

UCD NEWS



The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 26

September 2006

WELCOME TO THE twenty-sixth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of Paul Crowley, an interview with a number of club officials and, as usual, the Belfield Diary.

There's been turmoil really in the league since the last issue. One club with a winding-up order, another bankrupt mid-season – the first time this has ever happened in the League of Ireland. In addition, we've had an extended transfer window due to Dublin City's demise, with plenty of activity for UCD. In the midst of all this, our league form has been frustrating, with few defeats but few wins as well, while there's been positive moves on the new ground front too.

First up, Dublin City's demise. They pulled out of the league on the 19th of July with debts ultimately revealed at €1.5m – rather a lot for a club with no home and a smaller average home gate than us! The league decided to expunge all their results, which suited us grand as we had lost to them back in May. Shels, of course, appealed (Derry had lost as well, and so gained points on Shels), but the decision remained the same. We now have no game on the last day of the season, finishing instead at home to Longford on the second last week. Nobody's explained how City got a UEFA Licence to play this year apart from a vague assurance from the FAI that they fulfilled all the criteria at the start of the season. Doesn't really say much for UEFA Licencing.

All their players became free agents, and UCD have snapped up two. Paul Crowley is a defensive midfielder in the Tony McDonnell mould and impressed on his debut in Sligo. Keith Doyle is a left-back who picked up a wrist injury on his debut with the U-21s and will be out for a period. College legend Mick O'Donnell has signed for Galway, getting sent off on his debut against Shamrock Rovers.

We've had other transfer activity recently. Alan Cawley has departed for Waterford, Ciarán Quinn is now with Glenavon and John Brophy has joined Kilkenny City on loan, where he will partner one Willie Doyle. Both those transfers are permanent. In have come Paul Knight, a forward from Middlesboro who scored a brace on his U-21s debut

On the pitch, and the rectangular thingies at the ends of the pitch haven't seen much use lately. In fact, since Conor Sammon scored in Sligo, we've gone six weeks without scoring on a keeper (Limerick's midfielder let in three!). Remarkably, we've not conceded in the same time and are currently on a run of four 0-0s in a row! We're now on a run of three defeats in 16 games...of which we've won just four...with two of those being in the Cup...

We haven't exactly been pushed hard in reaching the FAI Cup Quarter-finals for the fourth time in six years. Bottom-of-the-table Kilkenny nicely had a player sent off, while Limerick nicely went and imploded after we drew them (dropping from first to sixth in the table), and then had all their keepers injured. Despite this, they took the lead before Ronan Finn scored twice and Stephen Hurley scored a cracker from 25 yards.

On that last point, as another season draws to a close, we'll be doing our usual end-of-season awards shortly, so you can start giving thought to your votes for Player of the Year, New Player of the Year, Goal of the Season and Game of the Season.

BELFIELD DIARY

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.

12th July – UCD receive €1.25m funding for the Belfield Bowl in the annual Government grants awards. It's the biggest grant received by any club. The Bowl is hoped to open for next season. Meanwhile, we're drawn at home to First Division leaders Limerick in the FAI Cup. John Brophy scores as UCD's U-21s beat Dublin City 1-0.

16th July – Another "failure to win" visit from Paul Doolin as UCD hold Drogheda United 0-0 in Belfield; John Brophy has a great chance to seal the points on his first game in two years, but fires wide when clean through.

17th July – Forward Paul Knight signs from Middlesboro. UCD's U-21s beat St Pat's 3-1 in the Enda McGuill Cup – Francis Moran, Pat Kavanagh and Conan Byrne score.

21st July – A nightmare in Tolka as Shels hammer UCD 6-0. No more to be said!!

29th July – A dubious injury-time penalty seals all three points for Bohs in a 1-0 win in Belfield.

30th July – To complete a bad recent run, UCD's U-21s go down 2-0 at home to bottom-of-the-table Crumlin United in Belfield.

4th August – Conor Sammon's strike shortly before half-time is enough to end Sligo Rovers' one-year unbeaten home record as UCD win 1-0. Pat McWalter and Derek Doyle both hit the post seconds of the goal, while Sammon misses a one-on-one in injury time and Darren Quigley saves a penalty.

5th August – Tony McDonnell is appointed PFAI chairman. UCD's U-21s draw 1-1 with Shamrock Rovers. UCD sign Paul Crowley and Keith Doyle from Dublin City.

10th August – UCD's Freshers team draws 1-1 with an U-18 side from Huddersfield Town.

12th August – UCD advance to the quarter-finals of the Enda McGuill Cup with a 2-1 win over Bohs. Paul Knight scores both goals. Drogheda await in the quarters. UCD pick another point on the road with a 0-0 draw in Longford.

13th August – Gary Dicker is added to Ireland's U-21 squad for their Euro 2008 qualifier against Greece. Darren Quigley is suspended.

16th August – Ireland 0-4 Holland. No more to be said!!! Ireland's U-21s win 2-0 in Greece, with Dicker an unused sub.

19th August – Darren Quigley is recalled to the Ireland U-21 setup after his two game ban for dismissal in Azerbaijan. There's no place for Gary Dicker. UCD's U-21s get a big win with a 2-1 victory over Bray. New signing Timmy Purcell scores twice.

26th August – UCD reach the FAI Cup quarter-finals for the fourth time in six years with a 3-1 win over Limerick, who have to play midfielder Tommy Barrett in nets.

28th August – As against Greece, Manchester United's Darren Gibson withdraws from the Ireland U-21 panel and is replaced by Gary Dicker. UCD lose 1-0 to St Pat's in the U-21 league.

