

= History of Stoke City F.C. =

Stoke City Football Club was formed in 1863 under the name of " Stoke Ramblers " by former pupils of Charterhouse School whilst they were apprentices at the North Staffordshire Railway . The club dropped the Ramblers from their name and in 1888 they were founding members of the Football League . In 1928 , the club 's name was changed for the final time to Stoke City Football Club when Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent was granted city status .

The club moved in 1997 to the Britannia Stadium , a 28 @,@ 383 all @-@ seater stadium ; having spent 119 years at the Victoria Ground . In the 2007 ? 08 season , Stoke won promotion from the Football League Championship , the second tier of English football , and as of 2008 ? 09 are playing in the top flight (currently Premier League) for the first time since the 1984 ? 85 season , when they were relegated with a total of 17 points , a record low unsurpassed for 21 years . Stoke 's only major trophy was the 1972 Football League Cup , won when they beat Chelsea 2 ? 1 in the final at Wembley Stadium before a crowd of 97 @,@ 852 . The club have also won the Football League Trophy twice , in 1992 and 2000 . In terms of league achievement the closest Stoke have come to winning the title was in the 1946 ? 47 season where a final day defeat cost Stoke top spot .

= = 1863 ? 1930 : Early years = =

It is claimed that Stoke Ramblers was formed in 1863 when former pupils of Charterhouse School formed a football club while apprentices at the North Staffordshire Railway works in Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent . However , Stoke Ramblers ' first documented match was five years later , on 17 October 1868 , at the club 's original home , the Victoria Cricket Club ground and any earlier history is based on supposition . Played against an E.W. May XV club , the 15 @-@ a @-@ side match ended in a 1 ? 1 draw . In the game , the club 's first goal was scored by Henry Almond , Stoke 's founder and captain . Stoke played four further fixtures in 1868 , recording their first victory with a 2 ? 0 win against Newcastle @-@ under @-@ Lyme . In 1875 , to cope with rising attendances , the club switched to a ground at Sweetings Field , not far from the Victoria Cricket Ground . At this time , the only fixtures were friendly matches ; this changed in 1877 when the Staffordshire Football Association was formed and created a new competition , the County Cup , which Stoke won in the inaugural season , beating Talke Rangers 1 ? 0 in the final . In an earlier round , Stoke had recorded what is still the club 's record victory , a 26 ? 0 triumph over Mow Cop . Stoke retained the County Cup in the following season with a 2 ? 1 win over Cobridge and established themselves as the largest club in the area .

In 1878 , the club merged with Stoke Victoria Athletic Club and became known as Stoke Football Club . They moved from Sweetings Field to the Athletic Club ground , which soon became known as the Victoria Ground . It was around this time that the club adopted their red and white striped kit . Stoke entered the newly formed Birmingham Association Cup in 1881 , although they were beaten 8 ? 0 by Aston Villa in the first round . In the 1882 ? 1883 season , Stoke reached the final of the Staffordshire Senior Cup but were beaten 3 ? 2 by West Bromwich Albion . The club decided to enter the FA Cup for the first time in the 1883 ? 84 season ; the competition itself had been founded 12 years earlier .

The threat of a rival football association , the British FA , forced the Football Association to legalise professionalism in 1885 ; Stoke subsequently turned professional in August of that year . The club were defeated again in the FA Cup in 1885 ? 86 after a replay defeat to Crewe Alexandra . The club 's first victory in the competition came in the 1886 ? 87 season with a 10 ? 0 win over Caernarfon Wanderers at the Victoria Ground .

Stoke became one of the twelve founding members of the Football League in 1888 . Stoke 's manager , Harry Lockett , represented the club at a meeting in London , where the league 's formation was discussed . Lockett played an instrumental role in its inception and became the league 's first secretary ; however he resigned from his role of manager in August 1890 , in order to concentrate on his league responsibilities . Stoke struggled in their first two seasons in the league , 1888 ? 89 and 1889 ? 90 , finishing in last place on both occasions . The club failed to secure re

@-@ election to the league at the end of its second season , instead being replaced by Sunderland . As a consequence , Stoke started 1890 ? 91 in the Football Alliance ; they finished the season as champions . The Football League was expanded to include fourteen clubs in 1891 ? 92 , which ensured Stoke were re @-@ elected to the league , where they remained for the rest of the decade . In 1897 , Stoke appointed Horace Austerberry , who in 1899 became the first manager to lead the club to the semi @-@ final of the FA Cup .

