



# UCD NEWS



## The UCD FC Supporters' Club Newsletter

Issue 30

May 2007

**WELCOME TO THE** thirtieth issue of UCD News. In this issue, we have a profile of and an interview with winger Conan Byrne and, as usual, the Belfield Diary.

Things are going rather well as we approach the mid-season break – it's now nine games unbeaten, a Cup quarter final on the way. It's our longest unbeaten run since a 13-match streak in our promotion season in 2004, and our longest run in the Premier since the end of the 1999/00 and start of the 2000/01 season, when we went ten games unbeaten, including two draws in Europe and bringing home the Super Cup. We're four points up on the first 11 games of the past two seasons, and our usual tendency is to start seasons slowly and then get better. So it could be a good season unfolding for us! And we've put in a new feature on the newsletter which links into internet highlights of some of the past few games.

In the League Cup, we're into our fourth quarter-final in the last seven competitions after victory over St Pat's. Finn Harps await in Belfield, which is an excellent chance to make the semis, as Harps currently sit mid-table in the First Division. Without trying to get of ourselves, the only semi-finals we've ever lost have been in the Leinster Senior Cup, in 1996/97, 1896/97 and sometime in the 30s. Of course, under the new FAI league regulations, the League Cup winners will face into a play-off against the First Division champions, presumably at the end of the season.

We don't want to get ahead of ourselves because, last issue, we looked at the two ways we could get into Europe next year. And of course, both have fallen by the wayside. After winning the U-21 Futsal league, we fell in the final to Shamrock Rovers, despite leading at half time and generally being on top. And in the Fair Play award, Ireland ended up on 7.938, agonisingly short of the 8.000 required to enter the draw for the UEFA Cup.

Some of our former players have been on the move. Both Pat Kavanagh and Gary Dicker have been released by Birmingham after their promotion to the Premiership. Both contributed to Brum's reserve division win, with Kav scoring five times and Dicker scoring once. Gary has since joined Stockport County while Kav is back training with us, although he is likely to join another eL club.

The only real problem at the moment is the injury list – all of them in centre mid, curiously. Tony Mac, Brian King and Ronan Finn are all out – a problem in the past, but with Paul Crowley, Shane McFaul and Greg Bolger, we've hardly noticed!

## BELFIELD DIARY

**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.

**10th April** – UCD draw 4-4 with Bray in the Futsal to seal the league; they now enter the play-offs with Bray, Rovers and Bohs for a UEFA Cup spot.

**12th April** – A good second half performance sees UCD win 2-0 against Bray, with substitutes Derek Doyle and Conor Sammon notching the goals.

**16th April** – Not much to enthuse about in Kildare, but still a strong UCD side are through to the Second Round of the League Cup, after beating Kildare 4-2 on penalties after a 0-0 draw. Conor Kenna actually scores; Darren Quigley saves twice. Highlights are [here](#) on Youtube.

**17th April** – UCD, along with St Pat's, Drogheda, Derry and Cork are awarded a UEFA Licence, with the proviso that Belfield Park can't host any UEFA Cup games. The Fair Play trophy is our only route, with news expected by the end of the month.

**20th April** – UCD record a superb 1-0 away win in Derry, with Timmy Purcell scoring late on against an out-of-sorts City side. You can view highlights [here](#) in Week 7 Part Two. UCD are drawn away to St Pat's in the second round of the League Cup.

**24th April** – The U-21 pre-season Shield gets underway with a 3-3 draw in Bray.

**25th April** – Pat Kavanagh's fifth goal of the season helps Birmingham to their reserve league title; Gary Dicker picks up a medal as well.

**28th April** – After beating Derry away, UCD need a late Conor Sammon goal to grab a point at home to Longford; Paul Byrne is also on the mark with a superb third of the season from long range.

**29th April** – In the Futsal play-offs, UCD beat Bray on penalties, having led up to two seconds from time. However, Shamrock Rovers come back from 2-1 down in the final to win 4-2, and will be in Europe next September. Still, always next year! You can see the highlights [here](#) on Youtube.

**4th May** – A dire 0-0 in Dalymount, although actually a good result given our record against Bohs and given the strength of their team.

**5th May** – UCD beat Bohs 6-0 in the U-21 Shield. David Last (3),

**7th May** – A Conor Sammon penalty is enough to knock league leaders St Pat's out of the League Cup, and send UCD into the quarter-finals for the fourth time in seven years.

