

# UCD NEWS



## The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 13

March 2005

**WELCOME TO THE** thirteenth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of Alan McNally, Pete Mahon's look at his reign so far and, as always, the Belfield Diary.

The return of *UCD News* can of course only mean that the new season is just around the corner, with the first round of games on Paddy's weekend. The first of our pre-season games have been announced recently as well – more in the Upcoming Events section. However, as this is our first issue since the start of November – when there were still three games left in the season – we're going to have a look over the events of the last four months.

There's been much news since the last issue, so we're not going to dwell on the disappointment of missing out on the title other than to say that we can't quite decide if it's a good thing or a bad thing that the play-offs were abandoned – imagine playing Shamrock Rovers in the play-off final!

In the Premier Division, Shels pipped Cork City to the title, and the day after the Kilkenny game, the two league runners-up met in Belfield in the Dr Tony O'Neill U-21s final. A hugely successful season – only one defeat all season – came to a triumphant end with a last-gasp winner against a Cork side down to ten men and a midfielder in nets to win the title named after one of UCD FC's greatest names. The win denied Cork a third straight title. The less said about the Budweiser and red wine mix in the Cup afterwards, though, the better!

The main news in the close season is in the Belfield Diary. We've lost four key players – Seán Finn and Willie Doyle both joined Waterford on free transfers, Philip "Batman" Hughes was released – he has since joined Monaghan – while Pat Sullivan has signed for Drogheda (of all teams!) for a fee believed to be in the region of €15,000. In have come two of the First Division's top scorers last season – Frenchman Damien Dupuy from Galway United, who scored 13 goals in his 16 games for the Tribesmen, and Adrian Murphy from Athlone, who managed 11 goals. We hope to have profiles of these players in upcoming issues of *UCD News*. Both will be known to UCD fans, having both scored against us last season! Murphy scored two in Athlone's 4-3 defeat in Belfield at the start of the season, while Dupuy scored a late equaliser in Galway in June. We have been linked with others – former Student Aidan Lynch, released by Drogheda, Ger Rowe of Shels, Ger McCarthy of Pat's and Paul McNally (brother of Alan), recently released by Bohs. Pete has said he's looking for another wide player, and with Brian Gannon and Paul Byrne in particular set to break into the first team and the new scholarship players yet to be added, next season looks fairly promising.

The last couple of weeks saw another two UCD internationals as the Irish U-19 squad travelled to Italy and Spain with Darren Quigley and Gary Dicker. Dicker started both games in Italy – a 0-0 draw and a 2-0 win – while Quigley came on as a sub in the second game and, despite not having played a game for two months, was described as "very commanding". Although that squad had been hit by injuries and withdrawals – ten in total – both kept their places for a tournament in La Manga (as made famous by those Leicester players!) against Norway, Denmark and the Czech Republic, and were in fact the only eL players in the squad. Ireland beat Norway 3-0 before losing 2-0 to the Czechs and 2-1 to Denmark, where with Dicker scoring an own goal. Next up for the U-19s is the UEFA qualifying tournament in Serbia and Montenegro in April.

## BELFIELD DIARY

**5<sup>th</sup> November** – Sligo Rovers are the visitors to Belfield – Philip Hughes notches his third goal for the club before Sligo hit the bar from the spot, but the points are sealed in injury time by half-time sub Paul Byrne; Byrne had played three minutes of first-team action before then.

**6<sup>th</sup> November** – Harps beat Athlone 6-0 as they celebrate promotion.

**11<sup>th</sup> November** – 1-0 down but a man up with fifteen minutes to go, UCD finally make their numerical advantage pay as they beat Dundalk 3-1 in Oriel Park. Tony McDonnell scores when the keeper falls over the line after holding his header, while Paul Byrne – brought on after an hour – scores with two clinical finishes when put through. The pressure is back on Harps...

**13<sup>th</sup> November** – ...who win 2-0 in Kildare, who are now all but ruled out of promotion. The title goes down to the wire...

**14<sup>th</sup> November** – UCD reach the U-21 final after a convincing 3-0 win over senior championship rivals Finn Harps in Ballybofoey; Byrne scores two more.

**20<sup>th</sup> November** – With both sides gunning for the title, UCD's game against Kilkenny and Harps' tie with Dundalk both kick-off on Saturday evening. Harps take the lead first and, with seven wins and a draw since losing to UCD in September, don't let up, winning 3-0 in the end – the same score as UCD. Rob McAuley, Mick O'Donnell and Seán Finn are on the mark for the Students.

