When Marlion Pickett [runs onto the M.C.G for Richmond](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-26/marlion-pickett-to-debut-in-afl-grand-final-for-richmond/11551422) in the AFL Grand Final this Saturday, he’ll be only the sixth player in 124 finals to debut on the big day.

The sole purpose of this blog post is to illustrate how incredibly easy it is to figure this out, thanks to the dplyr and fitzRoy packages.

library(dplyr)

library(fitzRoy)

afldata <- get\_afltables\_stats()

afldata %>%

select(Season, Round, Date, ID, First.name, Surname, Playing.for,

Home.team, Home.score, Away.team, Away.score) %>%

group\_by(ID) %>%

arrange(Date) %>%

# a player's first game

slice(1) %>%

ungroup() %>%

# grand finals only

filter(Round == "GF") %>%

# get the winning/losing margin

mutate(Margin = case\_when(Playing.for == Home.team ~ Home.score - Away.score,

TRUE ~ Away.score - Home.score)) %>%

select(-Home.team, -Away.team, Home.score, Away.score)

| **Season** | **Round** | **Date** | **ID** | **First.name** | **Surname** | **Playing.for** | **Margin** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1908 | GF | 1908-09-26 | 5573 | Harry | Prout | Essendon | -9 |
| 1920 | GF | 1920-10-02 | 6677 | Billy | James | Richmond | 17 |
| 1923 | GF | 1923-10-20 | 6915 | George | Rawle | Essendon | 17 |
| 1926 | GF | 1926-10-09 | 3824 | Francis | Vine | Melbourne | 57 |
| 1952 | GF | 1952-09-27 | 9361 | Keith | Batchelor | Collingwood | -46 |