

UCD AFC let a two goal lead slip in the 2-2 draw with Bray Wanderers on Friday night.



Airtricity League Premier Division

BRAY WANDERERS (0) 2 UCD (1) 2

Doyle D 59, 90+1

McMillan D 29, 53.

The Carlisle, Bray, Friday 23 September 2010

By BRIAN de SALVO

A point earned, two squandered. Two goals ahead in the second half, UCD were unable to consolidate but credit a Bray side, playing its fifth game in a fortnight, for a spirited revival culminating in a spectacular injury time equaliser. For those not too busy biting their finger nails there was plenty to applaud.

Both sides fielded strikers who had scored hat tricks in matches between the clubs earlier in the season but neither was among the scorers this time. Shane O'Neill was an injury doubt and, his sharpness blunted, found UCD central defenders Evan McMillan and Michael Leahy in towering form. The visitors' own injury list left a vacancy at left back and provided an opportunity for seventeen year old Sean Russell, a player not even in the senior squad previously, to make a precocious debut. following a storming display for the Under 20 side in midweek. If you show you're up for it you will get a chance at UCD, even if you are the manager's son.

The Students started on the front foot with David McMillan setting up Chris Mulhall whose fierce drive scorched Matt Gregg's crossbar. A great tackle from Leahy stopped O'Neill in his tracks at the other end but it was the former UCD keeper Gregg who kept his current team in the game early on. With only six minutes gone he was fast off his line to block when Chris Mulhall burst through three defenders. Two minutes later it was Gregg to the rescue again. A stunning pass down the left from Russell sent Moore clear and his astute low cross was met by David McMillan but the keeper juggled his point blank effort over.

Now it was Billy Brennan's turn to preserve parity. A great flying save thwarted Prendergast's header and, when Leahy sliced Zambra's cross the UCD keeper's reactions were again sharp. And he was on hand to beat away O'Neill's long range drive.

When the first goal came it was the irrepressible David McMillan who registered. Again the advancing Gregg made a fine block but this time McMillan leapt to head the rebound home. It was an interval lead the visitors' excellent passing football warranted. When they went two up eight minutes into the second period it looked like game set and match.

The younger McMillan was again the scorer, interchanging passes with Kilduff after good work by Bolger to plant the ball into the net. and cap an exuberant display the more remarkable for limited match fitness. A third goal would have clinched it and Kilduff seemed likely to add one four minutes later when one on one with Gregg. But the big Bray keeper plunged at his feet to save and was quick to retrieve the loose ball.

Instead Bray pulled one back after 59 minutes. A Webster throw in from the right was back headed on by O'Connor and in by Daire Doyle. Ten minutes later, as Bray went for a second, manager Russell sent on Robbie Creevy to beef up a reorganised five man midfield. But still Bray pressed, although a cheeky freekick from Russell Jnr just slid past the post.

Even under duress the Blues continued to try to play their way out of trouble. On one occasion Evan McMillan, stretching to defend a ball he would have done well to despatch to the stand, managed instead to put Russell in possession and, eight passes later, Bray were trying to win the ball back in their own penalty area. But cracks were beginning to appear in the UCD defence. When Zambra skinned Russell, Leahy glided over to stifle the advance.

It looked as though the Students would play out time; indeed, substitute Ward spurned a late chance and it took a fine double tackle by Mitchell on first Kilduff then Mulhall to halt a UCD break. But the announcement of four minutes added rallied the Bray support and the Seagulls responded with élan. A corner from the right was headed out by Leahy only for Doyle to chest the ball down and hit a searing half volley from the edge of the box into the top corner of Brennan's net. Frustration for the Blues but a fitting finale for an entertaining match.

BRAY WANDERERS: Matt Gregg; David Webster (Gary Shaw 65), Adam Mitchell, Derek Prendergast (Stephen Brennan 61), Dane Massey; Dean Zambra, Gary Dempsey, Danny O'Connor (Ian Tuohy 82), Daire Doyle; Shane O'Neill, Chris Shields.

UCD: Billy Brennan; Paul O'Connor, Evan McMillan, Michael Leahy, Sean Russell; Chris Mulhall, Paul Corry, Greg Bolger, Karl Moore (Robbie Creevy 68); Ciaran Kilduff, David McMillan (Keith Ward 78).

Referee: Mr Derek Tomney

**Bray Wanderers 2-2 UCD AFC, Fri 24th Sept, Carlisle Grounds**

Saturday, 25 September 2010 16:18

---