

UCD NEWS



The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 29

April 2007

WELCOME TO THE twenty-ninth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of new signing Shane McFaul, an interview with new Romanian starlet Bogdan and, as usual, the Belfield Diary.

It's been a slow start to the season, although there are still the positives of another possible UEFA Cup spot, three more underage internationals and a very winnable run of games coming up which could well launch our season, albeit somewhat belatedly.

On the field first, I suppose. The fixture list couldn't really have been much more difficult for us, with games against a Shamrock Rovers side looking to make an impact on their return to the Premier Division followed by ties against Drogheda and Cork, both with intentions on the title. A draw against Rovers was followed by a 3-2 defeat in Drogheda, which saw a debut goal for new Romania signing Bogdan Oprea, who generally tormented the Drogheda defence for the quarter-hour he was on the pitch. He was inspirational in our first win of the season against Waterford too as, although he didn't score, his trickery set up both the first two goals and set us on the way to victory, which also saw (hopefully!) the return to form of Paul Byrne, who scored twice, having endured an injury-ridden last two years.

With home games against Bray and Longford coming up, as well as a trip to mis-firing Derry and a League Cup game against bottom of the league Kildare County, we would hope to have our season well up and running by the time of our next issue!

The UEFA Cup spot mentioned above isn't our Fair Play hope - we've now got a new possible route into Europe. The Fair Play update was covered in our last issue; this route concerns the U-21 futsal tournament. Yes, there is such a thing as a UEFA Cup for indoor football! With five wins from six so far, we're in the last four for certain, with matches scheduled for the end of April. Win that, and we're into the UEFA Futsal Cup. The homepage of the competition is [here](#), but the gist of it is that we would enter a four-team preliminary group competition in September, with one team playing host for all the group games. Of course, when you bear in mind that we'd only be putting in an U-21 team, and that the English champions (Doncaster) lost to an Andorran team, we'd probably be soundly beaten, but it'd be a bit of fun all the same! Futsal is taken fairly seriously on the continent, with large crowds turning up to games, although it's not so popular as yet here or in Britain, with time outs, penalties for excessive team fouls and American-style clock stopping when the ball's out of play meaning it just isn't as much fun as walloping someone off a wall.

The new internationals are coming thick and fast still - Ronan Finn was a surprise (for himself and his family as much as anyone else!) if deserved call-up to the Madeira tournament, and he nearly marked his debut with a goal in the only one of the three matches in which he featured. Darren Quigley is seemingly still Ireland's no.1 at U-21 level, even ahead of Darren Randolph, who was in the senior squad in San Marino, while Greg Bolger - who made his senior debut against Cork - and Darren Fosryth were part of the Ireland U-19 squad in Portugal last week. Congratulations to all!

BELFIELD DIARY

28th February - Ronan Finn becomes the latest UCD player to be capped at U-21 level, coming on as a sub for Ireland U-21 against Madeira in the annual Madeira tournament; he nearly scores late on in the game. Colin Forde is appointed the club's Promotion Officer.

1st March - UCD win the Collingwood after a gap of 13 years, 2-0 v Coleraine. Conan Byrne and Darren Forsyth notch the goals. The win means the Harding Cup, Colours, Collingwood and Colleges League have all been won in the past few weeks - pretty much a clean sweep of all the collegiate titles.

3rd March - UCD's final friendly ends in a 4-0 win over new eL side Wexford Youths. Conor Sammon, Conan Byrne and Derek Doyle (2) score, while Timmy Purcell sends a penalty wide.

4th March - Monaghan United get the time of their futsal clash with UCD wrong, resulting in a 3-0 walkover win for the Students.

9th March - League action finally gets underway again in front of a large crowd, with UCD and Shamrock Rovers cancelling each other out in a somewhat disappointing draw.

10th March - UCD's futsal campaign gathers pace with a 6-4 win against Drogheda. Greg Bolger gets a hat-trick, while Eoin Ó Cinnéide, Timmy Purcell and Darren Forsyth get one each.

16th March - A superb fightback falls just short as Drogheda beat UCD 3-2 in Untied Park. Derek Doyle puts UC ahead, but Drogheda roar back to go 3-1 up before debutante Bogdan Oprea scores within five minutes of coming on. In injury time, Darren Quigley nearly scores with a diving header, and Drogs are relieved to hear the final whistle.

18th March - A big win for UCD in the futsal - 11-4 against Dundalk. Timmy Purcell gets 5, Declan O'Donnell grabs a brace while Shane Flynn, David Last, Ger O'Callaghan and Greg Bolger were all on the mark as well.

20th March - The League Cup First Round draw sees UCD away against Kildare County. The winners will meet either Pat's, Shels or the winners of the Bray-Bohs tie. The game is set for Monday 16 April in Station Road, Newbridge.

23rd March - Another narrow defeat against one of the title contenders - 1-0 against Cork this time. Roy O'Donovan adds to his at-trick against Portadown n mid-week with the winner here.

27th March - Darren Quigley starts as Ireland U-21 lose 1-0 to Holland in Venlo.

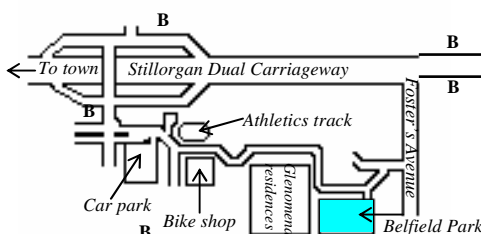
31st March - UCD are through to the last four stage of the futsal competition after beating 13-12. Timmy Purcell grabs another five-goal haul to bring him to 13 for the competition; David Last and Eoin Ó Cinnéide score hat-tricks and Ian Birmingham gets two. The winners of the playoffs will qualify for next year's UEFA Futsal Cup.

