

= Bolton Wanderers F.C. =

Bolton Wanderers Football Club ( / ˈbɒlɪtʃn / ) is a professional association football club based in Bolton , Greater Manchester . For the 2016 ? 17 Season , the team will play in League One , the third tier of the English football league system .

The club was formed as Christ Church Football Club in 1874 , and adopted its current name in 1877 . Founder members of the Football League in 1888 , Bolton have spent the highest number of seasons of any club in the top flight without winning the title ( the 2011 ? 12 season was their 73rd , non @-@ consecutive year in the top flight ) . The closest they have come to the title is third in the First Division on three occasions ( 1891 ? 92 , 1920 ? 21 and 1924 ? 25 ) . As of 2015 , the club has spent more seasons in the top division than any other club outside the current Premier League .

Bolton were a successful cup side in the 1920s , winning the FA Cup three times . The club won the cup a fourth time in 1958 . A leaner spell followed , reaching a nadir in 1987 when the club spent a season in the Fourth Division . The club regained top @-@ flight status in 1995 after a 15 @-@ year absence . In a period of relative success , the club qualified for the UEFA Cup twice , reaching the last 32 in 2005 ? 06 and the last 16 in 2007 ? 08 .

The club played at Burnden Park for 102 years from 1895 . On 9 March 1946 , The Burnden Park disaster occurred , which was a human crush in which 33 Bolton fans lost their lives . In 1997 it moved out of town to the Reebok Stadium , named after long @-@ term club sponsor Reebok . The stadium was renamed the Macron Stadium in July 2014 , to reflect the club 's new deal with Italian sportswear company Macron .

= = History = =

= = = Early history ( 1877 ? 1929 ) = = =

The club was founded by the Reverend Joseph Farrall Wright , Perpetual curate of Christ Church Bolton and Thomas Ogden , the schoolmaster at the adjacent church school in 1874 as Christ Church F.C. It was initially run from the church of the same name on Deane Road , Bolton , on the site where the Innovation factory of the University of Bolton now stands . The club left the location following a dispute with the vicar , and changed its name to Bolton Wanderers in 1877 . The name was chosen as the club initially had a lot of difficulty finding a permanent ground to play on , having used three venues in its first four years of existence .

Bolton were one of the 12 founder members of the Football League , which formed in 1888 . At the time Lancashire was one of the strongest footballing regions in the country , with 6 of the 12 founder clubs coming from within the boundaries of the historic county of Lancashire . Having remained in the Football League since its formation , Bolton have spent more time in the top flight ( Premier League / old First Division ) than out of it .

In 1894 Bolton reached the final of the FA Cup for the first time , but lost 4 ? 1 to Notts County at Goodison Park . A decade later they were runners @-@ up a second time , losing 1 ? 0 to local rivals Manchester City at Crystal Palace on 23 April 1904 .

The period before and after the First World War was Bolton 's most consistent period of top @-@ flight success as measured by league finishes , with the club finishing outside the top 8 of the First Division on only two occasions between 1911 ? 12 and 1927 ? 28 . In this period Bolton equalled their record finish of third twice , in 1920 ? 21 and 1924 ? 25 , on the latter occasion missing out on the title by just 3 points ( in an era of 2 points for a win ) .

On 28 April 1923 , Bolton won their first major trophy in their third final , beating West Ham United 2 ? 0 in the first ever Wembley FA Cup final . The match , famously known as The White Horse Final was played in front of over 127 @, @ 000 supporters . Bolton 's centre @-@ forward , David Jack scored the first ever goal at Wembley Stadium . Driven by long @-@ term players Joe Smith in attack , Ted Vizard and Billy Butler on the wings , and Jimmy Seddon in defence , they became the most successful cup side of the twenties , winning three times . Their second victory of the decade

came in 1926 , beating Manchester City 1 ? 0 in front of over 91 @, @ 000 spectators , and the third came in 1929 as Portsmouth were beaten 2 ? 0 in front of nearly 93 @, @ 000 fans .

In 1928 the club faced financial difficulties and so was forced to sell David Jack to Arsenal to raise funds . Despite the pressure to sell , the agreed fee of £ 10 @, @ 890 was a world record , more than double the previous most expensive transfer of a player .

