

= 2011 FA Cup Final =

The 2011 FA Cup Final was the 130th final of the FA Cup , the world 's oldest domestic football cup competition . The final took place on 14 May 2011 at Wembley Stadium in London in front of 88 000 spectators and a British television audience of more than eight million . The clubs contesting the final were Premier League clubs Manchester City and Stoke City . The match was Stoke City 's first FA Cup final , and Manchester City 's ninth .

As Premier League clubs , they entered the competition in the third round . Manchester City made an unconvincing start , contesting two replays against lower league opposition in the third and fourth rounds but gained momentum and kept three consecutive clean sheets en route to the final . Stoke City played one replay in the third round , before beating all opponents in a run which culminated in a 5 ? 0 victory over Bolton Wanderers in the semi @-@ final at Wembley Stadium ? the biggest winning margin at Wembley since 1939 . Manchester City entered the final as favourites , with Stoke City as underdogs .

Manchester City began the match the brighter of the two teams with the majority of possession and a number of shots forcing saves from goalkeeper Thomas Sørensen but the first half remained goalless . Stoke improved after the half @-@ time interval but failed to score from their only shot on target in the 62nd minute , which was saved by goalkeeper Joe Hart after a one @-@ on @-@ one with striker Kenwyne Jones . In the 74th minute , Manchester City midfielder , Yaya Touré fired a loose ball in the Stoke City penalty area past goalkeeper Sørensen to give Manchester City the lead . Stoke attempted to equalise after Manchester City 's goal without success and the final finished 1 ? 0 with Manchester City claiming their fifth FA Cup . The result gave Manchester City their first major trophy for 35 years , ending the longest trophy drought in the club 's history . Stoke City manager Tony Pulis said " Manchester City were the better team and deserved to win " , but expressed " disappointment " at his team 's display . Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini dedicated the victory to the Manchester City supporters , declaring , " I am happy for the fans , they deserved to win this Cup . For a long time they didn 't win . "

The medals were handed out by Prime Minister David Cameron . As winners , Manchester City won a place in the 2011 FA Community Shield and the 2011 ? 12 UEFA Europa League but as they had already qualified for the UEFA Champions League via their league position , the Europa League place was given to Stoke City as runners @-@ up . To celebrate their victory , Manchester City held an open @-@ top bus parade on 23 May 2011 , beginning at Manchester Town Hall and ending at the City of Manchester Stadium ; it attracted a crowd of up to 100 000 .

= = Route to the final = =

= = = Manchester City = = =

As a Premier League team , Manchester City entered the competition in the third round . Their opening match was an away draw at Leicester City . Following a supporter campaign , Manchester City dedicated the match to former striker Neil Young , who was terminally ill . Young scored the winning goal when Manchester City and Leicester City met in the 1969 FA Cup Final . Manchester City fell behind after 46 seconds when Sol Bamba scored for Leicester following a corner . Manchester City took the lead by half @-@ time through James Milner and Carlos Tevez , but Andy King equalised midway through the second half to make the score 2 ? 2 . The tie was replayed at the City of Manchester Stadium the following week . Tevez gave Manchester City the lead after quarter of an hour , but the lead was brief . Four minutes later , Paul Gallagher 's penalty levelled the score , after Patrick Vieira had fouled Lloyd Dyer . Before half @-@ time , two Manchester City goals in 90 seconds shifted the momentum of the match . In the second half , Tevez missed a penalty and a goal by Dyer made the score 3 ? 2 . Leicester then pushed for an equaliser , but instead Aleksandar Kolarov scored on a counter @-@ attack to make the final score 4 ? 2 .

For the fourth round Manchester City were drawn against League One Notts County at Meadow

Lane . On a pitch described by the BBC as " pudding @-@ like " , lower division County threatened an upset when Neal Bishop scored from a corner in the 59th minute . However , ten minutes from time Micah Richards crossed for Edin Džeko to score his first Manchester City goal , ensuring a replay at the City of Manchester Stadium . Notts County started the rematch brightly , but faded as the game progressed . The score remained 0 ? 0 for most of the first half , but Vieira scored either side of half @-@ time to give Manchester City a two @-@ goal lead . From that point , the match proved less even , and Manchester City scored three more goals for a 5 ? 0 win . From there on , City kept consecutive clean sheets on the way to winning the cup . Manchester City 's fifth round match was against Aston Villa at the City of Manchester Stadium . Villa manager Gérard Houllier rested several senior players , in contrast to a near full @-@ strength Manchester City line @-@ up . Manchester City took the lead after less than five minutes through Yaya Touré , and further goals from Mario Balotelli and David Silva resulted in a comfortable 3 ? 0 win .