1st April - Shane McFaul and Alan Mahon both hit the woodwork from distance, but it's another disappointing result as Sligo beat UCD for the first time since 1998; Fax Kudozovic's injury time goal the only one of the game.

5th April - Greg Bolger and Darren Forsyth receive Ireland U-19 debuts with starts against Portugal in the invitational Oporto tournament. Ireland lose 1-0.

7th April - Finally, a win! Conan (1) and Paul (2) Byrne score the goals as UCD cruise past Waterford United 3-0 in Belfield.

WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



Buses to Belfield:

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

FROM BUCHAREST TO BELFIELD

From the College Tribune, 01/04/07

While the eircom League of Ireland may not just yet be witnessing quite as big an influx of foreign talent that the English Premiership experienced from the 1990s onwards, recent years have seen the Emerald Isle attract its own equivalent to the foreign legion.

Determined not to miss the boat, UCD have been doing some importing of their own. While to hope for an impact of Gheorghe Hagi proportions would be slightly ambitious to say the least, Pete Mahon has enlisted a Romanian striker of his own in an attempt to bolster his goal-shy strike force.

Bogdan Oprea's recent arrival has barely forced an eyelid to flinch in footballing circles outside the college. On campus and among the UCD faithful, however, great things have been predicted.

Finding a home in Irish football happened almost accidentally for Oprea. Enjoying a holiday over here, he was enticed to take part in a trial with Bray Wanderers. After a fortnight's training with Eddie Gormley's men, he opted against a move to the Carlisle Grounds. He outlines the decision behind the move. "Bray offered me a six-month deal but I had to start off in the under-21s. I wanted first-team football so I came to UCD on trial and showed them what I can do."

Joining from Romanian side Astra, Oprea can certainly relate to the instability felt by the Shelbourne players last season when the club fell into financial difficulty. A First Division club, Astra were relegated and subsequently dissolved. Re-established a year later, Oprea was handed a three-year deal, but only managed to last half his tenure as the club failed to pay his wages.

The case was brought through the courts and, while it was a hard time for the Bucharest lad, he bears no grudge. "It was simply a money matter. The Romanian FA declared me a free agent, but I didn't leave on bad terms."

Settling into a new club and a new life, those around him – his family, his teammates and his gaffer – have all done their utmost to help the transition go smoothly.

"My team are nice people. I've made good friends with Doyler and Shane in particular. I've talked to Pete also. He is an open man; you can talk to him about almost anything. I have a good relationship with him."

On the pitch, Oprea has had to adapt to a considerably different style of play. He explains "Romanian football is more organised. Here, speed and power are what is needed. In Romania, the play is more technical." Mahon was singing off a similar hymn-sheet when he was evaluating the beginning of his new acquisition's career at UCD. "He's a very technical player. He's only at the club five weeks, but he has shown in training that he has good technical ability. He has to learn about other parts of the game that wouldn't be the same in Romania where it's more about the skill and technique end. It's a bit more physical over here and he must learn a couple of things."

He holds high hopes, however. "They're only minor details. He has natural ability, we have to give him a bit of time to acclimatise to this league and if and when he does, we'll have a good player on our hands."

The gamble may be paying off far quicker than one would have expected. Thrown into the mix late on when UCD met Drogheda recently, Oprea opened his accounts within minutes. An attribute necessary to succeed as a striker, confidence is something Oprea possesses in abundance.

"That's why Pete put me on the field; I'm a forward, I must score. I want to play as much as I can. I want to start the game, not just ten minutes. Then the goals will come."

An instant hit with fans of the Students, he has seemingly received cult status ever at this early stage of his UCD career, with a terrace chant in his honour already in existence. Embarrassed when mentioned, Oprea feels he has yet to prove a thing. "It's nice to hear good things about you. It means that people appreciate you for your work. I want to show people what I can do."

Focus On – SHANE McFAUL

Name – Shane McFaul

Date of birth – 23 May 1986

Place of birth – Dublin

Position – Centre-mid

Joined UCD – February 2007

Signed from – Virginia Beach Mariners

UCD debut – H v Shamrock Rovers, 09/03/07

First goal – Not scored as yet.

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

Did you know? – Shane previously played for Cherry Orchard, Notts County¹ and Virginia Beach Mariners in the US. He played 31 times for County in Divisions Two and Three before moving to Virginia, playing in the league just below the MSL (featuring, among others, David Beckham and Ronnie O'Brien). The team folded in March due to a lack of ownership.



¹ We have recently been informed that the full name is Notts County, not Nottingham County, as we previously published. We're sorry Notts County/UCD Unofficial Supporters Club (Liverpool branch).

UPCOMING EVENTS

12th April – Home to Bray – note the change of date from Friday to Thursday, due to the club's alumni dinner night on the Friday.

16th April – Away to Kildare in the League Cup, a tie which will probably change again before the date, given how many times it's changed already! Keep an eye on the UCD website to confirm; there are trains returning to Heuston after the match.

20th April – Derry have been misfiring since the departure of Stephen Kenny – a chance of a draw or more for us on our first trip north this season?

27th April – Longford – without a point at the time of writing – visit Belfield, having been comfortably beaten 3-1 on their last visit. More of the same here?

4th May – Our first away Dublin derby – away to Bohs in Dalymount Park.

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.STFCOnline.com - The Supporters' Club/fanzine website.

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