

= 2007 ? 08 Bradford City A.F.C. season =

The 2007 ? 08 season was the 105th season in Bradford City A.F.C. ' s history , their 93rd in The Football League and 95th in the league system of English football . After finishing 22nd in League One during the 2006 ? 07 season , Bradford City were relegated to League Two meaning the season would be their first in the bottom tier of The Football League since 1981 ? 82 . It was also Stuart McCall ' s first season as manager , after he was appointed the full @-@ time successor to Colin Todd in May 2007 . It covers a period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 .

McCall brought in seven new signings in pre @-@ season , as well as a number of loan players , but from September to November , the club failed to win in eight games , leaving them in 21st place in League Two . The club improved during the latter part of the season , finishing in 10th place , three places and 16 points outside the play @-@ offs . Bradford also suffered first round exits in two of the cup competitions they entered , and lost in the second round of the FA Cup . Peter Thorne was the club ' s top goalscorer , recording 15 goals , 14 in the league and one in the FA Cup . The season also marked centre back David Wetherall ' s retirement after 304 league games with the club . Joe Colbeck was named player of the season , despite spending part of the season on loan at Darlington . The club ' s average attendance of 13 @,@ 756 was the highest in the division .

= = Background = =

During the 2006 ? 07 season , manager Colin Todd had been sacked because of a poor run of results . Club captain David Wetherall was originally appointed Todd ' s successor on a caretaker basis , before being handed the role until the end of the season , during the following month . Wetherall could not stop City ' s run of poor form , and the club were relegated to League Two on 28 April 2007 after a 3 ? 0 defeat at Chesterfield . It was the club ' s third relegation in seven seasons , and meant the 2007 ? 08 season would be their first season in the fourth division of English football in 25 years . On 22 May 2007 , former City player Stuart McCall , who had played more than 400 games for the club during two previous spells , was announced as the club ' s new manager to take over on 1 June 2007 . Although the club had just 13 players with first @-@ team experience , the bookmakers made City second favourites to win the League Two title .

Despite the club ' s relegation , off the field , chairman Julian Rhodes had announced a deal to slash the price of watching professional football to just £ 138 , the equivalent of £ 6 per match , and the cheapest season tickets in England . In June 2007 , Rhodes was also joined by Mark Lawn as new joint chairman of the club . Lawn signed a deal to wipe out the club ' s debts .

= = Review = =

= = = Pre @-@ season = = =

With just 13 players on the books , McCall ' s first job was to sign a number of new players to build a first @-@ team squad . McCall ' s first signings were strikers Barry Conlon , from Mansfield Town , and Peter Thorne , from Norwich City , both on free transfers , on 2 July 2007 . No more players were signed by the time City played their first pre @-@ season friendly away at Harrogate Town on 16 July 2007 . However , there were eight trialists in the team which won 1 ? 0 . The only goal of the game was a header from David Wetherall . Two days later , City were defeated 2 ? 1 by Conference side Farsley Celtic , before a 2 ? 0 victory against North Ferriby United . Scott Phelan , who had played all three of the pre @-@ season games during a trial , became McCall ' s third signing on 24 July from Everton . The same day , City drew 1 ? 1 with Burnley in their only home pre @-@ season friendly open to fans , with a goal from Paul Evans . McCall signed full back Darren Williams , from Hartlepool United , Kyle Nix on a monthly contract , and Nathan Joynes on loan from Barnsley but released three other trialists . Joynes had been the third loan signing from Barnsley , following Paul Heckingbottom , who had played for Bradford in the 2003 ? 04 season , and Thomas Harban . The

following two friendlies both ended in defeat ; first 1 ? 0 to York City , then 2 ? 1 to Blackpool in a private practice match , with another goal from Evans . Evans completed his transfer the following day , to be followed by Alex Rhodes , who had been on trial from Brentford , and Guylain Ndumbu @-@ Nsungu on loan from Gillingham , the following week .

A new home and away strip for the season was announced , with the home shirts worn for the first time in the friendly against Burnley . The club also sold more than 12 @,@ 000 season tickets , with 12 @,@ 019 fans buying one before the end of the deadline for the cheap offer on 31 July .

= = = August = = =

Bradford started their league season on 11 August 2007 with a 1 ? 1 draw with Macclesfield Town , when a crowd of 14 @,@ 345 was inside Valley Parade , 1 @,@ 000 more than was originally announced . The attendance was more than 6 @,@ 000 higher than any other game in the division . Macclesfield had taken the lead , with City equalising shortly before half @-@ time when Guylain Ndumbu @-@ Nsungu scored with a rebound after Barry Conlon 's penalty was saved . Four days later City were at Championship side Wolverhampton Wanderers , for the first round of the League Cup . Wolves scored twice in the first five minutes of the second half , and despite Kyle Nix pulling one back for Bradford , City went out 2 ? 1 . City 's second league game of the season was the first league game to be played at Shrewsbury Town 's new £ 15m ground the New Meadow , when an early penalty from former City player Dave Hibbert gave the home side a 1 ? 0 win . McCall 's first win as manager came in the third game when a debut goal from Luke Medley secured a 2 ? 1 victory over Wrexham .