Stoke suffered financial problems around 1900 , which ultimately led to the loss of the club 's Football League status in 1908 . " Historical Football Kits " says that , " In 1908 , having finished in mid @-@ table , Stoke went into liquidation and resigned from the League . Ironically this galvanised local businessmen , the clergy (the Victoria Ground was owned by the Church of England) and supporters to form a new limited company and purchase the old club 's assets . " The club moved to the Birmingham & District League after its demotion . In 1909 , the club opted to field two teams , one in the Birmingham & District League and the other in the Southern League (West Division) ; Stoke won the latter in their first year in the competition . Stoke continued to participate in both leagues until 1915 , when their application for election back into the Football League was approved . However , the outbreak of the First World War meant the league was suspended for four years ; it recommenced in August 1919 . During this time , Stoke entered the Lancashire Primary and Secondary leagues .

The club became owners of the Victoria Ground in 1919 . The Butler Street stand was constructed shortly afterward , increasing the overall capacity of the ground to 50 @,@ 000 . Following the restart of the Football League , Stoke achieved promotion from the Second Division in the 1921 ? 22 season under the stewardship of Arthur Shallcross , although this was followed by relegation in the 1922 ? 23 season . Unable to prevent the club 's bad form , Shallcross resigned in March 1923 . Tom Mather was appointed manager later in 1923 , although Stoke were unable to mount another promotion challenge . They were instead relegated from the Second Division four years later in the 1925 ? 26 season . The club 's stay in Third Division North was brief , as Stoke won the championship during their first season in that league . In 1925 , Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent was granted city status , and this led the club to change its name to Stoke City Football Club in 1928 .

= = 1930 ? 1960 = =

The 1930s saw the début of the club 's most celebrated player , Stanley Matthews . Matthews , who grew up in Hanley , was an apprentice at the club and made his first appearance , aged 17 , in March 1932 against Bury . By end of the decade , Matthews had established himself as an England international and one of the best footballers of his generation . Matthews won his first England cap in 1934 , making him the first Stoke player in 30 years to play for England . Stoke achieved promotion from the Second Division in the 1932 ? 33 season as champions , but Matthews only featured in 15 games , although he did score his first goal for the club in a 3 ? 1 win against local rivals Port Vale .

By 1934 , the club 's average attendance had risen to over 23 @,@ 000 , which allowed the club manager , Tom Mather , more transfer funds . Despite this , the core of the side consisted of young local players , such as Matthews , Tommy Sale and Freddie Steele . Mathers resigned from his post in May 1935 to take the managerial job at Newcastle United , ending his 12 @-@ year tenure . Bob McGrory was appointed as the club 's manager shortly afterward ; he had previously played for the club for 14 years . In the 1935 ? 36 season , the club finished fourth in the Football League First Division , nine points adrift of champions Sunderland . This was followed by two successive mid @-@ table finishes , in 1936 ? 37 and 1937 ? 38 . The club recorded its record league win , 10 ? 3 , over West Bromwich Albion in February 1937 , in which Steele scored five goals . In April of that year , the club achieved its largest league crowd ? 51 @,@ 373 against Arsenal . Steele 's 33 league goals in the 1936 ? 37 season remains a club record in 2007 .

By 1938 , rumours purported that Stanley Matthews wanted to leave Stoke to further his career . This led to a meeting at Kings Hall , attended by three thousand people with a further thousand outside . Matthews opted to stay with Stoke and helped the club to finish in seventh place in the

1938 ? 39 season .

The outbreak of the Second World War prevented further progress as the league was suspended for six years . After resumption of the FA Cup , 33 fans died and 520 were injured during a sixth round away game against Bolton Wanderers when the crush barriers gave way on the terraces .

At this time , the side was predominantly composed of local players who had come through the club 's youth system , including Matthews , Sale , Steele and John McCue , all in their prime , as well as the newly discovered Neil Franklin , regarded as the country 's best centre @-@ half . In the 1946 ? 47 season , Stoke mounted a serious title challenge : the club needed a win in their final game of the season to win the First Division title , but a 2 ? 1 defeat to Sheffield United gave the title to Liverpool . Stanley Matthews left the club three games before the end of the 1946 ? 47 season to join Blackpool at the age of 32 for a fee of £ 11 @,@ 500 . The team subsequently failed to mount a title challenge in the following two seasons , 1947 ? 48 and 1948 ? 49 , finishing 15th and 11th respectively .

