

COLLINGWOOD

Taylor Adams	CTR	102.2	#13	26yo	181cm	83kg	130 games
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TAYLOR ON THE MEND

inside midfielder **extractor**

A round 7 groin injury meant that Taylor Adams couldn't gain momentum to churn out consistent 100+ scores, ending up with a mirrored average of his previous season. The tough midfielder's output was still more than serviceable, delivering impressive tackling and contested possession numbers.

Adams provides the grunt that locks him into Nathan Buckley's 22 when fit. He has three seasons with a fantasy ton average in his past, so a bounce back of at least five points is very much on the cards if he has a full preseason. While Adams won't be the first Magpie chosen, he'll still be drafted early.

Projection: 101.0 (+2) from 19 (+9). Value: +323.5. Draft rank: 63. CTR rank: 36.

Flynn Appleby	BAC	48.8 (10)	#31	21yo	187cm	86kg	10 games
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APPLEBY DEBUT GOES SOUR

lockdown defender

The only sighting of Flynn Appleby in 2019 was a severely-undersized humiliation at the hands of the much bigger **Jeremy Finlayson**, forced to fill the shoes of an absent **Darcy Moore**. Forgetting that mismatch, Appleby impressed at reserve level, named in the bests three times from 11 matches.

Appleby will be biding his time in the resses come round one and is unlikely to break into a rock-solid lineup without another injury crisis. Don't draft this youngster.

Projection: 45.8 from 1. Value: -26.2. Draft rank: 260. BAC rank: 81.

Dayne Beams	CTR	99.8	#11	30yo	187cm	88kg	176 games
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TWILIGHT BECKONS BEAMS

inside midfielder **hurt factor** **coming off LTI** **hip problem** **illness**

It was a rough transition back to Collingwood for Dayne Beams, forced to deal with an irritable hip injury that flared up after a knock in round 7, eventually sidelining him for the second half of the season. With this ongoing niggle, the ex-Lion hadn't performed anywhere near expected and was on the verge of being dropped anyway.

Throw shoulder surgery and mental health issues into the mix and we have to consider 2019 an outlier for the former All-Australian. The good news is that Beams is back training with the main group. As a preseason watchlist candidate, if all the signs are positive, Beams should be taken in middle rounds.

Projection: 96.3 (-6) from 14 (+5). Value: +172.3. Draft rank: 107. CTR rank: 54.

Trent Bianco	BAC/CTR		#34	19yo	178cm	70kg	'19 ND #45
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STOKED UPON TRENT

half back flanker **outside midfielder**

Likened to the dual-footed **Steele Sidebottom**, Trent Bianco was a steal at pick 45. As an elite ball-user with a high footy IQ, Bianco can line up across half back with the ability to go into the midfield, as he did with the Oakleigh Chargers to averaging 27 disposals.

Bianco needs to work on his inside and defensive games but has already proven himself as a ball winner who'll propel countless future attacks. He's expected to make his senior debut this year at some stage, although he shouldn't be in draft calculations just yet.

Projection: 52.5 from 2 (+2). Value: -39.0. Draft rank: 303. BAC rank: 103.

Atu Bosenvulagi	FWD		#40	19yo	180cm	82kg	'18 ND #77
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DON'T CATCH THIS BOSIE

defensive forward

Nephew of club legend Joffa and convert from rugby union, Atu Bosenvulagi spent his first year in the VFL playing 18 matches for ten goals. The Oakleigh Chargers recruit has been admired for his toughness as well as speed, used most as a pacy pressure forward.

Bosenvulagi will struggle to make any inroads with such a stacked senior lineup, sitting behind a host of other young players for fringe mid/forward positions. Leave him out of any 2020 draft calculations.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Tim Broomhead	FWD/CTR	60.0	#29	26yo	182cm	84kg	36 games
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SPLINT FIXES BROOMHEAD

half forward flanker

A gruesome broken leg put a line through Tim Broomhead's 2018, finally rejoining the reserves 12 months later. While it was a slow burn to recovery, Broomhead impressed at the tail end, racking up 25+ possessions in three of his last four outings.

Broomhead will relish another full preseason under his belt and will be eager to revert back to his 2015 form. If his VFL displays are good enough for long enough, he might see a senior call-up but don't hold your breath. Leave him out of draft plans.

Projection: 59.2 from 6 (+6). Value: -76.9. Draft rank: 406. FWD rank: 122.

Callum Brown	FWD	66.9	#17	22yo	178cm	77kg	33 games
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CAN YOU RELY ON BROWN?

inside midfielder half forward flanker

Two fringe seasons were followed up with a cliched third-year breakout for Callum Brown, forcing his way into the best 22. Providing both forward and midfield support, Brown edged his way to a 15-touch, four-tackle average.

Brown might be the Pie most affected by **Dayne Beams'** return, with potential to be pushed back into fringe territory. He'll get his chances throughout the year but needs to prove his scoring ability before we commit. For now, it's a pass.

Projection: 70.0 (+5) from 14 (-6). Value: -28.0. Draft rank: 265. FWD rank: 77.

Tyler Brown	CTR		#6	20yo	188cm	77kg	'17 ND #50
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BROWN KEPT IN SHADE

outside midfielder

As the younger brother of **Callum Brown** and son of club legend Gavin, the silky Tyler Brown is held in high regard at the club. Yet to debut for the seniors, Brown made 13 appearances in the VFL.

Brown will continue to develop his fitness in the twos and would be unlucky not to be given a debut in 2020. Until we catch him on the big stage, don't bother.

Projection: 57.4 from 2 (+2). Value: -53.2. Draft rank: 353. CTR rank: 107.

Darcy Cameron	RUC/FWD	25.0 (1)	#14	24yo	205cm	103kg	1 game
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DOUBLE THE DARCY DAMAGE

second ruck/forward

Flying down from Sydney, ruck/forward Darcy Cameron will bolster Nathan Buckley's reverse stocks. With eight goals from 11 games, Cameron has proven at NEAFL level that he can impact the scoreboard when rotating through the forward line.

Since **Brodie Grundy** is an immovable object, Cameron will be eyeing **Mason Cox's** role. Should the big Pie struggle with form or injury, the ex-Swan could get his chance. Expect Cameron to appear at some stage.

Projection: 50.0 from 6 (+6). Value: -192.0. Draft rank: 592. RUC rank: 43.

Mason Cox	FWD	58.3	#46	29yo	211cm	105kg	58 games
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ONE-EYED COX IS A FLOP

second ruck/forward buckets non-AFL background

At the crossroads between underwhelming and mediocre, Mason Cox didn't reach anywhere near his unforgettable 2018 preliminary final heights, eventually sidelined after round 20 to undergo three surgeries on a detached retina in his left eye.

Cox returns to the starting 22 but will be kept under pressure by ex-Swan **Darcy Cameron**. Don't get sucked in by the American pie hype; Cox isn't a fantasy performer and should be avoided at all costs.

Projection: 54.1 (-1) from 12 (-2). Value: -214.5. Draft rank: 609. FWD rank: 198.

Jack Crisp	BAC	88.9	#25	26yo	190cm	90kg	132 games
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SHARP RISE FROM CRISP

half back flanker

Kickstarting countless attacks with line-breaking runs, Jack Crisp executed a career-best season in all fields, averaging over 26 touches on his way to becoming Collingwood's highest scoring defender. The dashing rebounder came home like a freight train, averaging 105 across the final 10 home & away matches.

Crisp has shown admirable consistency over the past five years with the Pies and will be a crucial playmaker come 2020. If you think that he can mimic the tail end of last season, there is no reason to avoid taking him with an early pick even with **Scott Pendlebury** possibly shifting his role more towards defence.

Projection: 94.8 (-3) from 21 (-1). Value: +478.7. Draft rank: 18. BAC rank: 3.

Josh Daicos	CTR	56.2 (17)	#26	21yo	178cm	76kg	17 games
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FIND DAICOS IN TRAFFIC

half forward flanker

The nimble Josh Daicos remained a fringe player for the Pies, only called upon when form or injury woes struck his teammates. An ankle injury late in the year meant limited duties to begin preseason, but he'll be back in top shape as summer passes.

Daicos plays a similar role to **Josh Thomas**, so it may be difficult for the youngster to break into the starting lineup. While he might deliver a few 80s when on the park, with a game built on quality over quantity and without enough job security he must be overlooked.

Projection: 72.3 (+7) from 9 (+4). Value: -104.9. Draft rank: 471. CTR rank: 141.

Jordan De Goey	FWD	88.3	#2	24yo	188cm	92kg	87 games
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NOT ALL GREEN FOR DE GOEY

crumbing forward finisher hurt factor hamstring problem

As the most dangerous target in a multi-pronged attack, Jordan De Goey again proved a handful for opposition defenders, kicking 34 majors from 17 appearances in a career-high fantasy season. He sat mostly deep forward with occasional stints at centre bounces, finishing as the eighth-best centre clearance Pie behind seven pure midfielders. He only played a quarter of football in the final two months due to a late-season hamstring strain.

