

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

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19 September 2025

Topic

A common question in Australian rules football is how well state-level (VFLM, VLFW) performance translates into success at the elite level (AFLM, AFLW).

- Raw comparisons between VFL(M/W) and AFL(M/W) players are biased: only a subset of VFL(M/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(M/W) and VFL(M/W) match and player statistics from AFL(M/W) Tables, making it possible to conduct a rigorous causal-style analysis of talent pathways.

Plan

1. Use the [fitzRoy](#) package to collect historical AFL(M/W) and VFL(M/W) player-level data.
2. Organise the data to contain statistics for players in VFL(M/W) and AFL(M/W).
3. Explore the statistics and demographics of players that didn't transition from VFL(M/W) to AFL(M/W).
4. Subset to players who made the transition.
5. Conduct clustering of VFL(M/W) players into groups based on demographics, age, height, position.
6. Use PSM to match VFL(M/W) players who transition to AFL(M/W) with similar VFL(M/W) players who do not.
7. Estimate the “treatment effect” of AFL(M/W) selection on subsequent performance outcomes, and test whether VFL(M/W) performance indicators predict AFL(M/W) success.

