

Attendance 2015/16

Status as at New Year 2016.

Introduction

The following note is a brief evaluation of the attendance at League One football matches during the first half of the 2015/16 season. Unfortunately the writer does not have full data for all 24 clubs in the league so only nine have been included in the evaluation.

The evaluation concerns the period from August 2015 until and including the 2nd of January 2016. It compares the full and home attendance in that period with the same period during the 2014/15 season. For each club average attendance at all home-matches has been calculated. The attendance at away-matches have been included as home-matches for the relevant clubs.

Full Attendance

The table below and the diagram overleaf show how the two periods compare at the nine clubs.

Four of the clubs including Port Vale have had a smaller crowd attending their matches. Bradford City have had a spectacular increase in attendance which may be due to particularly favourable offers of season tickets at only £149. Other clubs which

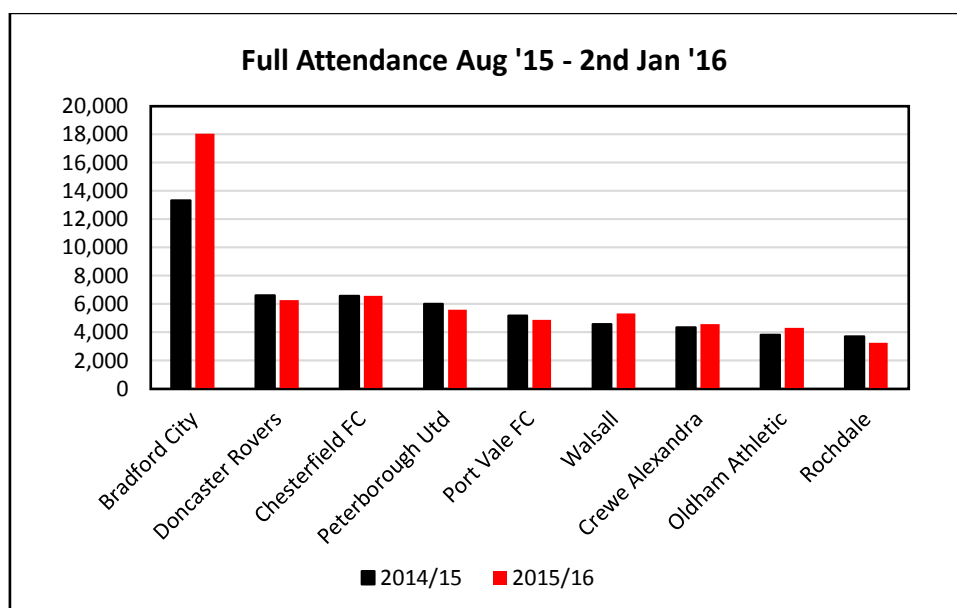
<u>Club*)</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>Difference</u>	
			<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
-	-	-		
Bradford City	13,309	18,050	4,741	35.62
Doncaster Rovers	6,615	6,272	-343	-5.19
Chesterfield FC	6,574	6,575	1	0.02
Peterborough Utd	6,017	5,603	-414	-6.88
Port Vale FC	5,181	4,866	-315	-6.08
Walsall	4,559	5,346	787	17.26
Crewe Alexandra	4,360	4,572	212	4.86
Oldham Athletic	3,838	4,323	485	12.64
Rochdale	3,717	3,249	-468	-12.59
Total	54,170	58,856	4,686	8.65

have enjoyed increased attendances are Walsall Town and Oldham Athletic, but the reason is not very clear.

It is also noted that if we delete just Bradford City from the table the increase actually becomes a small decrease; small, but nevertheless a decrease.

Note: Coventry City has been excluded because of their unusual move from Northampton back to the Ricoh Arena within the City which seems to have resulted in an increase of attendance from less than 9,000 to nearly 13,000.

In the case of Port Vale it is not only the decrease in attendance that should be of concern to the management of the club. It is the fact that attendance of 5,000 or less only fill a ¼ of the stadium which could seat nearly 20,000.