Collingwood will be taking a conservative approach with De Goey in his preparation, as there was talk of hamstring problems last preseason as well so it sounds a bit chronic. Setbacks aside, he'll be suiting up in round 1 and is every chance to increase his output as he moves into the prime of his career. De Goey is reliable for scores in the 80s with an occasional monster, so lock him away in the earlier rounds.

Projection: 86.5 (+2) from 17 (+1). Value: +246.0. Draft rank: 78. FWD rank: 15.

Jamie Elliott	FWD	71.6	#5	27yo	178cm	81kg	103 games
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ELLIOTT KEEPS DANCING

crumbing forward

Despite circling by rival clubs, Jamie Elliott showed faith in Collingwood after they stood by him through multiple injury-riddled years. The athletic small forward missed all of 2016 and 2018 with recurrent soft-tissue issues. Blame his fantasy decrease on the readjustment period and focus on his final four appearances where he booted 11 goals with eight marks and 17 disposals per game - a clean 100-point fantasy average.

Elliott is yet to put a foot wrong in preparation for 2020 and has plenty of positivity surrounding him, with coaching staff realistically asserting that his next hundred games could be better than his first hundred. Risk takers should keep him on the watchlist during the preseason and, if all goes well, snap him up in the second half of the draft

Projection: 80.0 (+9) from 17 (+3). Value: +136.4. Draft rank: 126. FWD rank: 27.

Levi Greenwood	BAC	63.0	#19	31yo	181cm	87kg	151 games
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PASTURE FOR GREENWOOD

lockdown defender

current LTI

knee problem

Long gone are Levi Greenwood's 80+ midfield days. The ex-Roo was pushed to half back permanently last season, embracing the role and becoming a reliable, tough defender. He dealt with hamstring issues early in the season before a heartbreaking ruptured ACL in September put the tough-as-nails Pie on ice.

Greenwood will be hoping for a quick recovery but will undoubtedly face a delayed preseason. His vacancy could open up a spot for **Isaac Quaynor** to seize, even a young **Trent Bianco** if cards fall his way. On the chance of a round 1 miracle, Greenwood's scoring isn't near good enough these days anyway. Pass.

Projection: 63.2 (+1) from 5 (-11). Value: -44.1. Draft rank: 324. BAC rank: 111.

Brodie Grundy	RUC	130.0	#4	26yo	203cm	100kg	130 games
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WE'RE ALL ROADIES FOR BRODIE

first ruck

extractor

beast

tapper

hurt factor

Move aside, Dean Cox and Gary Dempsey! Brodie Grundy reaffirmed with a colossal 2019 that he's the league's premier ruckman, arguably the best fantasy ruck in VFL/AFL history. 43 hit outs per match ranked him second behind **Jarrod Witts** but it was his herculean follow-up work that set him apart. Formidable consistency with a disposal rate over 20 propelled Grundy to top the league fantasy averages, and rewarded any draft league coach who invested the number one pick in him.

Off-season speculation dragged on into the new year about Grundy signing an enormous seven-year contract, which he finally did. We are long since past worrying about the **Mason Cox** effect, even in a time where ruck tandems are more in vogue. Dean Cox used to be the benchmark for fantasy rucks, but he managed three seasons averaging more than a ton and Grundy has now done it four times in a row. He would be first picked in any team, real or fantasy, and should go #1 in yours.

Projection: 117.2 (-5) from 22. Value: +774.6. Draft rank: 1. RUC rank: 1.

Will Hoskin-Elliott	FWD	66.8	#32	26yo	186cm	82kg	117 games
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WHEE, IT'S A ROLLER COASTER!

half forward flanker

aerialist

dead-eye

knee problem

Ex-Giant Will Hoskin-Elliott's scoring bounced back after a lacklustre 2018. A dip in goals juxtaposed with a lift in disposals suggests more time moving further up the ground. It still wasn't enough to match his output from the year he spent largely on the wing averaging 85. His overhead ability rivals **Jeremy Howe** for most marks per game at the club.

Hoskin-Elliott boasts versatility but lacks consistency, prone to quiet games when he can't hit the scoreboard. If you can look past the roller coaster scoring, WHE should be taken in the later rounds to complete the on-field forward line though you would prefer not to be subjected to his lower scores if you can help it.

Projection: 74.6 (+5) from 17. Value: +44.3. Draft rank: 175. FWD rank: 44.

Jeremy Howe	BAC	79.0	#38	29yo	190cm	86kg	181 games
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HOW DOES HOWE REBOUND?

key defender

loose in defence

aerialist

rebounder

Following three consecutive 80+ years, jumping Jeremy Howe's scores dropped significantly. An in-game calf injury brought down his average, but the overall blame lies with added accountability. He still led the club in average marks, but lost three touches per game.

Howe has all cylinders firing coming into 2020 and won't be giving up his defensive post barring injury. The return of **Tom Langdon** suggests Howe could be freed up to intercept more often, meaning he's more likely to return to the 75-80 range than not. Nab him as a mid-tier defender.

Projection: 75.5 (+8) from 19. Value: +66.1. Draft rank: 156. BAC rank: 48.

Mark Keane	BAC	#47	20yo	194cm	92kg	'18 B	rookie
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MARK OFF KEANE'S CARD

key defender **non-AFL background** **rookie**

County Cork recruit Mark Keane spent his first season at Collingwood in the VFL, adjusting to the pace of the sport. Across his 16 matches, the Irishman was twice named in the bests. As a tall defender akin to the recently-departed Tyson Goldsack, he doesn't play the type of role that garners fantasy interest.

Keane will spend year two continuing to hone his craft in the reserves. Even if given a starting berth at one stage this year or next, his scoring patterns suggest that he'll remain irrelevant.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Will Kelly	FWD	#27	19yo	194cm	84kg	'18 ND #29
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KELLY FELLED

key defender **coming off LTI** **hamstring problem**

Athletic tall defender Will Kelly was dealt a double injury blow in his first listed year. An ankle injury suffered at the close of the Oakleigh Chargers' finals series delayed his start to the year, with a hamstring strain sidelining the former pick 29 yet again following four VFL games.

Kelly needs time to hone his craft in the twos, so he won't be lining up with the big boys anytime soon. Expect Kelly to impress in future years but not this one. Let him fall into the free agent pool.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Tom Langdon	BAC	77.5	#8	25yo	190cm	85kg	89 games
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LONG REHAB FOR LANGDON

half back flanker **coming off LTI** **knee problem**

All the boxes were ticked for Tom Langdon until a knee injury struck him down in round 9. After close to two months of unsuccessful attempted rehab, the club opted for surgery which ended the versatile key defender's season. Removing his injury-affected game, Langdon went about his business at just under 70ppg, slightly lower than we've come to expect from previous years.

Langdon will be hopeful for a round 1 berth but will need to prove his fitness over the summer for that to be the case. Considering that he's a mainstay for Nathan Buckley's backline when fit, and keeping in mind that his responsibilities have drifted more towards man marking over the years, a tail end selection with the expectation of consistent 70s wouldn't be remiss.

Projection: 70.7 (+1) from 16 (+7). Value: -21.1. Draft rank: 240. BAC rank: 75.

Max Lynch	RUC	#45	21yo	200cm	99kg	'16 Rk #51
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LEAVE LYNCH ALONE

first ruck **non-AFL background** **rookie**

Soccer-turned-football convert Max Lynch spent another year in the twos, chalking up 18 matches as the first ruck. Aside from four games of 20+ hit outs, his season didn't leave much to rave about.

Lynch slides further down the selection table with the admission of **Darcy Cameron**, so look elsewhere for ruck support for your fantasy squad.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Jack Madgen	BAC	53.4 (8)	#44	27yo	192cm	98kg	8 games
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DON'T IMAGINE MADGEN

key defender **non-AFL background** **rookie**

As a former US college basketballer with admirable athleticism, Madgen showed in his handful of matches that he could match it with big-bodied forwards. His call-ups were purely result of injury.

Madgen has signed a new one-year deal but only as a category B rookie, so his chances of getting a call-up are slim to none. Look elsewhere.

Projection: 45.6 from 4. Value: -105.5. Draft rank: 473. BAC rank: 160.

Brayden Maynard	BAC	79.9	#37	23yo	189cm	90kg	95 games
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LAUGHS FOR MAYNARD

lockdown defender

It was smooth sailing for Brayden Maynard in 2019, finishing fifth in the club best and fairest. The tough defender didn't miss a beat, quietly outdoing most of his opponents while regularly becoming involved in defensive kick-mark chains.

Maynard is now locked into for a half back flank role, often gifted kick-in duties as well. His preseason is going along nicely so he warrants a pick in the middle rounds for an easy set-and-forget defender.