= = = Top flight run and cup success ( 1929 ? 1958 ) = = =

From 1935 to 1964 , Bolton enjoyed an uninterrupted stay in the top flight ? regarded by fans as a golden era ? spearheaded in the 1950s by Nat Lofthouse . The years of the Second World War saw most of the Wanderers ' playing staff see action on the front , a rare occurrence within elite football , as top sportsmen were generally assigned to physical training assignments , away from enemy fire . However , 15 Bolton professionals , led by their captain Harry Goslin , volunteered for active service in 1939 , and were enlisted in the 53rd Bolton Artillery regiment . By the end of the war , 32 of the 35 pre @-@ war professionals saw action in the British forces . The sole fatality was Goslin , who had by then risen to the rank of Lieutenant and was killed by shrapnel on the Italian front shortly before Christmas 1943 . 53rd Bolton Artillery took part in the Battle of Dunkirk and also served in the campaigns of Egypt , Iraq and Italy . Remarkably , a number of these soldiers managed to carry on playing the game in these theatres of war , taking on as ' British XI ' various scratch teams assembled by , among others , King Farouk of Egypt in Cairo and Polish forces in Baghdad .

On 9 March 1946 , the club 's home was the scene of the Burnden Park disaster , which at the time was the worst tragedy in British football history . 33 Bolton Wanderers fans were crushed to death , and another 400 injured , in an FA Cup quarter @-@ final second leg tie between Bolton and Stoke City . There was an estimated 67 @, @ 000 @-@ strong crowd crammed in for the game , though other estimates vary widely , with a further 15 @, @ 000 locked out as it became clear the stadium was full . The disaster led to Moelwyn Hughes 's official report , which recommended more rigorous control of crowd sizes .

In 1953 Bolton played in one of the most famous FA Cup finals of all time ? The Stanley Matthews Final of 1953 . Bolton lost the game to Blackpool 4 ? 3 after gaining a 3 ? 1 lead . Blackpool were victorious thanks to the skills of Matthews and the goals of Stan Mortensen .

Bolton Wanderers have not won a major trophy since 1958 , when two Lofthouse goals saw them overcome Manchester United in the FA Cup final in front of a 100 @, @ 000 crowd at Wembley Stadium . The closest they have come to winning a major trophy since then is finishing runners @-@ up in the League Cup , first in 1995 and again in 2004 .

= = = Few highs and many lows ( 1958 ? 1995 ) = = =

While Bolton finished 4th the following season , the next 20 years would prove to be a fallow period . The club suffered relegation to the Second Division in 1963 ? 64 , and were then relegated again to the Third Division for the first time in their history in 1970 ? 71 . This stay in the Third Division lasted just two years before the club were promoted as champions in 1972 ? 73 . Hopes were high at Burnden Park in May 1978 when Bolton sealed the Second Division title and gained promotion to the First Division . However , they only remained there for two seasons before being relegated .

Following relegation in 1980 , Bolton signed former Manchester United European Cup winning striker Brian Kidd from Everton for £ 150 @, @ 000 as they prepared to challenge for a quick return to the First Division . Kidd scored a hat @-@ trick in his third game for Bolton , a 4 ? 0 win over Newcastle United in the league , but the rest of the season was a struggle as Bolton finished close to the relegation places . By the end of the 1981 ? 82 season , Bolton were no closer to promotion and had lost several key players including Peter Reid and Neil Whatmore . The following season Bolton were relegated to the Third Division after losing 4 ? 1 at Charlton Athletic on the final day .

Despite a new @-@ look , much younger team and an 8 ? 1 win over Walsall , Bolton 's best league win for 50 years , Bolton failed to win promotion in the 1983 ? 84 season , and would remain in the Third Division for another three seasons . In 1986 Nat Lofthouse was appointed President of

the football club , a position he would hold until his death on 15 January 2011 . At the end of the 1986 ? 87 season , Bolton Wanderers suffered relegation to the Fourth Division for the first time in their history , but won promotion back to the Third Division at the first attempt . The club won the Sherpa Van Trophy in 1989 , defeating Torquay United 4 ? 1 . During the 1990 ? 91 season , Bolton were pipped to the final automatic promotion place by Southend United and lost to Tranmere Rovers in the play @-@ off final , but they failed to build on this and the following season saw the club finish 13th .

