

# UCD NEWS



## The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 27

November 2006

**WELCOME TO THE** twenty-seventh issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of centre-forward, an interview with captain Tony McDonnell and, as usual, the Belfield Diary.

Another season, so, comes to a close with a late flurry lifting us up to sixth place, our highest position since 2002, and our first top half finish since the European qualification in 1999/00. We've finished ahead of Bohs for only the second time ever, having beaten them away for only the third time ever. Conor Sammon finished top scorer with 7 league goals – mightn't sound a huge amount, but only seven players in the league managed more.

One of the most positive and exciting developments of this season has been Darren Quigley and Gary Dicker breaking into the Ireland U-21 squad as regulars. Between them, they've earned 9 caps this season, and Dicker has both scored and captained the team. And recently, Quigley went one further and picked up a B cap – the level immediately below full international – against Scotland, the first UCD player to get this high an honour while at the club in almost 50 years.

The U-21s have given up their hold on the national title, unfortunately. After coming through the group stages and beating Dundalk 6-2 in the first knock out round, they were paired against Drogheda. However, the Drogs were disqualified after fielding an ineligible player against Bray in the previous round, and so we made the short trip to the seaside instead. The game was initially down for Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup>, but the traffic problems going to Bray that evening meant the game was called off 45 minutes after the scheduled kick off time as only 9 UCD players had arrived! The game was rearranged for the Sunday, and Bray won through 3-1 after some curious refereeing decisions and some astonishing misses. Still, there's always next year.

Speaking of next season, we still don't know what division we're going to be in thanks to more idiocy in Merrion Square. Their final decision – based on attendances, five year history, marketability and generally how well you could waffle in front of a committee – will be made on the 11<sup>th</sup> December. Any and all plans are going to have to be on hold until then.

However, the team for next year may well be panning out with the news that three players are on trial with English clubs. Gary Dicker has gone back to Bradford City after a successful first week's trial, Pat Kavanagh is with Birmingham and Darren Quigley may be heading to either Falkirk or West Ham United. Pat Kavanagh – signed on amateur terms from Wayside Celtic in June – would be able to leave on a free transfer, but sizeable transfer fees would be sought for the other two.

Planning permission for the Belfield Bowl has been granted, with the club hoping to move in in April next year, so next season will start back in Belfield Park. So there'll be an updated map below shortly! The new ground will hold 3000, with 1500 seats, compared to Belfield Park's 1900 capacity and 848 seats. It will also have a scoreboard...!

So another season is consigned to the history books, but as the club continues its upwards trend under Pete Mahon, there's much to look forward to for the 2007 season!

## BELFIELD DIARY

**6<sup>th</sup> September** – UCD's reward for beating Limerick in the Cup is an away tie against Derry, easily the toughest Quarter-Final draw on offer

**8<sup>th</sup> September** – UCD rack up another in the series of 0-0 draws against Pat's.

**15<sup>th</sup> September** – A fourth 0-0 in a row for UCD, away to Waterford this time in one of your more tedious games this side of creation.

**17<sup>th</sup> September** – UCD take a big step towards the U-21 knock out stages with a 2-0 away win against Shels. Timmy Purcell and Conan Byrne score.

**22<sup>nd</sup> September** – Finally, a goal! Conor Sammon scores to give UCD the lead against reigning champions Cork, but Dan Murray equalises four minutes later.

**23<sup>rd</sup> September** – UCD draw 3-3 against Shamrock Rovers in the U-21s league, in a game switched to a UCD home tie after Rovers' ground was deemed unplayable. Conan scores twice more, with Darren Forsyth adding the other.

**27<sup>th</sup> September** – UCD hammer Trinity 4-0 – Francis Moran and Forsyth both getting a brace.

**1<sup>st</sup> October** – Another Cup Quarter-Final exit as Derry turn it on in the second half to ease to a 2-0 win in the Brandywell. Pat McWalter's season comes to an abrupt end with a cruciate knee injury after just four minutes.

**6<sup>th</sup> October** – UCD ensure they can't finish in the bottom two with a crushing 4-0 win over Bray – our biggest home win in the Premier in a decade. Gary Dicker with two, Alan McNally and Derek Doyle are all on the mark.

