

= 1967 ? 68 Manchester City F.C. season =

The 1967 ? 68 season was Manchester City F.C. ' s seventy @-@ sixth season of league football , and second consecutive season in the Football League First Division . In the third full season under the management of Joe Mercer and Malcolm Allison , Manchester City were unfancied at the start of the season following a mid @-@ table finish in 1966 ? 67 . Following the signing of forward Francis Lee , the club embarked on an unbeaten run that saw the club challenge at the top of the table . A televised victory against Tottenham Hotspur in snowy conditions proved particularly notable , becoming known as the Ballet on Ice .

Going into the final match of the season , Manchester City led the table . A 4 ? 3 win at Newcastle United clinched the club ' s second league title , winning the First Division by two clear points over club rivals Manchester United . The league championship was the first trophy of the most successful period in Manchester City ' s history . Under Mercer and Allison , the club won a further three trophies in the following two seasons .

= = Background and pre @-@ season = =

The 1966 ? 67 season had been Manchester City ' s first in the top flight after winning promotion from the Second Division in 1966 . A fifteenth @-@ place finish consolidated the club ' s place in the division . Club captain Johnny Crossan struggled with injuries in 1966 ? 67 , and was sold to Middlesbrough for £ 34 @,@ 500 in the close season . Tony Book succeeded him as captain . The club made no major signings before the start of the season , though Tony Coleman , a winger with a wild off @-@ field reputation , had arrived from Doncaster Rovers at the tail @-@ end of the 1966 ? 67 season . Mercer had reservations about signing Coleman , but Allison convinced Mercer that he could pacify a man he once described as " the nightmare of a delirious probation officer " . City also attempted to sign England international goalkeeper Gordon Banks , but were outbid by Stoke City .

The team travelled to Europe in pre @-@ season , playing friendlies against Eintracht Braunschweig and Standard Liège . After returning to England they played Portsmouth at Fratton Park , winning 2 ? 0 , and finished their preparations with a resounding home win against Borussia Dortmund . Between matches , the players followed a fitness plan created by former athlete Joe Lancaster , under instruction from Malcolm Allison . The training regime was initially unpopular with the players ; the severity of the first session caused some players to vomit .

= = Football League First Division = =

City ' s season opened with a 0 ? 0 draw at home to Liverpool . City were awarded a penalty , but new captain Tony Book hit it wide . Two defeats followed , at Southampton and Stoke . The Stoke defeat led to a tactical switch . Mike Summerbee , who played wide on the right at the start of the season , was moved to centre @-@ forward . The change reaped immediate dividends , with Summerbee playing a leading role in a 4 ? 2 win against Southampton . This was the first in a run of five straight wins , after which Manchester City had caught up with the league leaders . During this run of wins young winger Stan Bowles made his league debut , scoring twice in a 5 ? 2 win against Sheffield United .

Manchester City ' s first transfer business of the season brought goalkeeper Ken Mulhearn to the club from Stockport County on 21 September , a deal that involved City ' s back @-@ up goalkeeper Alan Ogley moving in the opposite direction . Harry Dowd kept goal in the next match , a 1 ? 0 defeat at Arsenal , but then dislocated a finger , prompting a debut for Mulhearn in the season ' s first Manchester derby . Mulhearn was reputedly so nervous before the match that Allison locked him in the medical room until he calmed down . Colin Bell scored the opener after five minutes , but two Bobby Charlton goals meant a win for Manchester United . In the second half of the match , Bowles exchanged punches with Brian Kidd , though neither man was sent off , largely thanks to the intervention of their respective captains . The derby loss was followed by a third consecutive defeat , at Sunderland .

A couple of days after the Roker Park defeat , Manchester City completed the signing of centre @-@ forward Francis Lee from Bolton Wanderers for a club record £ 60 @,@ 000 . During negotiations Mercer stated to Lee that " we feel we 've got the start of a good side . We are just one player short , and we think you are that player . " Lee made his debut in a 2 ? 0 win at home to Wolverhampton Wanderers , the start of an 11 match unbeaten run , including a 6 ? 0 win against Leicester City .

= = = Ballet on Ice = = =

Midway through their unbeaten run , City faced Tottenham Hotspur at home in snowy conditions , in a match televised on Match of the Day . As the teams came out onto the frozen pitch , commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme called the Manchester City team as " the most exciting team in England " . Aided by a modification to the studs on their boots suggested by Tony Book , City produced one of their best footballing performances in their history . One Spurs player was quoted as saying , " It was extraordinary . City moved like Olympic speed skaters while we were falling around like clowns on a skid patch . " Tottenham took an early lead through Jimmy Greaves , but Bell equalised before half @-@ time , and in the second half City besieged Tottenham , scoring three more times to win 4 ? 1 . After the match City trailed the league leaders by only a single point .

The match was named as Match of the Day 's " Match of the Season " , and as the only match at Maine Road that season to be recorded for television , is the foremost recorded example of the 1967 ? 68 team in action .

The unbeaten run came to an end at Christmas , with back @-@ to @-@ back defeats in matches against West Bromwich Albion causing the club to fall to fourth place . The team commenced 1968 with a seven match unbeaten run , starting with consecutive 3 ? 0 wins at Nottingham Forest and Sheffield United , and culminating in a 5 ? 1 defeat of Fulham to go top of the table . The run came to an end with a defeat at Don Revie 's Leeds United , which also meant City were overtaken at the top of the table by local rivals Manchester United . A visit to United 's Old Trafford ground then followed . United took an early lead , but City rallied to win 3 ? 1 .

In late April , after City won 1 ? 0 against Sheffield Wednesday and title rivals Manchester United lost to West Bromwich Albion , City were in a position where winning their final three games would all but guarantee the championship . In the first of the three , a home match against Everton , City won 2 ? 0 in a match featuring Tony Book 's first league goal for the club . Next was Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane . City took a 3 ? 0 lead before half time , eventually winning 3 ? 1 .

= = = Title decider at Newcastle = = =

Going into the final match , City were level on points with neighbours Manchester United , with City holding the advantage in goal average ? the first decider if teams finished level on points ? but needing to win to be sure of staying above their cross @-@ city rivals . Liverpool were three points behind , but had a game in hand , so could still win the title if both City and United faltered . City faced tenth @-@ placed Newcastle United at St James ' Park ; United were at home to bottom @-@ half Sunderland . Bookmakers made United slight favourites for the title .

Mike Summerbee opened the scoring on 13 minutes , but Newcastle soon equalised . Neil Young made it 2 ? 1 , but again Newcastle equalised . A second strike by Young was disallowed for offside , and at half @-@ time the score was 2 ? 2 . Straight after half @-@ time Young scored again , and Francis Lee scored a fourth on 63 minutes . A late Newcastle goal set up a nervy finish , but City held on to win 4 ? 3 and secure the title . The win was compounded by a 2 ? 1 victory by Sunderland over Manchester United , giving City the title . Liverpool won one of their remaining games but lost the other , missing their chance to leapfrog United into second by one point .

= = = Matches = = =