

UCD NEWS



The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 22

March 2006

WELCOME TO THE twenty-second issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of Stephen Hurley, a look at how we can still qualify for Europe and, as usual, the Belfield Diary.

Well, we're back. As promised, if a bit later than intended... Plenty of news to catch up on too. Twelve players gone, two former UCD stars re-signed, two players up for PFAI awards, seven international caps in the last month, including one goal and even one captain's armband, another U-21 title, a change of date for our home games and the possibility of UEFA Cup action this season! Where to start?!

Home games first I suppose – the club has announced that it is looking to change its home fixtures to Saturday at 5:15pm to facilitate away fans travelling to games. Obviously, if this hits the home support, we'll get changed back to Friday evening. The first Saturday evening game will be against Bray.

Moving to the end of last season – safety was ultimately assured with a game to go, giving us a dead game (v Rovers) for only the second time in the last seven seasons. Three days before that, UCD U-21s had faced Shelbourne U-21s in Tolka after reaching their second consecutive U-21 final. It's not often we start a game against Shels as favourites and completely outplay them, but that's what happened here as we should have been 4-0 up at half-time, but a series of remarkable misses and a goal for Shels with their first real attack of the match after 70 minutes left some semblance of a contest on the scoreboard.

The season concluded with the PFAI awards – Tony McDonnell was nominated for Player of the Year and Gary Dicker for Young Player of the Year, although both lost out in the end.

Into the close season, and the transfers have been coming thick and fast. Out have gone UCD stalwarts Mick O'Donnell (Dublin City), Robbie Martin (Longford Town for an undisclosed fee) and Aidan Lynch (Dundalk), as well as Damien Dupuy (Fribourg in Switzerland), Brian Gannon (Monaghan), Stephen Cashin, Liam Tiernan and Darren O'Brien (all Kilkenny), Neil Gallagher (Dundalk on loan), Willie Doyle (Shamrock Rovers), Séamus Long (Rovers on loan) and Anto Murphy (St Pat's). However, despite a number of English clubs – among them Charlton Athletic – showing interest (though none making any official contact) in Gary Dicker, and rumours of a move to Cork for Alan McNally, the nucleus of the squad has been kept together, and has been bolstered by the return of Alan Cawley (from Shels) and Darragh Ryan (from England). James Hussey, a promising keeper, has signed from Bohs, while Ciarán Quinn arrives from Monaghan and has already scored in pre-season.

Last month, we got two more U-21 internationals as Darren Quigley and Gary Dicker both featured strongly in Ireland's Madeira tournament victory. Dicker was captain for the Finland game and scored a late winner, while Quigley now appears to be the team's number one. Between the games against Madeira, Finland and Portugal in that tournament and the friendly win against Sweden, Dicker now has four caps and Quigley three, bridging a gap back to 2002, when last a UCD player was capped at U-21 level (Robbie Doyle v Finland).

Pre-season hasn't been great – five goals from four games, all against Kilkenny – and an opening day trip to Derry is daunting to say the least, but with players like Paul Byrne, Conan Byrne and Ronan Finn coming through, there's the usual insane optimism around Belfield Park again!

BELFIELD DIARY

5th November – A late Robbie Martin penalty earns UCD a 2-1 away win over Finn Harps to all but assure safety. Tony McDonnell equalises Kevin McHugh's early opener for Harps.

6th November – Shelbourne beat Finn Harps in the U-21 semi-final – they will face the winners of UCD v Bohs in the final.

9th November – UCD beat Bohs 2-0 in the U-21 semi. Conan Byrne and Ronan Finn score.

10th November – Captain Tony Mac is nominated for PFAI Player of the Year, while Gary Dicker is up for Young Player.

12th November – Longford beat UCD 1-0 in a low-key game. Johnny Martin scores the only goal against his former club.

15th November – UCD retain the U-21 title with a comfortable 2-1 win over Shels. Conan Byrne and Ronan Finn score again.

18th November – The 2005 season ends with a 2-2 at home to Shamrock Rovers. Podge McWalter and Ronan Finn – on his second senior appearance – score as UCD come from 2-0 down to draw.

15th December – Micko Donnell, Newguy (Brian Gannon), Damien Dupuy and Liam Tiernan are released by boss Pete Mahon. Aidan Lynch joins Dundalk, as does Neil Gallagher (on loan) while Anto Murphy joins Pat's. Moving the other way, though, is Alan Cawley, re-joining UCD after his controversial E24,000 transfer to Shels. Jimmy Hussey, a promising keeper, also signs from Bohs.

29th December – UCD re-sign Darragh Ryan after a spell in the Conference North in England; Micko signs for Dublin City, Newguy signs for Monaghan.

6th January – UCD win the Fair Play award – see next page for more!

12th January – The exodus continues as Willie Doyle signs for Shamrock Rovers, while Stephen Cashin and Darren O'Brien sign for Kilkenny.

1st February – UEFA's Fair Play update to 31st December shows Ireland on 7,944, just short of the 8,000 needed to put UCD into the draw for a spot in the UEFA Cup.

6th February – All clubs bar Longford get a UEFA licence from the FAI.

13th February – The eL fixtures are announced – UCD's opening day involves a trip to Derry, followed by a home game against Pat's. The season will end with a trip to Dalymount Park to play Dublin City.

14th February – Gary Dicker and Darren Quigley make their U-21 debuts in a 1-1 draw against Madeira in the Madeira tournament. In Madeira. Obviously!

15th February – Dicker captains Ireland to a 2-1 win over Finland, scoring an injury-time winner. Quigley is rested.