Projection: 76.8 from 20 (-2). Value: +96.4. Draft rank: 143. BAC rank: 43.

Chris Mayne	BAC/CTR	74.1	#16	31yo	188cm	84kg	214 games
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DON'T BUY SHARES IN MAYNE

outside midfielder half forward flanker

Despite a brief to run forward from the wing, Chris Mayne could manage only three goals last season while chalking up uncontested possessions. He occasionally played defensive forward jobs on rebounders such as **Shannon Hurn**. 11 of his 19 games resulted in fantasy scores above the midfielder baseline.

Solely as a fantasy midfielder, he does a job for the team without being reliable for draft fantasy purposes. Given the prospect for first-year endurance freak **Jay Rantall** to push for selection in his spot, it's hard to part with anything more than a tail end selection for the former Docker.

Projection: 78.9 (+2) from 13 (-6). Value: +89.8. Draft rank: 147. BAC rank: 45.

Brody Mihocek	FWD	71.8	#41	27yo	192cm	97kg	38 games
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MIGHT CHECK ON OTHERS?

key forward

All boxes were ticked in Brody Mihocek's 2019 in finishing as the club's top goalkicker with 36.24 from an average of six marks per game. Five fantasy tons teased many coaches who ended up riding the roller coaster, subsequently let down by a number of sub-60s as well.

Mihocek has no doubts over his job security and lined up at centre half-forward for every match last season. If you can deal with the typical inconsistency of a key forward, the hope of the occasional big score is enough motivation to grab him with a pick in the closing rounds.

Projection: 74.3 (+1) from 22. Value: +50.0. Draft rank: 168. FWD rank: 41.

Darcy Moore	BAC	66.5	#30	24yo	203cm	100kg	69 games
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PAY NO MIND TO MR DARCY

key defender swingman rebounder

We're no stranger to Darcy Moore's numerous soft tissue setbacks over his career, including the five-week strain suffered against the Eagles in round 17. The forward-turned-defender has found his home across half back, never hesitant to leave his opponent in order to intercept.

Fantasy-wise, however, he struggles. Moore is flashy and athletic but he's never blossomed into the fantasy-friendly player we anticipated at the outset of his career. The only value he brings to the table is the fact that he's a certainty to play when fit.

Projection: 58.4 (+8) from 18 (+3). Value: -244.1. Draft rank: 629. BAC rank: 208.

Nathan Murphy	BAC	38.5 (2)	#28	20yo	190cm	85kg	2 games
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LUCK RUNS OUT FOR MURPHY

utility coming off LTI back problem

Former Australian under-19 cricketer Nathan Murphy was prematurely thrust into the senior squad in late 2018 when injuries struck down more experienced defenders. He then rejoined the VFL squad, where he only managed three appearances due to back, neck and ankle injuries.

The acquisition of **Jordan Roughead** means Murphy sits far down the defensive pecking order and is yet to show any glimmer of fantasy potential. For those reasons, he's best left unnoticed in the draft.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

John Noble	BAC	56.7 (3)	#9	23yo	180cm	72kg	3 games
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NOBLE DEFENDS RAMPARTS

half back flanker seagull

Given a lifeline in the mid-season draft, John Noble slotted into the defensive unit nicely at season's end. The attacking defender's boldness to find the footy and rebound resulted in a three-game streak in the 70s, sandwiched in between a couple of less impressive outings.

Noble is every chance to line up in the back pocket and could be a diamond in the rough should he enjoy some natural progression. That spot will be hotly contested, but Noble should start ahead of the others. Keep him on the watchlist as a potential free agent pickup.

Projection: 69.7 (+1) from 3. Value: -6.9. Draft rank: 222. BAC rank: 65.

Scott Pendlebury	CTR	104.3	#10	32yo	191cm	90kg	298 games
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PENDLES' PERFECT 10

inside midfielder magnet launcher

Stand and applaud, folks: a perfect 10 seasons of 100+ fantasy scores for Scott Pendlebury. Not even **Gary Ablett jnr** can boast that incredible feat. Now a silver fox of the AFL, Scott Pendlebury dominated again in the Collingwood midfield with his teammates searching for his silky distribution. A drop in tackles was compensated with an increase in marks, indicative of his extra minutes spent across the half back line compared to seasons gone by.

Pendlebury seems to only be getting better with age so don't let that daunting age-30 hurdle scare you off. He'll be leading from the front and if he's not chalking up the disposals in the centre, he'll be a key distributor, lining up a kick behind the ball and racking them up there instead. Take Pendlebury early for a worry-free mid, with the tantalising prospect of adding dual eligibility if his heat map drifts even further towards defensive 50 as the season wears on.

Projection: 102.6 (-1) from 20 (-2). Value: +371.1. Draft rank: 40. CTR rank: 24.

Tom Phillips	CTR	83.0	#21	23yo	187cm	79kg	72 games
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PHILLIPS IS A BLADE RUNNER

outside midfielder

Despite being upstaged by draftee **Jay Rantall** in the 2k time trial, Tom Phillips remains Collingwood's most reliable outside runner. The wingman's scores were notably affected by the Pies' win-loss ratio with a 22-point differential. A slight drop in possessions and marks dampened what was otherwise a consistent and stellar campaign.

Phillips will line up on the wing and run his guts out to link up between defence and attack, occasionally getting a cheap goal or two as well. Being such an outside player his output is going to fluctuate, but the Magpies are top four prospects so he's going to put up big points. Expect the elite runner to keep his form line going and select him with an early pick.

Projection: 93.2 (+3) from 20 (-2). Value: +183.4. Draft rank: 102. CTR rank: 52.

Isaac Quaynor	BAC	60.3 (4)	#3	20yo	180cm	83kg	4 games
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SHIP SAILS FOR QUAYNOR

half back flanker foot problem

Speedy rebounder Isaac Quaynor suited up 10 times for the VFL squad until finally getting his senior chance in round 16, where he slotted in seamlessly. The athletic defender's best game was his debut, racking up 18 touches and seven marks. He has a disposal ratio pleasingly slanted towards kicks, and scores well on the outside with uncontested marks.

Quaynor will benefit from Collingwood's fantasy-friendly game style yet remains on the selection fence. Taking into account an uninterrupted preseason and natural second-year progression, he's poised to increase in all facets if he can secure a spot. A certainty for the watchlist and, if touted for round one, falls between late-round smokey and free agent pickup.

Projection: 68.6 (+8) from 11 (+7). Value: -36.9. Draft rank: 293. BAC rank: 98.

Jay Rantall	CTR	#35	18yo	184cm	82kg	'19 ND #40
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RANTALL TANTALISES

inside midfielder

It's not easy to edge out endurance beast **Tom Phillips** in the 2k but Jay Rantall managed to do just that in preseason, making the perfect first impression. As an inside midfielder who thrives at the stoppages, the former Australian representative basketballer averaged 26 possessions with 11 contested, plus six clearances and a goal at NAB League level.

Rantall could prove to be one of the prime sliders in this year's draft. He'll be constantly pleading his case for senior selection but will remain a fringe player this year, as the Pies are stacked with midfield talent and already have to fit in established players returning from injury. He is one to squirrel away in the memory bank for future years.

Projection: 54.4 from 2 (+2). Value: -59.2. Draft rank: 368. CTR rank: 113.

Ben Reid	FWD	65.3	#20	31yo	196cm	98kg	148 games
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FINAL CHAPTERS FOR REID

key defender swingman buckets

Hamstring and calf setbacks troubled Ben Reid in 2019. Strong training form earned him a recall for the preliminary final, in which he touched the ball four times. The last three years have seen the tall swingman's scores dwindle, due to both injury and form.

Reid now enters his 14th season and will be used as a Mr Fix It in attack or defence when the mainstays suffer injuries. His job security and his scoring potential fail to impress, so the veteran is best ignored.

Projection: 57.0 (-4) from 7. Value: -104.8. Draft rank: 470. FWD rank: 140.

Jordan Roughead	BAC	64.9	#23	29yo	200cm	101kg	159 games
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THE REMAINING ROUGHEAD

key defender

Ex-Dog Jordan Roughead came to Collingwood as a depth utility but finished 2019 as a regular full back, lacing up for every match and regularly taking the opposition's prime forward. A three-week period saw Roughead flung forward, then returned him to defence for finals.

As one of the larger defenders on Nathan Buckley's list, Roughead presents as the prime candidate to lock down the full back role once more. The team-first mindset doesn't correlate to fantasy scores, so remove him from calculations.

Projection: 56.6 (+1) from 20 (-2). Value: -308.7. Draft rank: 656. BAC rank: 221.

