

MAFL Heuristic Tipsters For 2011

Loathing the Bye Already

Back in 2009 I introduced MAFL's Heuristic Tipsters and these have predicted home and away results with accuracy levels ranging from passable to exceedingly good over the past two seasons.

In 2011, the addition of a seventeenth team, the Gold Coast, has forced the AFL to introduce byes to the competition. Some of the heuristics on which the Heuristic Tipsters are built need to be updated to account for this change, so I took the opportunity to review and rebuild the Heuristic Tipsters entirely.

Now, some 740 lines of code later, I've built Heuristic Tipsters : 2011 Edition.

The Building Blocks

The 2011 versions of the Heuristic Tipsters are very similar to the 2009/2010 versions. The underlying building-block heuristics are generally the same, save for some amendments to cater for byes, and the order in which these building-blocks are applied for a particular Heuristic Tipster (aka strategy) is the same as it was previously.

Here are the heuristic building-blocks from which we'll construct strategies:

<i>Heuristic Name</i>	<i>Heuristic Description</i>	<i>Move to the Next Heuristic If</i>
Favouritism	Tip the team that is the TAB Sportsbet favourite as at 12 noon on the Wednesday before the match	The two teams are equal favourites
Designated Home Team	Tip the team that is the AFL Designated Home Team for the match	
Most Recent Tipping Success	Tip the team that has most recently in the current season as measured by round number, been tipped and won. Work backwards through the rounds, reverting to the immediately preceding round if neither team was tipped and won in the round currently under review, even if one or both teams were tipped and lost. Teams with byes are considered not to have been tipped in the round for which they have the bye	Both teams' most recently tipped win was in the same round or neither team has a tipped win in the current season
Season-Long Tipping Success	Tip the team that has the best record in the current season, as measured by percentage of wins when tipped (treating wins as 1 correct tip and draws as ½ a correct tip)	Both teams have the same tipping record, as measured by percentage of wins, for the current season OR if either team has not been tipped in the current season
Team's Most Recent Success	Tip the team that has most recently, in the current season, won. For the purposes of this rule, byes are treated as non-wins	Both teams' most recent win was in the same round or neither team has a win in the current season
Team's Season-Long Performance	Tip the team that currently has the better winning percentage. If both teams have the same winning percentage for the season, use For and Against percentage to break the tie. If they are also tied on this measure, check that Hell hasn't frozen over and then revert to the previous week's winning percentage and For and Against percentage. In Round 1 use the ladder from the previous season as at the end of the home-and-away games (ie Round 22 in 2010).	(In the so-unlikely-that-it's-barely-worth-mentioning event that the two teams were also tied as at the end of the previous season, continue working back through the weekly ladders in the previous season until the tie is broken)
Team's Most Recent Result	Tip the team that, in the current season, won by the larger margin (or lost by the smaller margin) in its previous game. For the purposes of this rule, byes are ignored, so it's possible that the result in question for the two teams pertains to different rounds	Both team's margin of victory (or of defeat) in the previous round were identical

As you can see, no strategy uses more than three heuristics and many use only two. All of them have the Team's Season Long Performance as their final rule though, in practice, some of them rarely have need to use this rule.

Here's a quick summary of each strategy:

BKB (short for Bookie Knows Best) is one of the simpler strategies. Each week it tips the TAB Sportsbet favourite unless the teams are equal favourites in which case it uses ladder position to break the tie.

CTL (short for Consult The Ladder) is also a simple strategy. Each week it tips whichever team has the superior season-long performance, referring back to earlier rounds if a tiebreak is needed, and using the final regular-season ladder from the previous season to make its selections for Round 1.

Home Sweet Home tips the Designated Home Team.

Shadow is the first of the more complex strategies, combining heuristics pertaining to its own performance with, if required, those pertaining to team performance.

Silhouette, named because of its similarity with Shadow, is another more complex strategy. It differs from Shadow only in the priority with which it applies its base heuristics.

EI I (short for Easily Impressed I) is a strategy that selects the team that won by the most (or lost by the least) in its previous game. In the event of a tie on this heuristic, the strategy tips the team with which it has had the most recent tipping success. In Round 1, since neither of these rules produces a tip, the strategy must use another rule; it mimics CTL.

EI II varies from EI I in that it puts the Most Recent Tipping Success ahead of a Team's Most Recent Margin.

STM I (short for Short Term Memory I) is a strategy that looks firstly at the length of time (measured in competition rounds) since each team's most recent success, then at the length of time since it has successfully tipped each team, and then at season-long performance.

STM II varies from STM I in that it puts Most Recent Tipping Success ahead of a Team's Most Recent Success.

Ride Your Luck is the first streak-based strategy. It tips the team that has provided it with the longest streak of successful tipping, reverting to season-long performance in the event of streaks of equal length.

Follow The Streak is the second streak-based strategy. It tips that team that has had the longest streak of success, reverting to season-long performance in the event of streaks of equal length.

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