Home Attendance

For the long term survival of a club with roots in a local community attendance at home matches by the club's own supporters is probably more important than total support. From the table below it is seen that home supporters comprise between

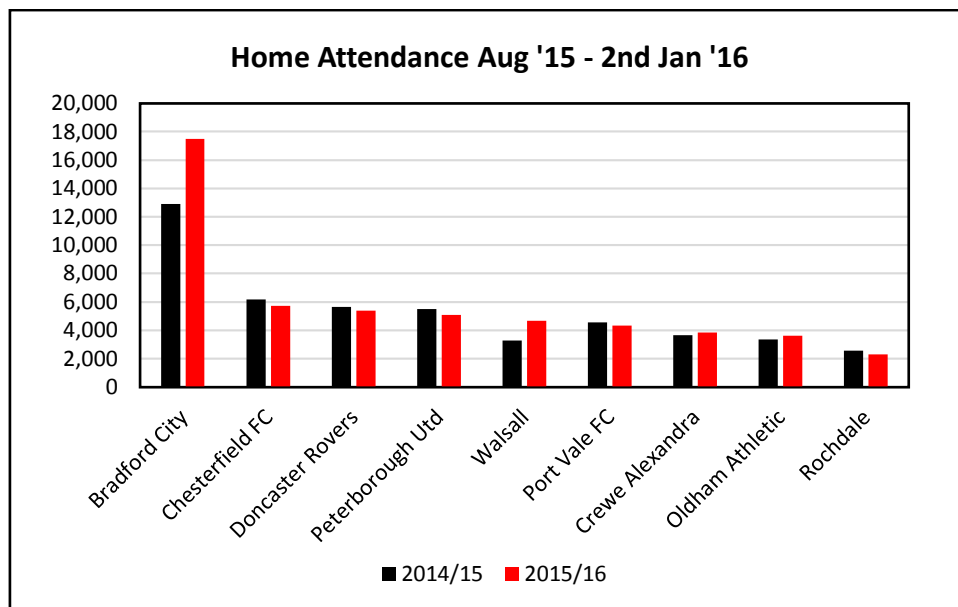
Club Club\Attendance	2014/15			2015/16		
	Full	Home	%	Full	Home	%
Bradford City	13,309	12,901	96.93	18,050	17,493	96.91
Doncaster Rovers	6,615	5,639	85.25	6,272	5,382	85.81
Chesterfield FC	6,574	6,151	93.57	6,575	5,719	86.98
Peterborough Utd	6,017	5,481	91.09	5,603	5,063	90.36
Port Vale FC	5,181	4,553	87.88	4,866	4,321	88.80
Walsall	4,559	3,262	71.55	5,346	4,680	87.54
Crewe Alexandra	4,360	3,642	83.53	4,572	3,842	84.03
Oldham Athletic	3,838	3,368	87.75	4,323	3,619	83.72
Rochdale	3,717	2,553	68.68	3,249	2,291	70.51
Total	54,170	47,550	87.78	58,856	52,410	89.05

70% and 97 % of match attendances at the nine clubs included in the analyses and again it is Bradford City which scores best on this analysis. By contrast Rochdale has the worst record in this regard, while Port Vale is close to the average.

The above table and the table below both show the changes in home support and again Bradford City is way ahead of the other clubs together with Walsall. If those two clubs were taken out of the equation we would be talking of an average decline in attendance of about 4% rather than an increase.

Port Vale has suffered a decline in average home support of 5.1% which is more than the average 4% for other clubs.

<u>Club</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>Difference</u>	
			<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
	-	-		
Bradford City	12,901	17,493	4,592	35.59
Chesterfield FC	6,151	5,719	-432	-7.02
Doncaster Rovers	5,639	5,382	-257	-4.56
Peterborough Utd	5,481	5,063	-418	-7.63
Walsall	3,262	4,680	1,418	43.47
Port Vale FC	4,553	4,321	-232	-5.10
Crewe Alexandra	3,642	3,842	200	5.49
Oldham Athletic	3,368	3,619	251	7.45
Rochdale	2,553	2,291	-262	-10.26
Total	47,550	52,410	4,860	10.22



Support Away

In the period under review Port Vale played 12 away games within League 1 with an average attendance from Port Vale of 829 which was just less than 20% of the home support at Vale Park.

As we found in a previous analysis more are prepared to travel to neighbouring clubs than to those further away. Thus more than 2,000 PV supporters attended the match in Crewe on the 8th of August while 1,000+ travelled to Burton and Coventry. By contrast only 155 travelled to Colchester on the 20th of October.

These figures are virtually identical to those for the same period in 2014.

Comparison with other clubs is difficult as the number of visiting supporters is not always recorded. (In fact the writer is in credit to Port Vale who is one of the few clubs who meticulously record both home and away attendance at every match.)

Other Matters

It is often argued that ticket prices influence attendance, but I can find no evidence of that. In fact it seems more likely that attendance influences the ticket price i.e. the higher the attendance the higher will management be able to set ticket prices.

It is also argued that performance measured in terms of wins or goals scored influences attendance, but again the evidence so far has not been very strong.