

Essendon vs. Port Adelaide

Head to Head – Essendon vs. Port Adelaide

Round	Venue	Ess Score	Port Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Essendon StatRating™	Port Adelaide StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2000									
1	TD	156	62	94	9.7	14.9	681	322	359
16	AAMI	89	58	31	11.9	12.9	455	412	43
2001									
2	TD	145	107	38	9.7	9.7	619	505	114
17	AAMI	97	104	-7	11.6	11.3	490	479	11
2002									
11	TD	49	108	-59	15.2	10.5	289	457	-168
SF	AAMI	59	83	-24	15.4	11.1	273	495	-222
2003									
9	TD	96	146	-50	10.6	9.7	407	558	-151
SF	AAMI	44	83	-39	20.3	13.1	246	382	-136
2004									
1	AAMI	62	158	-96	12.5	8.5	391	740	-350
Average		89	101	-12	13.0	11.3	428	483	-55

After being the Don's whipping boys at Telstra Dome in early 2000, Port Adelaide have managed to turn it around and dish it back to Essendon. Round 1 this year completed the turnaround, with their 96 point thrashing capping off the last 6 wins against the Bombers. Whether it be during the home and away season, or in Finals, at AAMI Stadium or at Telstra Dome, they have made sure that they have come away with a commanding win. Given these circumstances, Port Adelaide should start a short priced favourite for this game at Telstra Dome, as they have won their past 6 games this season, and the Bombers have lost 5 of their last 6.

Essendon – Current Form

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Ess Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Essendon StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2004										
13	MCG	Melb	69	95	-26	14.9	10.8	328	508	-180
14	TD	Kang	79	100	-21	14.9	9.4	342	564	-221
15	MCG	Rich	155	77	78	9.7	14.5	590	393	197
16	SUB	WCE	73	117	-44	13.7	12.8	357	407	-50
17	TD	Stk	92	127	-35	12.4	12.3	330	465	-135
Average			94	103	-9	13.1	12.0	390	467	-77

It's been all downhill for the Bombers since the 2nd half against Brisbane back in round 12. Since then, they have lost 5 of their last 6 games, all against sides that are vying for either a Top 4 or Top 8 position. It's also no coincidence that they have had a number of players out through injury during this period, which include Hird, Fletcher, Wellman, Lucas, Rioli and Cupido just to name a few. The "Backs to the Wall" statement is one we heard for quite a while with this team, and although many used the term last week, it has more relevance this week. Last week they were in the 8. This week they are not, and if they drop the game, will find it extremely hard to get back in. Although their ratings have been in the 300's, they have restricted the opposition to reasonable levels, considering West Coast's dominance at Subiaco, and the new Telstra Dome kings, Stkilda. As remarkable as it seems, their current playing levels do have some consistency, as can be seen by the table below.

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Ess Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Essendon StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2003										
6	SUB	Freo	100	131	-31	11.2	10.7	403	493	-90
7	MCG	Rich	42	84	-42	15.4	10.3	300	467	-167
8	MCG	Haw	106	53	53	10.0	21.4	622	164	458
11	TS	Syd	79	133	-54	12.8	8.8	343	615	-272
12	TD	Kang	88	96	-8	12.0	11.7	415	429	-14
13	TD	Geel	129	93	36	10.9	17.1	540	281	258
2004										
1	AAMI	Port	62	158	-96	12.5	8.5	391	740	-350
2	TD	Stk	60	94	-34	16.6	11.6	266	509	-243
3	TD	WCE	137	131	6	11.9	9.1	513	592	-78
13	MCG	Melb	69	95	-26	14.9	10.8	328	508	-180
14	TD	Kang	79	100	-21	14.9	9.4	342	564	-221
15	MCG	Rich	155	77	78	9.7	14.5	590	393	197
16	SUB	WCE	73	117	-44	13.7	12.8	357	407	-50
17	TD	Stk	92	127	-35	12.4	12.3	330	465	-135

The figures highlighted in light blue represent current playing criteria, while the figures in red show the game result in the following week, and the cells highlighted in Green indicate the Bombers StatRating™ in the following week. The bottom figures show the Bombers latest form. This 2 game tango that the Bombers have been playing is quite evident in their form over the past 2 years. Rounds 6,7 and 11,12 of 2003, and more recently rounds 1,2 and 13,14 bear a striking resemblance to their round 16,17 figures. On each occasion, they have risen, from having "their backs against the wall" to post memorable victories. Their average StatRating™ in the following week is a healthy 566, with an average score of 132. Should they be able to reproduce these figures this week, they'll definitely win.

