

# UCD NEWS



## The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 25

July 2006

**WELCOME TO THE** twenty-fifth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of centre-forward Conor Sammon, a look at the return to playing of a former star and, as usual, the Belfield Diary.

First up, apologies for the delay in this issue – holidays and summer soccer are a dangerous mix! On the plus side, there's less time to wait until the next issue!

There's been a lot happening in the past month – mainly off the pitch rather than on it. That's partly because we had a two-week break during June, and partly because there's been quite a lot happening off the pitch lately!

Let's start on the pitch, I suppose – get that bit out of the way! UCD's form since the defeat against Dublin City has been very encouraging – including draws at home to Derry City and away to St Pat's, and a narrow defeat in Cork when a point was the least we deserved. Add in a draw against Longford (another game when we deserved better) and a win against Waterford and we're comfortably in mid-table.

The U-21s have been doing a bit better as they aim for three league titles in a row. Just two games in – against Pat's and Bohs – and they've racked up eleven goals without reply and sit atop the league table with a game in hand on the next three teams. A particular revelation has been the signing of Pat Kavanagh from Wayside Celtic – by all accounts, he ran both games, and then scored ten minutes into his senior debut against Waterford before going very close to repeating the trick against Longford. Definitely one to watch over the remainder of the season!

To round-up the on-pitch stuff, we've drawn First Division leaders Limerick at home in the FAI Cup. Their next two games after the draw saw losses against Cobh and Harps, although they did recover to beat Shamrock Rovers to open up a six-point gap at the top. Their away form is average though – four wins and three defeats from seven games, with seven goals scored and conceded in that time. They did, though, put out Drogheda in the previous round, for which we thank them!

So to the off-pitch stuff. First up is the news that the Revenue Commissioners are coming down strongly on eL clubs of late, with Shels and Cork both being served winding-up petitions recently (Shels avoided theirs; Cork's is due to be heard shortly). UCD fans can rest easy, however – Revenue have been and gone, and the small amount which was due has been paid. So whatever else happens there, it appears that UCD have nothing to worry about.

The other issue is the new league format, which was voted in during the month. Under this new format, the FAI reckon the league will be an awful lot better next season if they pick the teams to play in the Premier based on league position for the past five years, attendances, facilities, geographic location and other silly matters. This has particular ramifications for the club as we would be seen to fall down on the likes of attendances, facilities and geographic location (with four other bigger clubs in Dublin already). In effect, what it means is that we could win the league this year and still be relegated because we're a small club. Seems this season won't be ending when we thought it would!

## BELFIELD DIARY

**2nd June** – UCD draw 0-0 with Derry in a live telly game. Conor Sammon has a shot scrambled off the line and Pat McWalter does well to avoid being sent off. However, UCD deserve their point against the league leaders.

**4th June** – Belgium, Norway and Sweden benefit from the Fair Play draw; Roeselare, Brann Bergen and Gefle win a spot in the UEFA Cup. Ireland end up down in 24<sup>th</sup>, with 7.861, well short of the 8.000 required. Only eleven countries reached the 8.000 mark.

**18th June** – UCD come back from the mid-season break with a 1-1 friendly draw against Dundalk. Alan McNally scores late on to equalise David Hoey's strike.

**23rd June** – In a surprise to no-one, St Pat's and UCD draw 0-0. Richmond Park is the venue this time. A flat overlooking the ground catches fire. But it's only a small one.

**24th June** – After an indifferent Shield tournament, UCD start their defence of their U-21 league title with a 6-0 hammering of Pat's, who won UCD's division last time out. Ciarán Quinn with a penalty, Pat Kavanagh with a brace on his U-21s debut, John Brophy and two own goals secure a remarkable result.

**27th June** – UCD beat Waterford 2-1, but for most of the game, it looked as if Waterford were to gain their first league win of the season. Pat Kavanagh on his debut and Brian Shortall get goals in the last 15 minutes to seal a deserved three points.

**28th June** – UCD draw First Division leaders Limerick at home in the FAI Cup Third Round draw.

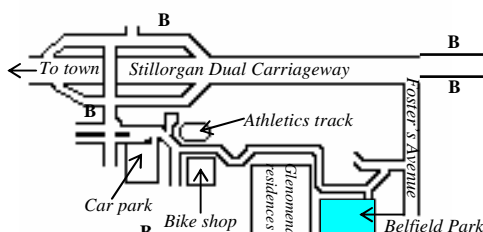
**30th June** – Cork City steal the points in Turner's Cross with a scuffed and deflected goal from Denis Behan. Tony McDonnell goes off injured with a hamstring injury, and UCD spurn enough decent chances to earn a draw at least.

**2nd July** – UCD continue their flying start in the U-21s tournament with a 5-0 win over Bohs – John Brophy bags a hat-trick, while Kieran Harte and Damien Kelly also bag goals.

**4th July** – UCD race into a two goal lead against Longford in Belfield courtesy of a Pat McWalter brace, but uncharacteristically bad defending sees Longford claw back to 2-2, which is how it finishes. Definitely two points dropped!

**9th July** – For the second time in a week, UCD allow two points to drop, this time when Robbie Doyle's injury time free kick is dropped into the net by Darren Quigley, cancelling out Conor Sammon's earlier opener.

## WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



### Buses to Belfield:

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

## RETURNING AGAIN

*From "Belvedere – A Celebration of Excellence 2003";  
Kevin signed for St Pat's recently*

When I was 12, I joined Belvedere and began playing against the top schoolboys clubs in Dublin. A trial at Millwall was quickly followed by an invitation to go over to Manchester United.

