We now remember how on a freezing cold Boxing Day 2009 at Eastlands in Manchester, Roberto Mancini made his home debut before the Manchester City faithful and was happy to take some credit for the 2-0 victory over Stoke City.

The memory of their Christmas dinners will have been soured by the way that Mancini was brought in to replace the popular Mark Hughes as manager, and the fans are in no mood to forget that, despite the welcome victory and “clean sheet” against Stoke’s powerful strikers.

Others are enjoying the turmoil at City. Sir Alex Ferguson reminded us that in the 23 years that he had been in charge at Club World Cup Champions and local rivals Manchester United, City have had no fewer than 14 managers. He was also confident that – despite his almost 68 years – he would see out another 20 managers at City. Few would have bet against him.

Most of the City players kept quiet publicly about the changes, but Welshman Craig Bellamy whas reported to have clashed with Mancini, and it was no surprise to see him on the bench for the start of the match. When Bellamy was brought on very late in the game the fans showed their loyalties with a resounding standing ovation. Amusingly, the replaced Robinho seemed to mistake the applause as being meant for him, an irony that will not be lost on the City fans, who have been bitterly disappointed in the Brazilian since he arrived from Real Madrid in 2008. His wages of £100,000 per week had not made him popular with the City faithful.

Only time will tell if Mancini can bring about the success demanded by owner Sheikh Mansour, who has already spent well over $300 million on new players, but Mancini’s history has been chequered to say the least. It was he that was replaced by “The Special One” Jose Mourinho at Inter Milan.

Since that time many of the City players who had disappointed the home fans and failed to bring any silverware back to Eastlands have gone. Several have not been heard of since - their disappearance from the football-viewing public’s eye seeming to reinforce the feeling that their club places were well beyond their capabilities - but new players have arrived, and many of their wage packets make Robinho’s pay seem miserly.

So, how are City performing now? They became Premiership champions in the 2011/12 season, beating off the challenge of Sir Alex Ferguson’s men, but they have failed to make inroads into that most cherished of all club prizes, the European Champions League. Chelsea used the funds of billionaire owner Roman Abramovich to buy their way to that trophy in 2011/12, but City have fallen at an early hurdle this year. It remains to be seen whether Sheikh Mansour values the European crown as highly as Mr. Abramovich does.

Within the ranks of the Manchester City players a kind of loyalty and team spirit seems to be developing, although renegade and eccentric striker Mario Balotelli seems intent on winning the wrong kind of publicity at every opportunity, His days at Manchester City may be numbered, but perhaps Roberto Mancini’s are not.