Port Adelaide – Current form

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Port Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Port Adel StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2004										
13	SUB	Freo	112	102	10	11.5	12.7	401	354	47
14	YP	Stk	93	47	46	14.7	21.2	313	208	105
15	AAMI	Carl	123	40	83	10.1	15.9	616	188	428
16	MCG	Haw	105	53	52	9.8	15.2	502	284	218
17	AAMI	WCE	102	76	26	13.1	10.0	304	498	-194
Average			107	64	43	11.8	15.0	427	306	121

Port Adelaide has gone from strength to strength in the past 9 weeks, winning 8 of their last 9 games. That currently includes a winning streak of 6, but maybe we saw some signs last weekend that a loss is on the way. Looking back through their form, the round 15 win against Carlton was definitely a peak. A StatRating™ Margin of 428 is just huge, and they were entitled to fall over against the Hawks at the MCG. That didn't eventuate (Surprise, Surprise) and they ended up beating them by a lackluster 52 points. Last weeks effort, at home, against a side that traditionally doesn't play too well at AAMI Stadium, was a game where they used their get out of jail card. They were almost 200 StatRating™ points in arrears of West Coast, had 10 less inside 50 entries, and 9 less shots at goal. Add to the fact that West was able to have a shot at goal with every 10 possessions to West Coast's 13.1, and you start to get the picture. The deciding factor in the end was accuracy at goal. Port Adelaide managed a season high 73% to West Coast's 29%. They did win the game, but not the StatRating™, and this is not a good sign. The Table below highlights recent performance's by Port Adelaide in the past where this has occurred.

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Port Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Port Adel StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2002										
9	AAMI	Coll	91	86	5	12.5	9.6	295	449	-154
10	YP	Haw	117	77	40	10.7	16.3	526	264	262
15	SCG	Syd	94	92	2	12.1	10.9	437	523	-86
16	Optus	Kang	70	99	-29	11.7	8.1	299	691	-392
19	Optus	Carl	54	45	9	13.4	13.8	305	355	-50
20	AAMI	Adel	84	76	8	10.7	12.5	374	361	13
2003										
4	Optus	Carl	114	84	30	11.5	10.0	392	532	-140
5	AAMI	Adel	78	66	12	15.2	13.9	277	345	-68
5	AAMI	Adel	78	66	12	15.2	13.9	277	345	-68
6	AAMI	Rich	84	57	27	13.3	15.3	330	262	68
17	Gabba	Bris	104	103	1	9.1	9.1	529	547	-18
18	MCG	Haw	84	80	4	10.9	10.6	469	407	62
2004										
2	SUB	WCE	118	115	3	9.9	9.3	453	615	-162
3	AAMI	Haw	171	90	81	8.2	10.0	732	562	170
10	AAMI	Geel	116	112	4	12.0	10.1	376	504	-128
11	Gabba	Bris	86	123	-37	11.7	10.0	412	590	-178
17	AAMI	WCE	102	76	26	13.1	10.0	304	498	-194

The figures highlighted in light blue represent current playing criteria, while the figures in red show the game result in the following week, and the cells highlighted in Green indicate Port's StatRating™ in the following week. The bottom figures show Port's latest form. These figures aren't quite as damning as expected. They have 6 wins and only 2 losses, with 3 of those wins coming against the Hawks, and 2 at AAMI Stadium against Adelaide. The away games against Kangaroos and Brisbane are the losses of note, with StatRating™ figures in those games being low. In fact even when they have won, their figures have not been high (Hawthorn excepted). Average StatRating™ is 384 with a score board total of just 86.