= = = September = = =

Bradford started September with consecutive defeats ; first 2 ? 1 in the league against Barnet , before a 5 ? 1 loss to Doncaster Rovers in the Johnstone 's Paint Trophy . For the latter game , McCall had named a weakened team , which included debutants Ben Saynor and Sean Taylforth , and City faced a £ 5 @,@ 000 fine from The Football League , but were eventually only fined £ 3 @,@ 000 . Two victories in the league followed against Lincoln City ? the first time the two teams had met in a league game since the fire disaster in 1985 ? and Peterborough United . But the month ended as it had started with back @-@ to @-@ back defeats against Hereford United and Wycombe Wanderers .

= = = October = = =

The run of consecutive defeats extended to five during the first two weeks of October . After a 3 ? 0 defeat to Accrington Stanley , McCall added two more loan signings to the squad , Nicky Law , son of former City manager Nicky Law , and goalkeeper Rhys Evans . Both played as City lost 2 ? 1 to both Milton Keynes Dons , when Barry Conlon scored his first goal for the club , then Morecambe . The run of defeats came to an end when City drew 0 ? 0 with Darlington , but the month ended without a single victory after another draw , this time 1 ? 1 with Grimsby Town , when Rhys Evans was substituted after 24 minutes for City , and Ndumbu @-@ Nsungu scored a late equaliser following Grimsby 's own goalkeeper Phil Barnes ' red card . Evans ' loan deal was cut short following the injury and he returned to Blackpool after just four games . Young midfielder Joe Colbeck , who had been one of several players McCall wanted to send out on loan to gain first team experience , was loaned out to Darlington for a month .

= = = November = = =

Bradford 's run without a league victory extended to eight games after a 2 ? 1 defeat to Brentford . The run , which stretched back to 15 September came to an end with a 2 ? 1 win over Chester City on 6 November 2007 when Alex Rhodes scored his first goal for the club . City again defeated

Chester City four days later , this time in the FA Cup , when Peter Thorne 's first goal for the club secured a 1 ? 0 win . City won their third game in a row with a 4 ? 1 victory over Dagenham & Redbridge ? their highest victory of the season , before the month ended with a 1 ? 1 draw against Stockport County .

= = = December = = =

Bradford were eliminated from the FA Cup with a 3 ? 0 defeat to League One side Tranmere Rovers . They returned to league action with two more draws , away to Mansfield Town and Chesterfield , the latter game of which featured Joe Colbeck , who had returned from Darlington early despite his one @-@ month loan spell being originally extended . The following week City signed Willy Topp for £ 35 @,@ 000 ? the first time they had paid a transfer fee for a player since Andy Tod in November 2001 ? nearly three months after he first came on trial . City were given two weeks off before their next game , when their home game against Rotherham United on 15 December was postponed because of a frozen pitch . But they could not take advantage of the extra rest and despite taking the lead against Peterborough United , two second half goals gave Peterborough a 2 ? 1 win and helped them to second in the league . The highest attendance of the season for a League Two game attended City 's next game on Boxing Day against Lincoln City . It was the first time the two teams had met in the league at Valley Parade since the fire of 1985 and the crowd of 15 @,@ 510 observed a minute silence and wreath @-@ laying ceremony before the game . Peter Thorne gave City the lead , and despite an equaliser from Lincoln , Barry Conlon secured a 2 ? 1 win for Bradford in the last minute . The 2007 calendar year finished with another home game , but this time City lost 3 ? 1 to Hereford United .

= = = January = = =

The New Year started with a number of changes off the field . Loan signing Ndumbu @-@ Nsundu returned to Gillingham but Heckingbottom 's deal was extended to allow him to play against Accrington Stanley on New Year 's Day , before a permanent deal was finalised the following week . Midfielder Lee Bullock was also signed on a loan transfer from Hartlepool United . City beat Accrington 2 ? 0 with Matthew Clarke scoring his first for the club and Joe Colbeck adding his first since he returned from his loan spell at Darlington . It was followed up with another win , when Thorne scored City 's first hat @-@ trick for two years , to defeat Notts County 3 ? 0 . Two away draws followed at Bury and Wrexham , but City returned to winning ways with a 4 ? 2 victory over Shrewsbury Town to finish the month unbeaten .

McCall had also been busy in the transfer market during January , with the trio of Ben Starosta , Scott Loach and TJ Moncur all arriving on loan . Bullock made his loan permanent and signed an 18 @-@ month contract , and David Brown signed after impressing on a trial . Five players also left Valley Parade on loan deals during January , with Craig Bentham joining Farsley Celtic , Luke Medley joining Cambridge City , Sean Taylforth and Luke Morgan both going to Droylsden , and Simon Ainge joining Halifax Town . Goalkeeper Donovan Ricketts was also expected to leave but his transfer to Queens Park Rangers collapsed after the Home Office rejected his application for a work permit .

