games since his being drafted by the Saints a decade ago (in 2001). With his admirable character and senior mentor status being a stock that is gradually declining at the Lions, the romantic in me likes the thought of picking him back up again as a mature age rookie. The re-build is unlikely to allow such sentiment.



Tom Collier - #22

by [Tassie4ever](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 7

Goals: 2

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 5

Time on ground: 93%

Best and Fairest: 2 votes (=30th)

Dreamteam: 363 points; \$198,700 (-\$3,200)

Supercoach: 434 points; \$264,700 (+\$34,200)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 10

Goals: 1

Tom was recruited in 2007 and made his senior debut in 2008. In other words, he has been in the system a number of years. The sad reality is that he has still not established himself as a senior player, despite quite a number of chances by now.



For a player who stands 192cm and at 90kg, Tom does not seek to physically impose himself on the contest. At times he appears reluctant to seize the initiative, and on this score one particular incident during the Gold Coast game in Round 5 - when he achieved his best possession count - stands out in my mind.

Collier did not crack senior representation after Round 13, which in view of our poor season performance might be taken as a comment on the views of his coaches.

He has the physical attributes, but to my eye at this point of his career often lacks the essential belief in his own skills and ability. He might well be the sort of player who requires an empathetic mentor to help him tackle his self-doubts. He plays as he is, a quietly spoken country lad.

In an apparent attempt to sort him out, Tom has been tried back and forward, but appears better placed in defence.

While always sympathetic to the prospects of players from my home State, I would not have been surprised to see Tom delisted. That he was not might be down both to the departures of others, and the lack of tall(ish) defenders in our ranks.

If he doesn't crack it this coming season, then it will probably be all over.

Aaron Cornelius - #44

by [Sanchez365](#)

- [Tassie4ever's review](#)
- [2010 review](#)

Games: 8

Goals: 10

Sub: on = 1, off = 2

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 73%

Best and Fairest: 3.5 votes (=27th)

Dreamteam: 327 points; \$189,600
(-\$30,500)

Supercoach: 352 points; \$226,400 (-\$47,100)

NEAFL:

Games: 12

Goals: 46



Still Taking Baby Steps, But The Potential Has Been Seen!

It was a disappointing year for the Brisbane Lions and when Jonathan Brown infamously put his face into the path of Luke McPharlin's errant knee, everyone was reeling, except maybe (sadistically perhaps) Aaron Cornelius. For a young 3rd tall forward chances were getting scarcer and scarcer with the introduction of the sub rule forcing ruckmen to pinch-hit in the forward line, so when his courageous captain walked (more stumbled) from the field he must have felt his time was nigh.

In Round 3 versus Melbourne, Cornelius got the call up, playing as a deep forward allowing Clark to play as free-roaming CHF. Cornelius didn't make the strongest impact in that game (0 goals, 4 disposals, 3 marks) but his presence seemed to create a much better structure in the Lions forward line. However the coaches were still not happy with him, subbing him off late in that game and then surprisingly starting round 5 as the substitute. After this match it was clear that the coaches thought he needed to work on the defensive aspects of his game and his fitness in the reserves.

Cornelius was effectively banished to the NEAFL and with Brown's return to the field in round 9 it appeared to most that his passport out of QLD would be stamped at the end of the year. Somehow, lightning struck twice for the Lions captain Jonathan Brown with another horrific facial injury occurring, this time his blind courage (and perhaps a little nudge from Harry Taylor) sent him crashing into the forearm of Mitch Clark (perhaps the most significant act by Clark all season) and back to the sidelines.

This meant Cornelius, who had been serially dominating at NEAFL level (he finished fifth in the overall goals kicks after missing the last 5 games due to senior call up, but finished second for goals per game) earned another call up in Round 18, where his renewed defensive efforts and vigour

were on display for all to see, kicking 2 goals and 3 behinds. It was clear he was really working his backside off for the team, but that perhaps his match fitness still wasn't quite there as he was caught laboring to a contest late in the game verses North Melbourne. However it was clear that was because he had run himself into the ground, not because of his previous lack of defensive effort. Cornelius' sticky hands were seriously on display in game after the bye against Adelaide where he kicked 4 goals 2 behinds, and he secured his place in the team for the remaining 4 rounds.

Next year is an exciting time for Aaron Cornelius. He has proved at NEAFL level that he is a serious goal threat and this year put in the work to improve the defensive aspect of his game. He is an obvious natural forward that leads to all the right spots but still needs to work on getting that elite fitness that the best full forwards have. With the possible departure of Clark, there will be gaps in the forward line to be filled. He will also no doubt benefit from the on field leadership of Jonathan Brown and not receiving the number 1 defender each week.

2012 will be Cornelius' break out year, his on field performance after Round 18 showed that the penny has finally dropped for him and he realizes he can't just rely on his natural ability to make it in the AFL. If he doesn't perform, I would expect 2012 would be his last at the Lions. That said, Aaron Cornelius has the potential to be the Brisbane Lions very own Jack Riewoldt.

Josh Drummond - #39

by [Jemima](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 7

Goals: 2

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 1

Time on ground: 81%

Best and Fairest: 6.5 votes (22nd)

Dreamteam: 398 points; \$247,700 (-\$26,200)

Supercoach: 457 points; \$359,300 (-\$41,700)

NEAFL:

Games: 5

Goals: 2

After sitting out the final games of 2010 following his recovery from LARS surgery, Josh Drummond was looking forward to a strong campaign in 2011.

Unfortunately, a hip injury sustained during pre-season training put his return to the Seniors on hold for a little longer. Josh missed the entire NAB Cup and sat out the early weeks of the season.

After two games in the Reserves, Drummond returned in Round 7 in the Lions inaugural game against the Gold Coast Suns. He played again the following week against Essendon however, despite playing out the game, he suffered another injury, this time to his knee. This caused a good deal of consternation to Lions fans, fearing it was a problem with the LARS graft, however the injury was diagnosed as a torn meniscus, repaired during surgery in mid-May.

Drummond returned for the Reserves against NT Thunder and looked likely to slowly work his way back into the Seniors. However, with the Lions severely depleted in the defensive end, he was selected to make his return in the round 13 game against Richmond, possibly a little earlier than was advisable. Unfortunately, the knee wasn't right and Josh had a lengthy injury spell, missing the next 7 games with knee soreness and bone bruising.

After a couple more runs with the Reserves, Josh came back into the Seniors for Round 21, the return match against the Suns. He played the season out against Collingwood, West Coast and Sydney with no further injury and had surgery on his troublesome hip at the end of home and away season.

Drummond's importance to the Brisbane Lions, both on and off field, was underlined when he was announced as part of the leadership group prior to the commencement of the regular 2011 season. So it was extremely disappointing, and frustrating for Josh, that he could again manage only 7



games in 2011, following on from 7 games in 2011. With so little match play, when he did manage to get on the field early in the season his form suffered. During the final 4 games of the season, he looked stronger and we saw a few glimpses of some good form.

There is no doubt that a fit Josh Drummond is one of the best rebounding defenders in the game and his booming left foot delivers possibly the best kick in the AFL. The issue with Josh has always been his propensity for injury. With one more year to go on his current contract, no doubt Josh and the medicos at the club will be working hard to ensure he delivers a season rivalling 2009, his best season for the Lions.

Josh Dyson - #27

by [Gibbo 88](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 1

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 1, off = 0

Emergency: 1

Time on ground: 70%

Best and Fairest: 0 votes (=38th)

Dreamteam: 31 points; \$92,500

Supercoach: 30 points; \$103,600

NEAFL:

Games: 15

Goals: 6



Now in his second year as rookie, Josh had to start stringing together some good performances in the reserves to try and get a debut and more importantly, show enough to stay on the lions list. Luckily for Josh, the large amount of injuries over the first 12 weeks of the season meant that there were a lot of 1st and 2nd year players rotating between the seniors and reserves in the second half of the season and he was elevated to the senior list in place of Daniel Merrett.

After putting in a month of strong performances in the reserves he finally received a call up to the seniors in round 20 against Adelaide. He started as the sub and was put on in the 1st quarter and had 8 disposals and unfortunately only kicked two behinds. He took an impressive contested mark in the forward 50 late in the game which showed he has a fair bit of courage considering he was one of the smaller players on the field. He was dropped back into the reserves for the following week and was named in the best and Clarke stated "certainly showed the benefits of playing a week in the top grade. He looks far more comfortable", which is a good sign that we will see more of Josh in the future.

Brendan Fevola - #5

By [Ginger Greatness](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$234,300

Supercoach: 0 points; \$240,700

[VFL:](#)

Games: 17

Goals: 69



Confession time - 12 months ago I was still drinking the kool-aid that was the Brisbane Lions No. 5. He did not deliver anywhere close to non-negotiables in 2010, but hey, he was in good company in terms of names on our list that had gone missing that year (for any number of reasons) and had given me at least, a few glimpses of absolute magic. He had also given me glimpses of absolute misery.

That divide between good and bad, unfortunately, added to what was already a pattern of divisiveness that Fevola, willingly or not, brought to the Brisbane Lions football club. That divisiveness extended through the views of supporters, board members, sponsors and from some reports, the playing group itself. We are a more united club for having expelled that divisiveness earlier this year and for that I am very grateful.

Fevola's 2011 saw him being arrested, detained and charged in the wee hours of New Years Day 2011; his attendance at a mental health facility; reported use of panacea type anti-alcohol drugs; weight issues; gambling issues; reports of previous suicide attempts; with most if not all being played out publicly in the media. After the Lions agreed to terms with Fevola's management, they too then parted ways with allegations and counter-allegations on show, like so much dirty laundry.

