

UCD graduate and Belfield FM commentator Peter Branigan explains it all.



I have been supporting UCD for the best part of fifteen years now. I grew up in between Belfield and Milltown at a time when Shamrock Rovers were not long out of their spiritual home at Glenmalure Park, but it was always College for me. They were the real local team, and they have always had young and exciting players.

Our old trick was getting into Belfield Park using the underage entry cards of a certain local soccer club who play in Deer Park. These cards entitled us to free entry to the ground but I've never played a game of club soccer in my life!

I received a UCD jersey from Pat Jennings Jnr when he played in goals for College. He had the entire squad sign the jersey, and it is still a prized possession of mine.

One of my earliest memories of supporting The Students was a game against Shamrock Rovers at Belfield Park on the August Bank Holiday Monday of 2003. As is so often the case, Rovers' fans had travelled in huge numbers. They were silenced late on however when UCD were awarded a penalty. Robbie McAuley scored and it looked as though we were going to claim a crucial victory in our quest to avoid relegation. As is UCD's style however, we managed to concede in stoppage time having scored ourselves in stoppage time. Trevor Molloy beat Pat Jennings Jnr and the match finished up two-all.

Another highlight for me was the League Cup Final against Derry in 2005, even if the result was again ultimately disappointing. UCD had beaten Shelbourne late on at Tolka to get to the final and it was the first time that Belfield had hosted a major senior final. Belfield Park was packed, including the extra seats installed especially for the final at the Foster Avenue end of the ground. That was the best support I have ever seen UCD receive at home.

As I mentioned earlier, UCD have always had young squads. It's a testament to the set up at the club that they manage to compete in the Premier Division, often with managers having to entirely rebuild squads in the off season. Part of the appeal with UCD is watching new these new squads gel together and establish themselves in Ireland's premier soccer competition.

I've seen some great players wear the sky blue of UCD, including Gary Dicker, Tony McDonnell, Ciarán Martyn and current Irish international Conor Sammon. Perhaps my proudest achievement as a College fan was coming up with Conor's nickname, "Sammon of College!"

More recently, I have begun working with the media team at UCD and I write match reports for the official website, [ucdsoccer.com](http://ucdsoccer.com). I love doing the match reports, and it feels good to be able to help out at a club I have supported for over a decade. I look forward to many more years at UCD Bowl.