17th February – Ireland win the Madeira tournament outright for the second year in a row with a 2-1 win over Portugal. Both Quigley and Dicker start.

19th February – UCD go down 1-0 to Monaghan in their first friendly. Dicker linked with a move to Charlton Athletic, among others.

21st February – Robbie Martin moves to Longford for an undisclosed fee. Séamus Long goes on loan to Rovers.

25th February – UCD and Athlone play out a 0-0 draw on a freezing night in the midlands. Aaron McEniff bizarrely has a 30-yard strike ruled out for offside as UCD dominate.

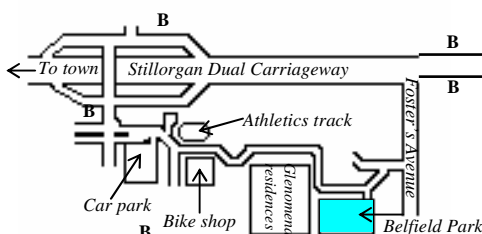
26th February – UCD recover from the loss of a goal inside a minute to beat Kilkenny 5-1 – Conan Byrne, Podge McWalter, Conor Sammon (x 2) and Ciarán Quinn all score. Former UCD forward Eóin Bennis is nominated for FAI Junior Player of the Year.

28th February – Ireland U-21s beat Sweden 1-0 in Drogheda – both Quigley and Dicker play again.

1st March – In the first match of Steve Staunton's reign as Ireland manager, Ireland tear Sweden apart 3-0 – Duff, Keane and Miller are all on target. UCD are the featured Premier Division club in the match programme.

3rd March – The final pre-season game ends in a 0-0 draw with Shamrock Rovers in Belfield on another fairly cold night.

WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



Buses to Belfield:

3	10
11	11B
17	46
46A	46B
46C	46D
63	84

B – Bus stop

FAIR PLAY!

From the official UCD website (www.UCDSoccer.com);
06/01/06

UCD are in with an outside chance of a place in next season's UEFA Cup after being revealed as the winners of the 2005 Fair Play competition.

Having won the First Division competition last season, UCD this year finished a mere two points clear of Derry and Cork, who tied for second place, and scoop the prize money of €4,500. The Students were helped by a remarkable disciplinary record which saw no suspensions until the end of September.

There is now a wait until the end of May to see if this is good enough for a spot in the UEFA Cup. If Ireland finish high up enough in the European Fair Play award - 8.000 points average or more - the eircom League will be able to nominate UCD to a draw for two places in next season's UEFA Cup. Should Ireland win the Fair Play competition outright, UCD would be automatically entered in the UEFA Cup.

The draw has been running for the last eleven seasons and Ireland have yet to gain an extra place as a result. Last year, Ireland finished down in 25th, but the previous two seasons, Cork City were in the hat.

It is UCD's fourth time to win the Premier Division Fair Play trophy since its inception eleven years ago after wins in 1996/97, 1998/99 and 1999/00.

FAIR PLAY UPDATE!

From the official UCD website (www.UCDSoccer.com);
02/02/06

Belgium top the Fair Play race in UEFA's update of the standings to 31st December, with Ireland falling just short of the total which would see UCD enter the draw for a place in the UEFA Cup.

Ireland's average is 7.944, with 8.000 the magic figure required for UCD to enter the draw for one of two places into the First Qualifying Round of the UEFA Cup next season.

With several competitive games yet to take place between now and the end of May - such as the U-17 and U-19 European Championship final qualifying games - there is still every chance the Students could end up in the hat for the draw at the start of June.

Currently, 15 countries have averages over 8.000. The leaders - Belgium - would get a place automatically for their Fair Play winners, while the Fair Play winners from the other 14 countries would go into the hat for the remaining two UEFA Cup spots.

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

Focus On – STEPHEN HURLEY

Name – Stephen Hurley

Date of birth – 20/12/85

Place of birth – Arklow

Position – Centre-mid/Right-mid

Joined UCD – June 2004

Signed from – St Joseph's Boys (Sallynoggin)

UCD debut – v Shelbourne (A), 16/03/05; drew 1-1

First goal – v Dublin City (H) in the FAI Cup, 10/06/05 (won 2-0)

2005 UCD statistics – Played 34 (29 League, 4 FAI Cup, 1 League Cup); Scored 3 (two league, one FAI Cup)

UCD career statistics – Played 34 (29 League, 4 FAI Cup, 1 League Cup); Scored 3 (two league, one FAI Cup)

Did you know? – Stephen's debut lasted all of 13 minutes before being stretchered off injured against Shels. The injury wasn't bad though – in fact, after missing the following game against Drogheda, he missed just three more non-League Cup games all season, including the final two.



UPCOMING EVENTS

10th March – The kick-off of the 2006 season – and again, we're away to a team with Setanta Cup games under their belt. Derry this time, who robbed us of a place for ourselves in the League Cup final...

17th March – Pat's at home on Paddy's Day...wonder how many travelling Americans that's worth at the gate?! Quite possibly a bottom-half six-pointer already.

24th March – Away to Waterford. We hope to do a bus to this one – if you're interested, drop us a line.

25th March – The UCD Alumni Black Tie Dinner. John Toshack is the guest speaker; contact Diarmuid McNally (Diarmuid.McNally@UCD.ie) for details on tickets.

31st March – Home to Cork City. Note this will be the last home game to be played on Friday evenings.

4th April – Or thereabouts. The League Cup First Round. Yayy! Dundalk away stand in the way of another League Cup run.

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 official UCD website
- www.Eleven-a-side.com/ucd - A handy site for UCD news and match previews.
- www.STCOnline.com - The Supporters' Club/fanzine website.