Trey Ruscoe	BAC/CTR	#39	18yo	190cm	90kg	'19 ND #55
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RUSCOE SENDS YOU TO SIBERIA

key defender

East Fremantle draftee Trey Ruscoe is a strong defender who thrives in the one-on-one contests. His Championship stat line was strong despite given man marking duties, going at rates of 15 disposals, five marks and four tackles. Prior to the tournament, he played his junior years as a midfielder or forward.

Ruscoe's versatility and strong hands overhead will be appreciated down the line when he eventually gets the call-up to the senior squad. For 2020 he'll sit far down the pecking order and will be lucky to make an AFL debut without many holes in Nathan Buckley's 22.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Matthew Scharenberg	BAC	72.7	#12	24yo	191cm	93kg	38 games
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SCHARENBERG COLD AS ICE

half back flanker current LTI knee problem

Following a long-awaited breakout, Matthew Scharenberg suffered a delayed 2019 after requiring another knee reconstruction late in 2018. Prior to that he'd been in career-best form, something he struggled to replicate on the park last season. The injury-prone backman suited up for the last five rounds before being dropped for the qualifying final due to poor form.

Scharenberg teased us with a few big scores in 2018 but, at this stage, his injury history and selection question marks can't be overlooked. It's hard to see him and **Tom Langdon** in the same starting 22, so it's best to leave Scharenberg out of consideration. His only saving grace might be the susceptibility to injury of his teammates, so if he's in the unlikely position of being the best of what's left, that would be his only useful scenario.

Projection: 70.7 (+4) from 8 (+1). Value: -10.5. Draft rank: 226. BAC rank: 68.

Steele Sidebottom	CTR	95.9	#22	29yo	184cm	85kg	231 games
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RUSTY IS STILL HEAVY METAL

balanced midfielder

Apart from lowering his colours against tagger **Ryan Clarke**, Steele Sidebottom's year was one of the Pies' most reliable. Playing almost exclusively on the wing opposite **Tom Phillips**, Sidebottom's two-way running saw him clutch career-high marks as a crucial link-up player. With silky skills on both feet, the Pies looked to him as a key distributor.

Sidebottom is all but guaranteed another 95+ season as he enters his 12th year on the list. He missed just 14 home & away games in the entire decade of the 2010s so he should play every game, with the bonus of being able to pump out match-winning 130+ scores every now and then. Take Sidebottom seriously and take him early.

Projection: 99.6 from 22 (+1). Value: +344.0. Draft rank: 55. CTR rank: 31.

Brayden Sier	CTR	67.1 (14)	#36	22yo	191cm	88kg	18 games
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CAN'T SEE SIER, SIR

inside midfielder

Aside from the Phill Inn basketball incident while recovering from a calf injury, Brayden Sier's 2019 story was rather unflattering. Much like the similar-bodied **Rupert Wills**, Sier's selections have been correlated with injury and form-related vacancies, not sighted in the seniors after round 18.

Sier is every chance to see a career-best year ahead of him should the cards fall his way. At this stage, he remains on the watchlist. Since Nathan Buckley doesn't have room for both Wills and Sier in his starting 22, we shouldn't have room for either in ours. A potential free agent pool pickup.

Projection: 68.1 (+3) from 8 (+2). Value: -127.2. Draft rank: 511. CTR rank: 152.

Jaidyn Stephenson	FWD	71.0	#1	21yo	188cm	78kg	38 games
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STEPHENSON'S STAR RISEN

half forward flanker aerialist finisher illness

Without dwelling on Jaidyn Stephenson's 10-match betting scandal suspension, his play when on the park was excellent. Over 12 matches plus finals, the second-year speedster hit the scoreboard in all but two. He was one of a number of small forwards rotated through the goal square in an attempt to isolate them one-on-one, keeping defenders on their toes.

Stephenson looked set to take his talents to another level until a bout of glandular fever struck in early December, an illness that you never like to hear about in a footballer as it can linger. When fit, his role is safe, so keep him on the watchlist and take Stephenson in the middle of the draft if he recovers quickly.

Projection: 76.2 (+3) from 20 (+8). Value: +83.6. Draft rank: 150. FWD rank: 33.

Josh Thomas	FWD	62.8	#24	28yo	178cm	78kg	87 games
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DOUBTING THOMAS IS WISE

outside midfielder

An impressive 2018 campaign propelled Josh Thomas into fantasy calculations playing an outside midfield role with stints forward. Last season he teased us with a handful of enticing scores, only for his output to drop significantly due to fewer midfield minutes.

Thomas doesn't look out of place in Collingwood's starting lineup, however similar-styled younger players like **Josh Daicos** and **Callum Brown** are being groomed to take best 22 spots and Thomas looks like the most vulnerable of the incumbents. Look elsewhere.

Projection: 59.2 from 10 (-10). Value: -128.2. Draft rank: 512. FWD rank: 156.

Anton Tohill	FWD		#43	20yo	191cm	85kg	'18 B rookie
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TOHILL STILL CLIMBING

utility non-AFL background rookie

Irishman Anton Hohill's premier campaign was spent developing his knowledge and ball work in the reserves. Across his 12 appearances, the versatile tall showed glimpses of excellent speed and agility but failed to see much of the footy.

Tohill remains a long-term prospect coming into 2020 and won't be barging down Nathan Buckley's door anytime soon for a senior call-up. Forget about him and move on.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Adam Treloar	CTR	113.4	#7	27yo	182cm	89kg	161 games
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TRELOAR IS A ROWING MACHINE

inside midfielder magnet extractor

Two words: ball magnet. At 33 touches per game, Adam Treloar lead the league in disposals on his way to a career-best fantasy output of 114. He has now strung together six consecutive 100+ fantasy point seasons, and four over 105. Playing every game, Treloar was one of the most reliable fantasy midfielders.

Treloar sees a tagger on the rare occasion, although most attention goes to the better ball users in **Steele Sidebottom** and **Scott Pendlebury**. This gut runner is going to deliver another 100+ year so don't hesitate to draft him early on, with added value due to durability.

Projection: 112.5 (-1) from 21 (-1). Value: +599.4. Draft rank: 8. CTR rank: 4.

Travis Varcoe	FWD	60.1	#18	32yo	180cm	84kg	220 games
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NO REPLAYS FOR VARCOE

half forward flanker current LTI shoulder problem

Entering his 15th season, Travis Varcoe has washed-up veteran written all over him. Having never been exceptionally fantasy relevant with only one 70+ season at Collingwood, not much looks like changing as the ex-Cat's career dwindles into its latter stages. He will miss the early stages of the season after surgery on a shoulder injury sustained in January.

Varcoe will play when in form to provide on-field leadership and support Nathan Buckley's obsession with forward pressure but he won't deliver anything notable for fantasy coaches. Rests are a given, as are injury possibilities even beyond this random training injury. Thanks but no thanks.

Projection: 53.3 from 9 (-7). Value: -168.5. Draft rank: 566. FWD rank: 180.

Rupert Wills	CTR	72.8 (13)	#33	26yo	192cm	88kg	13 games
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LET WILLS SKATE

inside midfielder in-and-under non-AFL background

Tough nut Rupert Wills averaged seven tackles per game last season, the most of any Collingwood player. His problem was that he was only selected for seven senior games late in the year when needed to fill form or injury voids left by others.

Wills competes directly with **Brayden Sier** for the last-selected, big-bodied midfielder. The bull has proven that he can score with a five-round average of 85 in his debut season but we can't pick him unless we see a lift in job security.

Projection: 72.4 (-2) from 7. Value: -80.9. Draft rank: 411. CTR rank: 123.

Thomas Wilson	FWD		#48	22yo	187cm	68kg	'19 B rookie
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VOLLEY OF GOALS FOR WILSON

key forward swingman non-AFL background rookie

Former Australian basketballer Tom Wilson made the transition to AFL in May as a Category B rookie, suiting up for the Pies' VFL squad eight times. Dubbed a versatile swingman who could potentially move into the midfield, Wilson spent most of his time in attack, kicking four goals as he slowly regained his skillset.

Wilson has the coaching staff backing him but still has a lot to work on if he wants to break into the starting lineup. Expect the former Sydney King to improve in the VFL and push for a debut in years to come.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

ESSENDON

Patrick Ambrose	BAC	47.7	#29	28yo	191cm	92kg	86 games
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AMBROSE REACHES 19TH HOLE

key defender

Apart from injury, Patrick Ambrose has largely been best 22 for the Bombers since arriving in 2014, though 2019 was the first time he pushed past 18 games in a season.

The departure of **Michael Hartley** adds job security for Ambrose, though fantasy coaches won't care as his job is exclusively to stop rather than create.

Projection: 41.7 from 20 (+1). Value: -606.4. Draft rank: 695. BAC rank: 242.

Josh Begley	FWD	48.5 (15)	#16	21yo	188cm	97kg	16 games
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BARELY BIGLY BEGLEY

half forward flanker

Coming off a delayed start to preseason last year due to an ACL rupture on Anzac Day 2018, Josh Begley did well to suit up for 23 games across two levels, including six straight senior appearances mid-season. He is usually good for a goal per game from a dozen disposals, though his tackle rate of two is low for that position.