**21<sup>st</sup> November** – Cork City visit Belfield for the U-21s final, and take the lead early on before Brian Gannon converts a penalty in each half, the second of which sees Cork's keeper red-carded. With no sub keeper, former Wimbledon player Stephen O'Flynn goes in nets, but Cork up their game and equalise with a deflected free-kick ten minutes from time. As the game heads towards injury-time, Conor Sammon is put through and slots home from six yards as O'Flynn stays on his line, and the Cup is UCD's.

**23<sup>rd</sup> November** – Trinity retain the colours with a 1-1 draw in Trinity. UCD field something like a fourth XI.

**6<sup>th</sup> December** – Former UCD players Terry Palmer (Rovers), Rob Dunne (Dundalk) and Aidan Lynch and Niall Donnelly (both Drogheda) are all released. Dunne subsequently signs for Bray.

**14<sup>th</sup> December** – Top scorer Willie Doyle and Supporters' Player of the Year Seán Finn sign for Waterford United.

**15<sup>th</sup> December** – Philip Hughes is released after three goals in twelve games for the College. He subsequently signs for Monaghan.

**23<sup>rd</sup> December** – UCD win the First Division Fair Play award, gaining E2,500 prize money for their troubles. The top team in the Premier not already in Europe – in this case, Drogheda – are entered in the draw for a UEFA Cup spot. Since its introduction in 1996, UCD have won the Premier award three times.

**5<sup>th</sup> January** – UCD get only two players on the First Division Team of the Year – Tony McDonnell and Willie Doyle. Harps and Bray get three each.

**14<sup>th</sup> January** – Drogheda end weeks of speculation by finalising a deal to sign Pat Sullivan, paving the way for Brian Gannon to step into the first-team.

**22<sup>nd</sup> January** – UCD confirm their first signings of the season – Damien Dupuy from Galway and Adrian Murphy from Athlone.

**25<sup>th</sup> January** – The UEFA Licences are given out – or not. No club gets a licence, but mostly for administrative technicalities.

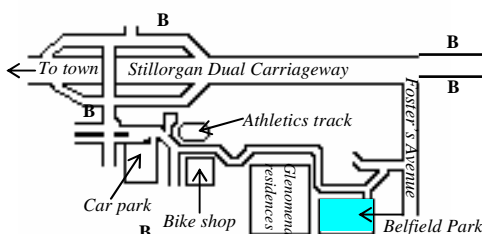
**30<sup>th</sup> January** – UCD Ladies' forward Carmel Kissane helps DART Killester to the national basketball Cup title.

**6<sup>th</sup> February** – Damien Quigley is named as Ireland Schools Player of the Year, beating team-mate Damien Kelly to the award. Willie Doyle is beaten to the First Division Player of the Year award by Finn Harps striker Kevin McHugh.

**11<sup>th</sup> February** – UCD get their Premier Division licence on appeal. Ireland U-19s end their tournament in La Manga with a win (v. Norway) and two defeats (v. Czech Republic and Denmark); Gary Dicker plays all three games (scoring an own goal v. Denmark), while Darren Quigley keeps goal against Denmark.

**13<sup>th</sup> February** – Playing mainly Under-21 players, UCD win the Harding Cup – the national collegiate competition – beating Trinity 5-0 in the semis and UCC 6-0 in the final. Paul Byrne scores three times in those two games alone!

## WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



### Buses to Belfield:

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

## UCD BOUNCE BACK

From [www.FAI.ie](http://www.FAI.ie) – link is [here](#)

*Note – this was written before our last game of last season, against Kilkenny*

When relegated last year, it was thought that UCD might be due a long spell in the First Division doldrums but just twelve months later, they are ready for a return to the top flight.

A lot of the credit for the remarkable turnaround has to go to wily manager Pete Mahon. The former St Francis visionary had always been highly regarded in league circles. Pat Dolan wanted him to become St Pat's manager in 1998, while he coached Bohemians to the double in 2001.

But Mahon walked away from the Bohemians manager's job after some Gypsies fans chose to vent their frustration with the club's fortunes towards Mahon's family and it seemed like the eircom League may have seen the last of a great manager.

Football certainly had not seen the back of him however and he led Belgrove to the FAI Intermediate Cup in 2003 and when the chance to return to the league came in September last year, he took little time in making up his mind.

On the face of it, it looked like a disastrous move. In the comfort zone at Belgrove, he knew he could take the club places while at UCD he inherited a sinking ship from the departed Paul Doolin. However, somehow UCD managed to force the relegation issue to the final day of the season as Derry City survived by the skin of teeth, though once relegated, there was not a saint who gave them a chance of competing against big spending and experienced First Division outfits.

Mahon publicly gave his side little hope. Asset-stripped by the Premier Division big boys, UCD started the season with a young team, unprepared for the physical demands of the First Division.

But privately he admits, he was telling his side that they had to go for promotion.

