MCC Library Fact Sheet
August 16, 2025

AFL 2025 Round 23
Hawthorn v Melbourne

The "Merger" Game

During 1996 plans had been put in place for a possible merger between Hawthorn and Melbourne at the end of the season. Before the members of both clubs were scheduled to vote on the proposed merger, the Hawks and Demons faced each other in the final round of the season. Their Round 22 clash was a night game, played at the MCG on August 31, before a crowd of 63,196. Ninth on the ladder after 21 rounds, Hawthorn were hoping to secure a finals berth by winning the game. Melbourne were looking to register their eighth win of the season. The Hawks were coached by Ken Judge and captained by Jason Dunstall. The Demons were coached by Neil Balme and captained by Todd Viney. Melbourne opened the game strongly and were 11 points in front at the first break, but Hawthorn kicked seven goals to two in the second term to lead by 19 points at half-time. The Demons fought back in the third quarter to trail by just two points at the final change and, after an exciting last quarter, the Hawks were victorious by a single point. The final scores were **Hawthorn 15.12 (102) defeated Melbourne 15.11 (101)**. Dunstall kicked ten goals for Hawthorn, while David Neitz was Melbourne's leading goalkicker with six. Hawthorn took on Sydney in a qualifying final the following week, but their 10-point loss put them out of the premiership race. On September 16 Melbourne members voted narrowly in favour of the proposed merger but Hawthorn members overwhelmingly voted against it, and it did not go ahead.

Round 17, 1964

Melbourne's four-point victory over Hawthorn in the second last round of the 1964 season proved to be vital in the Demons' bid for their 12th VFL premiership. Had Melbourne lost this game they would probably have finished outside the four. Instead, they finished on top of the ladder with 56 points (14 wins), half a game ahead of Collingwood (second), Essendon (third) and Geelong (fourth), and a game ahead of Hawthorn (fifth). In the Round 17 game at Glenferrie Oval, witnessed by around 20,000 fans, Melbourne was captained by Ron Barassi and coached by Norm Smith. Graham Arthur was captain/coach of Hawthorn. Heading into the last quarter, Hawthorn led by 16 points and, according to the *Age,* "looked to be heading for a comfortable win and a berth in the four". In the final 30 minutes Melbourne got back into the game, but they were still behind well into the time-on period. The Demons then made one last ditch effort, attacking repeatedly and eventually taking the lead through an "amazing" goal from Hassa Mann. Mann gathered the ball some 30 yards out, near the boundary line, and screwed his kick through to put the Demons ahead. A couple of minutes later the siren sounded and Melbourne were the winners. The final scores were **Melbourne 10.13 (73) defeated Hawthorn 10.9 (69)**. Melbourne's win kept them on top of the ladder, two points ahead of Geelong and six ahead of Collingwood and Essendon. Hawthorn, who would have been in the top four if they had beaten the Demons, were in fifth position a further two points back. With both Collingwood and Essendon winning their final round matches (Essendon by 165 points over South Melbourne), Hawthorn failed to make the finals even though they defeated Richmond comfortably in the final round. Melbourne was well beaten by Footscray in Round 18 and Geelong lost narrowly to St Kilda, leaving Melbourne on top but moving Geelong down from second to fourth as they had an inferior percentage to both Collingwood and Essendon. In the first semi-final Geelong defeated Essendon by 19 points. Melbourne then had a huge win over Collingwood the following week to gain a place in the grand final. Collingwood qualified to meet them in the 'decider' when they held on to beat Geelong by just four points in the preliminary final. The margin was the same in the grand final, except that Melbourne were four-point winners over the Magpies.

Did You Know?

- Melbourne won their first nine VFL games against Hawthorn, the first game in this streak being the inaugural VFL game between the teams at Glenferrie Oval in Round 11, 1925, and the last being their Round 11 clash at the MCG in 1930.
- Hawthorn won 22 straight games against Melbourne from their Round 13 game in 1973 through to their Round 3 clash in 1984.
- The Demons and Hawks have only drawn one game in their VFL/AFL contests. This was in Round 18, 2021, at the MCG when **Melbourne 11.13 (79) drew with Hawthorn 12.7 (79)**.
- The first finals' clash between the clubs was in the 1957 preliminary final when **Melbourne 22.12 (144) defeated Hawthorn 11.10 (76)**.
- The only grand final contested between the clubs was in 1988 when **Hawthorn 22.20 (152) defeated Melbourne 6.20 (56)**.