The 1950s did not start well for the club ; having avoided relegation in the 1950 ? 51 and 1951 ? 52 seasons , Stoke succumbed in 1952 ? 53 , finishing second from bottom . Bob McGrory resigned as the club 's manager in February 1952 after 17 years in the role . His successor , Frank Taylor , consolidated the club 's position in the Second Division but was unable to mount a sustained challenge for promotion , although Stoke came close in the 1954 ? 55 season , missing by two points . Taylor 's failure to deliver promotion led to his dismissal in June 1960 , after a 17th @-@ place finish in the 1959 ? 60 season .

= = 1960 ? 1977 : The Waddington years = =

By 1960 Stoke were struggling to attract supporters to the Victoria Ground , with the average attendance dropping below 10 @,@ 000 for the first time in 40 years . Tony Waddington was appointed as the club 's manager in June 1960 . He joined the club in 1952 as a coach , before being promoted to assistant manager in 1957 . In his first season in charge , 1960 ? 61 , Stoke finished 18th in the Second Division . Crowds were still low ; a match against Preston North End attracted 8 @,@ 409 in 1961 . However , Waddington pulled off a significant coup by enticing Stanley Matthews ? now 46 years old ? back to the club , 14 years after he had left . A crowd of 35 @,@ 974 witnessed Matthews ' return to the club , only a fortnight after the poor crowd against Preston . The return of Matthews helped Stoke to rise to eighth position in 1961 ? 62 . Promotion was achieved in the next season , when Stoke finished as champions . In their first season back in the First Division , 1963 ? 64 , Waddington guided Stoke to a mid @-@ table finish . Matthews remained influential , as he helped the club to the Football League Cup final in 1964 , although this ended in defeat to Leicester over two legs .

Waddington relied upon experience ; Dennis Viollet , Jackie Mudie , Roy Vernon , Maurice Setters and Jimmy McIlroy were players signed in the later stages of their careers . Matthews was awarded a knighthood for services to football in the 1965 New Year 's Honours list . This was followed by his 701st , and final , league appearance for the club against Fulham in February 1965 , shortly after his 50th birthday . It ended a career spanning 33 years , including 19 years ' service to his home town club .

Gordon Banks , England 's 1966 World Cup winning goalkeeper , joined Stoke from Leicester in 1967 for £ 52 @,@ 000 . Regarded as the best goalkeeper in the world , Banks proved to be a shrewd signing for Waddington as he helped the club maintain stability in the First Division . However , Banks was forced to quit top @-@ level football in 1972 , after losing an eye in a road accident .

The club won its first significant trophy on 4 March 1972 , in the League Cup Final . Stoke beat favourites Chelsea 2 ? 1 in the final at Wembley Stadium before a crowd of 97 @,@ 852 spectators . Before this victory , Stoke had progressed through 11 games to reach the final . This included four games with West Ham United in the semi @-@ final ; the two @-@ legged match was played twice . Stoke fared well in the FA Cup ; the club progressed to the semi @-@ final stage in both the 1970 ? 71 and 1971 ? 72 seasons . However , on both occasions Stoke lost to Arsenal in a replay .

Waddington was presented with a dilemma as both George Eastham and Peter Dobing retired not long after the club 's League Cup win . Waddington responded by paying £ 240 @,@ 000 to Chelsea for the services of Alan Hudson in early 1974 . This was followed by Geoff Salmons ' arrival from Sheffield United for £ 160 @,@ 000 , in the same year . Waddington later paid a world record fee for a goalkeeper , £ 325 @,@ 000 , to sign Peter Shilton from Leicester City . The new personnel brought added impetus to Waddington 's side , and Stoke were close to winning the League title in 1974 ? 75 , but an end of season slump led to a fifth @-@ place finish , four points off the champions , Derby .

The 1970s also saw Stoke compete at European Level for the first time in its history . Stoke qualified for the UEFA Cup in 1972 ? 73 as a result of their League Cup triumph . In the first round , Stoke played Kaiserslautern of Germany : Stoke won the first leg 3 ? 1 at the Victoria Ground , with a crowd of over 22 @,@ 000 . However , the club lost the second leg 4 ? 0 , therefore losing 5 ? 3 on aggregate . Stoke qualified for the UEFA Cup two years later , due to their fifth @-@ place finish in the First Division in the 1973 ? 74 season . In the 1974 ? 75 competition , Stoke were again knocked out at the first stage . Stoke drew both legs against Dutch side Ajax , 1 ? 1 and 0 ? 0 respectively , but went out due to the away goals rule .

