

Two quick second half goals killed off the spirited challenge from a depleted UCD side in the Brandywell on Friday night, although Kevin McHugh's late fourth put an unjust tint on the scoreline. Having matched their hosts for the first half, Derry blitzed the Students in the opening quarter hour of the second to effectively seal the points there and then. UCD were without twelve players for the trip north, including keeper Matt Gregg, captain Conor Kenna, left backs Ian Bermingham and Killian Gallagher and midfielder Ronan Finn. Indeed, so stuck were the Students for numbers that Finn, who hadn't trained midweek, still made the bench. Derek Doyle lined out as a makeshift full back while Billy Brennan was given a non-League Cup debut in nets. It was a debut to forget for Brennan as within 90 seconds, he was picking the ball out of the net. Owen Morrison's shot from the edge of the area should have been held, but the keeper instead could only parry straight to the feet of Mark Farren, who couldn't miss from five yards out. It would have been easy, even at that early stage, for the visitors' heads to drop in anticipation of a rout, but instead, they played some good football as the half became an entertaining, open affair with chances at both ends. Morrison curled a shot off the UCD bar, while Conor Sammon had a trademark weak header go harmlessly into the grateful arms of Brennan. At the other end, UCD were knocking the ball around confidently and mopping up plenty of loose balls, with Shane Fitzgerald and Alan Mahon in particular getting plenty of space down the right flank. Pat McWalter just couldn't get on the end of an excellent Mahon cross on 25 before UCD deservedly equalised a minute later. The ball came out to the left wing, was fed infield to Timmy Purcell, who shimmied past one defender before unleashing a drive from just outside the box which flew past Ger Doherty into the bottom corner. The goal gave UCD extra confidence and they should have been ahead shortly after. From another excellent Mahon cross, Brian King appeared to be manhandled to the ground before Paul Byrne's effort at the far post was weak and straight at Doherty. Derry went straight up the pitch and would have retaken the lead only for a superb goal-line clearance from Derek Doyle. The Students were having particular joy from set pieces, with Greg Bolger's deliveries creating chances. From one corner, a goal mouth scramble ensued, but the Candystripes managed to clear out for another corner. This one saw a Byrne header cleared off the line before Derry finally managed to clear their lines from the third corner. At half time, 1-1 was a fair reflection of the game; however, Derry came out revitalised for the second half. Within 30 seconds, they gave a warning as to their intentions as Niall McGinn fired a shot narrowly over from the edge of the box. However, the same player did have the ball in the net four minutes later with a similarly spectacular strike, this time from the other side of the box and from a more acute angle. The game was over as a contest seven minutes later when Derry were awarded a free 22 yards out; Owen Morrison stepped up and curled home a replica of Derry's free in the Bowl on the opening day of the season. UCD's first real attack of the half came two minutes later - another Mahon cross was headed weakly wide by Byrne; the striker is having his worst goalless spell in a UCD jersey, which must surely be a concern for Pete Mahon. Chances were few and far between for the remaining half hour; Billy Brennan made one good save, although his weakness under the high ball was all too evident, with Derry putting plenty of crosses into the six yard box to test him. In the last action of the match, Kevin McHugh got the ball down in the area, went past Alan McNally with ease and powered into the top corner from 12 yards out to make it 4-1. Bray and Harps visit the UCD Bowl next week in two crunch matches; the Students expect to be back to full strength for those games, and indeed the team selection in Derry was partly with next week's games in mind. With Harps winning in Cobh, UCD have dropped into tenth place in the table and will need at least four points next week to get their season back on track. UCD -

Depleted UCD crash in Derry

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Brennan; Mahon, D Doyle, McNally, McMillan; King, Fitzgerald (Reilly 82), Bolger (Finn 73), McWalter (O'Callaghan 89); Byrne, Purcell. Subs not used - Harding, T Doyle