

UCD AFC came back from two goals down to grab a draw in a fascinating clash in Pearse Park.



UCD had every right to be nervous as they stepped into the lions den to face a team that had already beaten them three times this season. Crumlin United were looking for their fourth victory across league and cups, but it was a very different UCD that showed up to the one finding their feet in the division earlier on in the season. While UCD did fall two goals behind they showed incredible resilience to claw their way back into the game in atrocious conditions.

Mark Boland and Hamza Suleiman were the heroes of the hour as they popped up in the right place at the right time on two occasions to power headers into the back of the home net to first reduce the deficit and then do away with it. It was no more than UCD deserved as they matched their opponents for skill and physical ability in inclement weather.

UCD took a foothold in the game early on and could well have taken an early lead, with Keohanne and O'Reilly causing trouble down each flank. Keohanne had hte first real attempt of the game when his rasping drive stung the palms of the home keeper and the ball was scrambled away to safety. Moments later, Ronan Crean drifted in from the wing and unleashed an effort at goal that evaded everyone and shaved the post. Crumlin were living dangerously and finding it difficult to deal with UCD's holy trinity in midfield of Fallon, Murray and Hanley. The halftime whistle blew with neither side able to breach the deadlock.

Into the second half and with UCD playing with the strong wind, it was set up perfectly for The Students to apply the pressure and grab a win. It was not to be as Crumlin stole in from seemingly nowhere to grab the first goal. Niall Corbett was called on to deal with a thunderous

effort, he palmed the ball away from goal and with the Crumlin striker poised to slot the ball home, Luke Breen arrived seconds too late and denied the goalscoring opportunity. The referee pointed to the spot and pre-empted Michel Platini's calls for a revamp of such a situation as Breen avoided the commonly sought after straight red card. The penalty was scored and UCD looked to be in trouble.

This came to pass as Crumlin went further ahead from a cleverly worked piece of football. A ball in from the wing was controlled and blasted towards goal by the home side's striker and UCD found themselves two goals down.

Two down and against the league leaders on their home patch, it was going to be difficult for The Students to turn this game around. In a strange twist, Crumlin began to shrink into themselves and invited UCD to pile on the pressure. UCD did not have to be asked twice and once Messers Doyle and Orton had injected some new blood into the attack with the introduction of Suleiman from the UCD bench it was clear UCD had not given up.

With ten minutes left in the game the diminutive striker, Boland, rose like a performing seal to smack a header into the back of the Crumlin net. The panic could be felt from Pearse Park all the way back to Belfield as the league leaders knew their three points were under threat from a resurgent Student side.

Their fears were well founded as Hamza Suleiman popped up at another corner and smashed a crashing half volley into the back of the net.

Crumlin stay top and UCD stay fourth, but their has been a confidence shift.

**UCD AFC:** Corbett, Naughton, Breen, Keogh, Mulumby, Murray, Hanley, Fallon, Crean, O'Reilly (Boland), Keohanne (Suleiman)