The Butler Stand roof was blown off in a storm in January 1976 . The ground damage meant the club 's next home game against Middlesbrough had to be played at Vale Park , the home of local rivals Port Vale . The repair bill , in the region of £ 250 @,@ 000 , put the club in financial trouble , which was eased by the sale of Alan Hudson , Mike Pejic and Jimmy Greenhoff for a combined sum of £ 440 @,@ 000 . With the team depleted , relegation proved inevitable in the 1976 ? 77 season . Waddington , after a spell of 17 years in charge , left the club after a 1 ? 0 home defeat in March 1977 .

= = 1977 ? 1997 = =

George Eastham , who had previously been Waddington 's assistant , was appointed as manager in March 1977 , but the club 's slide into the Second Division in 1976 ? 77 season proved unstoppable . Eastham did not last long , leaving in January 1978 after only 10 months in charge . The club 's misery was compounded by a defeat to non @-@ league Blyth Spartans in the FA Cup shortly afterwards . Alan Durban , arriving from Shrewsbury Town , was selected as the club 's new manager in February 1978 . Durban achieved promotion to the First Division in his first full season , 1978 ? 79 , with a third @-@ place finish . After consolidating the club 's position in the First Division , Durban left for Sunderland in 1981 .

Richie Barker , Durban 's successor , was appointed manager in 1981 . He signed Mickey Thomas from Brighton and Hove Albion and Mark Chamberlain from Port Vale , as he set about building a side for the 1982 ? 83 season . Thomas was signed for £ 200 @,@ 000 and made over 60 appearances for the club , but was sold to Chelsea for £ 75 @,@ 000 in 1984 . Winger Chamberlain , a £ 135 @,@ 00 signing , proved successful as he made eight appearances for England during his stay at Stoke . Barker 's spell in charge was short @-@ lived ; he was sacked in his second season , 1983 ? 84 . The club 's new manager , Bill Asprey , decided to bring back veteran Alan Hudson , and the decision paid off as Stoke improved during the second half of the 1983 ? 84 season and avoided relegation on the final day .

The next season , referred to as The Holocaust Season by fans , proved to be disastrous . Stoke finished the season with only 17 points and just three wins , which would be the lowest points total in the top flight of English football (under the " three points for a win " system) for 21 years until the record was broken by Sunderland in the 2005 ? 06 season . Mick Mills was appointed player @-@ manager for the 1985 ? 86 season , following Asprey 's departure in April 1985 due to ill health . His first task was to consolidate following the club 's relegation in the previous season , which he achieved with a mid @-@ table finish in the Second Division . The team reached fourth place in 1986 ? 87 , his second season in charge , including a 7 ? 2 win over Leeds United , but the team 's form tailed off towards the end of the season , culminating in an eighth @-@ place finish . Mills was unable to sustain a challenge for promotion and was sacked in November 1989 , following a poor

start to the 1989 ? 90 season after spending £ 1m on players . His successor , Alan Ball , became the club 's fifth manager in 10 years . Peter Coates became the club 's chairman in 1989 , following numerous changes of chairmanship during the 1980s .

Ball struggled in his first season in charge , 1989 ? 90 , and his Stoke side were relegated to the third tier of English football after finishing bottom of the Second Division . The start of the 1990 ? 91 season in the Third Division marked the first time Stoke had played at this level in 63 years . Ball kept his job for the start of this campaign but departed in February 1991 in the midst of an indifferent season that saw Stoke finish 15th . This remains the club 's lowest league position , as of 2007 .

Ball 's successor , Lou Macari , was appointed in May 1991 , prior to the start of the 1991 ? 92 season . The improvement was immediate , as Stoke narrowly missed out on promotion in his first season in charge , finishing fourth in the Third Division . He also clinched a trophy for the club ; the Associate Members ' Cup (at the time known as the Autoglass trophy for sponsorship reasons) was won with a 1 ? 0 victory against Stockport County at Wembley ; Mark Stein scored the only goal of the game . The following season , 1992 ? 93 , promotion was achieved from the third tier , now known as Division Two , with Stoke finishing as league champions . Stein , a £ 100 @, @ 000 purchase from Oxford United , scored 26 goals during the season as Stoke amassed a total of 93 points . Macari left in October 1993 to take over as manager of Scottish side Celtic , and Stein also departed in a £ 1.5m move to Chelsea .