As for Fevola's departure, the reports were that the decision to wield the axe was made at a board level. It was also consistently reported that Fevola's (confidential settlement) payout was physically made this year, but that the amount paid would be spread across both this and next year's salary cap. Reports differed on the amount - some suggesting less than \$1 million, others as high as \$1.6 million. If he is picked up elsewhere, it is likely that those payments will be deducted. The Lions were also not spared criticism for their action to part ways but, to follow a common trend, views were divided when it came to Fevola's treatment by the club.

To his credit, Fevola managed to keep his head down for the most part while at Casey, although his 2011 did involve a pokies bust at the Berwick Inn, ejection from a poker room at Crown Casino and a mad Monday incident at the Glenferrie Hotel.

His average of over 4 goals a game though will no doubt have some pondering the costs vs benefits of "Fev" all over again. I expect opinion will be divided on the subject. The dual Coleman medallist turns 31 in January 2012.

Mitch Golby - #41

by [blynd freddie](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 8

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 1

Time on ground: 87%

Best and Fairest: 3.5 votes (=27th)

Dreamteam: 363 points; \$172,400 (+\$79,900)

Supercoach: 345 points; \$196,200 (+\$92,600)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 13

Goals: 3



Have a soft spot for Mitch – any kid who is linked in some way to Kilcunda [great surf at ‘cemetery’] and Pyramid Rock [music] is always going to be a top bloke.

Mitch Golby started the 2011 with one hell of a pre-season after injuring his knee for a second time, apparently was out for 3/4 months from May with an orthoscope clean up after injuring his knee for the second time in May 2010. I have [assumed](#) [sorry] from this December article he was preparing for 2011 since September 2010. During a NAB challenge game against the Western Bulldogs he seemed to jar his knee again and missed about 3 weeks in March, returning to be named one of the best in the [inaugural](#) NEAFL game against Morningside.

After continuing good form in the twos including a 30 possession game and the shut-down of top forward and NT Thunder draft hopeful Tungatalum, Mitch was elevated off the rookie list to replace Ryan Lester who was currently on the LTI list and was coincidentally named to debut against Carlton and matched up against Gartlett in the back-line at the Docklands.

Round 12 marked the halfway point of the 2011 home and away season and Mitch Golby was to become the 8th debutant and surprisingly not the last debutant for the Lions.

Mitch played 8 games with in his debut year with season highs of 17 disposals, 5 tackles. Towards the end the year he seemed to be gaining confidence and started to record numerous clearances, rebound 50's and inside 50's. Mitch finished equal 27th in the B&F after voting in three of his eight games.

Another who should receive a pass mark grading and is one of many in our current squad who will be expected to continue to develop and force himself into the team again in 2012 – another who has been drafted as a footballer first and I expect will be elevated to the seniors in the coming weeks.

Josh Green - #42

by [Tassie4ever](#)

Games: 5

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 1, off = 0

Emergency: 5

Time on ground: 64%

Best and Fairest: 1 vote (37th)

Dreamteam: 229 points; \$146,500 (+\$54,000)

Supercoach: 223 points; \$161,100 (+\$57,500)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 7

Goals: 5

Started his career at the Lions in 2011 as a 18yo, selected a bit apart from the stereotypical 190cm muscle-bound youngster. Josh is only 177cm and 76kg. He makes up for this in pace, fierceness at the ball, and willingness to get involved.



Photo by Jorgo:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mrjorge>

All of the above attributes were on vivid display throughout Josh's appearances in the 2's when it seemed it was only a matter of time before he cracked the seniors. One seconds game v Redlands stands out in my mind- he was simply everywhere, a redheaded flash of energy.

Josh made his senior [debut](#) in Round 9 against North Melbourne. He then played 5 senior games in a row, it should be said that, while promising, without making a substantial impression. He collected a season-high 14 possessions v Sydney in Round 11.

To my eye, it seemed that Josh was a bit caught out by the pace of the big boys and floundered somewhat. The body was willing, but the mind was a bit off the pace. [Injury](#) thereafter curtailed Josh's season.

I have the firm belief that Josh will be a success, maybe in the season coming, but certainly soon after. He has that indefinable something that makes the senior footballer. Awareness, initiative, and, above all, pace. At this level, size isn't so important.

That he will add to the Lions collective on-ball strength, I have no doubt.

Pearce Hanley - #11

By [Lionheart 182](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 22

Goals: 3

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 88%

Best and Fairest: 32.5 votes (=4th)

Dreamteam: 1677 points; \$290,100 (+\$29,900)

Supercoach: 1717 points; \$338,500 (+\$41,100)

2011 was, for the most part, a year of great frustration for Lions fans. But Hanley was one of the great shining lights in an otherwise dull year. He had shown signs of becoming a solid AFL player in his limited 2010 game time where he struggled with injury and the pace of the game, but nobody could have foreseen the improvement he displayed in 2011.



Playing off a half back flank, Hanley was a key player in a defence constantly under siege from the opposition – the lions were the 5th most scored against team in the competition. Averaging just over 20 possessions a game and leading the Lions in running bounces and marks, his drive from the backline was invaluable in a team constantly struggling to break the lines of the opposition press. In another good sign, his stats remained relatively constant when fellow back flanker Josh Drummond returned to the side. The pair should remain a key duo in the Lions backline for the next few years at least.

His main weaknesses however are still his ability over his head, and his ability to read the play, two very important things when playing as a backman. This was evident in his attempt to spoil the Crows Graeme Johncock in round 20, who ended up kicking the match winning goal.

It is clear Hanley has been given a license to take the game on, and been told to run at every opportunity, which he has done. If he can continue his current rate of development, big things may beckon for Pearce.

Brad Harvey - #45

By [Crusha](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$106,400

Supercoach: 0 points; \$117,700

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 16

Goals: 1

No: 45

Height: 185cm

Weight: 83kg

DOB: 16-04-1992

Status: Rookie



Brad was taken at Pick 13 in the 2010 Rookie Draft primarily, if you took any notice of the pre draft “pundits”, on the strength of some outstanding results at the Draft Combine rather than his football skills.

Those results were:

- 1st Standing Leap
- 1st (Eq) Running Vertical Jump
- 2nd 20m Sprint (briefly held the Combine record until bested by Joel Wilkinson)
- 3rd Repeat Sprints

And on the strength of those you could see how that view was formed. What that view seemed to disregard was his selection in the 2010 Vic Metro squad alongside players such as Josh Caddy, Jonathon Patton, Billy Longer, Andrew Gaff, Will Hoskin-Elliott, and our own Pat Karnezis & Ryan Lester, to name a few. So those in the know must have identified some football ability (you would think).

As a non-elevated Rookie, Brad was not eligible for Senior selection during the 2011 season, and appeared for the Lions Reserves in the NEAFL, playing in all but the final fixture. He was listed amongst the best on 3 occasions.

I believe Nathan Clarke had Brad’s development in mind in playing him in a range of positions over the course of the season. Given his physical attributes, he is ideally suited to playing on a Wing or floating across Half Back, but Clarke even tried him several times at Fullback against the likes of Tim Notting, Israel Folau and Darren Ewing (the 100 goal FF from NT Thunder). Even though he gave away plenty in height & weight in those contests he acquitted himself well, earning two of his “best” nominations in games where he played that role (vs Notting & Folau).

One of the pre-draft knocks against Brad was his supposed poor kicking skills, but I didn't see anything that would corroborate that at the games that I attended. His disposal by foot was more than adequate, and certainly better than several of our notoriously erratic Senior listed players. This was backed up by Clarke in his Reserves Wraps, on more than one occasion.

He also does not lack courage, as evidenced by his loose ball contest with Karmichael Hunt in the second to last fixture at Coorparoo. Hunt left the field bloodied, and it was reported later that Brad had suffered some minor eye socket damage (it was probably the reason for him missing his only game for the season, the following week).

If I have one criticism of Brad it is that he seems to have lengthy periods "out of the game". This may be the result of an under-developed "engine", given he has yet to complete a full AFL pre-season. So I expect some improvement in that aspect in 2012.

To summarise, there is still a potential AFL listing ahead for Brad if he puts in the required work. He is a keeper and should retain his Rookie listing for 2012.

Ryan Harwood - #26

by [Tassie4ever](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 7

Goals: 1

Sub: on = 3, off = 0

Emergency: 8

Time on ground: 57%

Best and Fairest: 1.5 votes (35th)

Dreamteam: 322 points; \$215,300 (+\$9,700)

Supercoach: 321 points; \$255,300 (-\$8,200)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 11

Goals: 1

Maybe Ryan's season is best explained by himself when he apparently twittered that he would put in a big pre-season this next, as he needed to get fitter.



Good self-advice, IMHO. What might be slightly troubling is his apparent admission that he had begun to enjoy the good life at the Lions, without perhaps the necessary preparation. If correct, not good enough. See Simon Black for advice. Soon.

Ryan always reminds me of the Energizer bunny- goes hard all day, but at the one pace. And for a bloke not overly endowed with pace, this is a major deficiency. Not a great kick, nor a great distributor. But very, very hard at it. Should work hard at joining the dots, strengths and deficiencies-wise.

Still just 20yo, Ryan burst on to the senior scene in late 2010 when he gave us a glimpse of some much-needed hardness around the pill. Played 7 senior games in 2010, but only 5 in 2011.

With a few promising new around the ball types coming through, Ryan will need to take advantage of every opportunity.

