

Do the VFL and VFLW stats suggest performance in AFL and AFLW?

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Topic

A common question in Australian rules football is how well state-level (VFL) performance translates into success at the elite level (AFL).

- Raw comparisons between VFL(W) and AFL(W) players are biased: only a subset of VFL(W) athletes are drafted, and they may already differ in age, position, or performance profile.
- Propensity score matching (PSM) provides a way to create comparable groups of players, balancing observed characteristics before comparing outcomes.
- With the [fitzRoy R package](#), researchers can access both AFL(W) and VFL(W) match and player statistics from AFL(W) Tables, making it possible to conduct a rigorous causal-style analysis of talent pathways.

Plan

- Use the [fitzRoy](#) package to collect historical AFL and VFL player-level data.
- Construct covariates for VFL players (e.g., disposals, goals, tackles, age, height, position).
- Use PSM to match VFL players who transition to AFL with similar VFL players who do not.
- Estimate the “treatment effect” of AFL selection on subsequent performance outcomes, and test whether VFL performance indicators predict AFL success.

