



RED AND BLACK CITY

By David Prentice

It is 53 years since reigning champions Manchester City ran out at Goodison Park in a controversial new strip.

Controversial, but much loved.. eventually.

The club who had worn sky blue ever since they changed their name from Ardwick to Manchester City in 1894, ran out in front of 55,399 fans at Goodison Park in red and black striped shirts, with black shorts and socks.

Legendary Evertonian Joe Mercer was the City manager on 5 October 1968 – although the strip switch was very much the idea of his assistant Malcolm Allison.

The reasoning was simple. Allison was a big fan of the wonderful AC Milan side of that era.

On the strip's first airing Everton triumphed 2-0.

Mike Summerbee, wing wizard of that golden generation and now a



• Mike Summerbee



• Manchester City, back row, left to right: George Heslop, Mike Doyle, Alan Oakes, Harry Dowd, Arthur Mann, Glyn Pardoe, Tommy Booth and Tony Coleman. Front row from left to right: David Connor, Bobby Owen, Colin Bell, Tony Book, Francis Lee, Mike Summerbee and Neil Young

much-admired club ambassador, was also a fan of the red and black outfit. He said: "Wearing that kit made you feel bigger than you were and I thought we looked pretty good in that strip – people were a bit afraid of us."

In time. Everton had no fear that afternoon, as goals by Alan Ball and Joe Royle took Harry Catterick's flamboyantly expressive team up to third place in the First Division table.

Following that defeat City fans expressed their dismay at the new kit. But Big Mal was unabashed.

They wore it in that season's FA Cup semi-final at Villa Park, when Tommy Booth's last-minute goal stopped Everton reaching a third FA Cup final in four seasons, and also in the subsequent European Cup Winners' Cup and League Cup finals of 1969 – victorious each time.

It quickly became known as a 'lucky kit'.

The same colours resurfaced when City beat Ipswich in the 1981 FA Cup semi-final, future Evertonian Paul

Power scoring the winning goal, and again when they famously secured promotion back to the Premier League in 2000 during a classic encounter away at Blackburn Rovers, with Everton legend Royle at the helm.

And for City's first title in 44 years and maiden Premier League success, the second strip was (of course), red and black stripes.

Like their City counterparts, Everton also aired a new strip when we were reigning champions, in 1985. This time the home strip had an infamous white bib across the top half of the front.

In a campaign in which we finished runners-up in League and FA Cup – to neighbours Liverpool – it was seen by supporters as a jinxed strip and swiftly dropped.

It proved lucky when we faced Manchester City, mind, Gary Lineker scoring a hat-trick in a 4-0 win at Goodison.

City's colours that night, on 11 February 1985? Red and black stripes, black shorts and black socks!