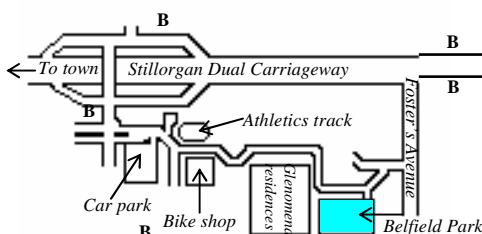
29th August – UCD are dumped out of the U-21 Cup by Drogheda on a 3-1 scoreline in Belfield.

1st September – Darren Quigley fails to regain his starting place in the Ireland U-21 squad as he and Gary Dicker are on the bench for Ireland's 1-0 defeat against Belgium, which eliminates them from Euro 2008.

2nd September – After a backs-to-the-wall performance, a deflected free-kick gives Germany the points in Stuttgart.

3rd September – Having ended Sligo's unbeaten run, UCD now become the first team to take points from Derry in the league with a 0-0 draw. Darren Quigley saves another penalty.

WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



Buses to Belfield:

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

B – Bus stop

NEXT SEASON...

From The Title; 01/10/06 (abridged)

October is a big month in the existence of UCD. In 11 day's time, An Bord Pleanála will give their decision on whether to approve planning permission for the Belfield Bowl, the 3000-seater [sic – it's 1500 seats; 3000 capacity] ground the club hope to move to next year.

Nine days later, club officials meet with the FAI's Independent Assessment Group (IAG) to outline their case for inclusion in next season's Premier League.

Club officials are confident they won't be lost in the mix when the FAI sit around a table and decide the 12 clubs that will comprise the Premier League.

"If UCD are not in the Premier League, or whatever they are going to call it next season, it will solely be because we are not getting the numbers through the turnstiles," said [manager Pete] Mahon. "There is no other reason. It can't be because of our training facilities, can't be because of our youth development programme, can't be because of our finances. The only reason is we aren't getting the crowds."

"It's something I can't understand. Belfield is the size of a small town, over 19,000 students, over 5,000 staff. If we got 10% of the people that are on campus coming to our games, we would have one of the biggest crowds in the league. It baffles and disappoints me."

Therein lies the rub, however. The club initiated a strategic review a couple of years ago to see what could be done to entice people to Belfield Park. Dick Shakespeare, the club secretary, believes the answer lies outside the campus.

"In the past, we have looked to the campus and the students, but every four years, there is a serious turnover of fanbase. And each year, you lose a quarter of the student population. Another 5,000 come in, but that's 5,000 more you have to try and attract. If we really want to get more people to the ground, we have to look at the South Dublin region as a whole. We have to make a connection with the community for the long-term and develop young talent."

Seeds are already being sown in that regard. UCD have recently linked up with Mount Merrion, one of the emerging schoolboy clubs in the city. "There will be cross-fertilisation from that relationship", Shakespeare said. "Those schoolboys can aim to play for an eircom League club."

In terms of youth development, UCD have consistently been at the forefront of the domestic game. From Clive Delaney and Ciarán Martyn in Derry, Drogheda's James Keddy, Barry Ryan at St Pat's and Andy Myler now with Shamrock Rovers, numerous players have taken their baby steps in senior soccer with UCD.

The development continues. The students have won the past two U-21 leagues. "And they were won with two dramatically different teams", remarked Tony McDonnell, the club captain. "Usually when a club wins two U-21 leagues in a row, it is with one very talented bunch of players."

When the IAG meets UCD, one complaint they can't have is the state of their financial affairs. As Mahon proudly proclaimed "In my four years with UCD, not one player has knocked on my door or rang my phone, wondering where his wages were. How many other clubs can say that?" None, according to the Players' Football Association of Ireland. The PFAI have said they have had to iron out problems with every eircom League club with the exception of one – UCD.

"We don't spend what we don't have", said Shakespeare. "It's simple economics. We know where our level is and budget accordingly. Not every team in the Premier Division is going to win the league, but that doesn't mean teams should be discarded from it."

"When Dr Tony O'Neill died seven years ago, everyone thought this club would crumble, that it was a one-man club. That has not been the case. We've confounded critics by surviving and running a nice, tight ship."

And if the form of Gary Dicker and Darren Quigley continues, both having attracted the interest of Charlton Athletic among others, the club could be in for a windfall in January.

By that stage, UCD should know whether they will be involved in the FAI's brand new Premier League or banished to the lower leagues.

Focus On – PAUL CROWLEY

Name – Paul Crowley

Date of birth – 13/08/80

Place of birth – Dublin

Position – Centre-mid

Joined UCD – July 2006. Hence the slightly out of date photo!

Signed from – Dublin City

UCD debut – v Sligo Rovers (A), 04/08/06, (eircom League Premier Division)

First goal – none yet

2006 UCD statistics – Played 4 (all league), scored none.

UCD career statistics – Played 4 (all league), scored none. Obviously.

Did you know? – Paul signed for UCD out of the transfer window after his former club, Dublin City, went bankrupt, leaving him clubless. He missed the Limerick and Derry games as he was Cup tied, and was injured for the Cork game, which means we have yet to concede a goal in a match in which he was playing!



UPCOMING EVENTS

22nd September – H v Cork. 15 0-0s between us in the league this season. This couldn't possibly be a fifth straight 0-0 for UCD?!?!

1st October – A v Derry in the FAI Cup. The game's on Sunday as Derry play PSG the previous Thursday in the UEFA Cup. Kick-off is yet to be confirmed.

6th October – H v Bray. Freefalling Bray haven't picked up a point since...well, since we drew with them in Bray...

13th October – A v Drogheda. The biggie is back. There's a bus to the usual Paul Doolin abusofest – contact us via the usual channels for more info.

20th October – H v Shels. Revenge on the cards for that 6-0 earlier in the season?

27th October – A v Bohs. Or maybe – just maybe! – a Cup semi-final to look forward to!

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

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