

UCD AFC moved into the next round of the Cahill Cup.

Cahill Cup



Fran Moran and Marc Whelan were the match winners for UCD as they put Arklow to the sword in the Cahill Cup. In what was ultimately a hard fought victory, UCD lead by two goals before the home side pulled one back but the Students held on to see out the victory.

The first fifteen minutes of the game did not look promising for UCD as the long trip south on a Friday night seemed to have caught up with them. The Students withstood the pressure as time and again Arklow streamed forward looking to find the go ahead goal but it never came. It proved to ultimately be a storm in a Coffey cup as cat like reflexes from UCD's number one ensured UCD remained on level terms after the opening quarter.

UCD worked their way into the game and gradually became more comfortable on the ball. Brian O'Reilly was a perfect example of this as he looked to turn on the turbo boosters at every opportunity. One such burst was instrumental in UCD taking the lead. O'Reilly crashed past his opposite number and exchanged passes with Marc Whelan. The veteran winger swivelled his hips and laid on a perfect return ball for O'Reilly who ahd continued his run. Fran Moran was waiting patiently in the box for a perfectly weighted ball into the area, one which ultimately arrived and Moran was on hand to side foot into the back of the net.

The last ten minutes of the first half highlighted a contrast in styles. Arklow adopted a very direct approach to the beautiful game, seemingly content to to increase the time the ball spent in UCD's half rather than create anything constructive. The Students on the other hand were more measured in their approach passing their way out of trouble and into attacking situations galore.

The Boys in Blue were forced into an early change as Conor Cannon departed to be replaced by Stiofain Sexton. With confidence high, UCD began to create chance after chance. Sexton was one such player given the opportunity to take a chance. An inch perfect clearance from the UCD custodian fell perfectly into the stride of the UCD sub, but his finish was as messy as a footlong sandwich of the same name.

UCD's second goal was a carbon copy of the first. This time it was Conor Butler who broke down the left flank and he found James Timmons. The UCD veteran has always had a penchant for combining with players of a similar physical stature and this time it worked to the team's benefit as he laid the ball on for Marc "the Adonis" Whelan to calmly knock into the back of the net.

Five minutes later the game was turned on its head as Arklow clawed their way back into the game. UCD initially defended well against a well struck corner but as the second ball was returned to the box they went to sleep and Arklow profited, dragging themselves within a goal of the Students.

In the end UCD held on for a victory that was well deserved if a little hard on the eye. "There is plenty to play for between now and the end of the season, there is no reason why we cannot pick up some silverware. We need to believe", said Marc Whelan after this victory.

**UCD AFC:** Coffey, O'Reilly, Butler, Davey, Dent, Timmons, Marc Whelan (Suen), Moran (Lynagh), Cannon (Sexton), Molloy, Michael Whelan