



# BENNI GETS BIG BREAK

MCCARTHY: 'PRODIGAL' SON RETURNS HOME TO COACH CAPE TOWN CITY

**IN A HAPPY SPACE.** Former Bafana Bafana striker Benni McCarthy got his big break as a coach by being appointed as Cape Town City coach yesterday. Picture: Gallo Images

➔ **Old team-mate Shaun Bartlett gives deal the thumbs-up.**

**Jonty Mark**

**T**he prodigal son is back,' said Cape Town City CEO John Comitis yesterday, as one of the worst-kept secrets in South African football was revealed, with Benni McCarthy's announcement as the new City head coach.

It is fitting that McCarthy's first appointment as a head coach should be in his hometown, where the Hanover Park-born young-

ster's skills as a striker first came to the fore, ahead of a playing career that took him across European club football as well as to the top of the scoring charts with Bafana Bafana.

The appointment represents a risk for City, but McCarthy has earned his coaching stripes away from the dug-out, with a Uefa A Licence already in the bag and the Uefa Pro Licence in the process of completion.

He also spent time as an assistant coach at Belgium's St Truiden in the 2015/16 season, and it is refreshing to see a club boss going for a prospective coaching talent, as opposed to just picking from South African football's merry-go-round of the usual names.

"I would like to thank John

Comitis for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said McCarthy yesterday.

"It is opportunities like this that give former players a chance to truly prove themselves."

McCarthy's appointment was backed by his former Bafana strike-partner Shaun Bartlett, who got his break as a head coach in the Absa Premiership with Golden Arrows and is currently in charge at University of Pretoria.

"We need more South African coaches in the league, and I think it is good when former players step up, like Benni has done in educating himself, he has had a spell as an assistant in Belgium and once you get a taste for that, it is difficult to stay away," said Bartlett yesterday.

## info

### **Benni McCarthy**

► **Age:** 39

► **Playing career**

**Clubs:** Seven Stars, Ajax Amsterdam, Celta Vigo, FC Porto, Blackburn Rovers, West Ham United, Orlando Pirates.

► **Honours:** Dutch Eredivisie title 1997/8, Dutch Cup 1997/8, 1998/9; Uefa Intertoto Cup 2000; Uefa Champions League 2003/4, Portuguese Primeira Liga title 2003/14, 2005/6, Portuguese Cup 2005/6; Absa Premiership title 2011/12, Telkom Knockout 2011/12, MTN8 2011/12.

► McCarthy remains Bafana Bafana's all-time leading goalscorer with 32 goals from 80 caps.

