

UCD NEWS



The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 15

May 2005

WELCOME TO THE fifteenth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of Pat McWalter, a captain's view of the club and, as always, the Belfield Diary.

It's been a much-improved month for UCD, with two wins and a draw from four games moving us up to seventh in the league. And with strugglers Longford, Finn Harps and Shamrock Rovers to come before the end of the first round of matches, there's a good chance of a higher position at the one-third stage. Indeed, had we gotten the winner we deserved against Bohs, we'd now be sixth, just one point off fourth.

In the League Cup First Round, we've been paired with Dublin City. It'll be our first ever time playing them in a proper match (Dublin City's first ever game was against UCD in a friendly in 2001, just before both teams took on Coventry City; we fielded an U-21 team that day and drew 1-1). The currently homeless Vikings were drawn at "home", but have ceded that advantage, so the game will be in Belfield. It'll be the third time in three years that we'll have played an away tie in Belfield, after league and League Cup games against Shamrock Rovers were moved in 2003.

The line-out will be interesting, though. We'll be expected to field largely an U-21 team, with a couple of first-teamers thrown in in for experience and to gain match fitness. Our U-21s, of course, won the league last season, and already Brian Shortall, Brian Gannon, Stephen Hurley, Conor Sammon and Paul Byrne of that team have been involved this season in the senior team, with more to break through as the season goes on. Paul Byrne – four goals in 110 minutes for the first team! – will probably get a first senior start, while the likes of Neil Gallagher, Brian Gannon, Colm Kierans, Darren O'Brien, Kieran Foley and Adrian Murphy will probably all be involved as well. It's not exactly the most important of games, but it's an interesting one to see how the quality up-and-coming players – of which we always have a few! – are doing, and who to watch out for. The game is provisionally scheduled for Monday the 30th of May.

I had most of this column written before the FAI Cup draw before I got lazy and forgot to finish it on time. In previewing the Cup draw, I noted that "A handy draw would be someone like Dublin City" What can I say?! Anyone want a betting tip, let me know! We're actually home for this one, as opposed to "away" home. This game is down for Friday the 10th of June – ten days after the League Cup tie. This should guarantee a fair few players rested for the League Cup! It'll also make a change to play a Dublin derby where UCD fans significantly outnumber the visitors!

While on the subject of the U-21s, three have been selected for the semi-pro team to take on the English, Scottish and Welsh semi-pro players. Last year, we had Hugh Davey, Willie Doyle and Neil Gallagher selected, which caused our game against Dundalk to be postponed. This year, there's more emphasis on reserve-team players, but we still have three in the squad – Brian Gannon, Conor Sammon and Darren O'Brien. Only Cork – with six players – have more in the squad, but then that's a reflection of the fact that we're far quicker to put our U-21s into the first team!

BELFIELD DIARY

10th April – UCD's U-21s open their season with a Shield tie against St Pat's – the reigning national champions go down 2-1 to the Saints in Belfield.

11th April – After a second home draw in a row against a newly-promoted side, Cork manager Damien Richardson has a rant in the papers at visiting sides' overly defensive styles in Turner's Cross. He is roundly criticised for – to editorialise rather bluntly – being silly.

15th April – A first win of the season at the fifth attempt for UCD – 1-0 against high-flying Waterford. Robbie Martin scores the winner to end a run of three scoreless games for UCD; Mick McCarthy and Paul McGrath are among the crowd.

19th April – Ireland U-19 manager Seán McCaffrey names his squad for the UEFA U-19 qualifiers in Serbia and Montenegro for the games against the hosts, Albania and Poland. Gary Dicker and Darren Quigley, who have featured in every squad so far this year, are omitted. Cork City's Shane Long is the only domestic-based player to travel.

22nd April – UCD travel to Richmond Park with high hopes of a point or three, but a three-goal twenty-minute blitz from the hosts end the game as a contest by half-time. Pat's take the foot off the pedal though, and Alan McNally pulls one back before Paul Byrne scores within five seconds of his introduction for his Premier Division debut – and his fourth goal for UCD in 86 minutes of first-team action!

24th April – The U-21s get back on the winning trail – 3-0 at home to Sligo. Derek Doyle, an own goal and – surprise surprise! – Paul Byrne are on the mark.

28th April – The First Round of the League Cup sees UCD travel to Richmond Park to face First Division leaders Dublin City in a first-ever competitive meeting between the sides. The winners will face either Kildare County, Shelbourne or the winners of the Bray v. Shamrock Rovers tie for a place in the quarters.

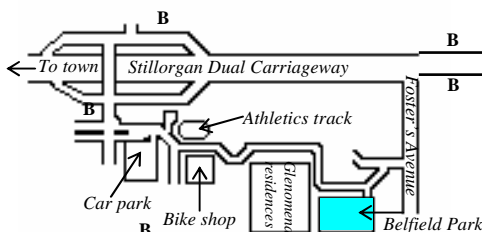
30th April – A second home win in a row – 1-0 against second-placed Derry City; Robbie Martin scores again. The Dublin City League Cup tie is switched to Belfield Park.