On the last day United's Irish scout Joe Corcoran brought me to see the first team training and I stood at the bottom of the stairs at The Cliff getting autographs from the players as they walked past.

Then Alex Ferguson appeared at the top of the stairs and roared: "Grogan, get up here."

When I got into his office and closed the door he took a Machete out of his draw, caught me in a headlock and put the knife to my throat. "I'm the boss," he said.

He told me to keep my feet on the ground and said that if I kept improving that they would be keen to sign me when I turned 16.

When I was leaving his office he called me back and asked me who I supported. I turned around and, without thinking, said "Liverpool". Out came the machete again and, with a wry smile, he repeated the question and added: "You are one of us now son."

I signed my three year contract in 1998, near the end of the season and just before I left for the European U-16 Championships with Ireland.

It was a great feeling to be part of the first Irish team to win a European trophy and we got a huge welcome home in Dublin. But I was sensible enough to realise that, even though I had achieved a lot over the previous 18 months, it was nothing to what I wanted in the future.

By this stage I had experienced slight growing pains in my knees but it wasn't really a cause for concern because most young players suffer from it. All it meant was that I occasionally had to step back from training and match to rest.

I got back playing and we won the league while Teddy Sheringham, who had been my constant companion in rehab, also returned to score in the Champions League Final.

But the injuries kept coming back and I ended up going to more doctors and specialists and hearing many more different opinions.

Brian Kerr was a great mentor to me at this time and suggested that I try UCD. I could go to College and play in the League of Ireland where the training demands wouldn't be as severe as United.

I enjoyed UCD and the chance to experience college life and things went well for me in the beginning. Just before Christmas 2000 I went back to United for a week.

Alex Ferguson made me train with the first team that week and I held my own. One day we were having a practice match and he called out the midfield for the one of the teams. It was: Beckham, Giggs, Keane and Grogan.

At that point it looked like I would be returning to United at the start of the 2001-02 season but, in February 2001, the injuries started coming back. Having consulted a few other doctors, he [the specialist] suggested I might have the operation United wanted but warned it would be my last chance to make it as a professional footballer.

After the operation was a lonely time as I did my rehab on my own but I was determined not to give up. I got back playing for UCD towards the end of the 2001-02 season and that summer I was ready to try and make it in England. I went to Millwall for three weeks trial and was offered a contract within a week.

I looked back at how hard I had worked over the past five years, first to get to Manchester United and onto the Irish international team. Then to make a success of my time at UCD where I got a Diploma in Sports Management as well as a few goals. And finally there was my success in getting back to full time football with Millwall.

My ambition was to get into the first team and I knew it was attainable. I worked hard for two months and was on the verge of achieving my goal when I felt the pain.

For a while I was in denial and tried to play through the pain barrier but it soon became obvious to everybody that I had a problem.

Then I took a deep breath and walked into the training ground with my head held high. I sat down with the manager, Mark McGhee, and told him I was walking away from football.

It's not a matter of looking back and asking: "What if?". It's about looking forward and saying: "What's next?" It's the end of one chapter and the start of another, but the book is far from finished!

## Focus On – CONOR SAMMON

**Name** – Conor Sammon

**Date of birth** – 06/11/86

**Place of birth** – Dublin

**Position** – Centre-forward

**Joined UCD** – February 2005

**Signed from** – Cherry Orchard

**UCD debut** – v Cork City (A),

08/04/05, (eircom League Premier Division)

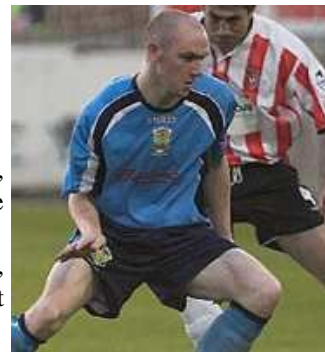
**First goal** – v Dundalk (A), 27/03/05, (League Cup First Round)

**2006 UCD statistics** – Played 17

(15 league, 1 FAI Cup, 1 League Cup), scored 3 (2 league, 1 League Cup)

**UCD career statistics** – Played 26 (22 league, 1 FAI Cup, 3 League Cup), scored 3 (2 league, 1 League Cup)

**Did you know?** – Announcing man-of-the-match is rare enough outside of international games and on live TV commentary. It's only happened at two UCD games this season (Kilkenny in the Cup and Derry at home in the league), and Conor has won both times.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**16<sup>th</sup> July** – H v Drogheda United. Another visit from Mr Doolin, at a rearranged time given he's managed to spoof his way into the UEFA Cup, with a tie against HJK Helsinki to be played the previous Thursday. It's a 7:00pm kick-off here as the Leinster Football Final is also on that day.

**21<sup>st</sup> July** – A v Shelbourne. Given recent financial worries and reports, it'll be interesting to see what sort of side Shels can put out for this one.

**29<sup>th</sup> July** – H v Bohemians. Before beating Waterford, Bohs' only away points of the season had been in...Dalymount Park, against Dublin City. Three home points? We'll have to see...

**4<sup>th</sup> August** – A v Sligo. Sligo have changed to Friday nights for a four-match trial, though given the way it's started, don't rule out the trial being abandoned by the time we come to play.

*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.Foot.ie/forums> – 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](http://www.UCDsoccer.com), the official UCD website
- [www.Eleven-a-side.com/ucd](http://www.Eleven-a-side.com/ucd) - A handy site for UCD news and match previews.
- [www.STIGOnline.com](http://www.STIGOnline.com) - The Supporters' Club/fanzine website.

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