James Hawksley - #12

By [Jackess](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 6

Goals: 4

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 4

Time on ground: 78%

Best and Fairest: 4 votes (26th)

Dreamteam: 275 points; \$232,900
(-\$38,500)

Supercoach: 281 points; \$277,500
(-\$45,400)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 11

Goals: 0



Although a source of great frustration for many Lions supporters I believe The Hawk made some improvement this season. He may still only be pencilled in for a spot on the senior list next season but I am refusing to rule him out as substandard when it comes to AFL footy.

Despite promising reserves form playing on a wing it took The Hawk until round 16 to add to his 22 game AFL career. Having proven he can win the ball and has reasonable defensive skills the big improvement had to come in his ball use. This season he showed he has the ability to break the lines and despite some improvement he was unable to shake the tag of being the turnover king.

After 5 games straight in the seniors Hawksley was banished back to the reserves which may have signalled the end to his career. He was given a reprieve in round 24 after Staker injured his knee and it was clear that The Hawk knew he had to put his best foot forward to retain a spot on the list. He responded with 27 disposals and a brilliant set shot goal from deep in the right pocket. It was his best game in his four seasons at the club.

While the final list lodgement is still weeks away I hope The Hawk still has another opportunity to improve on his deficiencies. While it will take a big effort to overtake the strong crop of youngsters in the Lions squad I believed he has showed enough glimpses of talent to allow him to build on his 28 games in the AFL.

Patrick Karnezis - #28

by [Jorgo](#)

Games: 11

Goals: 17

Sub: on = 3, off = 2

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 71%

Best and Fairest: 7.5 votes (21st)

Dreamteam: 480 points; \$147,000
(+\$54,500)

Supercoach: 506 points; \$177,800
(+\$74,200)

NEAFL:

Games: 10

Goals: 24

AFLPA nominee for best first year player

Brisbane Lions Rookie of the Year

Radiant

Drafted from Oakleigh in the 2010 National Draft from a tight knit Greek family Karnezis took a little while to settle himself into life at an interstate AFL club.

Starting the season, the comments from training and reserves watchers was that he was perhaps a little too lightly framed for the big time. This didn't stop him from lining up in the maroon, blue & gold in Round 1 of the 2011 NAB Cup against Essendon where he showed enough to raise some interest.

While he spent a little time playing off half back in the NEAFL he predominantly played across half forward. He provided a solid lead up target, taking plenty of marks and soon had a few bags of goals to his name. Comments from the coaching staff that his work rate had improved, on the back of 10 goals in 3 weeks, started speculation that a possible debut might be sooner than we all thought.

It was therefore not surprising that, with positions becoming available in the Seniors forward line due to injuries, his form saw him selected for his AFL debut in Round 13 vs Richmond. In a disappointing night for the Lions Karnezis was a shining light kicking two goals with his first 2 kicks at AFL level.

He would go on to play out the rest of the season in the Senior team and quickly became a favourite of the fans, particularly the female ones, and the coach. He ended the season with 17 goals from 11 games which added some scoring potency to the Brown-less Lions. Not only was his



contribution to the scoreboard consistent per game but his set shot routine looked very solid to the point where, as a spectator, it seemed he would never miss.

On top of his goal scoring feats he proved he was capable of taking strong marks with a couple of memorably tough grabs in Round 15 against Port Adelaide. His introduction to the forward line made the Lions forward structure much more dangerous and mobile than it had been for a while.

One critique of him has been that he tended to drift out of games late and that his impact seemed to come in short spurts rather than a consistent spread across the game. This was mirrored across the season too as his impact lessened as the season wore on and he started to appear tired.

However that is to be expected in such a young player who has not yet fully adjusted his body to the requirements of AFL football. In a lacklustre season for the Lions Karnezis gave us all something to be excited about and his future looks bright.

He was deservedly awarded the Rookie of The Year Award at the 2011 Club Champion Dinner.

Ryan Lester - #35

by [Nuggo](#)

Games: 3

Goals: 2

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 86%

Best and Fairest: 2 votes (=30th)

Dreamteam: 142 points; \$117,100
(+\$24,600)

Supercoach: 154 points; \$137,100
(+\$33,500)



Looks like a keeper

With Lester being pick 28 in the 2010 draft many posters were diving for the mock drafts to see what we had on hands. With the best minds in the land analysing him he was not as highly touted as others.

Lester was presented with the number 35 jumper which was most recently worn by the 2010 Club Champion.

During the preseason he was noted as having well developed legs as well as good core strength. This was evident in the NAB cup as he played well as a lead-up forward.

Lester made his debut in [Round 1](#) against Fremantle at the Gabba. Named on the interchange bench he played the role of the third forward. His first AFL goal was via a little toe poke on his non-preferred side under pressure.

The first two rounds as the third forward showed that he was strong overhead and although he didn't excel in that position it shouldn't be completely ruled out.

In round 3 against Melbourne he was moved down back and played a key defensive role. He looked comfortable and played his role really well. One of his strengths was his ability to read the play. After the game Lester had some soreness in his right foot. A second set of scans revealed this to be a partially ruptured [linsfranc ligament](#). This unfortunately kept him on the sidelines for the rest of the season.

Judging on his first three rounds he looks as though he will be an AFL player. What position he ends up playing is an unknown but in this current Lions side there are still plenty of spots up for grabs.

Matthew Leuenberger - #23

by [BigCat2](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 22

Goals: 5

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 83%

Best and Fairest: 31.5 votes (6th)

Dreamteam: 1933 points; \$397,400 (+\$76,100)

Supercoach: 2133 points; \$535,600 (+\$202,500)

Having finally strung some games together, Matthew Leuenberger is finally showing the football world his obvious talents. Injuries in past seasons had cruelled him until 2010, but he is emerging as one of the best ruckmen of the competition.



With Mitch Clark set to play as key forward, Leuenberger became the main Lions ruckman for 2011. He put up massive numbers in terms of hit outs in every game apart from when being played as a forward, and his hit outs to advantage have improved. This should further increase with more chemistry with his midfielders, as at times there are still clever taps out the back or knock ons which our midfielders are not running on to. It was a huge effort to sustain this output through the year – in fact he got better as the year went on, and enjoyed a super finish to the season.

Leuenberger's play around the ground had also lifted. He was able to take numerous contested marks in midfield or deep in defence, providing a good long target for kick outs and general play. His link up work was also exceptional at times, and he can truly elevate himself to elite if he is able to do this more consistently. Early on in the year he was played as a key forward against St Kilda and Richmond, and while he showed good leads and sure hands, at this stage he is more valuable as a ruckman.

Leuenberger finished the season with 724 hit outs, at 32.9 per game. At still just 23, his best years are undoubtedly still ahead of him. He continued to improve through the season, and looked like he was starting to realise how good he can be. His strong performances in 2011 should ensure a top 5 finish in the Best & Fairest this year, and he will be a key in the developing Lions midfield.

Broc McCauley - #46

by [Jubair](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 3

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 3

Time on ground: 68%

Best and Fairest: 1.5 votes (=35th)

Dreamteam: 190 points; \$123,200 (+\$42,800)

Supercoach: 183 points; \$138,600 (+\$46,900)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 11

Goals: 4

Did he need more time?

Broc McCauley was a great white rookie list hope for the Lions. His form for Southport, before being drafted as a rookie for the Lions, was nothing short of impressive and many thought the size, strength and speed that he possessed would propel him towards a senior berth not long after he joined.

His [first year](#) was quite promising. His form stood out against stronger teams such as Southport and Labrador when he took it upon himself to make sure he won the ruck contest and provided a marking option around the ground, occasionally sneaking forward to kick a few goals too. His tremendous workload led to a persistent groin injury which initially kept him out for 4 weeks but even after coming back, it continued to hinder his performance.

He received a fairly reasonable review from Adrian Fletcher at year's end but was soon delisted from the rookie list. He was invited to continue training with the club in the hope of being picked up again in the rookie draft. Many supporters, including myself, could not understand why that decision was made. Many believed that he could not have done more to earn another year on the rookie list.

The supporters' prayers were answered when the Lions chose Broc again at pick 62 in the 2010 rookie draft. He took this opportunity by the horns and applied himself over the preseason, experiencing an 'injury free' period according to Rob Kerr, Lions National Talent Manager.

He was rewarded with a NAB cup berth in the Lions opener against St Kilda and Essendon where he excelled when Leuenberger was being rested. He continued to shoulder the ruck load and perform admirably during the NAB Challenge matches until he injured his ankle against the Gold Coast in the



first pre-season match between the neighboring cities. Lions' fans had their heart in their throats when Leuenberger also seemed to go down with a soft tissue injury later on in the game, leaving Mitch Clark to assume the No.1 ruck role. Luckily for us fans, this time the footy gods smiled upon our ruckmen and it turned out Broc would only be out for 2 weeks and Leuey was only experiencing severe cramps.

As it is the case often, one man's misfortune is another man's opportunity. By round 2 of the regular season, Callum Bartlett was still recovering from his knee injury from the previous year so he was moved to the Lions long term injury list and it allowed Broc to be elevated to the senior list.

Having started as an emergency in Round 2, he came into the senior side in place of Matt Maguire to make his official debut aged 24 years and 104 days - at the time, the oldest rookie on the Lions rookie list.

His debut was largely unimpressive - supporters describing his debut as 'disappointing', 'lazy', 'was not hard enough', 'over-awed'. You did get the feeling that he let the occasion get the better of him as he was more impressive in the pre-season games up until then. In Broc's defence, he was tried as a resting forward swapping with Leuenberger but against a well drilled defence like the Dogs, a rookie debuting was never going to do so well. Regardless, the potential was still there but he was sent back to the reserves the following week.