Joe Jordan 's tenure in charge was short ; he left the club less than a year after joining . Following Jordan 's departure , Stoke opted to reappoint Lou Macari only 12 months after he had left . Despite the optimism surrounding his return , only a mid @-@ table finish was attained in the 1994 ? 95 season . The 1995 ? 96 season started poorly , but the signing of striker Mike Sheron turned around the club 's campaign . Stoke eventually finished fourth but were defeated in the play @-@ off semi @-@ final by Leicester City . The following season , 1996 ? 97 , saw Mark Stein return from Chelsea on loan , partnering Sheron in attack . The season started well , with Stoke in fourth place at Christmas , but a poor second half of the season saw the club drop to an eventual 12th place . Sheron was sold in 1997 for a club record fee of £ 2.5m. Macari left the club at the end of the season , his last game in charge the final league game at the Victoria Ground in a match against West Bromwich Albion .

= = 1997 ? 2008 : The Britannia Stadium = =

The 1997 ? 98 season saw Stoke move to its new ground , the 28 @, @ 000 all @-@ seater Britannia Stadium , after 119 years at the Victoria Ground , the longest time spent at a ground by any team in Britain . Chic Bates , Macari 's assistant , was appointed manager for the club 's inaugural season in the new ground . Bates struggled as his side slipped from a play @-@ off place towards the relegation zone , with the club 's bad run culminating in a 7 ? 0 home defeat to Birmingham City . Bates was replaced by Chris Kamara in January 1998 . Kamara could not improve the club 's fortunes , and he left in April . Alan Durban , Stoke 's manager two decades earlier , took charge for the remainder of season . Durban was unable to keep the club up , with a 23rd @-@ place finish consigning Stoke to relegation from Division One .

Brian Little , formerly manager of Aston Villa , took charge for the 1998 ? 99 season , and Stoke began the season impressively , holding first place until December with six straight wins . The team 's form tailed off in the latter stages of the season , leading to Little 's departure at the end of the season . His successor , Gary Megson , was only in the job for four months . Megson was forced to depart following a takeover by Stoke Holding , an Icelandic consortium that purchased a 66 percent share in Stoke City F.C. for £ 6.6m. The club 's new owners appointed the club 's first foreign manager , Iclander Gudjon Thordarson , in November 1999 .

Stoke won the Football League Trophy in the 1999 ? 2000 season with a 2 ? 1 win over Bristol City in April 2000 before a crowd of 75 @, @ 057 at Wembley . Disappointment followed a month later , as Stoke were defeated against Gillingham in the play @-@ off semi @-@ finals , consigning themselves to another year in Division Two . They reached the play @-@ offs again in the 2000 ? 01 season with a fifth @-@ place finish , but this time Walsall halted Stoke 's progress at the semi

@-@ final stage . Thordarson achieved promotion at the third attempt in 2001 ? 02 ; another fifth @-@ place finish ensured a play @-@ off spot . Cardiff City were defeated in the semi @-@ final before a 2 ? 0 win against Brentford at the Millennium Stadium secured promotion . Despite achieving the goal of promotion , Thordarson was sacked by Gunnar Gíslason , only five days after the club won the play @-@ off final . A campaign calling for Thordarson 's reinstatement was organised by fans , but it proved unsuccessful .

Steve Cotterill was drafted in as Thordarson 's replacement before the start of the 2002 ? 03 season . Cotterill quit in October 2002 , after only four months in charge , to take the role of Howard Wilkinson 's assistant at Sunderland . The club were close to unveiling George Burley as their new manager after Cotterill 's departure ; however , a last minute change of heart led the former Ipswich manager to decline the club 's offer . The club acted swiftly and Tony Pulis was appointed as Stoke 's new manager shortly afterwards . Pulis steered Stoke clear of relegation with a 1 ? 0 win over Reading on the final day of the season that kept the club in the Championship . The club 's position in the league was consolidated in 2003 ? 04 . Pulis was sacked at the end of the 2004 ? 05 season , following a disagreement between himself and the club 's owners . Dutch manager Johan Boskamp was named as Pulis ' successor on 29 June 2005 , only a day after Pulis was sacked . Boskamp broke the club 's transfer record in signing Sambegou Bangoura for a fee in the region of £ 1m . Another significant addition was the signing of Belgium international Carl Hoefkens , who subsequently won the Fans ' Player of the Year Award for the 2005 ? 06 season . Despite his spending on new players , Boskamp 's side was inconsistent and only a mid @-@ table finish was achieved . The season was marred by a feud between Boskamp and the club 's director of football , John Rudge , which escalated to the point where Boskamp threatened to quit . Boskamp left at the end of the 2005 ? 06 season , amidst a takeover by former chairman Peter Coates .

