

UCD AFC came out on top in this match and the CUFL group to advance to the QFs.

Colleges and U



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Given 3 letters to play with and DCU still couldn't spell UCD, that was not the only difference between these sides on a windy afternoon in Belfield. The one time pretenders to UCD's crown as top dogs on the University circuit were beaten 2-1 as UCD cemented their position at the top of the group and passed smoothly into the quarter finals of the Colleges and Universities Football League. Robbie Benson opened the scoring and 74 minutes and thirty seconds later Tristan Dent scored the second to provide the cushion once DCU eventually broke the Belfield rearguard at the death.

As has happened so often at home in this competition, UCD began the game on the front foot. This approach proved an instant hit as Robbie Benson applied the finish to a flowing move involving Cillian Morrison and Dean Clarke. The three first team musketeers went straight for the jugular and it paid off. A move that was peppered with silky footwork, one touch passing and movement normally reserved for the Strictly dancefloor found Benson in a goalscoring position and he didn't have to be asked twice to put UCD one goal to the good.

A goal down, struggling to get a foothold in the game and battling a fierce wind, DCU appeared on the verge of collapse but composed themselves and fought back. The UCD backline needed to be on top form time and again to repel the fiercest DCU attacks. Tomas Boyle was being examined in the classroom and his place in the backline was taken by veteran history student Dave Molumby. On his way to becoming a History of the media master off the field, there is little doubt he could lay claim to a similar title on the field. His sublime performance at right back mirrored the efforts of his team mates in defence as UCD's defence became the starting point for many attacks.

In the midfield, Benson and Tom O'Halloran were creating plenty of chances and it seemed only a matter of time before the home side went further ahead. Benson smashed an effort off the crossbar that bounced to safety while O'Halloran was not having the best of luck in front of goal with a plethora of decent chances.

Into the second half and DCU continued to push for the equaliser but left themselves open for the counter attack. The hardworking Dean Clarke gave the DCU defence a torrid time as Benson continued to pick holes and slide his team mates through on goal. Samir Belhout and O'Halloran were through on goal a number of times only giving the crowd on the other side of the goal misplaced excitement, as they drove the ball into the side netting, creating the ripple effect every fan dreads.

The game continued at a frantic pace as the ding dong battle continued. UCD stood firm at the back in the face of a serious threat from Dan Mahon, his pace and power was sure to create a goal, if the UCD side would let him.

With time ticking towards the last quarter Tristan Dent popped up at a corner to finish calmly past the visiting keeper and give UCD a 2 goal lead. A broad smile wept across his face as he wheeled away in celebration, the afternoon sun gleaming on his polished ivories.

With the game in its dying embers UCD continued to stoke the flames and twice the DCU custodian was alert to thwart the home attack, once from Tyrone McNelis and a second time from Tom O'Halloran. With nearly 90 minutes played since the first goal was scored, DCU got their consolation. A clever corner kick eventually brought the ball to the back post where the UCD backline was finally beaten. The referee blew to signal a goal, the end of the game, three points to UCD, a top of the table finish and a quarter final clash with Waterford IT all in one breath.

UCD AFC: Corbett, Molumby, Wright, Dent, Butler, Murray, Benson, O'Halloran, Belhout, Morrison (McNelis), Clarke