

UCD NEWS



The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 5

April 2004

WELCOME TO THE fifth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of Rob McAuley, news on the transfers in to and away from Belfield Park, the media's view on how they see our 2004 campaign going and all the rest of the news from pre-season.

It's been a busy sixteen weeks since the last-day relegation last November. For the 25th anniversary of the club entering the League of Ireland, we've signed 25 new scholarship students – some from local clubs and schools, some from the likes of Bohs and Shels. Among the players who are most likely to make an impact over the coming season are Willie Doyle, a forward from Bohs, Brian Gannon, a full-back from Bohs who has particularly impressed in pre-season, Darren Quigley, a goalkeeper from Kildare County who's currently sitting his Leaving Cert in St Laurence's in Loughlinstown, Cormac Kenna, a centre-back from Shels who has been playing full-back in pre-season and who was formerly on the books of Coventry City, and Ciarán Foley from Longford.

On the other side of things, nine players have departed. Alan Cawley and John Martin will be playing European football this season with Shels and Longford; former boss Paul Doolin has signed three players in Mark Rooney, Gavin Whelan and Niall Donnelly (who has gone on loan to our first home opponents of the season, Athlone); Darragh Ryan has returned to England to look for a club there, Pat Jennings has gone to Derry while Robbie Griffin and Ben Savage will be returning to Belfield with their new clubs Kildare and Monaghan respectively. Seán Finn may re-sign – Monaghan are also interested – while Alan Gallen has not yet been offered a new contract.

The fixture list was announced a couple of weeks ago and hasn't been overly kind to us as we have to travel to our four main promotion rivals – Bray, Harps, Dundalk and Kildare – twice while hosting them the once. Against that, Kilkenny at home on the last day of the season is surely the best possible tie to have if we find ourselves needing a result!

The League Cup draw has been made and not surprisingly – given the regional nature of the draw – we've got the same group as last year, only with the venues reversed. So we have to travel to Bray yet again (three times this season), and host Shamrock Rovers yet again (after doing so four times last season!). We've only ever gone beyond the First Round in this competition twice – once going all the way to the Final – but this isn't a competition the club take likely and we'll be looking to improve on that record this season.

In other news, the Supporters' Club has gotten in a range of merchandise for the new season. Keyrings featuring Rob McAuley, Tony McDonnell, the UCD fanzine and the UCD crest are E1 each, with more designs to follow as we get more photos. And if anyone has an idea they'd like to see on a keyring, get in touch with us and we'll make it up. We also have UCD AFC scarves coming in in the next few weeks, priced at E10, we're looking at getting colour posters in and of course *Blue Review* and *Student Till I Graduate* will both be back, still at E2 and E1 respectively.

Anyway, the new season (and the summer!) is just around the corner, we're one of the title favourites instead of relegation strugglers, we've had the recent boost that three teams will go up automatically this season, we've signed some of the best young players in the country to go with the many experienced players at the club and the big games are coming from the off with trips to Bray and Finn Harps!

BELFIELD DIARY

15th December – Several transfer announcements from Belfield Park – last season's top scorer Robbie Griffin, Seán Finn, Niall Donnelly and Ben Savage are all released; Pat Jennings leaves the club and Alan Cawley signs for Shels.

30th December – Cup holders Longford seal a deal to bring UCD's vice-captain John Martin to Flancare Park.

2nd January – Highly-rated striker Willie Doyle is UCD's first signing of the close season, signing from Bohs. Like keeper Neil Gallagher, Doyle played for Ireland's U-19 last season.

3rd January – Mark Leech and Neil Gallagher are both selected in the eL's Under-18 squad for a match against a Leinster League Under 18 side. Leech comes on as a second-half sub in a 2-2 draw in Tullamore. Only three First Division teams are represented – UCD with two players and Bray and Monaghan with one each.

15th January – Paul Doolin raids his former team twice in quick succession to bring forward Mark Rooney and midfielder Gavin Whelan – nephew of Ronnie – to Drogheda. Meanwhile, Hugh Davey is the first to sign a contract for the new season.

20th January – The scholarship list is finalised, with 25 new players joining the club in total.

2nd February – Robbie Griffin is snapped up by UCD's title rivals Kildare County, while Pat Jennings signs for Derry.

11th February – UCD are confirmed with a B licence in the UEFA licencing scheme, which will allow the club compete in the First Division next season, but which also means that major improvements, particularly to Belfield Park itself, will have to take place if UCD are to be promoted.

13th February – Mark Leech and Darren Quigley are named in the Ireland Schools' squad for a friendly against Bray. Quigley plays in a 2-1 win in the Carlisle Grounds.

20th February – Alan McNally, Pat Sullivan and Rob McAuley all sign new contracts for the coming season.

28th February – Longford get revenge for their beating on the last day of last season with a 2-0 friendly win on the reserve pitch. For UCD, Darren Quigley and Brian Gannon impress, Seán Finn plays after being released at the end of last season while Mad Tom holds up the game for a few minutes after being involved in a collision with a linesman!

6th March – UCD go down 3-2 to Dublin City, with Rob McAuley and Robbie Martin scoring either side of half-time for College. In other news, Darragh Ryan has returned to England, while Theo Dunne, who has been with the club almost all the club's league career, has retired from the coaching staff. Mark Leech is AWOL.