Perhaps we can give Begley a mulligan for 2019, as he would have struggled to get up from week to week without the fitness base from a full preparation. Bomber coaches will be tempted to rotate resting mids through the forward pocket opposite **Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti** in the spot vacated by Mark Baguley, so he will have to show some specialist tricks to get attention.

Projection: 53.7 (+5) from 7 (-1). Value: -128.3. Draft rank: 513. FWD rank: 157.

Tom Bellchambers	RUC	87.5	#2	30yo	202cm	108kg	128 games
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FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

first ruck

A handful of days before his 30th birthday, Tom Bellchambers's 2019 campaign was interrupted by a calf injury, traditionally an old man's complaint. He returned to complete another season of below-replacement-level play, dropping seven hit outs from his previous best of 33 with a disposal rate just creeping into double figures and a disappointing three marks.

Bellchambers has fallen away from the sort of ruck that you accept at the end of a draft to one who will be left as a free agent by the end of your draft. It is hard to foresee an Indian summer along the lines of **Todd Goldstein** out of Bellcho, as all signs point the other way. Then again, they did for Goldie too, who looked destined for the cliff when his body started playing up. Try to avoid.

Projection: 75.6 from 16 (+1). Value: -101.8. Draft rank: 459. RUC rank: 32.

Nick Bryan	RUC		#24	18yo	202cm	87kg	'19 ND #38
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DON RUCK STOCKS IN GOOD NICK

first ruck

While he was not the first ruck off the board at last November's national draft, Nick Bryan showed the most improvement across his last junior year including a dominant performance in the NAB League grand final for Oakleigh with 26 hit outs and 20 possessions.

There is a lot to like in the graph of Bryan's development leading into his first listed season, though as with just about all drafted rucks he is still at the early stages of a long apprenticeship until his body fills out to do justice to his talents. Don't pick him this year.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Ned Cahill	CTR/FWD		#28	19yo	178cm	77kg	'19 ND #56
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NED GETS THE DON NOD

half forward flanker
defensive forward

With a small body size and wide skill set reminiscent of legendary Bomber Darren Bewick, Ned Cahill arrives at Tullamarine with a reputation of a pressure forward coming off a flank who can also rotate through midfield. He was a regular goalscorer in his junior days, usually good for a goal per game from just on 20 disposals with four tackles and plenty of pressure acts.

Cahill will find the going tougher at his new club with a frame of his size, which leads one to speculate that his fate may be to move to a forward pocket rather than the flanks due to lesser competition from older players. The Dons don't have an established second forward pocket post the retirement of Mark Baguley, so he will battle with the likes of **Josh Begley** and **Irving Mosquito**.

Projection: 47.0 from 4 (+4). Value: -148.0. Draft rank: 541. CTR rank: 160.

Dylan Clarke	CTR	62.3 (12)	#37	21yo	187cm	87kg	12 games
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THEY'RE RUBBER, CLARKE IS GLUE

inside midfielder

tagger

in-and-under

It was long past time that Dylan Clarke found another trick in his kit bag to overcome perceptions that he was too slow and wayward with disposal for senior level. When given a last chance in round 11, he showed that he can shut down the best in the game by nullifying **Patrick Cripps** and posting a fantasy ton himself. He played every game in the ones after that, though his disposal rate dropped away to less than 15.

Clarke's best qualities are working from contest to contest and getting to where the footy is, though he doesn't have the burst speed to escape packs once he gets it, as evidenced by his ratio skewing hard towards handball. He has found his niche in the team at last, and has an off season in which he can add other strings to his bow. He will probably go undrafted in your league but he's worth a look, especially early in the season.

Projection: 72.2 (+8) from 19 (+8). Value: -223.4. Draft rank: 615. CTR rank: 170.

Tom Cutler	CTR	79.1	#12	25yo	192cm	92kg	66 games
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CUTLER FISHES ON A WING

utility

It looked at the end of 2018 that Tom Cutler had finally established himself in Brisbane's best 22, coming off an 18-game season where he nudged the midfielder baseline playing mostly off a wing, shifting up the ground from previous stints at half back. He was picked only three times last year during the Lions' finals run and eventually shunted off to Essendon.

Dons hierarchy have made public statements that they see him as a wingman, which is where his fantasy value is maximised. He will be aiming at the spot previously occupied by the retired David Myers, though he is probably four back in the depth chart going into preseason. One for the JLT watchlist, where his outside talents will likely be showcased.

Projection: 78.4 (-5) from 5 (+2). Value: -28.2. Draft rank: 267. CTR rank: 89.

Joe Daniher	FWD	71.4	#6	26yo	200cm	99kg	104 games
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RED AND BLACK FLAGS OVER DANIHER

key forward

coming off LTI

groin problem

The saga of Joe Daniher dominated off-season headlines, with a painfully public dalliance with the Swans eventually shut down by Essendon. While much of the media speculation centres on his mindset after being denied his trade request, it should not be forgotten that it is his body that has been letting him down, with osteitis pubis restricting him to 11 games over the past two years. His ceiling is Coleman-capable goalkicking superstardom; his floor is another wasted season ending in acrimony.

Homer coaches who had faith in Daniher last season to pick him up in fantasy drafts would have been burned pretty badly, so will they go to the well again? Even if he overcomes both mental and physical challenges to suit up for an extended run, his scoring will be frustratingly variable like every other goal-dependent key forward. It's hard to justify using anything other than a late flier on him, as there are more red flags on him than the Kop end at Anfield.

Projection: 73.8 from 8 (+4). Value: +14.2. Draft rank: 197. FWD rank: 51.

Sam Draper	RUC	#38	21yo	203cm	107kg	'16 Rk #1
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MOTHBALLS FOR DRAPER

first ruck

non-AFL background

coming off LTI

knee problem

rookie

Coming off 47 hit outs in the VFL early in his third listed season, Sam Draper ruptured an ACL and will not be sighted on field until after the 2020 season has started.

Draper's senior debut will have to wait, which is okay since ruckmen of his shape tend to take at least four years to develop anyway. One for the future.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Orazio Fantasia	FWD	68.4	#13	24yo	178cm	77kg	74 games
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THERE ARE MORE THINGS, ORAZIO

half forward flanker

hip problem

Joe Daniher wasn't the only Bomber denied a trade request over the off season, with Orazio Fantasia also wanting out after a poor 2019 beset by lack of continuity through a string of soft tissue injuries to hamstring, quad and hip, the last of which required a post-season arthroscope. His ceiling for a spot start is above a fantasy ton, though he goes 15 points better in wins and his scoring is somewhat dependent on events upfield for quality supply.

The change rooms at Bomberland have been a hubbub of chuntering from the likes of Fantasia, unhappy with how things are going at the club and with their personal form. A new year means new hope, and like Daniher and the team in general he is capable of a lot more than he has shown lately, if he can get mind and body aligned to produce on the park. As a fantasy asset, he's not an every-week starter unless in a hot vein of form, making him a late pick.

Projection: 64.3 from 14. Value: -107.5. Draft rank: 477. FWD rank: 142.

Aaron Francis	BAC	67.5	#10	22yo	192cm	90kg	26 games
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BANK AARON TO TAKE GRABS

key defender

swingman

Despite some impressive form in August 2018 as an intercepting defender, Aaron Francis was dropped after round 3 in favour of **Cale Hooker** then returned to play a terribly unsuited forward role in the middle of last season, before returning to the back line from round 15 and building some better form into September. His fantasy scoring is highly reliant on marks, as he doesn't get involved much in other kinds of plays.

The delisting of **Michael Hartley** is probably the best news that Francis could have for his job security, a move that might have been occasioned by some circling vultures from Francis' home state of South Australia in the off season. Intercept marking is a fine one wood to have in the modern game, though his lack of other clubs in the bag tends to limit his fantasy value. He should go undrafted, though a spot start is not a silly idea.

Projection: 61.0 (+5) from 13 (-3). Value: -142.7. Draft rank: 535. BAC rank: 176.

Martin Gleeson	BAC	73.7	#8	25yo	191cm	86kg	78 games
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DELAYED GLEE FOR GLEESON

half back flanker

The headline for Martin Gleeson last season was that he got back to the senior side at all after a nasty ankle bone break in 2017, suiting up for the last nine games and specialising in intercept possessions. His fantasy average has always hovered near the back baseline without ever consistently rising above it.

Gleeson played his role for the team which is mainly measured in exotic stats that don't directly affect his scoring in basic fantasy formats, or at least not in numbers large enough to make him startable. There does not appear to be upside left in his game in season six, so he is probably going to be left in the free agent pool after your draft.