**8<sup>th</sup> October** – UCD's U-21s beat Crumlin 4-1 to confirm qualification for the last 16 of the Dr Tony O'Neill U-21 league. Greg Forsyth notches a hat-trick and Damien Bolger is also on target.

**13<sup>th</sup> October** – Gary Dicker and Darren Quigley are named in the Ireland U-21 squad for a friendly against Luxembourg. Manager Don Givens has axed many players who will be too old for the next tournament.

**15<sup>th</sup> October** – Planning permission for the Belfield Bowl redevelopment works is granted after an appeal is overruled. UCD celebrate by losing 1-0 to Paul Doolin's Drogheda...

**16<sup>th</sup> October** – UCD's U-21s beat Shels 2-0 – Conan Byrne and Greg Forsyth with the goals. It's a major step to securing the Dublin league title.

**18<sup>th</sup> October** – Darren Quigley and Gary Dicker both start Ireland's friendly against Luxembourg, though both are replaced at half-time as Don Givens makes several substitutions. Ireland go on to win 2-0.

**20<sup>th</sup> October** – Shels' senior team continue their hex on UCD, with a comfortable 2-0 win in Belfield.

**22<sup>nd</sup> October** – A blow for the U-21s, as they go down 2-1 to Bray in their final match in the group stage. Francis Moran is on target for UCD.

**27<sup>th</sup> October** – UCD secure only their third win in Dalymount ever when a Pat Kavanagh goal is enough for a 1-0 win, although it could have been many more. Paul Crowley's season is over after a broken ankle in an innocuous challenge...

**3<sup>rd</sup> November** – UCD secure a seventh straight win over Sligo Rovers courtesy of a last-gasp Pat Kavanagh goal. It's the first time the College have won two on the trot this season, and the first time anyone's scored in successive games!

**6<sup>th</sup> November** – After Shels get a last-day walkover against Bohs to secure the Dublin U-21 title, UCD face Dundalk in the last 16 of the League. 3-0 up after 12 minutes, the result is never in doubt, and the score in the end is 6-2, with UCD easing up. Francis Moran gets two, as does Darren Forsyth, while Kieran Harte got a penalty on his birthday and Dundalk chipped in with an own goal as well. UCD now face Drogheda away in the quarters.

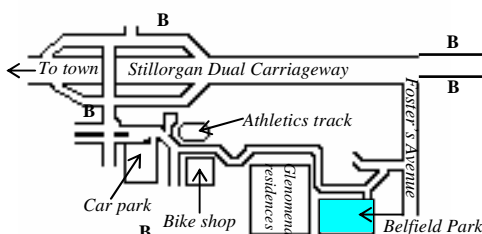
**10<sup>th</sup> November** – Another win, and another goal for Pat Kavanagh, this time in a 3-1 victory over Longford which assures seventh place in the league. Conor Sammon also scores a brace.

**12<sup>th</sup> November** – After Ipswich's Shane Supple withdraws, Darren Quigley is added to the Ireland B squad for the game against Scotland.

**14<sup>th</sup> November** – Darren Quigley comes on for the final five minutes to earn his first Ireland B cap.

**26<sup>th</sup> November** – The U-21s are finally stopped – losing 3-1 in Bray in the league quarter finals to end their two year reign as national champions.

## WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



### Buses to Belfield:

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

## CAPTAIN CHAT

UCD captain Tony McDonnell recently submitted to an online interview on [Foot.ie](#); here's some of the highlights!

### What's been the highlight of your career so far on the playing front?

There have been a few highs I suppose. My full league debut will always be special for me. Any Myler made his debut the same day down in Strokestown Road against Longford in the first division. At the time it was a barren pitch with the current ticket stand being the dressing rooms in those days. We won 2-1 with Andy bagging the winner from my cross. I guess since then being selected for the U-21 squad on a couple of occasions was a real honour. I was the only home based player selected at that time so it made it all the more special. Most recently, being shortlisted for the player of the year award last season was an honour I honestly never expected but greatly appreciated.

### What offers (if any) did you get from cross channel?

I was approached by a scout from Bolton when I was in the U-21's with an offer to go pro. The terms were weak and I was completing my finals for a degree at the time. It was a tough decision but I decided that I would be better off making a go of it in the league here while at the same time starting out with a career outside of football. To be honest, it's a decision I've not once regretted.