3rd May – The eL U-21 squad for the annual Four Nations semi-pro tournament is announced. With first-team players being omitted, UCD are still represented by Brian Gannon, Conor Sammon and Darren O'Brien included. The opposition will be provided by representative teams from the Welsh Premier, the Scottish Highland League and the English Conference.

6th May – Bohs travel to Belfield Park bringing a squad in which two players – Gareth Farrelly and Dominic Foley – boast nine international caps (and two goals) and over 70 English Premiership appearances between them. After the event, though, even Bohs fans are in no doubt as to which were the better team. Stephen Ward scored early in the second half for Bohs only to spark a period of domination for UCD which lasted until the full-time whistle. Robbie Martin scores with a quarter of an hour to go – his 31st goal for UCD, to draw level with Jason Sherlock – and Paul Byrne misses a great chance in injury-time. Bohs drop to second bottom, while UCD climb to seventh – with the next three games against Longford, Shamrock Rovers and Harps...

10th May – The FAI Cup draw sees UCD get...Dublin City! The two teams will now meet in Cup competitions twice in ten days...

WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



Buses to Belfield:

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

HOW WILL WE DO?

From the Mirror; 15th April 2005 (abridged)

A good ten months shy of his 30th birthday, it's remarkable to note that Tony McDonnell has worn the sky blue of UCD for 13 seasons now. It's an astonishing record for any player at any club. But given the high turnover that inevitably results at a conveyor-belt club like UCD, it says much for the big man's loyalty.

He's seen hundreds of players come and go – figures such as Jason Sherlock, Mick O'Byrne, Terry Palmer, James Keddy, Ciarán Martyn, Shay Kelly, John Martin, Ciarán Kavanagh and Jason Colwell. McDonnell has been the constant, outstaying the other old man of the side – Mick O'Donnell – by three seasons.

No-one could have complained had McDonnell left at the end of the 2003 campaign. UCD had been poor for most of the season and, despite a late charge when Mahon took control, they went down. For the first time since his introduction to the team, First Division fare beckoned. He experienced life there until 1995, when College gained promotion. Suddenly, UCD were back in the second tier of Irish football, but McDonnell was staying put.

"Obviously I wanted to play Premier Division football," he said, "but I never thought about leaving. It didn't enter my head. I was captain of the side that was relegated and I felt I was obliged to try and get us promoted again."

It's a long time since he gained his degree and he now works in Hedge Funds at HSBC. Considering he has a career in finance to put first, full-time football is a non-runner, but he's delighted to be back among the full-time clubs.

"Absolutely yeah," smiled McDonnell "You couldn't do it if you didn't enjoy it, with the amount of commitment required. It's tough balancing the two, but it's great to get out of the office – and it's a great release to kick a few people in training. That's what's keeping me going!"

It's an exciting time for the club as the young members of the panel adjust to playing demanding top-flight games in quick succession. They've already visited title-favourites Shelbourne and Cork City, emerging with draws from both games. But they've also lost to Drogheda and Bray.

"To have got two points away to the top sides was great, but we dropped points away to Bray, and we wanted something from that one. It was disappointing, but three's a big difference from the last time we were in this division. We couldn't see the daylight at all – we couldn't see where a win was going to come from. But this time around, we're creating chances and even if we do lose, we know it's going to come right for us.

"I think we'll be fine this year. Once we get a couple of wins under our belt, it will breed confidence."

FOCUS ON – PAT MCWALTER

Name – Pat McWalter

Date of birth – 3rd October 1985

Place of birth – Dublin

Position – Forward

Joined UCD – January 2005

UCD debut – A v. Waterford United (04/07/03) in a 1-1 draw.

First goal – A v. Longford Town (18/10/03); UCD's equaliser as we lose 2-1

2005 UCD statistics – Played 7 (all league obviously), scored 0.

UCD career statistics (league only) – Played 50, scored 8

Did you know? – Podge is only 19! It surprised me anyway! Plus, I can't think of anything else about him... Emmm... He was the last UCD player to be subbed on and off in the same match – against Pat's in 2003, when he lasted 15 minutes before coming off injured...



UPCOMING EVENTS

14th May – A trip to the team who pipped us for the First Division title last season – and who are now five points adrift in the Premier, with only two goals and two points to their name. Still, I'm sure their tin cup makes them feel better!! The form guide says three points, but it's not always that easy...

21st May – On the road again, to Longford this time. There's a Supporters' Club coach going to this, numbers permitting – e-mail UCDAFC@yahoo.ie or text 087-9417327 if you're interested. Cost is €20, leaving the Montrose at around 4:00.

27th May – Home to Shamrock Rovers. Actually home, as opposed to away home. Whether they'll still be in existence when the game comes around is uncertain – whether they'll even have more than zero points is equally unsure!

30th May – Away home to Dublin City in the League Cup in Belfield. A massive crowd is guaranteed (!). Still, an interesting one to keep an eye on the young players coming through.

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.FootieForums> – 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.UCDsoccer.com, the new official UCD website
- www.Eleven-a-side.com/ucd - 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