Projection: 67.3 (+4) from 16 (+7). Value: -75.8. Draft rank: 404. BAC rank: 136.

Noah Gown	FWD		#32	20yo	194cm	91kg	'18 ND #60
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GOWN NOT WEARING CAPE YET

key forward

current LTI

foot problem

Coming off an impressive 31 goals from his last 14 games at junior level, Noah Gown found the going a little tougher in the VFL with 17 majors from 12 outings, though nine came in the last four with three of those producing fantasy scores above 70.

The departure of **Mitch W. Brown** and the seemingly inevitable injuries elsewhere in the Bomber attack mean that Gown will probably get a shot at senior action some time in 2020. He is highly unlikely to post startable scores at the top level at this still-early stage in his development.

Projection: 37.2 from 3 (+3). Value: -104.4. Draft rank: 467. FWD rank: 139.

Matt Guelfi	BAC/CTR	56.1	#35	22yo	184cm	85kg	32 games
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STEALTHY GUELFİ STAYS QUIET

utility coming off LTI knee problem

A knee meniscus injury ended Matt Guelfi’s second listed season, where he played more games for even less return in standard scoring formats. His worth to the team is built on one percenters, pressure acts and other exotic stats that club coaches love.

Fantasy coaches in basic scoring leagues couldn’t give a tinkers about that, meaning that Guelfi will be left in the free agent pool and will be overlooked every time you comb through the list of players looking for a spot start, as his ceiling is too low.

Projection: 55.8 from 13 (-4). Value: -210.4. Draft rank: 605. BAC rank: 197.

Brayden Ham	FWD/CTR	44.5 (4)	#33	21yo	181cm	70kg	4 games
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ALMOST CHRISTMAS FOR HAM

outside midfielder

A hard worker almost exclusively on the outside, Brayden Ham started the VFL season on fire, leading to senior call ups in rounds 5 and 8 where he found the going tougher. He returned to the lower level where his form fluctuated from week to week, averaging a goal from 18 touches, then a few more games in the ones in August junk time.

Physically, Ham has all the tools to become an elite runner at senior level, and he has shown in the VFL that he can run to the right spots to receive. The rigours of life playing against men will become easier over time, with the proviso that his body shape suggests a susceptibility to second-year syndrome. Probably not fantasy relevant just yet.

Projection: 49.8 from 7 (+3). Value: -155.8. Draft rank: 556. FWD rank: 176.

Dyson Heppell	CTR	97.2	#21	27yo	189cm	84kg	168 games
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DYSON IS A HOOVER

inside midfielder foot problem

Up to the bye period last season, we got the same old dependable Dyson Heppell, with disposals somewhere in the high 20s mostly gathered behind packs without elite hurt factor. A foot bone problem interrupted his post-bye run three times, occasioning off-season surgery.

We saw four and a half seasons of extremely flat production before that blip, so presuming that Heppell gets back to full fitness we can expect more of the same in year nine. This makes him an unexciting but solid early round fantasy draft option, with low upside and downside.

Projection: 96.3 from 17. Value: +208.6. Draft rank: 95. CTR rank: 49.

Mitchell Hibberd	CTR		#46	23yo	191cm	90kg	4 games
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HIBBERD OUT OF HIBERNATION

half back flanker coming off LTI knee problem rookie

After an injury-ravaged four years on North Melbourne’s list, Mitchell Hibberd is back in the AFL following a stellar year for Williamstown in the VFL. A conversion from defender to inside mid produced rates of 24 touches, seven tackles and 98 fantasy points. He suffered a knee meniscus injury in January training that put him out for six weeks.

The upside for Hibberd is **Tim Kelly**’s first year at Geelong. The downside is Marcus Marigliani. The hierarchy down at Tullamarine made it a priority to fill their list with depth at the inside mid position, but for every Kelly there are at least a dozen Mariglianis. Worth a flier if he gets up for the Marsh series, though he is likely to go slow given that setback.

Projection: 67.0 from 6 (+6). Value: -102.0. Draft rank: 460. CTR rank: 136.

Cale Hooker	BAC	79.1	#26	31yo	198cm	103kg	192 games
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MORE CALE, MORE COWBELL

key defender buckets aerialist

Soft tissue injuries delayed Cale Hooker’s start to 2018, then he was shifted from his stop-gap attack role to his more natural defensive post. Like most other key position defenders, his fantasy scoring is highly reliant on marks: when he reaches six of those, he’s startable. An average of eight implies that he’s usually well above the back baseline.

Essendon have decided, in their wisdom, to put most of their eggs in the key forward position in the **Joe Daniher** basket, a gamble that could backfire and mean that they will once again turn their troubled gaze towards Hooker as a suboptimal attacking option. Either way, his floor can let you down sometimes but remains worthy of a late-round pick.

Projection: 73.4 from 18 (+1). Value: +25.4. Draft rank: 186. BAC rank: 56.

Michael Hurley	BAC	79.1	#18	29yo	192cm	94kg	178 games
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TAKE A QUIZZ AT HURLEY

key defender

aerialist

rebounder

coming off LTI

shoulder problem

Injuries to either shoulder that both required surgery derailed Michael Hurley's 2019 campaign, but before that he maintained his pace from the previous year with a pleasingly high base of eight marks per game making him the most valuable key defender in fantasy behind **Tom Stewart**. He resumed training after Christmas in a bid to push his disposal rate from 20 back to 25 to earn another All-Australian jersey as he did in 2017.

It is a shame that in basic fantasy formats, in particular, dominant centre half backs like Hurley don't always get rewarded for their performance. It's difficult to generate fantasy scores from shutting down an opponent so well that he doesn't even get targets. Hurley's worth for fantasy purposes is predicated on uncontested marks on the rebound, a secondary part of his game. This means he's behind a lot of half back flankers in the rankings.

Projection: 82.8 (+5) from 20 (+2). Value: +215.5. Draft rank: 90. BAC rank: 19.

Lachlan Johnson	CTR/FWD	#36	18yo	175cm	79kg	'19 ND #63
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SOCKS UP FOR SON OF KINZA

defensive forward

current LTI

knee problem

In his last junior year at NAB League level, Lachlan Johnson averaged 15 disposals and a highly impressive seven tackles in a small forward role interchanging in midfield, before injuring his knee playing for Scotch College and requiring a reconstruction.

Johnson could play anywhere really, like his dad Chris, but it will be at least halfway through 2020 before we see him on the park, and almost certainly not in the seniors until the year after. One to watch in future years, no doubt.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Harrison Jones	FWD	#23	19yo	194cm	75kg	'19 ND #30
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A NEW JONES TO KEEP UP WITH

key forward

The athletic skills of Harrison Jones were in full flight at the Combine where he set impressive marks in the vertical leap and yo-yo tests, confirming the raw ability he has showed in junior action, mostly as a forward but also in ruck. His statistical output is outweighed greatly by his potential.

Jones is just the sort of rich clay that coaches love to sculpt, which along with his weedy frame means he is highly likely to spend a lot of time at VFL level, perhaps even more than a full season. He could be anything or nothing, but for 2020 he's nothing for fantasy purposes.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Kyle Langford	FWD/CTR	75.5	#4	23yo	191cm	87kg	64 games
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HORROR FILM FROM LANGFORD

balanced midfielder

half forward flanker

Coming off an impressive back end of 2018 where he looked to have cracked the code of how to play inside mid resting forward at senior level, Kyle Langford was picked for only three of the first eight rounds last season, then after building form through the byes was dropped again for round 16, only to be a late in followed by a poor month. His startable scores came when he lifted his disposal count above 20, though this happened only five times out of 18 appearances.

It is a particularly bad sign for Langford that the club went to the draft for a search for inside midfield depth, exactly the role he was being groomed for. It would not surprise to see the likes of **Jacob Townsend** and **Mitchell Hibberd** rise above him in the pecking order in the first half of the season, even if his own form is not that bad, as it seems someone doesn't like him down there. As it is, he's nearly free agent fodder as his scoring floor and job security are both low.

Projection: 73.9 from 14 (-3). Value: +26.1. Draft rank: 185. FWD rank: 46.

Jayden Laverde	FWD	62.6	#15	24yo	191cm	91kg	39 games
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NO GREEN LIGHT ON LAVERDE

half forward flanker

We finally saw some of the best of Jayden Laverde in his fifth season, after yet another season started late due to omnipresent soft tissue injuries and lack of consistent form. His best included four multiple-goal hauls in his nine senior appearances, but he reached 15 disposals only twice and rarely threatened the forward baseline.

Laverde has the body shape to be a decent third tall forward, using his talents off the ball to contribute to the team without being any sort of accumulator of leather handles himself. His ceiling appears to be the bottom six of Essendon's best 22, which makes him useless in fantasy draft leagues.

Projection: 57.0 from 9. Value: -135.4. Draft rank: 521. FWD rank: 161.