He regained a spot in the 22 against St Kilda in Round 5 and played a game some described as 'career defining' and 'impressive'. I agree that a 36 Hit out, 18 possession game in just his 2nd game against the previous year's runner up was quite a stirring effort especially matched up against a top 10 draft pick. Watching from the stands, I really liked the way he got on his knees and burrowed into contested situation to feed out the ball. He did this quite effectively but let himself down at crucial times with silly decision making. Some of those decisions made you cringe and you asked yourself 'why? oh why?' - in particular one glaring mistake led to a Saints goal and they only ended up winning by a few points in a game which the Lions should have won. I am not blaming Broc for that loss; there were senior Lions who made crucial errors which led to Saints goals. This outstanding game was followed up with a solid display against Richmond where Broc, as it turned out, played his last game for the season and for the Lions.

He played out the rest of the season in the reserves and while he played a number of best on ground games, it was not enough to earn a recall into the senior team. On 11 September, he was delisted along with Bart McCullough. They have not been invited to continue training with the club so it can be assumed that the playing tie has severed completely between the Lions and the two Mcs and they will not be picked up again in the rookie draft.

McCauley, to me, was a player who I thought needed to be given more opportunities to become accustomed to the AFL level. Yes he did make mistakes but he had played less than 5 games. Sometimes I think, are we marking him harder because of his age? We do have to take into account that he started football late after taking nearly a decade off it so moving from not playing

professional Aussie rules at all to playing at the MCG in front of thousands and against hardened professional players within a space of a few years would have been a big step up for him. Especially when 4 points were up for grabs and teams were playing their best players and those players were giving a 100%.

In reality, I am not within the inner circle of the Brisbane Lions and not involved in list management so I would not have access to the data they have available when deciding on a player's future with the Lions. A lot of supporters were, at first, baffled by the club's decision. With Mitch Clark about to leave, we all thought the club must have made another blunder with player management but Rob Kerr, our much revered National Talent Manager, put us at ease and explained the reasoning behind the club's decision which was that they 'didn't feel the young ruckmen on our list had the level of improvement within them to be regular AFL players '.

I wish Broc the best of luck in his future endeavours. Hope he continues to play Aussie Rules and also get back into his stockbroking career should he choose.

Bart McCulloch - #25

by [Crusha](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$80,400

Supercoach: 0 points; \$91,700

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 12

Goals: 7

Height: 198cm

Weight: 88kg

DOB: 23-09-1990

Status: Rookie

Games: Yet to debut



After only playing 1 Reserves match in 2009 and a further 12 in 2010, due to persistent Osteitis Pubis, Quad and Hamstring injuries, Bart was de-listed and then re-selected as a Rookie for 2011. The writing was then on the wall for the “project” player, that he would need to demonstrate some developmental progress during 2011 to convince the club to include him going forward.

After another injury interrupted pre-season and late start to the 2011 NEAFL season, Bart was an ever present from Rnd 6, racking up 14 consecutive games, his most consecutive games in a season since being drafted in 2008 (ND Pick 69). He contributed 6 goals and was named in the best players on 2 occasions.

Unfortunately for Bart, The Football Department’s end of season review determined that he “did not have the level of improvement within him to be a regular AFL player” (as per the Kerr Trade Report), and he was again de-listed.

Bart has since signed with TFL side South Launceston for 2012, but still harbours some hope of continuing in the AFL. He was recently quoted as saying “at 21 obviously I still have a dream to play AFL football but it’s a slight chance at best, so I will play for the Bulldogs unless some miracle happens and I am snapped up in the draft”.

Hopefully he gets his wish if only, at the least, to be able to say he had an “injury free” stab at an AFL career. And if not, he certainly has the abilities to excel in the TFL (providing he maintains fitness), and I look forward to keeping tabs on his career.

Ashley McGrath - #9

By [doddgey](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 21

Goals: 26

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 89%

Best and Fairest: 25 votes (7th)

Dreamteam: 1312 points; \$256,900
(-\$28,700)

Supercoach: 1441 points; \$313,400
(-\$56,400)



Another solid year for McGrath which saw him become Vossy's Mr Fixit at times.

Throughout the year he was placed in roles to plug gaps or make an impact. He went forward a number of times and kicked his second best career haul with 26 goals. He was also used in the midfield where his hardness at the ball provided plenty of support for the young Lions. His primary role though remained down back where his defensive pressure produced a career high 75 tackles.

There were 4 games that stood out this year for Ash in my opinion,

- Round 7 against the Gold Coast where he kicked 6 goals including 3 in the final quarter to almost single handedly steal the win.
- Round 10 against Adelaide where his crumbing work produced 4 goals including 3 in the second quarter.
- Round 15 against Port where he ended up with 19 disposals, 5 tackles and 2 goals.
- Round 17 against Geelong where he amassed 24 disposals and had his best game of the year for mine.

2012 will see Ash McGrath become the third most experienced player on our list and without a doubt one of the most valuable.

Niall McKeever - #40

by [POBT](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 10

Goals: 1

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 94%

Best and Fairest: 9.5 votes (20th)

Dreamteam: 360 points; \$149,200
(+\$56,700)

Supercoach: 392 points; \$185,900
(+\$82,300)

NEAFL:

Games: 7

Goals: 2



Niall McKeever was probably the surprise packet of the 2011 season.

A rookie listed player in 2011, he was elevated to the senior list largely out of necessity, only to play 10 senior games and give every indication that has a future in senior footy.

McKeever had a good season in the Reserves, culminating in an impressive performance for Queensland in the interstate match against WA. He played significant minutes in the ruck against an AFL experienced ruckman and was duly named in the best. Injuries to Daniel Merrett and Mitch Clark meant that the Lions were short a tall defender and a back up ruck. McKeever's form in the ruck at reserves and State level gave him the opportunity to play seniors although it would be fair to say that expectations were low. While his debut was hardly spectacular, he competed well, particularly in defensive roles. He certainly improved with more footy and it was a pleasure to watch him learn on the job. Perhaps his most impressive performance was against the Pies and the competition's premier big man in Travis Cloke. While Cloke got hold of him on occasion, McKeever certainly was not disgraced and showed plenty.

McKeever's form tailed off as the season drew to a close. However, it was still a remarkable effort for a young, tall Irishman to do as well as he did given his lack of footy experience. Some of the pieces are there that give hope that McKeever could hold down CHB in the future. He has a massive engine and the height and athleticism to compete in the air with almost any player in the comp. He is aggressive and seems to enjoy the physical contest. However, he lacks bulk and, at age 22, it will be interesting to see if he has the ability to put on more weight. His kicking action would rate

among the weirdest in the comp and yet, he managed to minimise disposal errors by foot. It would be nice if he could get the mechanics a little more consistent though.

I don't have a lot of confidence that he is an ongoing option as a 2nd ruck. However, I'd love to see him spend a summer on the weights and in the ear of Merrett and Patfull to learn the deep, dark secrets of playing in defence. Good key position players are hard to find and getting one from Ireland would be a massive boost to our side's development. As it stands, I think he's a long way off being a genuine tall defender but he showed good signs in 2011. Similar development in 2012 and we'll see a pretty good footballer running around in the number 40 jumper.

Matthew 'Goose' Maguire - #36

by [Nuggo](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 15

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 2

Time on ground: 92%

Best and Fairest: 12 votes (17th)

Dreamteam: 630 points; \$178,900 (-\$110,900)

Supercoach: 824 points; \$270,800 (-\$76,100)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 3

Goals: 0

Will he be a Lion in 2012?

After a season back from a long lay off it was evident that Maguire wasn't quite the same player. 2011 was about getting a bit more out of his body and concreting a position in the defensive half of the team.

The NAB Cup provided a curve ball in that Maguire was played in the ruck. Noises were coming from the Lions camp that he looked set to play the "mobile" backup ruckman.

The coaching staffs plan came crashing down when Maguire sustained a quad niggle that occurred in a general training session just prior to the start of the season. This kept him out from Rounds 1 – 5. With the side struggling Maguire was rushed back into the side for Round 6 against Richmond at the MCG. Maybe a run in the reserves first wouldn't have hurt as he looked to be lacking in match fitness.

With a lack of key forwards Maguire was trialled up in the forward fifty and while not totally foreign to him he struggled to have an impact. With Merrett going down it wasn't long before he was back in the defensive part of the ground.

Maguire struggled to keep the No.1 forwards at bay, which was evident by the display of Port Adelaide's Jay Schulz in Round 15 who dominated him and collected seven goals for his troubles. James Podsiadly in Round 17 also snagged a lazy eight goals for which the coach publicly attacked Maguire. Players not helping by dropping back in the hole made this period look worse for him but a combination of playing too far off his man and a lack of initial leg speed was his undoing.



Come Round 20 Maguire was dropped but found himself back in the team for Round 21 against Gold Coast due to injuries. This round was a turning point for him as the following round against Collingwood he played his best game of the season.

Maguire's quad injury at the beginning of the season may have been the catalyst for a poor season that righted itself in the last couple of rounds. Never the less, it is evident that for a long time his style has been to play off his man and rely on his reading of the play and confidence in taking a mark inside the defensive fifty. Where teams make their quick forwards lead to the open space and hit them lace out Maguire is shown up. Playing on forwards that don't react as quickly or don't read the play as well as him may be the best option going forward.

Being out of contract at the end of this year, it would appear those last four games may have thrown him a life-line. If the Lions don't offer him a new contract then it is hard to say where he will end up. If he is offered a new contract then consideration should be given to trimming down. Whilst he may lose some strength he may just gain that fraction more acceleration over those first five steps.