In the sixth round , Manchester City were again at home , and faced Reading , the only non @-@ Premier League team left in the competition . Micah Richards scored the only goal , a header from a corner in the 73rd minute . In the semi @-@ final , at Wembley Stadium , City defeated rivals Manchester United 1 ? 0 with a Yaya Touré goal , and continued their FA Cup semi @-@ final record of nine victories out of 11 , reaching the FA Cup Final for the first time since 1981 .

= = = Stoke City = = =

Stoke are also a Premier League side and thus entered the competition at the third round stage , where they were drawn at home to Welsh side Cardiff City . Stoke City made seven changes to the team that played their previous match . Michael Chopra gave Cardiff an early lead , but Stoke 's Tuncay Şanlı levelled the score just before half time . Stoke had a number of chances in the later stages of the match , but Cardiff held out for a replay . In the replay at the Cardiff City Stadium Stoke again used several reserves , changing all but one of the players from the previous league match . Few chances occurred during the game ; the score was 0 ? 0 after 90 minutes , prompting extra time . In the added period , Jonathan Walters scored twice to secure a 2 ? 0 Stoke City win ; the first goal was a header from a corner , the second a near @-@ post rebound . Stoke City then travelled to fellow Midlands team Wolverhampton Wanderers for the fourth round , in one of five all @-@ Premier League ties . Stoke defender Robert Huth was a central figure in the match . Ten minutes from time he gave Stoke a 1 ? 0 lead with a header from a free @-@ kick , but in the final minute he conceded a penalty for tripping Nenad Milijać . Milijać took the spot @-@ kick himself , but his effort was saved by Thomas Sørensen .

Stoke 's fifth round match was at home against League One leaders Brighton & Hove Albion . Three first half goals by John Carew , Jonathan Walters , Ryan Shawcross led Stoke to a 3 ? 0 win . Stoke then faced West Ham United in the sixth round . Stoke scored an early goal from a set @-@ piece , when long throw @-@ in specialist Rory Delap delivered the ball into the penalty area for Huth to score with a header . Controversial refereeing decisions then provoked the ire of both teams . When Frédéric Piquionne equalised for West Ham , the decision to award the goal infuriated Stoke ; in controlling the ball Piquionne committed what Stoke manager Tony Pulis called a " stonewall " handball . West Ham themselves felt aggrieved in the first minute of the second half when Stoke were awarded a penalty . Matthew Etherington was adjudged to have been fouled by Scott Parker though , as the BBC correspondent wrote , " there appeared to be minimal contact " . Robert Green saved Etherington 's penalty to keep the score level . The winning goal also came from a set piece . Danny Higginbotham 's free @-@ kick was reached by Green but could not be stopped , and Stoke won 2 ? 1 to reach the semi @-@ finals for the first time since 1972 . In the semi @-@ final , Stoke beat Bolton Wanderers comfortably , winning 5 ? 0 . Stoke took a three @-@ goal lead in less than half an hour after goals from Etherington , Huth and Kenwyne Jones . Walters scored twice in the second half to complete the win . The margin of victory was the biggest in an FA Cup semi @-@ final since 1939 , and secured Stoke 's first ever FA Cup Final appearance . By reaching the final , Stoke qualified for the 2011 ? 12 UEFA Europa League before the final , as Manchester City had beat Tottenham days before the final to secure fourth position in the Premier League and

consequently Champions League qualification .

= = Pre @-@ match = =

Manchester City were appearing in the final for the ninth time . They had won the cup four times previously (in 1904 , 1934 , 1956 and 1969) , and had been beaten in the final four times (in 1926 , 1933 , 1955 and 1981) . Stoke City were making their first appearance in the final . Their previous best was participation in the semi @-@ finals , which had occurred three times .

The 2011 final faced scheduling problems . The match clashed with top flight League fixtures for the first time since 1934 , which disappointed football traditionalists . The 2011 UEFA Champions League Final was being hosted at Wembley on 28 May 2011 and UEFA rules stipulate that the host stadium for the final must not have a fixture played two weeks prior to the final . Therefore , the FA Cup final had to be moved forward , and for the first time since 1989 was played before the English football domestic season ended .