The early 1990s saw Bolton gain a giant @-@ killing reputation in cup competitions . In 1993 Bolton beat FA Cup holders Liverpool 2 ? 0 in a third round replay at Anfield , thanks to goals from super John McGinlay and Andy Walker . The club also defeated higher division opposition in the form of Wolverhampton Wanderers ( 2 ? 1 ) that year before bowing out to Derby County . Bolton also secured promotion to the second tier for the first time since 1983 . In 1994 Bolton again beat FA Cup holders , this time in the form of Arsenal , 3 ? 1 after extra time in a fourth round replay , and went on to reach the quarter @-@ finals , bowing out 1 ? 0 at home to local rivals ( and then Premiership ) Oldham Athletic . Bolton also defeated top division opposition in the form of Everton ( 3 ? 2 ) and Aston Villa ( 1 ? 0 ) that year .

= = = Return to the top flight , into Europe ( 1995 ? 2008 ) = = =

Bolton reached the Premiership in 1995 thanks to a 4 ? 3 victory over Reading in the Division One play @-@ off Final . Reading took a 2 ? 0 lead before Bolton scored two late goals to take the game to extra time , scoring twice more before a late Reading consolation . The same year Bolton progressed to the League Cup Final , but were defeated 2 ? 1 by Liverpool . Bolton were bottom for virtually all of the 1995 ? 96 Premiership campaign and were relegated as they lost their penultimate game 1 ? 0 to Southampton .

The club won promotion back to the Premiership at the first attempt thanks to a season in which they achieved 98 league points and 100 goals in the process of securing the Division One championship , the first time since 1978 that they had finished top of any division . This season also marked the club 's departure from Burnden Park to the Reebok Stadium , the last game at the stadium being a 4 ? 1 win over Charlton Athletic .

Bolton were relegated on goal difference at the end of the 1997 ? 98 Premiership campaign . The following season they reached the 1999 Division One play @-@ off Final but lost 2 ? 0 to Watford .

In 2000 Bolton reached the semi @-@ finals of the FA Cup , Worthington Cup and play @-@ offs but lost on penalties to Aston Villa , 4 ? 0 on aggregate to Tranmere Rovers and 7 ? 5 on aggregate to Ipswich Town respectively . In 2000 ? 01 Bolton were promoted back to the Premiership after beating Preston North End 3 ? 0 in the play @-@ off final .

Bolton struggled in the following two seasons , but survived in the Premiership . The 2001 ? 02 season began with a shock as they destroyed Leicester 5 ? 0 at Filbert Street to go top of the table . Despite a 2 ? 1 win away at Manchester United , becoming the first team since the formation of the Premiership to come from behind and win a league game at Old Trafford , they went into a deep slump during the middle of the season and needed a Fredi Bobic hat @-@ trick against Ipswich Town to survive . Despite losing the final three games , 16th place was secured . The 2002 ? 03 season began with a poor start and , despite another win away at Manchester United , they were bottom until a 4 ? 2 win against Leeds United at Elland Road . Despite suffering from a lack of consistency , Bolton achieved the results needed and secured survival in a final day 2 ? 1 victory over Middlesbrough .

Bolton reached the League Cup final in 2004 , but lost 2 ? 1 to Middlesbrough . Nevertheless , the club finished eighth in the league , at the time the highest finish in their Premiership history .

In 2005 , Bolton finished sixth in the league , thus earning qualification for the UEFA Cup for the first time in their history . The following season , they reached the last 32 but were eliminated by French team Marseille as they lost 2 ? 1 on aggregate . Between 2003 ? 04 and 2006 ? 07 , Bolton recorded consecutive top @-@ eight finishes , a record of consistency bettered only by the big four of Chelsea , Manchester United , Liverpool and Arsenal .

The 2007 ? 08 season saw Bolton survive with a 16th @-@ place finish , their safety being confirmed on the final day of the season , as they went on an unbeaten run for their final five games , as well as getting to the last sixteen of the UEFA Cup . During the European run , Bolton gained an unexpected draw at former European champions Bayern Munich as well as becoming the first British team to beat Red Star Belgrade in Belgrade . They also defeated Atlético Madrid on aggregate before being knocked out by Sporting Lisbon .

