

By Philip Bourke

UCD made the trip back to Terryland Park for the first time since winning the Harding Cup Freshman Trophy in early February starting a sequence of results that ended the University Competition with all four cups in the UCD trophy cabinet. It may have been an Airtricity League match but the link between both competitions was obvious with Paul Corry starting in midfield and Ger Barron on the bench. UCD came into this game on the back of a 2-1 defeat to Shamrock Rovers, while Galway United notched an impressive draw with Dundalk away from home. It promised to be a tight match and an entertaining 2-2 draw was served up by two teams eager to attack at every opportunity.

The game was 2 minutes old when Dave McMillan found himself in space and fired a shot low at the Galway United goal but Barry Ryan was equal to his quick fire effort. It was not long before the two did battle again and this time the on song UCD hit man came out on top. A looping ball over the top of the Galway defence forced Synott to turn back towards his own goal, Ciaran Kilduff waits for no man and his ingenious effort was well saved by former student Ryan, but McMillan was on hand to guide it into the back of the net.

Both sides traded chances and it was clear that this was not going to be a goal decided by a solitary goal. UCD's direct passing was paying dividends with some last ditch defending saving Galway, while at the other end Galway moved the ball out wide and attempted to use the aerial threat of Anto Flood. Meynell worked the ball down the left flank before delivering a ball that tempted UCD's Billy Brennan from his line, his movement was blocked by Flood's strike partner as Flood rose to guide the ball home.

Galway began to exert some pressure on the UCD backline but they stood firm safe in the knowledge that quick counter attacks were causing the Galway defence problems as Kilduff looked to stretch his legs at every opportunity.

The McMillan brothers had a hand in more than one goal in this contest as after David's early goal, the ball brushed off Evan's digits, having first blocked the ball inside the box and the eager linesman's arm shot into the air to indicate that the elder McMillan had deliberately played the ball with his palm. The harsh decision led to Stephen O'Donnell sending Billy Brennan the wrong way from the penalty spot.

UCD were intent on playing attractive football to get back into the game. Neat triangles around their own box consistently allowed them to spring surprise attacks but the combination of a poor final ball and Galway's well organised defence preserved Galway's lead. UCD's equaliser arrive after a combination of hard work and good fortune. Chris Mulhall closed down Barry Ryan who slipped and presented the ball to Mulhall who finished into the empty net.

UCD went into the half time break level with Galway and knowing that a huge slice of luck had gifted them this position. The second half saw both teams play attractive football but fail to create the same flow of chances. Kilduff burst down the left before picking out David McMillan who was thwarted by Barry Ryan and the Mick Leahy saw his effort within the six yard box diverted over.

At the other end Billy Brennan had to be smart off his line to block Foley's fierce drive with his midriff.

Ger Barron picked up the Harding Cup trophy on this ground in February and it was his Goalkeeping team mate, Billy Brennan who ensured that UCD boarded the bus back to Belfield with something to show for their efforts last night.

Galway United: Barry Ryan; Conneely (Heary, 75), McKenzie, Synott, Meynell; Bobby Ryan, Foley (Curran, 90), O'Donnell, McBrien (Creaney, 31); Sheppard, Flood

UCD: Brennan; Harding, Leahy, E McMillan, Shortall; Corry (Ward, 73), Bolger, Creevy (Nangle, 83); Mulhall, D McMillan, Kilduff (Wilson, 73).

Referee: G Kelly