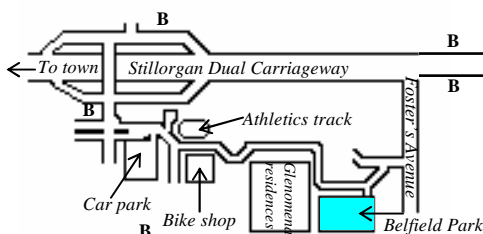
10th March – Another friendly defeat, this time 2-1 at home to Drogheda. Former Students Andy Myler and Mark Rooney score for the Dregs, while Rob McAuley replies with a late penalty. On the plus side, Alan Mahon makes his return after nearly a year out with injury.

12th March – Finally, a draw, against the team we're always good for a result against – Pat's. 1-1 in Richmond, with Robbie Martin scoring.

13th March – The FAI announce that the Premier Division will revert to 12 teams from 2005, which means three teams going up automatically from the First, with no play-offs.

15th March – UCD's final friendly is a disappointing 2-1 win over an AUL team; Robbie Martin and Alan Gallen score to ensure UCD come from behind to win.

WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



Buses to Belfield:

3	10
11	11B
17	46
46A	46B
46C	46D
63	84
B – Bus stop	

LOOKING AHEAD

How the media view UCD's 2004 campaign...

The Mirror, 12/03/04

UCD were relegated on the last day of the season despite having remained unbeaten in their last four [sic – it was eight] games. Many of the young stars, including Patrick Jennings and Alan Cawley, have now departed Belfield but there is more than enough quality left to ensure an immediate return to the Premier.

The Star

A lot of experienced players have left the Students, so an immediate return to the top flight will be tough for Pete Mahon and his current charges.

Sorely missed will be Alan Cawley, who has moved to Shelbourne, Derry City-bound keeper Patrick Jennings and John Martin (Longford Town).

Also departed from Belfield are Niall Donnelly, Gavin Whelan and Mark Rooney (all Drogheda United), Ben Savage (Monaghan United), Robbie Griffin (Kildare County) and Seán Finn (out of contract).

But Mahon has brought in some bright prospects from some of the Premier Division's top clubs to replace those that exited the club and he'll be hoping the new boys shine in the First Division.

Willie Doyle and Brian Gannon arrive at Belfield from Bohemians, while Conor Kenna comes in after getting first-team experience for Shelbourne in last season's League Cup.

With Darren Quigley joining from Kildare County, there's still plenty of hope that the Students can bounce back swiftly.

UCD boss Mahon will point to the club's end-of-season run-in as evidence that the club can mount a serious challenge against the more experienced promotion-chasers like Finn Harps and Bray Wanderers.

Amazingly, the Belfield Park outfit went down despite avoiding defeat in their final eight matches of last season's campaign.

Their final day victory over Longford Town and the 14-point haul in those eight games weren't enough to pip Derry City to the relative safety of the play-offs.

But UCD are battlers and that's an important quality when it comes to success in the eircom League First Division. A play-off spot is definitely within their reach.

WIN MATCH TICKETS

We've improved our match tickets giveaway for the new season – now, in addition to four free match tickets, each winner will also pick up two match programmes and two fanzines.

To unsubscribe from the UCD Supporters' Club, simply send us an e-mail at ucdafc@yahoo.ie

FOCUS ON – ROBERT

Name – Robert McAuley

Date of birth – Belfast

Place of birth – 19th June 1978

Position – Centre-back

Joined UCD – July 1996

Signed from – Trinity College.

Really! His dad is involved with the soccer club there as well!

UCD debut – A v. Bray Wanderers, October 1996.

UCD won 2-0.

First goal – A v. Cork City, 18/03/00.

2003 UCD statistics – Played 36 (33 league, 2 FAI Cup, 1 League Cup), scored 4 (all in the league, all penalties!)

Career UCD statistics (league only) – 165 games (eighth on the all-time list), 11 goals.

Did you know? – Robbie Mac is UCD's top scorer in European competition courtesy of a brace against Velbazhd Kyustendil on a scorching hot day in July 2000. This came as a surprise to many – both because he's a centre-back not renowned for scoring from open play and because his first comment on hearing that we were playing a Bulgarian team was "I don't like playing in the heat"! Ciarán Martyn scored the third goal for UCD that day after a Robbie Mac free was only partly cleared.



UPCOMING EVENTS

19th March – First competitive match in sixteen weeks – and it's already being billed as a promotion decider! Away to Bray in the Carlisle Grounds, kick-off at 7:45pm.

26th March – First home game of the new season, against Athlone Town. The last time Athlone visited was for the dramatic promotion/relegation play-off at the end of the 2000/01 season – probably won't be as exciting this time, but you never know! Kick-off, as with all UCD home games this season, is 7:45 on the Friday evening.

31st March – Ireland v. Czech Republic, Lansdowne Road. Kick-off is 7:45pm.

1st April – The second big away match in a row as UCD head to Ballybofey for a clash with Finn Harps. Harps have lost in the play-offs last three years – they won't this year, but will they go up or not?

Don't forget – if you can't go to a UCD game, you can keep in touch with the Students in many ways –

- Aertel page 222
- ThreeText page 267 (on TV3)
- The UCD text service – text UCD to 53131 to receive goal flashes and news! Texts cost 30p each. To unsubscribe, text "Unsub UCD" to 53131.
- <http://www.fest.ie/forums> – the UCD messageboard
- RTÉ Medium Wave and Newstalk 106, both of which offer regular eircom League commentary on Fridays.
- www.ucd.ie/~soccer, the official UCD website
- www.ucd.ie/~soccup, the unofficial website.