= = Recent history ( 2008 ? ) = = =

Bolton broke their record transfer fee with the signing of Johan Elmander from Toulouse on 27 June 2008 , in a deal which cost the club a reported £ 8 @.@ 2 million and saw Norwegian striker Daniel Braaten head in the opposite direction . In the 2010 ? 11 FA Cup , Bolton progressed all the way to the semi @-@ finals , but were beaten 5 ? 0 by Stoke at Wembley , with the match being described as " a massive anti @-@ climax " .

The following season began as the previous one had ended with just one win and six defeats , their worst start since the 1902 ? 03 season when they were relegated . On 17 March 2012 , manager Owen Coyle travelled to the London Chest Hospital with Fabrice Muamba who had suffered from a cardiac arrest whilst playing against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane in a FA Cup match . Muamba stayed in a critical condition for several weeks and Coyle was widely praised for the manner in which he represented the club during the period . That 13 May , Bolton were relegated to the Championship by one point on the last day of the season after drawing 2 ? 2 with Stoke City .

The Championship season started badly for Bolton , with only three wins in ten league matches and a second round exit from the League Cup following a loss at Crawley Town . As a result of poor performances leaving them in 16th place , Bolton sacked Coyle on 9 October 2012 , replacing him with Crystal Palace 's Dougie Freedman . They finished in 7th place , losing out on a play @-@ off place to Leicester City on goal difference . The 2013 ? 14 began with a trip to Turf Moor , in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Football League .

In December 2015 , Bolton , who were £ 172 @.@ 9 million in debt , were handed a winding @-@ up petition from HM Revenue and Customs over unpaid taxes , and a transfer embargo for the following month 's window . After ending a 17 @-@ game winless run , manager Neil Lennon , who had been investigated by the club due to allegations about his personal life , said that the club had " been through hell " . On 18 January 2016 , the club avoided an immediate winding @-@ up order after their case was adjourned until 22 February to give it time to either close a deal with a potential buyer or raise sufficient short @-@ term funds from asset sales . The club was said to owe HM Revenue and Customs £ 2.2m. On 9 April , Bolton lost 4 ? 1 away at Derby County to confirm their relegation to the third tier for the first time since 1993 .

= = Colours and badge = =

Bolton Wanderers ' home colours are white shirts with navy and red trim , worn with navy shorts and white and navy hooped socks . Their current away kit is a red jersey with blue trim worn with red shorts and red and blue hooped socks . Bolton did not always wear the white kit they do today , in 1884 they wore white with red spots , leading to the club 's original nickname of " The Spots " . This nickname has fallen into disuse since the club adopted its now @-@ traditional colours of white shirts with navy blue shorts . The navy blue shorts were dispensed with in 2003 , in favour of an all @-@ white strip , but they returned in 2008 . The club had previously experimented with an all @-@ white kit in the 1970s .

The Bolton Wanderers club badge previously consisted of the initials of the club in the shape of a ball , with red and blue ribbons beneath . The ribbons controversially replaced the Red Rose of Lancashire , coinciding with the club 's 125th anniversary , celebrated in 2002 . The club 's original badge was the town crest of Bolton . The badge has been changed again for the 2013 ? 14 season , to be similar to the older style with the ' Red Rose ' . It also shows the year when the club started using their current name . The re @-@ design has been welcomed by fans who saw the ribbons as

a poor choice .

The club 's nickname of " The Trotters " has several claimed derivations ; that it is simply a variation on " Wanderers " , that it is an old local term for a practical joker , or that one of the grounds used before the club settled at Pikes Lane resided next to a piggery , causing players to have to " trot " through the pig pens to retrieve the ball if it went over the fence .

= = Stadiums = =

When the club was first founded , Christ Church had a nomadic existence , playing at a number of locations in the area . The club , which had by then been renamed Bolton Wanderers , started playing regularly at Pike 's Lane in 1881 . Spending £ 150 on pitch improvements , season tickets cost a guinea . They played here for fourteen years until the tenancy expired and they moved to Burnden Park .