With a team with a sprinkling of experience (Tony McDonnell, Mick O'Donnell, Alan Mahon), an abundance of inexperience (Willie Doyle, Neil Gallagher) and a host of untried gems (Gary Dicker, Paul Byrne), UCD got off the a flying start beating promotion favourites Bray Wanderers in their own back yard. A defeat two games later in Finn Harps was the acid test but their response was a 13-game unbeaten run, as they suffered just one more defeat all season.

"We had an inexperienced team but there was a lot of quality there and I knew that even before I took over," said Mahon. "I'm delighted with how we've done because if we don't lose our last game, we'll have lost less games than anyone else.

"I said to the lads before the season that I wanted us to be promoted as champions. I wouldn't be happy to be promoted third. It's the first time that three go up and it's a case of not even getting promoted as the bridesmaid, it's more like the flower girl."

Currently second, UCD are in a strong position to claim the title with a win against Kilkenny City on Saturday night, provided leaders Finn Harps do not beat Dundalk.

Always pragmatic, Mahon is only concerned with his own team's performance. "Our job is to beat Kilkenny and take advantage of any slip up Finn Harps might have. I will not be happy if we don't win the league because we didn't get the points we needed ourselves. If we win, we finish the season with 75 points. To have 75 points and finish second would be incredible."

It would also be unprecedented. No side in Ireland has ever finished second with 75 points (if every season is converted into a 33-game season with three points for a win). In fact, Derry City in 1989 were the last side to get higher when, had it been three points for a win, they would have finished the season with 77 points.

But regardless of how the students are promoted, Mahon admits that next season could be a struggle. "Every one is out of contract after the game and I'm sure some of the players are been watched. It's an occupational hazard at UCD but I'm not worrying about it. We'll worry about next season after Kilkenny."

## Focus On – ALAN McNALLY

**Name** – Alan McNally

**Date of birth** – 15<sup>th</sup> September 1982

**Place of birth** – Dublin

**Position** – Centre-back/centre-mid

**Joined UCD** – June 1999

**Signed from** – Lourdes Celtic

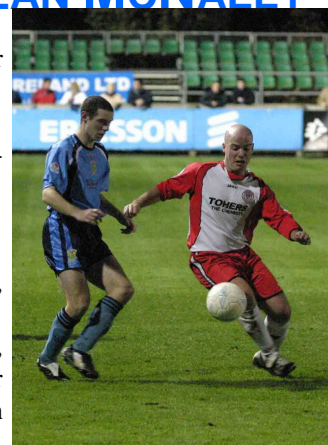
**UCD debut** – A v. Shelbourne, 20/02/00

**First goal** – A v. Shelbourne, 30/09/01. UCD won 1-0 – our first (and so far only) away win over Shels!

**2004 UCD statistics** – Played 39 (33 league, 4 FAI Cup and 2 League Cup), scored 3 (all league).

**UCD career statistics (league only)** – Played 131, scored 10.

**Did you know?** – Alan only missed one goal all season – the League Cup draw with Shamrock Rovers. His brother – Paul – has an FAI Cup runners-up medal from his time with Longford and a League Cup runners-up medal with Bohs – after losing to Longford in the final!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**18<sup>th</sup> February** – The 2005 fixture list is due to be announced. If they remember...

**26<sup>th</sup> February** – Back to action with a friendly at home v. Kilkenny; kick-off is 2:30pm.

**5<sup>th</sup> March** – Another home friendly: Philip Hughes returns as Monaghan visit Belfield; kick-off is 2:30 again.

**12<sup>th</sup> March** – Dundalk are the visitors to Belfield this time, same kick-off.

**20<sup>th</sup> March** – Back to action as the first round of games in the 2005 season are down to be played.

**9<sup>th</sup> April** – The UCD Alumni Dinner...for further details, contact [Diarmuid.McNally@UCD.ie](mailto:Diarmuid.McNally@UCD.ie)

*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
- 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.footballforums> – the UCD messageboard, which will continue to provide match reports all season – drop by and have your say!
- RTÉ Medium Wave and Newstalk 106, both of which offer regular eircom League commentary on Fridays.
- [www.ucd.ie/ucdnet](http://www.ucd.ie/ucdnet), the official UCD website
- [www.ucd.ie/ucdnet](http://www.ucd.ie/ucdnet), the unofficial website.
- [www.alternativedublin.com](http://www.alternativedublin.com) - A handy site for UCD news and match previews.

To unsubscribe from the UCD Supporters' Club, simply send us an e-mail at [ucdafc@yahoo.ie](mailto:ucdafc@yahoo.ie)

## WIN MATCH TICKETS

Our match tickets giveaway will continue this season – four free match tickets two match programmes and two fanzines. One winner at the end of last season to catch up on – Ronan Sweeney.