Daniel Merrett - #21

by [BigCat2](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 10

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 98%

Best and Fairest: 20.5 votes (=9th)

Dreamteam: 590 points; \$218,200 (+\$14,200)

Supercoach: 861 points; \$356,800 (+\$42,000)

After a forgettable year in 2010, it was joy to Lions fans when Merrett returned to form at the start of 2011. On many occasions last year he was seen to be lumbering around, and unable to contest with opposition's key forwards.

This year, his best attributes – speed, size and competitiveness – have returned with a vigour. It may well be due to the new fitness regimen put in place by Burton, but he looked much fitter and faster. Through the early rounds he was making many athletic spoils with his closing speed and leap. He regularly killed the contest with authority, thumping the ball well clear of danger. Very few forwards were able to get the better of him, and even when Jack Riewoldt kicked 5 goals, Merrett did not disgrace himself.

His skills and decision making, which had always been his weaker side, seemed to improve overall, apart from a few obvious howlers. The solidity he provided allowed the Lions' defensive unit to play with confidence, and by Round 10 he was being spoken by many as a possibility for All Australian Fullback.

However, disaster struck in Round 11 against Sydney, where he sustained a stress fracture of his back that ended his year. It is unclear why this injury - commonly seen in young sportsmen and cricket fast bowlers – occurred, therefore the ramifications are unknown. However, after a lengthy rehabilitation period and full pre-season, with age still on his side, we should be confident of Merrett returning to his best.



Jesse O'Brien - #34

by [POBT](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 12

Goals: 3

Sub: on = 3, off = 0

Emergency: 2

Time on ground: 69%

Best and Fairest: 5 votes (23rd)

Dreamteam: 625 points; \$162,900 (+\$17,600)

Supercoach: 564 points; \$170,400 (-\$4,800)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 2

Goals: 0



O'Brien was another one of the Lions' youngsters who showed more than a glimpse that he will become a good footballer in time. As a forward of centre midfielder/flanker, who occasionally went to a back flank too, O'Brien showed poise and efficiency with the ball in hand. This is something that the Lions midfield brigade is crying out for.

After a good pre-season, O'Brien was selected for round 1 and held his spot for the first 11 games of the year. Whilst not overly prolific in terms of possessions, he showed a knack of knowing where to be. His kicking was particularly impressive - although not overly penetrating in terms of distance, his kicking is very effective, particularly moving the ball inside 50. Against Richmond, 8 of his 13 kicks were to targets inside the forward 50. This is where I can see him playing a big role for the Lions in the future.

Voss used him as the substitute on a few occasions, probably due to his lack of running capacity. This is the clear area for improvement over the summer. The ability to run a game out is integral in modern footy and O'Brien has tended to fade out of games when he hits the wall. He won't be alone in hitting the running track this summer - a few of his young teammates need similar improvement in their footy.

After reverting to AFLQ level for a couple of weeks mid-season, O'Brien returned to senior action, only to suffer a leg injury that ruled him out for the remainder of the year. Reports from the club suggest that he'll be ready to go for the pre-season, where he will hopefully stack on a bit of muscle and increase his engine. When he improves in those areas, I am of the opinion that he has the requisite skill and smarts to play a very important role in 2012.

O'Brien's form in 2011 was rewarded with a 2 year contract extension, meaning that he will be on the books until 2013 at least.

Joel Patfull - #24

by [blynd freddie](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 18

Goals: 0

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 92%

Best and Fairest: 20.5 votes (=9th)

Dreamteam: 676 points; \$136,400 (-\$71,800)

Supercoach: 868 points; \$179,300 (-\$96,200)

A great trivia question for those that care...

Q: Who led the team out onto the ground to kick off the 2011 home & away season?

A: Of course it was Joel Patfull who was asked to lead the team out and 'break the banner' in round one against Fremantle for his 100th game...



If the review was to be given in a simplistic 'old school' style of - Pass or Fail - then in the eyes of most supporters Joel Patfull would receive a pass mark for his 2011 season but with a possible cautious warning in the comments column – Joel has had an honest and serviceable year although I am concerned for possible repercussions regarding his stats levels dropping below career averages and that this maybe a warning sign for limited game opportunities in 2012?

On showing his parents his mother was heard yelling... "Warning sign? Don't they know Joel finished 9th in this year's Class Championships... "AND", she went on... "He has not finished any lower than 11th over the last five years?" as she raced off to book a meeting with those responsible at the school of "purely observational opinion".

Whilst on stats it is also worth noting that Patfull and Merrett [equal 9th in 2011 B&F] also had a close finish [2nd and 1st respectfully] with the highest/worst ratio of Frees For verses Frees Against this year. IMO if turnovers are bad, then backline turn-overs are conceivably reprehensible.

Re this year's high B&F finish it seems the club was again comfortable with the trade off of low stats verses his ability to match up on either tall or small forwards as well as playing the occasional role up forward himself.

He has now become more what I might call a consistent old fashioned "honest toiler" defender. As previously mentioned he was not a big ball winner in 2011 with 1st possessions and clearances both

only totalling 2 for the year - he now seems to be more of a defensive run with type specialising in the more invisible stats of 1%'ers and spoils – although he did achieve a career high of 6 rebound 50's in the Rnd10 game against Adelaide back in May.

Unlike many of his team-mates Joel has had a relatively good run with injuries until early in the return Rnd20 game against Adelaide. Until around the five minute mark of this game he had only missed 4 games since debuting in round 8 of 2006. But his luck turned when he was chasing Taylor Walker on a lead and he partially stumbled. He kept his feet, but his hand had come in contact with the ground, and he immediately called to be interchanged. It seemed very innocuous, but after a brief inspection by the doctor he was subbed out with the red vest. It was later revealed his right hand had been fractured in two places. Sadly for Joel this was to be his final game for the 2011 season, he was to go on and miss the next four games – doubling the amount of games missed since debut.

His better games of the 2011 season – using the B&F votes as a guide - would mostly likely include his round five stopper on Nick Riewoldt [STK][2 votes in BF-MVP], round 8 on Patty Ryder [ESS] [Joel's most disp [16] for a game in 2011 – 3mvp], another stopping role in round 10 on Rodney Dangerfield [ADE] where Joel almost doubled the stats of Patrick and his round 17 game on Stevie J [GEE] – although no mvp votes.

I think if the club is to move forward and closer to finals aspirations Joel will need to continue his quality defensive work but continued development is still required when the ball is going the other way and earn more the respect from his opponents – Betterment in this side of his game to new levels next year IMO, would entrench a permanent position as one of our best 22 in 2012.

Jared Polec - #4

By [blynd freddie](#)

Games: 3

Goals: 1

Sub: on = 1, off = 0

Emergency: 1

Time on ground: 62%

Best and Fairest: 0 votes (=38th)

Dreamteam: 187 points; \$169,100 (+\$24,600)

Supercoach: 152 points; \$182,200 (+\$13,600)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 8

Goals: 7

Jared's first year at the club was a mixture of enthusiastic hype, injuries, suggestions of work related to 'some defensive aspects of his game' and perhaps a couple of glimpses of what we might expect in 2012 and beyond.



The Anticipation:

Kevin Sheehan said – “Left-footed long-kicking player who excelled in 2010 NAB AFL Under-18 Championships, winning All-Australian honours. Has pace and composure around goal with impressive form at senior level in the SANFL.”

Emma Quayle said – “Polec is a super-classy player and one of the better finishers in the draft pool.”

Dennis Cometti said – “you can tell the players that have something special and he's got that something special.”

Defensive Aspects:

Jared missed late NAB challenge games due to being sent back to the twos to improve the 'defensive aspects' of his game. IMO his attack on the ball, run and carry and delivery all seemed okay... But – without it actually being quoted anywhere there were suggestions from some quarters, of a lack of accountability when the ball was heading back the other way. Polec gained selection in round 3 after Voss had suggested "He's gone away and worked on (the defensive side of his game), spent some time on it, so we're satisfied with where that is at the moment, and as a result he gets his game."

His first quarter of this debut match was a beauty he “bolted out of the blocks with 11 touches in the first quarter and impressed when he put his body on the line”. He finished with 18 disposals for the game. Round 4 was a bye for the Lions, Polec then played the next two rounds before again returning to the seconds.

Injuries:

After returning to the reserves and playing several games, Jared apparently injured his knee at training and had surgery to repair a "bucket handle tear" in the lateral meniscus ligament, which was to keep him out for around a month. He returned to play around a half dozen more games in the twos before he had an arthroscope on his troublesome knee in mid August. The club decided to get it cleaned up because it was limiting his movement capabilities. Polec was then put into cotton wool for the season.

Positives:

From what I had seen of Jared in a couple of preseason and season proper games I am confident we have a player and a darn good ‘un at that. Although he was the youngest at the club he was actually ‘bigger’ than Jack Redden in his debut year... could actually be 1cm taller and around 5 to 6kgs heavier. He has silky outside skills and I think if the coaches can assist with incorporating and improving the ‘head over the ball’ inside aspects of Jared’s game I feel our 2011 patience will be greatly rewarded not only next year but well into the future.

James Polkinghorne - #31

by [blynd freddie](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 22

Goals: 14

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 80%

Best and Fairest: 10.5 votes (19th)

Dreamteam: 1448 points; \$285,300
(+\$53,000)

Supercoach: 1411 points; \$347,400 (+\$84,600)



In 2011 there was certainly an expectation for improvement from supporters and also, seemingly by the playing group as James had been [nominated](#) to a short list of possible vice captain/leadership group replacements for Black and Power. The nominations were to be based on the following selection criteria put forward by the players late last year.