Situated in the Burnden area of Bolton , approximately one mile from the centre of the town , the ground served as the home of the town 's football team for 102 years . In its heyday , Burnden Park could hold up to 70 @, @ 000 supporters but this figure was dramatically reduced during the final 20 years of its life . A section of The Embankment was sold off in 1986 to make way for a new Normid superstore . At this time , Bolton were in a dire position financially and were struggling in the Football League Third Division , so there was a low demand for tickets and the loss of part of the ground gave the Bolton directors good value for money .

By 1992 the club 's directors had decided that it would be difficult to convert Burnden Park into an all @-@ seater stadium for a club of Bolton 's ambition , as the Taylor Report required all first- and second @-@ tier clubs to do . A decision was made to build an out of town stadium in the suburb of Horwich , with the eventual location chosen 5 miles due west of the town centre . The stadium opened in August 1997 , as a modern , all @-@ seater stadium with a capacity of around 29 @, @ 000 . In recognition of the club 's former ground the stadium stands on " Burnden Way " . It has four stands , though the lower tier seating is one continuous bowl . It was originally known as the Reebok Stadium after long @-@ time team sponsor , Reebok . This was initially unpopular with many fans , as it was considered impersonal , and that too much emphasis was being placed on financial considerations . This opposition considerably lessened since the stadium was built . In April 2014 , the stadium was renamed as part of a four @-@ year deal with new sponsors Macron sportswear .

In 2014 the club established Bolton Wanderers Free School at the stadium , a sixth form offering sports and related courses for 16 to 19 @-@ year @-@ olds

= = Support = =

Bolton Wanderers Supporters ' Association ( BWSA ) is the official supporters ' association of Bolton Wanderers Football Club . The Supporters ' Association was formed in 1992 , on the initiative of a fan , Peter Entwistle . Later that year the Directors of the football club , satisfied that the Association had proven itself to be organised and responsible , officially recognised Bolton Wanderers Supporters ' Association as the club 's supporters ' group .

In 1997 , shortly after the move from Burnden Park to the Reebok Stadium , the BWSA accepted the invitation from the football club to hold its monthly meetings at the new stadium . The Macron Stadium has continued to be their venue ever since . In the year 2000 , the Association expanded significantly when its invitation to affiliate was accepted by Bolton Wanderers supporters groups in other parts of Britain , and also by groups around the world . All of these foreign groups have come on board to become independent , but integral , parts of the official Bolton Wanderers supporters ' family . Requests for affiliated status continue to be received regularly from other places around the world where Wanderers fans find themselves gather together .

= = = Rivalries = = =

Bolton 's main rivals historically have been with near neighbours Bury , though this has lessened

since the Second World War as the two clubs have rarely been in the same league . The club also has a rivalry with Blackburn Rovers , as the two sides are separated by just fifteen miles and are both founder members of the Football League . More recently , Bolton have developed an enmity with Wigan Athletic , whose fans generally regard Bolton as their main rivals . Bolton fans maintain a mutual dislike with the fans of Tranmere Rovers , Burnley , and Wolverhampton Wanderers .

= = Ownership and finances = =

The holding company of Bolton Wanderers F.C. is Burnden Leisure plc , which is a private company limited by shares . Burnden Leisure was previously a public company traded on the AIM stock exchange until its voluntary delisting in May 2003 following Eddie Davies 's takeover . The club itself is 100 % owned by Burnden Leisure , with Sports Shield Consortium leader holding 94 @. @ 5 % of issued shares in Burnden Leisure since the takeover from Eddie Davies in 2016 . The remaining stakes are held by over 6 @, @ 000 small shareholders with less than 0 @. @ 1 % holding each .

Since exiting the Premier League , Eddie Davies , the then owner of the club revoked his investment into the club . This led to published debts of almost £ 200m and bought the club very close to being wound up over unpaid tax bills owed to HMRC . As a gesture of his goodwill and as incentive to sell the club , Davies promised to wipe over £ 125m of debt owed to him when the club was sold , which wiped a significant proportion of debt the club owed .

