

UCD AFC played out a 3-3 draw on Saturday against Firhouse Clover.



UCD AFC continued their recent good form adding another point to their league total. Firhouse went into the game on top of the league and were confident of a good result against The Students. UCD went ahead and then came back from behind twice to rescue a point as Philip Byrne, Mark Condon and Tyrone McNelis got their names on the score sheet.

The first half was an end to end affair with Firhouse relying heavily on the long ball and UCD doing the opposite. The quality of the playing surface did not help UCD settle into their usual passing game but nevertheless they continued to create good chances.

Firhouse Clover had an early penalty claim waved away early on as Sean Coffey sprung from his line to close down the Clover striker. The collision left both players requiring treatment and both were soon fit to continue.

That scare apart UCD continued to press forward. Darragh Connolly, on a high from last week's exploits, found himself in acres of space but could only direct his shot into the acres of space behind the goal when he looked certain to break the deadlock.

Michael O'Neill was next up to let Clover off the hook. An inswinging corner caused consternation in the Clover box and O'Neill pounced to blast a shot goalwards. The crossbar saved Firhouse on this occasion and UCD wondered where their goal would come from.

Tyrone McNelis caught everyone off guard minutes later. A chipped ball from Sean Buckley found the elusive speedster 10 yards outside the box. McNelis decided to forget about controlling the ball first time and smashed a dipping volley goalwards, relief once again for Firhouse as the ball bounced to safety.

Firhouse came back again in typical fashion. A long throw into the box had the UCD defence scrambling and Firhouse could not find the finish to break the deadlock before the half time whistle.

It was clear that UCD had grown in confidence as the first half progressed and the early part of the second half was testament to this. Mark O'Callaghan's clever touches were bringing him further into the game and he was heavily involved in the first goal. He fired a shot in at goal that was spilled by the home keeper. Tyrone McNelis proved he could operate equally as well inside the box, only this time he scored.

Firhouse were rocked but this only increased their resolve to get back into the game. Their play became more and more direct and another long ball into the box caused a tangle of legs. The referee pointed to the spot and UCD found themselves back on level terms.

The left hand side of the Firhouse attack was beginning to bear fruit and another ball slid into the centre of the goal saw the tall striker finish expertly past the advancing Coffey.

UCD refused to lie down and Mark Condon, on as a half time substitute, dragged UCD back into the game. Firhouse gave him too much time on the right hand side and Condon made them pay. A dipping, looping, cross come shot flew into the keepers arms. It was too hot to handle and the keeper threw it into the net rather than burn his fingers.

Firhouse again came back strong and found themselves back in front. Another attack down the left hand side bore fruit. The winger swung an inviting ball into the box and the substitute striker arrived just on time to head past Coffey's despairing dive.

In a match dominated by long balls, mistakes and a tricky surface it was fitting that a moment of magic would decide the points, or at least a share of them.

## Byrne Knocks One Clover The Keeper

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Dan Lehane and Ryan McErlane exchanged passes before Tyrone McNelis picked up the ball outside the box. With everyone expecting a shot, his scooped pass picked out Philip Byrne. Byrne glanced towards the far top corner, then at the keeper and made his decision. A first time shot was the only way the ball would end up in the back of the net. First time shot, back of the net! The shot was perfectly effected and looped over the stranded keeper into the back of the net.

UCD AFC: Coffey, Bourke, Doyle (Condon), O'Neill, Lehane, O'Callaghan (Daly), McErlane, Buckley, Connolly (Whelan), McNelis, Byrne