1. Ability to influence the game in a senior match.
2. Professional in approach.
3. Living the club's values.
4. Bring others up to level.
5. Communication and accessibility.

[Rockliff, Drummond and Clark received the nod]

I have included the above in the 2011 review because although there is the belief that Polkinghorne has the "Ability to influence the game in a senior match", we unfortunately have not yet witnessed it.

James has now completed his 4th season with the club and has played 61 career games. He was listed as playing all 22 games this season although his round 8 game against the bombers only lasted around 5 minutes after being [hit by Hocking](#) and subsequently being subbed off with concussion, prior to getting a touch.

James has continued to develop his physical prowess under the new medical team, he had in previous seasons struggled with quad and hamstring injuries but in 2011 was one of only five Lions to play all 22 games. His role, other than being the coach's pet [[according](#) to Blacky] is still not clear, a defensive HF or a hard at the ball midfield run-with utility would still best describe Polkinghorne's 2011 roles.

The half forward position is arguably one of the more difficult positions on the ground to play and although James kicked 14 goals 17 behinds and had 12 goal assists this would still rank him well behind your Stevie J's and Rioli types, he also falls behind the averages in disposals and time on ground percentages when comparing those of both Raines and Stiller, although James had marginal increases in 2011 with his career disposals and tackle averages and was also ranked third at the club for inside 50's.

On at times he still struggled with his decision-making and effective disposals. He has been described as "sometimes he can be exciting, sometimes he can be frustrating" it may well have been the above suggested deficiencies that were possibly reflected by only receiving votes in 9 of his twenty-two 2011 games in the B&F.

Personally, I'm comfortable in giving a pass mark for 2011 but now that he is about to turn 23 years of age and has more than 50 games behind him one would expect the 2012 review to be assessed more stringently on the realisation of results than on signs of potential development.

Luke Power - #6

By [blynd freddie](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 20

Goals: 19

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 84%

Best and Fairest: 17 votes (13th)

Dreamteam: 1554 points; \$297,700 (-\$65,200)

Supercoach: 1662 points; \$365,000 (-\$60,200)

Gee, where do you start when reviewing Luke Powers 2011? It was a big year both on and off the field.

- When stepping down from the leadership group prior to the new season he was quoted as saying he was more than happy to hand the reins to "generation next" and "I don't need a title to do what I do,"
- A Dad for the first time,
- Achieved AFL Life Membership by playing his 300th game for the Brisbane Lions in round 8,
- Appointed president of the AFL Players' Association and
- Retires from the Brisbane Lions having played 282 AFL senior, 28 pre-season, 3 international and 1 state of origin for a total of 314 games.

Luke missed round 1 for the first time since 1999 apparently having slipped a disc in his lower back whilst bending to lift a baby bath full of water the night before the opening game against Freo.

Luke received B&F votes in 12 of his 20 games played, with his round 3 game against the Dees clearly his best for the year.

Luke's year was again mixed with games as a high forward and with rotations through the middle – his games up forward resulted in him kicking 19 goals 9 behinds and was credited with 12 goal assists. Luke had a couple of bags of 4 and one of 3 goals but in a sign of the times did struggle when the opposition assigned attacking run-with players on him. His round 6 HFF game against Richmond where Houli had 30 disposals against Lukes 16 and the round 14 Freo game where Palmer was given a run-with role being prime examples.



Luke was ranked 7th with a disposal average per game of just under 20 and with 4 tackles per game 6th. He also finished the season well gaining B&F votes in each of his last 6 games.

I think I'll close off Lukes 2011 review with a couple of quotes from late 2010 - "You are a long time retired, you definitely want to play and be involved for as long as you can." And with possible irony... "I think at the moment there are two great teams in Queensland. The Brisbane Lions and the Brisbane Lions reserves."

Time will tell if the Voss/Power call was too early but as many have already said "whatever happens from here in he has been one of the game's great servants".

Thanks for the memories Luke Power.

Albert Proud - #2

By [thoselionslads](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 0

Emergency: 0

Dreamteam: 0 points; \$206,100

Supercoach: 0 points; \$253,000

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 21

Goals: 26

Unfortunately, season 2011 never got underway for Albert. Continuously plagued by off field incidents and personal issues throughout his short career at the Lions, Albert's football career at Brisbane came to an abrupt end before a ball had been bounced in 2011.

Whilst it is easy to sit back and write about Proud's off field problems, it is quite sobering to contemplate what could have been. The Lions did everything right by Proud and in hindsight I think the best thing for Albert's football was probably to be drafted interstate.

In his 29 games for Brisbane, Albert showed glimpses of his undoubted talent although he never really 'clicked' and cemented his spot. Most of his AFL football was played as a small forward although his best position was undoubtedly in the midfield.

Unfortunately, Albert never really developed the tank to truly stake his claim as an AFL midfielder. His fierce attack on the ball and man had him compared to Byron Pickett in his junior days and Simon Black has mentioned that Albert's hard hitting nature had opposition players looking over their shoulder.

After his release earlier in the year, Albert ventured back to his junior club Mt Gravatt to play in the NEAFL. Proud enjoyed a good season, representing QLD in Perth and finishing 3rd in Mt Gravatt's Best & Fairest. There are whispers around the traps that a few clubs could be interested in picking up Albert. The talent is there to work with - it's just a matter of Albert deciding to make the most of it.



Andrew Raines - #29

by [Nicky G](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 16

Goals: 1

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 2

Time on ground: 82%

Best and Fairest: 17.5 votes (12th)

Dreamteam: 888 points; \$242,000
(-\$13,800)

Supercoach: 857 points; \$271,100 (-\$29,100)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 4

Goals: 0



Found His Niche

After a number years of disappointing on the half back line Raines appears to have re-invented himself, and re-invigorated his career, by becoming our nominated tagger. His pace, endurance and aggression have been put to good use and he has claimed a number of big scalps this year. He has also helped our stoppage setup by providing a bigger body amongst our cubs.

Andrew's year started strongly, earning coaches votes in Round 1 blanketing Mundy then Pavlich. This impressive form continued until Round 7 where he was concussed by an errant Swallow elbow. He missed 1 week but was then relegated to the reserves, returning to the seniors in Round 14 against Fremantle to even better form. He was now rarely beaten in the possession count against his designated tag, as well as picking up clearances. It may be during the time he spent in the reserves he was asked to tweak his game style- focusing more on winning the ball as well as negating. His best games for the year were against Port, accruing 29 possessions and leading the team with 7 clearances, while keeping Danyle Pearce relatively quiet, as well as the West Coast game, restricting Andrew Embley to 7 disposals with 21 of his own.

Some of this good work was undone by his long time achilles heel- poor decision making with the ball and a tendency to miss targets by both hand and foot. This aspect of his game has however improved to a degree this year, and if it can continue to do so his place in the team should be assured.

The one concern is that his contract finishes at the end of 2012, and if Richard Newell, our NSW scholarship holder, continues his development as a specialist tagger into next year it may be tough for Raines to hang onto his spot.

Jack Redden - #30

by [doddgey](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 22

Goals: 14

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 83%

Best and Fairest: 35 votes (3rd)

Dreamteam: 2316 points; \$430,200 (+\$100,600)

Supercoach: 2177 points; \$478,900 (+\$108,400)

Before reading on, check this out: [Footywire - Player Statistics comparison](#)

Do I have your attention now?

Am I comparing Jack to Judd, well not really (not yet anyway) however the similarity in the size and stats is scary. This kid is a gun and he is only going to get better. 2011 was a breakout year. A quick look at his achievements:

- 3rd in the Lions best and fairest
- Winner Shaun Hart Most Courageous Player award
- Nominated MVP from the Lions
- 4th most tackles in the AFL with 166

After a slight interruption to his pre season with a hand injury Redden began the year with a massive career high tackle count of 13 against Freo. He would repeat this number again in round 15 against Port. He also registered 12 tackles three times throughout the year. In round 5 he played one of his best games of the year against St Kilda where he had 27 disposals and kicked 2 goals and also polled his very first Brownlow vote. This game also got Jack onto the Herald Sun's **Mark Robinson's** radar with the following:

“When clubs such as Brisbane inject a group of young players - Hanley, Redden, Rockliff, Bewick, Polkinghorne, Cornelius, Banfield - it takes a period of time to automatically identify them by sight. Usually, when watching their games, you ask: Who's that? When you keep asking the same question and the answers keeps coming back, Redden, Rockliff, Redden, Banfield, Redden, Redden ... well, you get the picture. Jacky-boy is a jet. His side-step goal against the Saints in a slog shows he has purpose, confidence and awareness. First and last time this will be said: He wears No.30.”



In round 12 against Carlton Redden had a career high 32 disposals, a feat that he would match again in round 16 against Hawthorn. Redden also kicked 2 goals against the Hawks including a snodger from the 50 metre line. Jack brought up his 50th game for the Lions in round 20 against the Crows and has been very dependable, not missing a game since debuting in round 15 2009.

To me Jack epitomises what Voss wants the Lions brand to stand for – hard at it and uncompromising. His will for a contest is at times breathtaking and one has got to love the little bit of mongrel that has appeared in his game this year. He has improved his kicking and is now putting himself into positions to score goals. Two stand out in my mind: the first was against Freo at Subi where he cleaned up a spill from Brown in front of goal after gut running a long way. The second was against West Coast where he took a sublime handpass from Black to goal from the 50. Jack has also become stronger overhead this year and has become a very dependable mark.