= = = Sponsorship = = =

Bolton Wanderers had a long @-@ established partnership with sporting goods firm Reebok , which was formed in the town . Between 1997 and 2009 this partnership encompassed shirt sponsorship , kit manufacture and stadium naming rights . The combined shirt sponsorship ( 1990 ? 2009 ) and kit manufacture ( 1993 ? 2012 ) deals covering 22 years represent the longest kit partnership in English football history . The stadium 's naming rights were held by Reebok since its opening in 1997 and was due to run until the end of the 2015 ? 16 season . Bolton 's kit manufacturer from the 2014 ? 15 season changed to Italian sportswear brand Macron who also manufacture kits for clubs including Aston Villa , Lazio and Napoli . The stadium was also re @-@ branded as the Macron Stadium from July 2014 in an agreement that will last for an initial four years .

= = Players = =

As of 22 July 2016 .

= = = Current squad = = =

Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

= = = Reserves and Academy squad = = =

Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

= = = Former players = = =

For details on former players , see List of Bolton Wanderers F.C. players and Category : Bolton Wanderers F.C. players .

In 2005 , a list of " 50 Wanderers Legends " was compiled by the club as the result of a fan survey : " Thousands of supporters ... nominated their favourites with modern day heroes giving the old @-@

timers a run for their money " .

Nat Lofthouse finished top of the list , with Jay @-@ Jay Okocha second and John McGinlay third .

In 2012 a Wanderers Legends book was released by The Bolton News , featuring 30 legends , including players like Gary Cahill and Kevin Davies

= = = Player records = = =

= = Club officials = =

Bolton Wanderers Football & Athletic Co management

= = Honours = =

= = = Football League = = =

Second Division / First Division

Champions : 1908 ? 09 , 1977 ? 78 , 1996 ? 97

Runners @-@ up : 1899 ? 1900 , 1904 ? 05 , 1910 ? 11 , 1934 ? 35

Play @-@ off Winners : 1995 , 2001

Play @-@ off Runners @-@ up : 1999

Play @-@ off Semi @-@ finalists : 2000

Third Division / Second Division

Champions : 1972 ? 73

Runners @-@ up : 1992 ? 93

Play @-@ off Runners @-@ up : 1991

Play @-@ off Semi @-@ finalists : 1990

Fourth Division / Third Division

Third : 1987 ? 88

Overall League Performance

Division 1 / Premier League : 1888 ? 1899 , 1900 ? 1903 , 1905 ? 1908 , 1909 ? 1910 , 1911 ? 1933 , 1935 ? 1964 , 1978 ? 1980 , 1995 ? 1996 , 1997 ? 1998 , 2001 ? 2012 ( 73 seasons )

Division 2 / Championship : 1899 ? 1900 , 1903 ? 1905 , 1908 ? 1909 , 1910 ? 1911 , 1933 ? 1935 , 1964 ? 1971 , 1973 ? 1978 , 1980 ? 1983 , 1993 ? 1995 , 1996 ? 1997 , 1998 ? 2001 , 2012 ? 2016 ( 30 seasons )

Division 3 / League 1 : 1971 ? 1973 , 1983 ? 1987 , 1988 ? 1993 , 2016 ? ( 12 seasons )

Division 4 / League 2 : 1987 ? 1988 ( 1 season )

= = = Cup Competitions = = =

FA Cup

Winners : 1923 , 1926 , 1929 , 1958

Runners @-@ up : 1894 , 1904 , 1953

Semi @-@ finalists : 1889 , 1896 , 1915 , 1935 , 1946 , 2000 , 2011

Football League Cup

Runners @-@ up : 1995 , 2004

Semi @-@ finalists : 1977 , 2000

FA Charity Shield

Winners : 1958

Football League Trophy

Champions : 1989

Runners @-@ up : 1986

## Reserves and Others

Football League War Cup Winners ( 1 ) ? 1945

Premier League Asia Trophy Winners ( 1 ) ? 2005

Peace Cup Runners up ( 1 ) ? 2007

Carlsberg Cup Winners ( 1 ) ? 2010

Lancashire Senior Cup Winners ( 12 ) ? 1886 , 1891 , 1912 , 1922 , 1925 , 1927 , 1932 , 1934 , 1939 ( shared with Preston North End ) , 1948 , 1989 , 1991

Central League Champions ? 1955 , 1995

Premier Reserve League North Champions ? 2007

Manchester Senior Cup 1922 , 1963 , 2015