= = = February = = =

City 's unbeaten run was extended to six games when David Brown scored on his debut to beat Macclesfield Town 1 ? 0 . The run came to an end with consecutive 2 ? 1 defeats to Bury and Rochdale . On 20 February 2008 , David Wetherall , who had played nearly 300 league games for City since he joined in 1999 , announced he would retire at the end of the season . City won their first win in three games when they beat Notts County for the second time in as many months , with a 3 ? 1 win . Three days later City added a second consecutive win by defeating Rotherham United 3 ? 2 in the game which had been postponed in December , with Lee Bullock scoring his first goal for

the club . The same day , club chairman Julian Rhodes announced a new season ticket offer in a bid to fill more of the 25 @, @ 000 @-@ seater stadium for the following season by offering free tickets if more than 9 @, @ 000 adult tickets were bought .

= = = March = = =

March started with two more consecutive defeats . Dagenham & Redbridge defeated City 2 ? 0 in their first game at Valley Parade , when Barry Conlon missed a penalty and then an open goal both when the score was 1 ? 0 . In the following game , Peter Thorne scored a penalty to give City the lead against Stockport County , but County scored twice to win 2 ? 1 . Four days later , Bradford recorded their third victory of the season against Chester City , when Conlon scored the only goal of the game in a 1 ? 0 victory . Conlon scored another in the following game but City again were beaten , 2 ? 1 by Mansfield Town . Following Wetherall 's announcement that he would retire , City 's supporters staged a special day to celebrate his career and contribution to the club , during the away fixture on 22 March 2008 at Rotherham United , where the team had lost 4 ? 1 the previous season during Wetherall 's spell as player @-@ manager . The result of the game finished 1 ? 1 , during which Omar Daley was sent off . City played a second game two days later , because of the Easter fixture list , when Peter Thorne scored the 150th league goal of his career to help City beat Chesterfield 1 ? 0 . The month finished with a 3 ? 1 victory over Darlington , when Tom Penford scored his first goal for the club , and both Barry Conlon and Joe Colbeck scored against their former club . The victory put City into the top half of the table for the first time since September . During March , City also won a Football League award for their season ticket deal at the start of the season .

= = = April = = =

On 1 April 2008 , first City 's keeper Donovan Ricketts was blocked from coming back into the country following a Jamaica call @-@ up , before City lost 2 ? 1 at Rochdale , following a late winning goal from Rochdale 's Adam Le Fondre . City returned to winnings ways four days later , when Eddie Johnson scored the only goal of a 1 ? 0 victory over Morecambe . Johnson scored for a second successive game , three days later to secure a 1 ? 1 draw with Barnet in a rearranged game at Valley Parade . A second successive draw on 12 April , this time 2 ? 2 against Brentford , meant that City could no longer reach the play @-@ offs , ensuring that they would again be playing in League Two during 2008 ? 09 . A late goal from Joe Colbeck on 19 April prevented a third successive draw and gave City a 2 ? 1 victory over Grimsby Town . Colbeck was named the club 's player of the season at the annual award ceremony on 23 April , but was sent off in the club 's final home of the season against Milton Keynes Dons . Bradford were already 2 ? 0 behind when Colbeck was dismissed , and despite a goal from Omar Daley , they lost 2 ? 1 , which crowned Milton Keynes as the league champions .

On 29 April 2008 , McCall announced the list of players he would be keeping and releasing at the end of the season . As well as Ricketts , who was unlikely to be given a new work permit , the first team players to be released were Darren Williams , Paul Evans , Tom Penford and Alex Rhodes . Craig Bentham , who had spent three months on loan at Farsley Celtic , and Scott Phelan , who had not featured since December , were also deemed surplus to requirements . Back @-@ up goalkeepers Ben Saynor and Jamie Waite , neither of whom had played a first team league game , and youngsters David Brown , Luke Morgan and Damian Hopkins completed the list of 13 players to leave the club . Barry Conlon and Kyle Nix were the only first team regulars to be offered new contracts , along with juniors Luke Medley , Luke O 'Brien and Sean Taylforth .

= = = May and June = = =

City finished the season with a 2 ? 1 defeat at Wycombe Wanderers , when Luke Medley scored a penalty on his first start for the club . McCall had made a number of changes to the side , after his

decision to release 13 players , giving a debut to Sean Taylforth and also giving places to three of the released players . It was also David Wetherall 's final game for the club .

In the week after the season had finished , Barry Conlon was the first to sign a new deal keeping him at the club until January 2008 , before Kyle Nix and Luke O 'Brien signed their season @-@ long contracts . By the end of the week , McCall made his first transfer of the summer when he signed goalkeeper Jonathan McLaughlin from non @-@ league Harrogate Town . It was not until the end of the month that he added his second signing , when midfielder Chris Brandon , a former club trainee , joined from Huddersfield Town on a free transfer . Defender Paul Arnison , who had been released by Carlisle United in May , became the club 's third summer transfer , when he signed a two @-@ year contract on 18 June 2008 . On 30 June 2008 , the final day before City would return to pre @-@ season training , City signed a second defender , when Graeme Lee joined on a free transfer from Doncaster Rovers . He also signed a two @-@ year contract .

= = Match results = =

= = = Legend = = =

= = = Football League Two = = =

= = = FA Cup = = =

= = = League Cup = = =

= = = Football League Trophy = = =

= = League table = =

Source : The Football League