

Ed Scannell reflects on how he ended up supporting UCD AFC.



Ask anybody why they support a certain team and you'll receive various answers from "the 'oul man did" "because they're the best" to "I know someone who plays for them" and "you got to support the local team". For me supporting UCD it started out the latter.

I grew up in Blackrock so was only a stones throw from Belfield Park. But I was a Shamrock Rovers man (kid) and would (when allowed) be standing in Glenmalure Park cheering the Hoops. Why? Because they were the "best" and "I knew someone" who played for them (Mum's Cousin John Coady).

My first experience of watching UCD came (on the club's most famous night) May 4th 1984.

The occasion? The FAI cup final replay against Shamrock Rovers. UCD won that night and we spent the following weeks emulating them at lunchtime in the schoolyard. Don't believe me? Just ask Maccer!

I still supported Rovers for another season or two after that until they moved to the RDS. By this time I was a bit older and so came a bit more freedom from my parents grasp. So one Sunday in 1987 I found myself down at Belfield Park for a 3.30pm kick off. From that day on I was a UCD fan.

Belfield Park was a great place to watch football. Wherever you stood (or sat) you were right beside the action. It was always (and still is) a friendly atmosphere and away fans always seemed to enjoy themselves, and besides Tony Sheridan would open the gates and let you in for free at half-time. Being a goalie in my playing days I learned a lot standing behind Alan O'Neill and Paul Kavanagh's goal.

Football then moved to Friday nights and had to compete not only with my social life but also the affections of my girlfriend (now wife, Mary). Needless to say my attendance at Belfield dropped over a few seasons in the mid to late nineties.

However that all changed one night a few years ago when at a game I noticed an ad in the match program. Colin Forde the then CPO was looking for people to get involved at the club, and noticing they had no photographer at the match I offered my services. I have been the club

## **"I support UCD because..." by Ed Scannell**

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snapper ever since. Because of this I have got to know the players, managers and staff on a personal level, which has only served to increase my enthusiasm, loyalty and love for the club. I do miss not being in the stand at games sometimes but its great being pitch side and being involved directly. I wouldn't swap it for anything.