Essendon – Form at Telstra Dome

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Ess Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Essendon StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2002										
4	TD	Adel	122	81	41	10.7	11.7	495	477	18
8	TD	Stk	171	72	99	8.2	16.1	720	311	409
11	TD	Port	49	108	-59	15.2	10.5	289	457	-168
13	TD	Melb	120	108	12	10.2	10.8	469	603	-134
14	TD	WB	118	118	0	8.5	10.6	726	536	190
16	TD	Geel	56	95	-39	17.1	12.1	234	437	-203
18	TD	Bris	71	108	-37	17.9	10.7	274	506	-232
21	TD	Freo	93	72	21	11.4	14.1	597	277	320
EF	TD	WCE	111	78	33	14.1	11.8	398	490	-93
		Average	101	93	8	12.6	12.0	467	455	12
2003										
4	TD	WB	129	110	19	11.3	11.1	441	539	-98
9	TD	Port	96	146	-50	10.6	9.7	407	558	-151
10	TD	WCE	128	106	22	9.1	11.1	662	488	175
12	TD	Kang	88	96	-8	12.0	11.7	415	429	-14
13	TD	Geel	129	93	36	10.9	17.1	540	281	258
14	TD	Stk	119	51	68	9.3	16.9	667	255	412
16	TD	Bris	94	86	8	13.3	10.6	353	490	-137
19	TD	WB	147	80	67	9.2	14.3	709	336	374
21	TD	Freo	133	73	60	9.6	16.3	616	270	346
		Average	118	93	25	10.6	13.2	534	405	129
2004										
2	TD	Stk	60	94	-34	16.6	11.6	266	509	-243
3	TD	WCE	137	131	6	11.9	9.1	513	592	-78
7	TD	WB	121	95	26	10.1	11.4	584	463	121
9	TD	Geel	97	120	-23	10.6	9.4	493	606	-114
10	TD	Freo	115	85	30	10.6	11.5	473	540	-67
12	TD	Bris	96	162	-66	11.5	8.7	435	770	-335
14	TD	Kang	79	100	-21	14.9	9.4	342	564	-221
17	TD	Stk	92	127	-35	12.4	12.3	330	465	-135
		Average	100	114	-14	12.3	10.4	430	564	-134

Much has been said of the Bombers form at Telstra Dome this year, as they have relinquished their Crown as Kings of the Dome to the Saints. The glaring stat that has ballooned in recent times is their opposition total score and StatRating™. It has gone to 114 this year, with an average StatRating™ of 564. The positive from last week's performance was Stkilda's StatRating™. The Saints usually average above 600 at Telstra Dome, yet the Dons kept them down to 465. Is this a signal that the Saints are not as good as they were earlier in the year, or that the Dons are starting to get back to form? It's a tough question that will be answered by the end of round 18.

Port Adelaide – Form at Telstra Dome

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Port Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Port Adel StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2002										
3	TD	Stk	139	56	83	7.7	17.0	809	241	568
11	TD	Ess	108	49	59	10.5	15.2	457	289	168
		Average	124	53	71	9.1	16.1	633	265	368
2003										
9	TD	Ess	146	96	50	9.7	10.6	558	407	151
15	TD	WB	108	93	15	9.5	13.7	677	380	297
21	TD	Rich	124	104	20	8.4	12.4	604	330	274
		Average	126	98	28	9.2	12.2	613	372	241
2004										
8	TD	Kang	48	140	-92	21.8	9.3	193	631	-439
		Average	48	140	-92	21.8	9.3	193	631	-439

Port's form at this stadium has been great, but for the round 8 glitch against the Kangaroos. It was that game that kick started their good form, and perhaps it will be this game that ends it. One would have to assume that Port Adelaide should kick above the 100 mark at this ground, give recent results in previous years. Interestingly though, they have only played 3 games in Melbourne this year, and it's now round 18! They played round 4 against Melbourne at the MCG, round 8 against the Kangaroos at Telstra Dome, and round 16 against Hawthorn at the MCG. Their average score so far in Melbourne is 75, with an average StatRating™ of 335. All of a sudden, they don't look as robust as these figures in the table might suggest, given their averages were given a boost with a 52 point win against the Hawks recently.

Essendon – Top 8 Form

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Ess Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Essendon StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2004										
1	AAMI	Port	62	158	-96	12.5	8.5	391	740	-350
2	TD	Stk	60	94	-34	16.6	11.6	266	509	-243
6	MCG	Syd	108	98	10	9.6	11.1	522	433	89
9	TD	Geel	97	120	-23	10.6	9.4	493	606	-114
10	TD	Freo	115	85	30	10.6	11.5	473	540	-67
12	TD	Bris	96	162	-66	11.5	8.7	435	770	-335
13	MCG	Melb	69	95	-26	14.9	10.8	328	508	-180
14	TD	Kang	79	100	-21	14.9	9.4	342	564	-221
17	TD	Stk	92	127	-35	12.4	12.3	330	465	-135
		Average	86	115	-29	12.6	10.4	398	571	-173

The Bombers record against these teams is nothing short of disgraceful. They just haven't been able to measure up to these sides this year, with a 29 point margin standing between them and most of these sides. Their opposition StatRating™ has blown out to an average of 571, while they have struggled to reach the 400 mark. They have played 3 interstate sides in Melbourne, with a 2-1 record. Their averages against these teams are an average StatRating™477 and a scoreboard total of 106.

