

Cape's favourite son named as City coach

Mazola Molefe

BENNI is in the 18-area, in case you haven't heard. The Cape Town City area as the new head coach, and McCarthy replaces his ex-Bafana Bafana colleague Eric Tinkler, who joined SuperSport United last week.

Naturally there is excitement and there is some doubt. Will a figure as loved as the all-time national top goalscorer take the Mother City club to greater heights, a step further than a third place finish and a Telkom Knockout trophy under Tinkler's direction during the 2016/17 season? Or will it all end in tears, given that McCarthy doesn't quite fit the criteria of a proven Premier Soccer League coach?

Well, the proof will be in the pudding.

McCarthy, 39, has in the several years since his retirement worked hard at attaining the necessary qualifications, serving as a striker consultant at Scottish side Hibernian and being roped in by South Africa-raised Chris O'Loughlin as assistant at Belgian club Sint Truiden for a short time last year.

City have enjoyed great success from the time businessman John Comitis bought the Mpumalanga Black Aces franchise a year ago, relocated the club to Cape Town, and hired Tinkler.

In that sense, they are considered a serious team – one that is likely to continue challenging for honours year after year. And maybe McCarthy just isn't ready?

But then again – he is Benni. Larger than life, been around the block as a player as well as a protégé to an extent. It would be impossible to deny the argument that he should have started from the



BENNI MCCARTHY

bottom before making his way up the PSL food chain. But his appointment could still prove a masterstroke. Comitis clearly has complete trust in McCarthy as he decided on the only South African to win an European Champions League medal.

Tinkler is the best example of "working your way up". It took him nearly 10 years after his retirement before he could hold the title of head coach, and it was at a side with an incredible stature in Pirates after he'd served as assistant to Roger de Sa and Vladimir Vermezovic. Another former Bafana striker – Shaun Bartlett – is currently out in the trenches, trying to get the University of Pretoria back into the elite league after they were relegated two seasons ago. Bartlett also saw Golden Arrows achieve promotion in May 2015, but was sacked prior to the start of the new season.

Some will argue McCarthy hasn't been in the trenches, while others will counter that the job at City is nothing he can't handle.

Only a few more weeks before we know for sure.

Good luck Benni.

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