You could not do a review on Redden without highlighting just how good his defence is, this kid has become the baby faced assassin! It does not matter how big they are, he brings them to the ground and his chase downs are inspiring. God help the opposition in a few years time when he is at his physical peak. Thanks for the year Jack, I hope you finish your career with us because you are going to be a star.

Bryce Retzlaff - #37

by [TheBrownDog](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 11

Goals: 6

Sub: on = 0, off = 4

Emergency: 5

Time on ground: 76%

Best and Fairest: 2 votes (=30th)

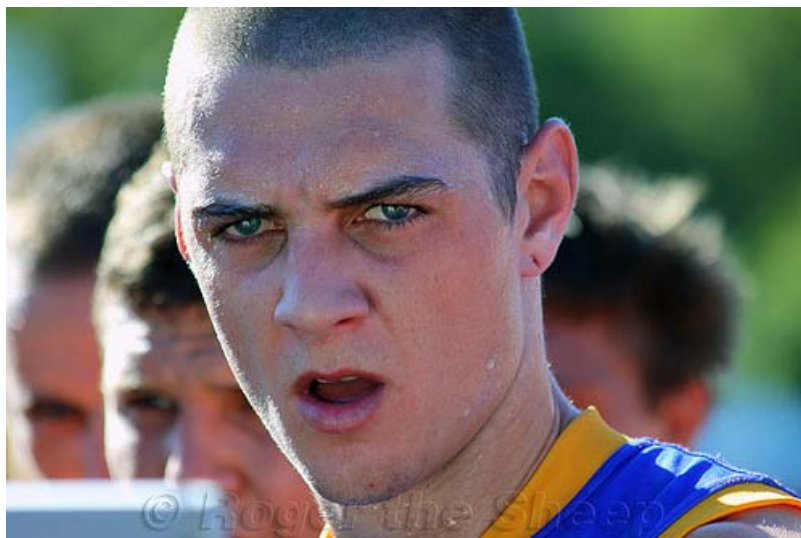
Dreamteam: 378 points; \$131,500
(+\$33,900)

Supercoach: 404 points; \$158,800 (+\$48,600)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 7

Goals: 20



With long term injuries to Jonathan Brown and Brent Staker, the 2011 season certainly provided opportunities for young tall forwards to show their wares. On a Brisbane list containing very little key position depth, there were only two real senior listed players to which we could turn – and those two options could not have been more diametrically opposed.

In one corner we have Aaron Cornelius, who oozes natural, innate football ability yet harms his chances through lack of fitness and workrate. In the other corner we have Bryce Retzlaff, an absolute workhorse who leaves absolutely nothing out on the paddock, yet is as rough and raw as tall forward prospects can get. What a mouth watering prospect we would have if the best abilities of both could be combined. Alas, barring a sudden and unforeseen breakthrough in gene splicing technology, we must gauge each player on their own merits.

Retzlaff's energy and workrate makes him a consistently influential player at NEAFL level. He runs his guts out, leads constantly, brings other forwards into the game and gets plenty of scoring shots himself - and in most cases, sprays the resulting kick. 😊

Poor goal kicking aside, Retzlaff's consistent endeavour inevitably attracted the attention of the Lions senior match committee desperate for genuine forward options and 'Retzy' earned his senior debut in **round 7** for the inaugural **QClash**. His effort was, as expected, very good, racking up 12 disposals but failing to trouble the scorers. He would have to wait until his round 9 vs North Melbourne to notch up his first AFL major, opportunistically soccering a loose ball through the sticks that had spilled off the back of a marking contest. That same game was Retzlaff's first AFL level win, and he sang the song with trademark pride and passion.

His best game for the year came in the following round vs Adelaide at AAMI stadium where he managed another 12 disposals, but more importantly took 7 marks and kicked two goals at crucial

times in the match. The first goal to put the Lions in the lead in the shadows of half time, the second late in the game to put the final nail in the Crows coffin. He backed up the following week with another two goals against the Swans.

His remaining six games for the year were nothing to write home about. The effort remained, but his form was patchy and inconsistent. It is worth noting that Jonathan Brown's horrific facial injuries robbed the Lions of their forward line general for the vast majority of the season. If the big fella can get on the park more often in 2012, the development of our next generation of forwards will be greatly enhanced. In Retzlaff's case, the main lesson to learn from the champ is how to find more of the footy and get more reward for the effort he puts in.

While he did show considerable progress this year, the reality is that Retzlaff has started from a long way back. If he is to become a quality player worthy of a regular spot in the Lions best 22, then he has much more ground to make up. His work ethic has taken him this far but it won't take him all the way – working hard must evolve into working “smart”, and be accompanied by demonstrated consistency and the ability to damage the opposition on the scoreboard. The good thing however about his desire and workrate is that he will not die wondering. If there is an AFL standard player inside him, he will find it.

Daniel Rich - #10

By [Snuka](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 16

Goals: 14

Sub: on = 1, off = 0

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 75%

Best and Fairest: 16 votes (15th)

Dreamteam: 1201 points; \$275,100 (-\$37,700)

Supercoach: 1256 points; \$301,200 (-\$79,200)

NEAFL:

Games: 1

Get to the front of him Richy!

Disclaimer: I missed two of his apparently better games against Freo and Gold Coast so may not be completely qualified for this.

Was always going to be tough for Rich to match his brilliant first year and I had hoped that he would get out of the rut he seemed to get himself into last year.

Started off well (from what I've heard) with a solid game against Freo (25 possies, 2 goals, 2 B&F votes) but wasn't near his best for most of the first half of the year. Too often he was waiting for his opponent to get the ball, going for the tackle rather than the hard ball get, a problem that plagued him in 2010. He was probably one of the main culprits when it came to mid group being unable to wrest momentum through lack of running or just being unable to win the ball and impose himself at the stoppages. I would even go as far to say he was a bit of a liability at the centre bounces but he wasn't alone. Dan never needed to get much footy to have an impact but seemed to be looking for the short kick or handpass more often. Not sure if this was a specific instruction, but the Lion's inability to give their team mates any sort of space at the clearances or perhaps our lack of a functioning forward line meant that he often had to go the shorter, less direct option.

His game against the Gold Coast (22p, 3.3g, 2.5 votes) was impressive on paper and from eyewitness accounts and played some solid if not spectacular footy in the next month against Essendon and Adelaide. If it seems harsh on him it's only because I'm such a fan. We know those performances are not as good as his best. A struggling but improving midfield wasn't able to give him the space he likes and he himself was still finding it tough to win the hard ball as we know he can.



An injury that kept him out for 5 or 6 games seemed to rejuvenate him and the silver lining in all this was that he played some of his best games in the last 2 rounds. You could see that even in the minimal game time he got being subbed on in the 2nd half against the Pies (13 possies) that he's attack on the ball looked to be back. Played his best game of the year (that I actually saw) the next week against WC (27p, 2g, 7 clearances, 6 l50s, 9 tackles). He looked to be winning more ball, and kicking longer than he had for most of the year. Continued his good form and was among the best in a side that was smashed by Sydney (18p, 1g).

It's more than the stats in the last couple of rounds that are making me look forward to next year for Dan. He was ferocious at the pill and was winning clean clearances. In 2012 he has got to continue to work on his positioning at the contest and attack on the ball and I hope that Woey and Voss are looking at ways for the midfield group to work together to give him as much space as possible. He is a weapon and if we can get a 4 quarter performance from all our midfielders, we will see just how good he really can be.

Tom Rockliff - #38

by [Grimreepah](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 20

Goals: 12

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 0

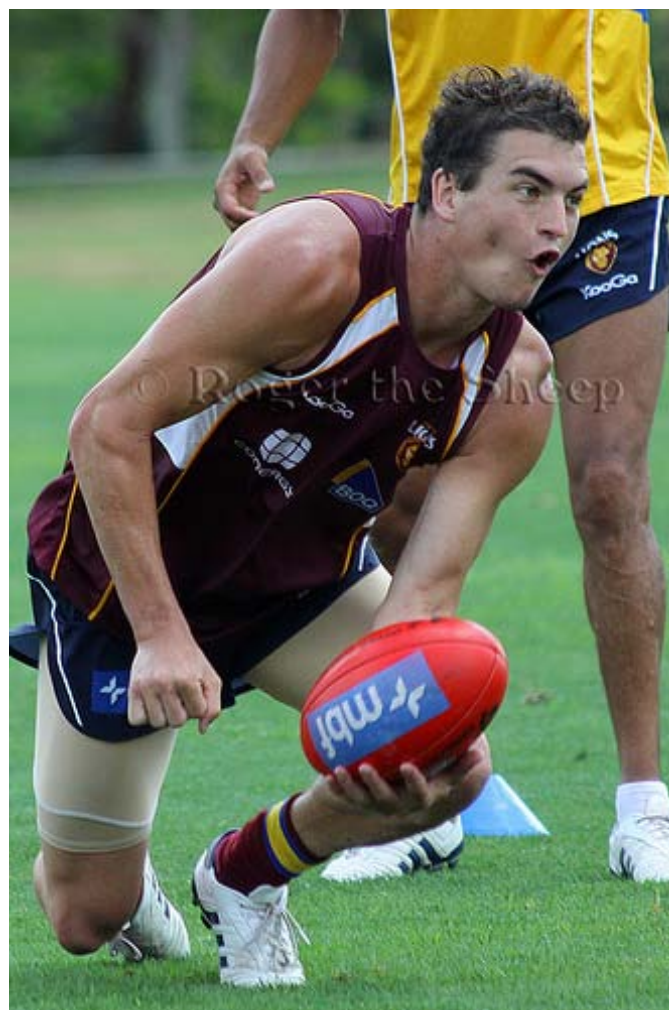
Time on ground: 80%

Best and Fairest: 37.5 votes (1st)

Dreamteam: 2122 points; \$453,100
(+\$90,900)

Supercoach: 2163 points; \$544,700
(+\$126,500)

- 5th highest average Dreamteam score in the league
- 10th highest average Supercoach score in the league
- 8th highest average disposals per game in the league
- Brisbane Lions MVP nominee



Becoming elite

Vice captain – After an injury free off season*, and another strong showing in the NAB Cup*, Tom Rockliff was elected as one of three new vice captains, along with Mitch Clark and Josh Drummond*. This was remarkable for the fact that he was 21 years old and had only played 20 games, but it was not unexpected. Rocky had not only been setting a good example on the field, but was proving to be media savvy, including going into damage control after Fevola and Proud had some run-ins with the law*. But the question remained, how would the responsibility affect someone who was still finding his feet in the game?