Many of the weekend 's Premier League fixtures were rescheduled to avoid a clash with the final , with some kicking off at 12 : 45 on Saturday and others on Sunday . By coincidence , Manchester City and Stoke City were scheduled to meet in the league on cup final day . The league match was rearranged for the Wednesday after the final . This prompted criticism from Tottenham Hotspur manager Harry Redknapp , whose team was challenging Manchester City for a place in the 2011 ? 12 Champions League . Redknapp stated that if Manchester City won the final , it would then be in Stoke City 's interest to lose against Manchester City in the league match , as it would make Europa League qualification for Stoke more likely . Stoke City refuted this accusation strongly , but ultimately this scenario was avoided . Champions League qualification was settled four days before the final , when Manchester City beat Tottenham Hotspur 1 ? 0 in a league match .

Both clubs received an allocation of approximately 25 @,@ 000 tickets , fewer than the 32 @,@ 000 received for the semi @-@ finals . The allocation was enough for the 21 @,@ 000 Stoke City season ticket holders , but not for Manchester City 's 36 @,@ 000 season ticket holders . Consequently , some supporters felt aggrieved at the lack of tickets , including Stoke City chairman Peter Coates who expressed his disappointment and suggested an allocation in the region of 30 @,@ 000 for both clubs . Ticket prices for the final exceeded £ 100 for the first time . The most expensive tickets cost £ 115 , an increase of 22 per cent on the previous season . The cheapest tickets available at £ 45 , up £ 5 from 2010 .

As for every match in the 2010 ? 11 FA Cup , the ball for the final was provided by Nike @-@ owned , Manchester @-@ based sports equipment company Umbro . The Umbro Neo Pro features a 14 @-@ panel design , and is patterned in blue and red . The majority of the balls to be used in the game arrived on the previous Wednesday , while the ball to be used at kick @-@ off was delivered to the stadium on the day of the game .

The traditional Cup Final hymn , " Abide with Me " , was sung by Tenors Unlimited , a trio of male vocalists , and former X Factor contestant Stacey Solomon performed the national anthem , " God Save the Queen " .

= = Match = =

Stoke City went into their first FA Cup Final as underdogs according to their manager Tony Pulis , while Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini saw in @-@ form Stoke 's underdog tag as a risk for complacency from his side . There were fitness doubts over key players for both teams , Carlos Tevez for Manchester City , and Matthew Etherington for Stoke City , who suffered a hamstring tear only 17 days prior to the final , but both were able to start the match . However , Stoke City 's underdog tag proved true as Mancini 's Manchester City side had the better of the match , with a 59 per cent share of ball possession and 23 attempts on goal to Stoke City 's nine , only one of which was on target .

Both teams were able to play in their respective home colours without any colour clash : Stoke City played in their red @-@ and @-@ white stripes , and Manchester City played in their sky blue

colours with the Manchester coat of arms on their shirt numbers , keeping up a long @-@ standing club tradition of wearing the city 's coat of arms for cup finals .

= = = Report = = =

Manchester City set up in a 4 ? 2 ? 3 ? 1 formation , with Mario Balotelli , David Silva and Yaya Touré playing behind lone striker Carlos Tevez , and Nigel de Jong and Gareth Barry in defensive midfield roles . Stoke City set up in a rigid 4 ? 4 ? 2 formation , with two wingers in Jermaine Pennant and Matthew Etherington to support strikers Kenwyne Jones and Jonathan Walters .

Manchester City started sprightly , managing to create some chances which forced saves from Stoke goalkeeper Thomas Sørensen and steady defending to keep Stoke City in the game in the first half . Yaya Touré unleashed a 30 @-@ yard strike in the 11th minute which went only inches wide of the top corner of the goal , while Mario Balotelli had a curling shot from the corner of the penalty area in the 24th minute which was destined for the goal but for a strong , one @-@ handed save from Sørensen .

Stoke improved after the break , but Manchester City had a key opportunity in the 56th minute when a counter @-@ attack led by Carlos Tevez , who drifted out to the right flank , allowed David Silva to find space outside the Stoke City penalty area as the Stoke defence vanished . Tevez managed to pass to Silva , but Silva was guilty of over @-@ elaboration instead of shooting first @-@ time , and the Stoke City defence managed to regroup , dispossessing Silva before he could adjust himself to shoot at goal .

Only six minutes later , in the 62nd minute , Stoke had their key chance and only shot on target of the match with Kenwyne Jones in the 61st minute . A looping ball over the top of the Manchester City defence by Matthew Etherington allowed Jones a one @-@ on @-@ one , but he failed to convert , firing straight at goalkeeper Joe Hart with the ball ricocheting off both striker and keeper before bobbling to safety . Doubts over Matthew Etherington 's fitness resurfaced when he was taken off in the 63rd minute , with Stoke City still in the game at 0 ? 0 as it stood .