### Do you intend to see out your career at UCD and for how long more do you envisage playing?

I don't think I have the right to say I'll see out my career at UCD, no matter how long I've been at the club. Like every other player I will sit down with the management at the end of season and take it from there. My affection for the club is hardly the best kept secret so I think it's a safe bet to say that I'll be there next season as long as I'm wanted. That said, I'm only 30 and while I recognise I can't go on forever, I do think I've a few years left yet!!

### What do you make of UCD's move from Belfield Park to the Belfield Bowl? Do you think the Bowl will be significantly improved or will it be improved to just scrape minimum requirements?

It'll be a sad day leaving Belfield Park purely for the memories and what it represents. However it was always the Doc's dream to move to a purpose built stadium and the Bowl is the nearest thing we have to that. The dressing room area is fantastic and would be the best in the league, however there would need to be many improvements to the common areas for supporters whilst I would have concerns about the quality of the pitch what with it being shared with the rugby team. If we can overcome those problems I do think it has the potential to be a top stadium. Being situated so close to the bar might even help attract support!

### How do you react to criticism that UCD don't deserve a place in the Premier Division due to lack of fanbase etc?

With venom. And in my opinion, there is no "etc". Our lack of numbers is in the stands is well documented but we are actively trying to tackle that. It will take time to see the benefits however as there is no quick fix. That is the only semi negative. Lets talk about the positives: best training facilities in the league; our own ground and a move to a new one which won't put the club into debt; a talent pool of players that is second to none and is reflected in the number of very decent players currently plying their trade elsewhere in the league; competitive teams that consistently try to play attractive football; a management team that is building for long term success; and finally a board that have never once jeopardised the clubs future by creating a budget on the back of a fag pack. I'll step down off of me soap box now!

### Of the goals you have scored, what is your favourite?

It has to be the header v Shamrock Rovers last game of the 2000/2001 season to win the game 2-1. It wasn't the prettiest but saw us through to the play-offs when we looked dead and buried a few weeks before that.

### Do you think UCD could win the league in the next 10 years?

Yes, but had you have asked me that in 96 I would have said the same thing! We need to hold onto our best young players and sign three or four players who are having experienced winning a major honour elsewhere. We lack that bit of belief at the moment and you only get it with the experience of winning something. The way the league is going now, I think only full time clubs would win it, so that would need to be a prerequisite. Even at that, Drogheda are a case in point that the transition takes time and that you need to have a 3-5 year plan. There are a lot of 'ifs' in that answer but I don't think it's the stretch that some might believe.

## FOCUS ON – RONAN FINN

**Name** – Ronan Finn

**Place of birth** – Dublin

**Position** – Centre mid

**Joined UCD** – July 2005

**Signed from** – Cambridge United

**UCD debut** – v Longford Town (A), 12/11/05

**First goal** – v Shamrock Rovers (H), 18/11/05

**2006 UCD statistics** – Played 16 (14 league, 1 FAI Cup, 1 League Cup), scored two (both FAI Cup)

**UCD career statistics** – Played 18 (16 league, 1 FAI Cup, 1 League Cup), scored 3 (1 league, 2 FAI Cup)

**Did you know?** – Ronan served a brief apprenticeship in the U-21s last season, scoring in both the semi-finals and the final of the league competition, and picking up the man of the match in the final for good measure. He also scored on his senior home debut, against Shamrock Rovers, and on his FAI Cup debut, against Limerick this year.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Bit vague, this one! Still, this is roughly what's going to be happening for the next couple of months...

**2<sup>nd</sup> December** – The ladies' FAI Cup Final, between the Mayo League and UCD. The Mayo League are the only team to beat UCD in the Cup in the last four years, with victory in last year's quarter-final. The Cup winners get a place in next year's Women's UEFA Cup.

**11<sup>th</sup> December** – The IAG give their final verdict on who should be in the hand-picked Premier next year, all subject to the FAI's whim of course. Nervous times for all ahead, even with our good finish to the season.

**End December** – Fair Play award winners named. Another competition UCD are going for a three in a row in, but this won has a possible UEFA Cup spot as well.

**End February** – Fixtures to be announced by the FAI for the 2007 season.

**Mid March** – Kick off of season 2007!

*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.

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