Early season form – Rockliff started off very similarly to how he finished 2010. He was accumulating a lot of possession, he was doing his fair share of defensive work, he was clever by hand, he was reliable by foot, but he was not having that significant influence on the game that the great players do. This was partly because he is not blessed with natural athleticism (Dennis Commeti says he runs like a bricklayer*) and partly because he is not penetrating by foot. But it was also because he was playing fairly safe. Still he was extremely consistent and one of the Lions' better players.

First injury – Thus far in his career Rockliff had been very resilient to the demands of senior footy, but in round nine against North Melbourne he was subbed off with a leg injury. Initially thought to be an achilles injury*, there was relief when it was only a strained calf*. In the end he only missed two weeks and played the rest of the season injury free.

The Staker incident – In round 20 against Adelaide there was a bit of controversy when Rockliff and Staker had a few heated words with one another*. This was initiated by Rockliff and was probably due to his sense of responsibility as vice captain. Opinions were divided on the matter. On the one hand it was thought not to be a good look to have players being demonstrative with one another, but on the other hand, in a side that wasn't winning many games, it was refreshing to see someone showing some passion. It also showed the inherent difficulty of a young leader having to address senior team mates. At a guess the coaching staff would have been glad that he had the cahones to challenge another player to lift his game, but would have advised him that he could have got his message across in a more appropriate way.

End of season form – Rockliff finished the year in blistering form. Firstly he upped his possession count even more – he averaged 22.7 disposals up to round nine and 29.1 disposals from round 12 onwards. But even more pleasing was that he was starting to hurt the opposition more with his ball use. In his last seven games he kicked seven goals and racked up 40 clearances. And in his last two games he had 13 and 14 tackles respectively, showing that this part of his game is also improving. The best game of his career came in round 23 against West Coast, finishing with 30 disposals, 10 clearances, 13 tackles and 2 goals*.

Best and fairest* – At season's end, Rockliff became the youngest winner of the Merrett-Murray Medal since Michael Voss in 1995. Indicative of his late season form was the fact that at after 11 rounds he was sitting outside the top 10* and with four rounds remaining he was in fifth spot*. The voting* shows that in the last handful of games, the coaches believed he was starting to become an elite player.

Andrew Hamilton - A strange sub-plot emerged throughout the year with Rockliff falling out of favour with the Courier Mail's senior AFL journalist. Early in the year Hamilton wrote 'for mine, Rockliff is not an A grader and could face battles getting a game down the track as the side improves'*. Later he accused Rockliff of 'playing for Supercoach points'* and at the end of the season he said that Rockliff was an undeserving winner of the Merrett-Murray medal*.

Looking forward – Obviously Rockliff is now one of the most important players at the club. He extended his contract by another two years (until 2014*) suggesting he is committed to the long term future of the club. He has demonstrated remarkable consistency suggesting he is not prone to form slumps. He handled his first year as a leader with aplomb and he is still improving. So how much better can he get? He is already well in advance of what his supposed potential was, so perhaps it would be unwise to make any more predictions about what his limits are.

Needless to say that all things are pointing to him one day being captain of the Brisbane Lions.

Sam Sheldon - #3

By [doddgey](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 16

Goals: 9

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 1

Time on ground: 85%

Best and Fairest: 16.5 votes (14th)

Dreamteam: 805 points; \$240,600
(+\$57,100)

Supercoach: 835 points; \$289,600 (+\$85,200)

[NEAFL:](#)

Games: 4

Goals: 1



The glass is half full

Few players divide the supporter base like Sam Sheldon, with very few sitting on the sidelines. Whilst much maligned by a certain Melbourne radio station 📻, Sam's year has been a pretty good one with plenty of development. After an injury and illness plagued few years Sheldon completed his first full pre season and impressed the new HP manager Brett Burton with his efforts.

His first game in the seniors came in round 8 against the Bombers with a reasonable defensive display. Sam showed that he is capable of being an AFL player in round 9 against North where in difficult conditions he showed good intensity for the ball and a clean pair of hands. After a few quieter games Sheldon had one of his best games against Port kicking 2 goals and laying 7 tackles in his new forward pocket role. His best game for the year came in the second Q clash where he had a season high 16 disposals and kicked 2 goals.

Sheldon ended up playing 16 games this year (13 players played more games and two players played the same). With this in mind it is interesting to have a look at where he finished in some stats against his team mates. Tackles – 11th, goals – 12th, goal assists – 13th, contested possessions – 15th, disposals – 15th, and marks – 16th.

All in all a good result and these figures must concern anybody who has made a statement about how many games (or lack thereof) Sam will play for the Lions. Sheldon still needs to work on a number of things however his kicking penetration has improved as has his defensive pressure. I

look forward to Sam's continual improvement next year with the extra benefit of seeing the Number 3 out there on the paddock.

Brent Staker - #14

By [Nuggo](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 7

Goals: 4

Sub: on = 0, off = 1

Emergency: 0

Time on ground: 77%

Best and Fairest: 4.5 votes (=24th)

Dreamteam: 376 points; \$245,500 (-\$59,900)

Supercoach: 469 points; \$359,300 (-\$66,900)

NEAFL:

Games: 2

Goals: 0

ACL Victim x 2



After having somewhat of a surprising and consistent year in 2010 expectations were high for Staker in 2011. Putting in a strong preseason he was tracking well but Round 1 proved to be the start of a shocking year with Staker sustaining an ACL injury in his right knee in the third term.

To LARS or not to LARS was the question now. Obviously wanting to get back as soon as possible and it only being Round 1 the Lions and Staker (after talking to the West Coast Eagles medical staff) opted for the [LARS](#) treatment.

Reportedly the treatment went well and Staker started his three months rehabilitation program. Round 14 he played his first game in the reserves where although he got through 80 minutes he did not perform to the required level the coaching staff were looking for.

Round 17 Staker made his return to the AFL against Geelong at the Gabba. Playing on Tom Hawkins his performance started well but Hawkins eventually got on top. It is fair to say he was struggling to find his groove. A [confrontation](#) with Vice Captain Tom Rockliff against Adelaide in Round 20 nearing half time put a question mark to whether he was committing 100% or not.

Round 21 against the Gold Coast Staker was moved up forward whereby he provided a target and played with confidence which showed in his contested marking. Round 23 against West Coast proved to be costly with Staker injuring the same ACL in a contest with Nic Naitanui.

After losing some faith in the LARS treatment the [traditional surgery](#) was opted for this time round. The bad luck continued with Staker receiving news that there was complications and that a reconstruction may not be possible well into 2012. With rehabilitation taking up to 12 months it is expected Staker will now miss all of 2012.

Cheynee Stiller - #32

by [doddgey](#)

[2010 review](#)

Games: 21

Goals: 3

Sub: on = 0, off = 0

Emergency: 1

Time on ground: 87%

Best and Fairest: 19 votes (11th)

Dreamteam: 1315 points; \$283,900 (-\$17,400)

Supercoach: 1431 points; \$343,200 (+\$14,500)

Put The Whip Away

Playing 21 games for the year mainly off half back with some time also spent on the wing, Stiller rebounded from a disappointing 2010. Some of his highlights this year included the round 14 game against Freo where he had 25 disposals, his 60 metre goal against Port in round 15, and his defensive efforts against North in round 18 and against Adelaide in round 20 where he laid 8 tackles. The best moment of his year in my opinion was the mark he took going back inside the defensive 50 against Gold Coast in the second quarter of round 21, don't let anyone tell you that this guy is not hard at it.

Cheynee Stiller epitomises the role of a foot soldier, "one who performs necessary but basic, often mundane tasks". Every side needs these toilers, those who go out and give their all and provide a solid contribution to the team. They rarely provide brilliance and often go unnoticed in performing their roles. It is easy to under estimate their value to a side.

Taking that thought let's look at Stiller's worth to the Lions and whether or not he is in our best 22. 9th in contested possessions, 7th in uncontested possessions, 8th in contested marks, 5th in rebound 50's, 7th in 1 percenters, 9th in kicks, 10th in handballs, 9th in disposals, 6th in marks, 10th in tackles, and 10th in the Merrett Murray award. The biggest criticism levelled at Cheynee is his disposals yet he finished the year 5th with 76%. You could argue that the Lions had a poor year so his finish is boosted by that, yet his 76% would have finished tied for 11th at Collingwood and tied 12th at Geelong.

Although he is not blessed with speed, his fitness and endurance is up there with the best and if he can work a little harder on his decision making ability and get some flow into his game he will rise well above the "foot soldier" ranks.



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