Port Adelaide – Top 8 Form

Round	Venue	Opp Team	Port Score	Opp Score	Game Result	Possession Per Score	OPossession Per Score	Port Adel StatRating™	Opposition StatRating™	StatRating™ Margin
2004										
4	MCG	Melb	71	124	-53	14.1	9.2	311	596	-284
8	TD	Kang	48	140	-92	21.8	9.3	193	631	-439
10	AAMI	Geel	116	112	4	12.0	10.1	376	504	-128
11	Gabba	Bris	86	123	-37	11.7	10.0	412	590	-178
12	AAMI	Syd	132	60	72	10.3	14.0	468	329	140
13	SUB	Freo	112	102	10	11.5	12.7	401	354	47
14	YP	Stk	93	47	46	14.7	21.2	313	208	105
Average			94	101	-7	13.7	12.4	353	459	-104

Port Adelaide has had it tough when it comes to Top 8 sides, with only 2 of their 7 games played at home. They still have a 4-3 record despite this, but they have lost both Melbourne games against these sides. Remarkably, their average StatRating™ is relatively low at 353, even though their scoreboard average is 94. Even without the 193 against the Kangaroos in round 8, their StatRating™ figures have not impressed in these games. They'll need to pull one out here to secure victory in this game.

Final Summary

- The ledger is 6 -3 in Ports favour since 2000, with Port winning the last 6 on end.
- The Bombers current form suggests they can bounce back to some form this week. They have been at these levels 4 times in the past 2 years for 4 wins.
- Port has won their last 6 on end, but is showing signs a loss is just around the corner. They were almost 200 StatRating™ points behind West Coast last week.
- The Bombers form at Telstra Dome has not been too good this year. They allow the opposition an average of 114 points per game, and an average StatRating™ of 571. Their most recent effort against the Saints started to show improvement though..
- Ports record at Telstra Dome has been impressive in the past, but lost badly to the Kangaroos earlier in the year. Their record in Victoria has not been great this year, with an average score of 75 and StatRating™ of 335.
- The Bombers have a terrible record against Top 8 sides. The only positive is their record against interstate sides here. Average score of 106 and StatRating™ of 477
- Port's record against Top 8 sides is better, but only marginally. Their average StatRating™ against these sides is 353.

Current odds on offer from Sports Bookmakers are

Essendon \$2.60
Port Adelaide \$1.50

At the Line

Essendon \$1.90 (+12.5 points)
Port Adelaide \$1.90 (- 12.5 points)

* For the latest odds on offer visit www.onthepunt.com.au

At the line signifies that you will be able to get a better price on Port Adelaide (\$1.90), but they will have to win by more than 12 points. In Essendons case, you will be offered a lesser price, but they will have the ability to lose by up to 12 points or even win the game, for you to collect. As long as they don't lose by 13 points or more, then you collect.

This is definitely a crunch game for the Bombers, and they have conditions to suit. They have shown they can bounce back from these levels, and Port is showing signs that they may falter soon. They were desperately lucky to pinch that game against West Coast last week, against a side that doesn't normally play well at AAMI Stadium. The Dons record at Telstra Dome and against Top 8 sides is a worry here, but they started to show some form against the Saints last week. Port's form against Top 8 sides in Melbourne is a real worry, and how they can get away with only 3 games here in 17 rounds is astounding. It's a big call, but the Dons season is on the line this week. I think we can see an improved effort from the boys in Red and Black, and they should take the points.

RECOMMENDATION: The value is definitely the 12 point head start being offered here. Half stake on the win and single stake on the line at + 12.5 at the line.

GOLD MEMBERSHIP:

Historical StatRating™ figures for Head to Head, current form, Top 8 form, and form at the ground suggest the following points range for these teams.

Essendon Predicted StatRating™: 470– 530

Points Range: 100 – 112

Port Adelaide Predicted StatRating™: 360 – 420

Points Range: 76 – 88

Expect the spread to be around 11 points in our favour here, so a win by the Dons would be a good result. Still some uncertainty around the Dons Telstra Dome form and Top 8 form, so rated a **3 star**.

ACTUAL SCORE: Essendon 18.11.119 (488)

Port Adelaide 11.13.79 (408)

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