On 23 May 2006 , Coates completed his takeover of Stoke City , marking the end of Gunnar Gíslason 's chairmanship of the club . Coates chose former manager Tony Pulis as Boskamp 's successor in June 2006 . Pulis took Stoke close to a play @-@ off place , however an eventual eighth @-@ place finish was achieved in the 2006 ? 07 season . In June 2007 , chairman Peter Coates purchased the Britannia Stadium outright from the City Council for a fee in the region of £ 6m .

= = 2008 ? present : Promotion to the Premier League = =

On 4 May 2008 , Stoke City won promotion to the top flight of English football after a 23 @-@ year absence , and as of 2008 ? 09 are playing in the Premier League for the first time . On 18 July 2008 , the club broke their transfer record to purchase striker Dave Kitson for £ 5 @. @ 5 million from Reading . The following weekend , the Britannia Stadium hosted its first ever top @-@ flight game , against Aston Villa , with a home win courtesy of Mamady Sidibe 's injury @-@ time goal from a Rory Delap throw @-@ in , giving Stoke City their first ever Premier League points . The club went on to record a 12th @-@ place finish in their first season back in the Premier League . A much cited aspect of the team 's style of play has been the utilisation of Rory Delap 's long throw to create goal @-@ scoring opportunities . Pulis signed Robert Huth and Tuncay ?anl? from Middlesbrough for a combined fee in the region of £ 10 million , in a bid to establish the club in the Premier League prior to the 2009 ? 2010 season . This feat was achieved comfortably as the club finished in 11th place , thereby securing a third season in the Premier League . Pulis bolstered his squad for 2010 ? 11 season with the club record £ 8 million signing of Kenwyne Jones .

A 3 ? 0 win over West Bromwich Albion in the 2010 ? 11 season gave Stoke two new records : The largest away win in the Premier League and largest top division away win since 1982 and also the first time since the 1983 ? 84 season Stoke have won three top @-@ flight matches in a row . Manager Pulis hailed the new records as " A Fantastic Achievement " . For the second season running Stoke made it to the quarter final of the FA Cup after overcoming Cardiff City , Wolverhampton Wanderers and Brighton & Hove Albion . They met West Ham United in the quarters and won 2 ? 1 thus earning a place in the FA Cup Semi @-@ final for only the fourth time in their history . It was also be their first trip to the New Wembley Stadium when they took on Bolton

Wanderers for a place in the final . Stoke comfortably beat Bolton 5 ? 0 clinching a first FA Cup Final appearance in their 148 @-@ year history . However , they lost the final 1 ? 0 to Manchester City . By reaching the final , Stoke qualified for the 2011 ? 12 UEFA Europa League . Despite a strong season , with an 8th @-@ place finish in sight , defeat at home to Wigan Athletic in the final game meant that Stoke finished 13th in the 2010 ? 11 season .

On 28 July 2011 , Stoke beat Hajduk Split 2 ? 0 over two legs in the third qualifying round of the Europa League . It was Stoke 's first appearance in Europe in 37 years . Stoke would go on progress past FC Thun in the Play @-@ off round gaining entrance into the group stage where Stoke were handed a tough draw against Besiktas , Dynamo Kyiv and Maccabi Tel Aviv . Stoke finished second in the group and were handed a glamour tie against Spanish giants Valencia in the round of 32 , following the draw manager Pulis stated that he is relishing the prospect of taking on one of Europe 's top clubs . Stoke lost both legs 1 ? 0 to end their European campaign . Pulis received criticism from some supporters after he fielded a weakened team in the second leg . Stoke ended the 2011 ? 12 season in 14th position in what was perceived to be a disappointing season . The 2012 ? 13 season saw Stoke make little progress , finishing in 13th position . Pulis subsequently left the club by mutual consent on 21 May 2013 .

He was replaced by another Welsh manager , Mark Hughes . Hughes led Stoke to a ninth @-@ place finish in 2013 ? 14 , their highest position in the Premier League and best finish since 1974 ? 75 . Stoke again finished in ninth position in 2014 ? 15 , which ended with a 6 ? 1 victory against Liverpool . Despite breaking their transfer record twice (on Xherdan Shaqiri and then Giannelli Imbula) , in 2015 ? 16 , Stoke did not make any progression and finished in ninth position for a third season running .

= = Books = =

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