FACT SHEETS ON THE MCC WEBSITE
The MCC Library's matchday fact sheets can be accessed through the MCC website at: **http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue**

This Round in History - Round 23 at the MCG

Round 23 was first played in 1991 with the introduction of a 24-round season to compensate for a bye in the fixture caused by the inclusion of Adelaide. In 1992 and 1994, 24-round seasons were also played. The 1995 addition of Fremantle eliminated the bye and the AFL returned to a 22-round season. Following Gold Coast's entry into the AFL in 2011, a 24-round season was again played to compensate for a bye. Despite an even number of teams competing from 2012, a staggered mid-season bye meant Round 23 (but not Round 24) has been retained.

The highest score in Round 23 at the MCG is 25.10 (160) by North Melbourne against Fitzroy 10.14 (74) in 1994. The 86-point margin is the biggest for this round at the MCG. The overall Round 23 highest score is 27.12 (174) by St Kilda against the Brisbane Bears 7.12 (54) at Moorabbin in 1991. The winning margin of 120 points is the greatest for this round. The biggest bag of goals at the MCG in Round 23 is six by Richmond's Jack Riewoldt against Port Adelaide in 2012. The overall Round 23 goalkicking record is 11 by Adelaide's Scott Hodges against Geelong at Football Park in 1992. The biggest Round 23 attendance is MCG is 85,405 for the Collingwood v Essendon match in 2019 at the MCG.

Statistics for Hawthorn v Melbourne

Hawthorn v Melbourne by venue

	Won by Hawthorn	Won by Melbourne	Drawn
Glenferrie Oval	15	29	0
MCG	47	43	1
Princes Park	11	4	0
Punt Road Oval	1	3	0
Syd. Showgrnd.	0	1	0
Waverley Park	14	3	0
	88	83	1

Most Goals in a Match (10 goals or more)

16	P. Hudson	Haw	Rd 5	1969	GO
12	B. Johnson Snr	Melb	Rd 11	1933	MCG
11	F. Fanning	Melb	Rd 11	1944	GO
11	L. Matthews	Haw	Rd 1	1981	MCG
10	P. Hudson	Haw	Rd 22	1971	GO
10	J. Dunstall	Haw	Rd 22	1996	MCG

Highest Score

Hawthorn	26.22 (178)	Rd 11	1982	PP
Melbourne	26.20 (176)	Rd 17	1940	MCG

Lowest Score

Hawthorn	1.7 (13)	Rd 9	1926	MCG
Melbourne	3.11 (29)	Rd 2	1966	GO

Greatest Winning Margin

Hawthorn	115 points	Rd 21	1983	Wav
Melbourne	141 points	Rd 9	1926	MCG

Last Match – Round 9, 2025, MCG

	Melbourne	Hawthorn
Quarter time	2.3	3.3
Half time	4.10	5.5
Three-quarter time	6.13	7.8
Full time	7.14 (56)	13.13 (91)

Played For Both

Bill Deague was recruited to Melbourne from Alphington and made his VFL debut in Round 14, 1932, against Hawthorn. From 1932 to 1936 he played 56 games, and kicked 11 goals, for the Demons. While at Melbourne he wore guernsey number 5. Deague's final two games for Melbourne were their 1936 first semi-final win over Carlton and their preliminary final loss to South Melbourne. These were his only finals appearances. He was 183 cm (6ft) tall and was a true utility player who played in many positions, including centre half-forward and centre half-back, half-back and half-forward flank, back and forward pocket and in the ruck. Moving to Hawthorn, Deague played 43 games (35 goals) for the club from 1937 to 1939, wearing the number 17 guernsey. During his career he received three Brownlow Medal votes while at Melbourne and five while at Hawthorn. He was prepared to go in hard and in his second last match against Collingwood was reported for elbowing Magpie full-forward Ron Todd but was cleared. Born in October 1912, Bill Deague passed away in August 1995.

Kyle Cheney was recruited by Melbourne through the 2007 National Draft. He had previously played for the Warrack Eagles and North Ballarat Under 18s. Cheney played the whole of the 2008 season with Melbourne's (then) VFL affiliate, Sandringham, before making his AFL debut in the first round of the 2009 season against North Melbourne. A defender and mid-fielder, he played 12 senior games for the Demons in 2009 but was selected for only two in 2010. In 2011 he moved to Hawthorn as a third-round draft pick, where he played 27 matches (2 goals) through to the end of the 2014 season. Whilst at Hawthorn he won Box Hill's best and fairest award in 2013, the side's premiership year. Cheney then transferred to Adelaide, where he was picked up in the last minutes of the trade period. He played 44 games (0 goals) for the Crows from 2015 to 2018. He was delisted at the end of the 2018 season.