Cian McBride	BAC		#41	19yo	195cm	84kg	'19 B rookie
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LONG RIDE FOR MCBRIDE

key defender non-AFL background rookie

Cian McBride was signed as a category B rookie from Ireland in the off season after blitzing several athletic categories at the Combine.

McBride will spend most if not all of 2020 in the VFL learning the trade, as his list status dictates.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti	FWD	75.4	#43	27yo	171cm	77kg	88 games
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VOILA, IT'S WALLA'S WAY

crumbing forward dead-eye

If you picked Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti up from the free agent pool after his bag of four in round 3 then enjoyed his seven-goal romp in round 4, you probably would have dropped him by the next time he passed the forward baseline in round 11. His role is to start deep and stay there, so his scoring is dependent on goals.

As in previous years, McDonald-Tipungwuti's scoring in 2019 was wildly different in wins, ten points over the forward baseline while his average in losses was 17 points under. Sometimes it is easy to predict if the Dons are going to get the four points and give Walla his share, but even if they win he can go missing. Avoid.

Projection: 62.9 from 21 (-1). Value: -190.9. Draft rank: 591. FWD rank: 190.

Andrew McGrath	CTR	73.5	#1	21yo	178cm	83kg	63 games
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HOW FAR, DON MCGRATH?

outside midfielder

The move of Andrew McGrath to midfield can be considered a success in that he largely recreated his stat line from his time at half back in a more difficult position, save for his disposal efficiency dropping by five points to 70%. His near-identical contested rate of just over 30% underlined a role that started outside and mostly stayed that way, despite his ox-like frame and lack of blinding pace off the mark.

For fantasy coaches, McGrath's utility going into 2020 classified as a CTR only is measured against a much higher baseline, a mark he has rarely threatened in his first three seasons. It wouldn't be the first time that a Rising Star winner hit his ceiling early in his career, though **Daniel Rich** eventually found a higher gear when he drifted from midfield to his original defensive position. As it is, McGrath is a late flier pick at best.

Projection: 74.7 from 22. Value: -204.0. Draft rank: 600. CTR rank: 168.

Conor McKenna	BAC	78.0	#45	24yo	184cm	88kg	72 games
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WHEN IRISH TOES ARE DANCING

half back flanker seagull rebounder non-AFL background

The move of **Andrew McGrath** to midfield was just as much about the continued development of Conor McKenna as about the more-hyped Rising Star. The Irishman came fully into his own as an explosive rebounder last season, gaining much of his 449 metres per game (up 80) with bursts of speed on the ground. His fantasy scores jumped by 15 points after the bye.

Obviously it's a small sample size, but it is noticeable that McKenna's numbers have trended up in the latter part of seasons, perhaps pointing to a superior fitness base that is not apparent early in the season when everyone else is also fresh. This would make him a pick up target, as he seems to be a bit of an August specialist who will probably get dropped midseason in your league.

Projection: 70.1 from 21. Value: -40.1. Draft rank: 313. BAC rank: 104.

Shaun McKernan	RUC/FWD	67.6	#44	29yo	196cm	100kg	77 games
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WINDING TRACK FOR SMACK

second ruck/forward buckets

In a Bomber forward line lacking tails through injury, Shaun McKernan had his best season in year 11 with 15 games, including some game-winning performances and trademark highlight reel efforts. In between those highs, however, came some troughs including four fantasy scores of 50 or below. His scores improved by 20 points in wins, even though his best came in a loss.

McKernan has always looked like the sort of player who can do anything on his day but struggles when things aren't quite clicking, which is most days to be brutally honest. Taken as an average, his post-bye scores were startable with the proviso that he's going to put in a stinker in one out of every three. If you can handle that with some other options behind him, pick him late.

Projection: 68.2 from 11 (-4). Value: -151.5. Draft rank: 548. RUC rank: 38.

Ross McQuillan	BAC/FWD	#39	21yo	186cm	79kg	'19 B rookie
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QUICK STICKS FOR MCQUILLAN

outside midfielder non-AFL background rookie

After showing impressive speed at the Combine, Ross McQuillan comes to Essendon where he is already the quickest player on the list, albeit he is still getting used to the oval-shaped ball after growing up on Gaelic football.

McQuillan may eventually turn into a useful player like **Conor McKenna** before him, but he will need to serve a long apprenticeship in the VFL before he's ready for the big time.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Zach Merrett	CTR	105.6	#7	24yo	180cm	83kg	125 games
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MERRETT CAN'T DO MUCH MORE

inside midfielder magnet launcher

On the face of it, 2019 for Zach Merrett was pretty much exactly the same as the previous year, save for the round 1 concussion that had derailed him early in 2018. A couple of exotic stats tell the story, though: he lifted his league ranking in inside 50s and metres gained by 50 to add enough hurt factor to join the ranks of the elite midfielders. His starting position was as often on a wing or a flank to avoid tags, and they largely didn't come.

It is unhealthy how much better Merrett is than his fellow Don midfielders, even his captain. Essendon evolved a game plan under John Worsfold based on generating scores from behind centre, which is not how things are done at successful clubs in the modern era where frontal pressure is more sustainable. New coach Ben Rutten will no doubt have new ideas on how to use Zerrett, and he is likely to continue to produce early round value.

Projection: 108.2 from 22. Value: +533.0. Draft rank: 14. CTR rank: 7.

Irving Mosquito	FWD	#22	19yo	176cm	72kg	'18 ND #38
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MOSQUITO YET TO BE BLOODED

crumbing forward coming off LTI hamstring problem

In between completing year 12 studies in his first listed season, Irving Mosquito played 12 VFL games for eight goals, twice reaching 16 disposals and once kicking multiple goals with his most notable stat being four tackles per match.

Mosquito will be coming off season-ending hamstring surgery, so a slow development will be slowed down even more going into his second campaign. Expect a senior debut some time this year, but not too early, and not producing startable scores.

Projection: 39.3 from 2 (+2). Value: -65.4. Draft rank: 385. FWD rank: 118.

Kobe Mutch	CTR	41.0 (4)	#19	22yo	187cm	88kg	4 games
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MUTCH STUCK ON CRUTCHES

outside midfielder

Injuries to a hamstring in round 3 and then later a fractured knee cap in the VFL restricted Kobe Mutch to just two fit appearances, both at the lower level where he has shown an ability to rack up possession both inside and outside without showing much in the way of hurt factor.

Essendon needs some outside run post the retirement of David Myers, but in Mutch they have a player whose limited physical talent set suggests he may never be able to step up a level, even if he can avoid injury. He probably has one more year to prove himself before being discarded.

Projection: 74.0 (+29) from 6 (+5). Value: -60.0. Draft rank: 370. CTR rank: 114.

Darcy Parish	FWD/CTR	86.3	#3	22yo	181cm	77kg	75 games
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FAITH NEEDED FOR PARISH

outside midfielder

Despite not being picked for round 1 and then dropped temporarily for Anzac Day, Darcy Parish suited up for 20 matches at about the same rates as he has through his four-year career, which is slightly under that required to be startable in fantasy leagues week to week, even if he can string together some decent scores at times.

Ceiling height is the problem for Parish, as after this long he really should have shown a more upward trajectory in his graph than the flatness he has rolled out since his debut. Coasting at this level is not good for his long-term job security, as younger models may go past him. Someone will pick him as a speculator.

Projection: 80.3 from 20. Value: +165.5. Draft rank: 111. FWD rank: 26.

Andrew Phillips	RUC	67.4	#34	28yo	201cm	98kg	41 games
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DON'T IMPORT PHILLIPS

first ruck buckets

Now at his third club, Andrew Phillips always suffered from low job security with his place on the ruck depth chart never higher than second. At Essendon, he sits well behind the ageing **Tom Bellchambers** who is very susceptible to the odd soft tissue injury, so he'll probably get a handful of games in relief which won't be startable.

The ruck baseline is pretty high these days, which means even when Phillips is given first ruck duties for the occasional game as he was five times last year at Carlton, his scores rarely go far into startable ranges if at all. This long-term trend is highly unlikely to change at club three, making him unworthy as a handcuff.

Projection: 59.5 from 5. Value: -112.5. Draft rank: 483. RUC rank: 34.

Mason Redman	BAC	68.7	#27	22yo	187cm	87kg	24 games
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REDMAN FLASHING IN AND OUT

half back flanker

The move of **Andrew McGrath** to a wing left a HBF spot open for whichever Bomber could stay fit long enough, and that man was Mason Redman whose stat line was not much different to the previous incumbent, save for a 12:6 disposal ratio instead of McGrath's 10:10, which led to a 10% edge in metres gained.

As a fantasy player, Redman is startable based purely on averages, with a floor in the 50s and ceiling at about 90 making him a frustrating start at times. League winners are probably not going to feature a plodder like Redman in their 2020 sides, as his upside is limited and job security not assured under a new coaching structure.