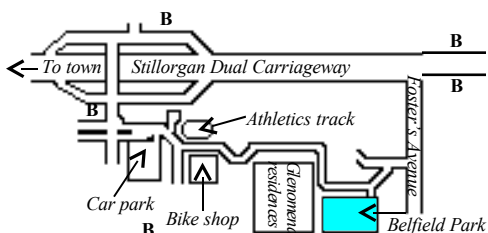
**8th May** – Ireland score 7.938 in the UEFA Fair Play competition, meaning UCD miss out on the UEFA Cup this year.

**11th May** – Another good result against Pat's, this time a 2-2 home draw after late goals from Timmy Purcell and Paul Byrne see UCD come back from 2-0 down. Tony McDonnell starts his first league game since the opening day, and comes off injured after 15 minutes. Highlights are [here](#) on YouTube.

**18th May** – The unbeaten run stretches to nine games after a 0-0 draw in atrocious conditions in Galway. UCD are drawn at home to Finn Harps in the League Cup Quarter-Final. James O'Sullivan and Shane Fitzgerald are named in the eircom League U-21 panel. Gary Dicker joins Stockport County.

**19th May** – UCD lose 1-0 to St Pat's in the U-21 Shield.

## WHERE IS BELFIELD PARK???



### Buses to Belfield:

3	10
11	11B
17	46
46A	46B
46C	46D
7	84

**B** – Bus stop

# Lone Gun

*From UCD Connections; excerpted from an article about the scholarship scheme*

UCD soccer player Conan Byrne is probably the best placed to give an insight into the comparisons between student life and being an actual professional. Byrne was on the books of Millwall before choosing the Leaving Certificate over the make or break life of English football.

“At Millwall, you were on your own two feet without a doubt. I was 15 when I first went over. The longest I stayed was three weeks in a row and I wanted to go home after one. I loved the football side of things. You were down at the training ground at 9am and finished by 2pm. But after training you are in somebody else’s house. You had to ask could you watch the TV or anything else.”

Being a professional footballer is the stuff of dreams, but he could do without the solitude. In two years’ time, Byrne will still be playing football, but he will have options.

That’s the bottom line for sporting scholars – options.

## BEST WIN?

From the *Mirror*, Friday 27 April 2007

UCD manager Pete Mahon rates last week’s victory in Derry as the second best of his Belfield tenure.

Eclipsing the win in the Brandywell was UCD’s FAI Cup victory over Cork City three years ago – when the then First Division side knocked Pat Dolan’s charges, who had a certain Kevin Doyle in their line-up, out of the competition.

Mahon said “To me, that win was better because we were such an inexperienced side at the time and Cork were flying, having just come off the back of a brilliant European run.

“Last week’s victory, though, was certainly the hardest fought win and afterwards Pat Fenlon was incredibly dignified and gracious and that meant a lot.”

## FOCUS ON – CONAN BYRNE

**Name** – Conan Byrne

**Date of birth** – 10 July 1985

**Place of birth** – Dublin

**Position** – Right wing

**Joined UCD** – June 2005

**Signed from** – Millwall

**UCD debut** – H v Longford Town, 12/08/05

**First goal** – H v Derry City, 19/09/05

**2007 stats** – Played 13 (12 league, 1 League Cup), scored 1 (in the league)

**UCD career statistics** – Played 37 (31 league, 3 FAI Cup, 3 League Cup), scored 2 (1 league, 1 League Cup)

**Did you know?** – The season after Paul Byrne blitzed the U-21 league, namesake Conan followed suit with 14 goals, despite only joining midway through the league. His first senior goal was the equaliser in the League Cup Final live on Setanta. Injury and a switch to right wing has meant he only added his second goal earlier this season, against Waterford.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**25<sup>th</sup> May** – Just a month after winning in the Brandywell, a quirk of the fixture list means we face troubled Derry City again. Pat Fenlon is now gone; will this have rejuvenated the title challengers for the past two years?

**29<sup>th</sup> May** – Away to Bray; confirmed on the Tuesday evening.

**1<sup>st</sup> June** – A trip to Waterford on the Bank Holiday weekend, which sees us enter the mid-season break.

**15<sup>th</sup> June** – Back in action again in the Second Round of the Cup. Draw to be made on Thursday, 31 May.

*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.5116online.com](http://www.5116online.com) - The Supporters' Club/fanzine website.