

Josh Dolan tells us why he supports UCD AFC.



I began supporting UCD when I was around 10. My first game was against Longford town in Belfield Park. One day I came home from school and my brother had got a spare ticket from one of his mates from school, it was a big surprise to me that there was a professional league in Ireland and also that there was a professional team about 20 minutes drive away from my house. After going to my first game I asked my friends to go they started going as well. After supporting the team in Belfield Park for a couple of years we moved to the Bowl. Our first game in the Bowl was against Derry City, unfortunately we lost 3-2.

A couple of weeks later I was in Belfield kicking the ball around with my brother and my dad and we saw the team training and immediately went over. The manager then was Pete Mahon and he said I could watch if I liked. I did for a couple of weeks and one of the nights it started to rain so I went inside and gave the then kit man Phillip a hand filling the ice baths, pumping footballs etc. A few days later I was made mascot and I was delighted to be allowed to walk out with then captain Connor Kenna. I continued to help the team in different ways like selling programmes, raffle tickets etc. One of my favourite things about UCD at that time was the friendly staff and players this is still the same today.

I have many great memories as a UCD supporter but my favourite has to be the night we won the first division we needed to win and Shelbourne had to lose. We beat Athlon 5-0 in

Lissywoolen while Longford surprisingly beat Shelbourne 5-4 in Tolka Park. The celebrations were brilliant as the players ran out of the dressing room celebrated with the supporters and slid along the muddy turf. We lifted the trophy a week later in the Bowl despite losing to Waterford. My other favourite memories include Keith Wards last minute winner against Shamrock Rovers a couple of years ago and the numerous A championship wins ,although I may never see us win the Premier Division these memories will be with me and many other UCD fans for ever.

Other things you'll notice in UCD is that the supporters and staff are very nice and friendly from first team manager Martin Russell to the media officer Gordon O'Callaghan . There are a lot of people in the club that work hard to keep the club running for example Diarmuid McNally who has many job titles including assistant manager and soccer development manager, another hard working person is Tony "Sherro" Sheridan who also has a lot of jobs such as Treasurer and head of security, without Diarmuid ,Tony and his family the club could not function properly. I don't think I could imagine not supporting UCD because it's just one of the biggest things in my life. It's almost like it's a part of me because when Friday evening comes there's only one place you'll find me and that's supporting and helping out the Student's. Not for the glory but for the passion.

So I encourage anyone please come to the bowl and support the student's week in and week out you will enjoy it.