Projection: 72.7 (+5) from 15 (-4). Value: +10.2. Draft rank: 202. BAC rank: 59.

Jordan Ridley	BAC	61.9 (9)	#14	21yo	192cm	91kg	9 games
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ALIEN ROLES FOR RIDLEY

half back flanker aerialist

Things were looking great for Jordan Ridley after an impressive 2019 Anzac Day performance, but he survived only one senior game more until being demoted to the VFL, thrown up the field to a wing and also forward. He passed the 25 disposal mark four times out of 16 for Williamstown, plus 24 in the losing final. The best parts of his game at the top level have been intercept marking and disposal by foot.

Essendon have a fair few of Ridley's type, and **Martin Gleeson** and **Mason Redman** were preferred in the interceptor half back role that was previously filled by Brendon Goddard. They have a few more wings and flankers ahead of him if he is being aimed at those spots too, though with the club's historically poor injury record he will probably get another chance. Too many red flags to burn a draft pick on him, nonetheless.

Projection: 63.3 from 6. Value: -52.0. Draft rank: 349. BAC rank: 119.

Adam Saad	BAC	81.9	#42	25yo	178cm	78kg	91 games
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SMILE ON SAAD'S DIAL

lockdown defender

Happily for a player who struggled with soft tissues early in his career, Adam Saad has missed only one game in the past three seasons, his role drifting deeper over time to primarily be about stopping an opponent with the occasional trademark burst of speed to break lines in midfield. He is so good at it that he's its benchmark.

Saad's tackle count was his best across five seasons, underlining his preferred man-marking position. This gives him a decent floor without a particularly high ceiling, just the sort of player who looks good on paper with an average suggesting startability, but who lacks upside and will let you down every month or so.

Projection: 67.9 from 20 (-1). Value: -81.8. Draft rank: 412. BAC rank: 140.

Dylan Shiel	CTR	97.0	#9	27yo	182cm	83kg	155 games
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SHIEL DEAL NOT A REAL STEAL

inside midfielder launcher

The knock on Dylan Shiel has always been that his ceiling is not high enough to put him in the very top echelon of inside midfielders. The flip side of that is that his floor is very high as well, and he delivered full trade value in his first season at Tullamarine after seven at GWS with his best tackle count, albeit two disposals off his best rate. He has largely been the same beast across the last six seasons.

The arrival of Shiel filled a big hole in the list structure post the retirements of Goddard and Watson, though the club dropped from mid-table in clearances and inside 50s towards the bottom third. That was not Shiel's fault, of course, and neither was them paying him an A-grader's salary for B-plus output. In fantasy drafts, he's a desultory middle-round pick with zero upside at this point.

Projection: 97.6 from 21. Value: +286.4. Draft rank: 70. CTR rank: 41.

Devon Smith	FWD/CTR	90.1	#5	26yo	174cm	77kg	137 games
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DEVO OVER DEVON'S ABSENCE

inside midfielder in-and-under launcher coming off LTI knee problem

Coming off a best & fairest win in his first season at Essendon, Devon Smith's second campaign in red and black was a disaster, copping several in-game injuries and then shut down for good after round 8 with a knee complaint. He still managed to lift his inside 50 rate to top 10 in the league, with five of his 18 touches per game crossing the paint. The only blip was a terrible disposal efficiency of 54%, though that is a stat blamable somewhat on quality of targets.

You can chuck the 2019 stats from Smith in the bin, as he was carrying that knee all year and also had lowered TOG in two of seven games due to knocks. His best form is in the very top echelons, and plenty of fantasy coaches will have fond memories of winning a 2018 league comp on his back. Competition for his signature in draft leagues should be as fierce as it was when he prepared to leave the Giants, making him a popular early round reach.

Projection: 102.1 from 19 (+12). Value: +572.6. Draft rank: 10. FWD rank: 2.

Will Snelling	FWD	79.5 (4)	#40	22yo	175cm	70kg	4 games
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SNELLING STARS IN MEATBALL II

defensive forward centre rotations rookie

Recruited from the SANFL midseason, Will Snelling was shifted from his usual midfield role to a forward rotating through centreat Essendon. He managed three games in the ones before foot soreness intervened, only to return for the final where he booted two goals in a big loss.

Given that there aren't going to be a lot of other alternatives to replacing Mark Baguley in a forward pocket, he's got as good a chance as any. He gets to play that battle out in the Marsh series, after which he is worth a look as a flier.

Projection: 70.3 from 7 (+4). Value: -12.3. Draft rank: 228. FWD rank: 63.

James Stewart	FWD	69.0	#17	26yo	199cm	96kg	45 games
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HOW THE GROIN WAS DONE

key forward

After falling out of favour with coaches late in 2018, James Stewart suited up for one VFL game and not at all for the senior side at all last year as he battled and eventually lost his season to a persistent groin complaint. As either a third tall forward or a full forward, he has not produced startable scores over six seasons at two clubs.

The departure of **Mitch W. Brown** adds something to Stewart's job security if he can get his body right, though with groin injuries that is usually easier said than done. Then again, if you were the Dons hierarchy you might want to look at the kids coming through more than the journeyman with the low ceiling. Ignore.

Not projected to play. Value: nil.

Jake Stringer	FWD	69.3	#25	26yo	192cm	95kg	126 games
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HE'S NOT A BABY, JAKE

key forward finisher

When Jake Stringer came to Essendon, some of the hype around him centred on his capability to move to midfield, perhaps even permanently. That promise has receded the longer he has played at the Dons, as he has won the club goalkicking twice and manages one centre clearance per game. His role is very much primarily as a target forward, especially on those all-too-frequent days when **Joe Daniher** is absent.

Stringer is the sort of key position forward whose average hovering around the forward baseline conceals an unacceptably large amount of variation in scoring from week to week, on a near-random basis as his rate only increases five points in wins and he can put in some quiet ones even when the team is doing well. Fantasy coaches who build their lists on this sort of boom-bust asset don't often make finals in draft leagues.

Projection: 65.3 from 18. Value: -120.3. Draft rank: 497. FWD rank: 149.

Jacob Townsend	FWD	57.5	#20	26yo	187cm	88kg	48 games
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TAKE ME TO FUNKY TOWNA?

half forward flanker coming off LTI leg problem rookie

Discarded by Richmond after they secured the services of **Tom J. Lynch** to play centre half forward, Jacob Townsend joins this third club with a brief to return to his original Giants roots as an inside midfielder, rotating out of the forward line. He averaged a goal from 18 touches with seven tackles last year in the VFL at a rate of 89 fantasy points, though he has never consistently reproduced that sort of form at senior level, 2017 flag run notwithstanding.

Townsend will have a lot of focus on him from salary cap leagues due to the year out of the senior level, and if it looks like he makes it to the round 1 Dons team then he's going to be popular amongst fantasy coaches. In draft leagues, however, you would need to have faith that he's going to play the majority of games, which would require a fabulous Marsh series. Someone in your league probably should burn a low-value pick on him for the narrow upside.

Not projected to play (-1). Value: nil.

David Zaharakis	BAC/CTR	82.0	#11	30yo	180cm	79kg	207 games
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ZAHARAKIS DRY AS ARRAKIS

half back flanker outside midfielder

As late as round 18 last season, David Zaharakis's statistics had dropped off slightly to a point where he was still barely startable, albeit not delivering the sort of middle-round value you would have had to spend to get him in fantasy drafts. Then came a terrible four weeks culminating in a season-ending ankle injury. He played a forward role in some games but after the bye was more often starting behind the ball, using his elite endurance to cover a lot of ground with limited effect on the stat sheet.

If footy was played on a GPS machine, Zaharakis would still be considered top drawer. Getting the ball is still worth something in modern footy, however, and he was scapegoated somewhat by Bomber fans who were disappointed in his demotion to a utility, slotting in to unfamiliar positions on the whim of John Worsfold. The advent of Ben Rutten might see a fresh start, not to mention a decent preseason. The addition of BAC eligibility vaults him to middle round value, albeit with some downside due to age.

Projection: 82.2 from 18 (-2). Value: +184.1. Draft rank: 101. BAC rank: 22.

Brandon Zerk-Thatcher	BAC	58.0 (1)	#30	21yo	195cm	86kg	1 game
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BZT, WRONG ANSWER

key defender

A single senior game at the end of his second listed season was a slightly disappointing return for Brandon Zerk-Thatcher, though he was re-signed for two more years based on some excellent VFL form where he specialised in intercept marks at a fantasy rate of 54.

Essendon has a lot of those types, and Zerk-Thatcher was perhaps unlucky that those in front of him in the depth chart turned their injury fortunes around to play out full seasons. Even if he gets picked for round 1, his game is not conducive to consistent fantasy scoring.

Projection: 56.0 from 1. Value: -16.0. Draft rank: 232. BAC rank: 71.