However , in the 74th minute , Sørensen was powerless to prevent Yaya Touré 's effort from ten yards when he pounced on a stray ball in the penalty area to thrash his thunderous shot with his left foot past Sørensen in front of the travelling thousands of Manchester City supporters . Stoke City attempted to get a goal back , resorting to direct long balls into the Manchester City penalty area but struggled to create any concrete chances . Despite Yaya Touré clinching the winning goal , enigmatic striker Mario Balotelli ? who claimed he had a " shit " season in a post @-@ match interview ? was named man of the match for his efforts .

= = = Details = = =

= = Post @-@ match = =

Tony Pulis commented after the game that " Manchester City were the better team " and that " they deserved to win the game " , while Roberto Mancini dedicated the victory to the Manchester City supporters . Pundits Graham Taylor and Mark Lawrenson agreed that Manchester City deserved to win but expressed disappointment at Stoke City 's under @-@ par performance in the final .

As President of the FA since 2006 , Prince William , Duke of Cambridge is a frequent guest of honour at the FA Cup final , attending the 2007 and 2010 finals , but his recent marriage to Catherine , Duchess of Cambridge meant he could not attend . Instead , Prime Minister of the United Kingdom , David Cameron awarded the medals to individual players at Wembley Stadium . Presenting the trophy was British Army Corporal Mark Ward , a lifelong Manchester City supporter who served in Afghanistan and whose bravery was rewarded with the Military Cross . Corporal Ward presented the trophy to the winning captain , Carlos Tevez , after the game .

Manchester City 's victory set up a Community Shield match against rivals Manchester United ? who City had beaten in the semi @-@ finals ? after United clinched the Premier League shortly

before kick off in the Final . The FA Cup winners are usually awarded qualification for the UEFA Europa League , but because Manchester City qualified for the UEFA Champions League via their league position , the Europa League place was passed to Stoke City as runners up . In the 2011 FA Community Shield match in August , the FA Cup winners Manchester City lost 3 ? 2 to Manchester United after creating a 2 ? 0 lead at half time .

Manchester United winning the 2010 ? 11 Premier League title earlier in the day meant double pride for Manchester as its teams claimed both of English football 's blue ribbon competitions . Some football pundits debated whether the joint win ? along with City 's qualification for the Champions League ? would mark the start of new era similar to the late 1960s when both City and United dominated English football ; during that period , both clubs won the league championship once , with United winning the European Cup and City winning the FA Cup , League Cup and European Cup Winners ' Cup within four years . The ' 35 years ' banner that had stood at Old Trafford , home of Manchester United which referenced to Manchester City 's long trophy drought , was taken down in recognition of City 's victory .

The match was broadcast live in the United Kingdom by both ITV and ESPN , with ITV providing the free @-@ to @-@ air coverage and ESPN being the pay @-@ TV alternative . Television viewing figures were collated after the final , with a peak of 8 @.@ 5 million viewers recorded across both channels . ITV held the majority of the viewership , with a peak audience of 8 @.@ 1 million during the last 30 minutes of the final and averaged at 6 @.@ 68 million , their highest viewing figures for an FA Cup since the competition moved to ITV from the BBC in 2009 . The pay @-@ to @-@ view alternative ESPN averaged 412 @,@ 000 viewers throughout the day with a peak of 476 @,@ 000 .

Manchester City and Stoke City had been scheduled to play in a Premier League fixture on the day of the FA Cup Final , but instead the match had to be moved to the following Tuesday , making it the last mid @-@ week game of the Premier League season , a match Manchester City won , 3 ? 0 . Despite it being Manchester City 's final home game of the season , they postponed their homecoming celebrations until the post @-@ season out of respect for the opposition .

Manchester City elected not to parade the trophy at the match as they did not wish to be seen as ' crass ' in front of the visiting Stoke City supporters . Instead , Manchester City were invited by Manchester City Council to host an open @-@ top bus parade through the City of Manchester in celebration of their victory . The parade took place on 23 May 2011 and began at 18 : 00 starting at Albert Square outside Manchester Town Hall where 10 @,@ 000 people were present to see the team set off on the bus parade with various streets of the city centre closed by 12 : 00 in preparation for the parade . The open @-@ top bus then travelled out of Manchester city centre via Princess Street , Portland Street , Piccadilly Gardens , Newton Street on onto Great Ancoats Street . The parade finally reached Ashton New Road where thousands supporters were waiting at the gates of the City of Manchester Stadium to welcome the team home . The parade culminated in a special reception at the stadium , where 40 @,@ 000 who claimed free tickets for the event were waiting . Greater Manchester Police estimated that the parade attracted a crowd in excess of 100 @,@ 000 .