

H Bam's Eoin Brennan looks forward to the Bank of Ireland Cup Final.

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Wednesday 25th Apr

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Eoin Brennan looks forward to H Bam's Bank of Ireland Cup Final date with ABCDE FC in the UCD Bowl on Wednesday. Kick off is 6.30pm and H Bam are raring to go.

As Take That sang/said (delete appropriately) "We've come a long way" and H Bam certainly have. They were founded in 2006 when their first leader Hugh Barnwell called a meeting of like minded folk with roots in the educational establishment that is Colaiste Eoin and H Bam were born. Were it not for Hugh's late night dalliances with a model H Bam may never have seen the light of day, but as someone once said, "Bang" and the spark of creativity is lit for ever more.

In the years since their inception they have won the Premier Saturday Division four years in a row, now is their big chance to add some Cup silverware to every bulging trophy cabinet. The H Bam history has been bloody and eventful involving a cull, a take over bid and a name change.

Former goalkeeper Eoin Brennan introduces the best players in his team. Stephen Williams is a willing runner with a great attitude, Brennan compares him to Emile Heskey, whether that is to the version that scored a hat trick against Derby County for Liverpool in 2001 or the one that is painfully shy, and lacking in street smarts remains to be seen. Either way it is clear that Williams is a nice fella.

Supplying Williams from midfield is the fiery Paul Barr, never afraid to take a shot from distance or spray a raking pass, Barr is also not afraid to leave the boot in when necessary. His unorthodox tackling style has resulted in his favourite move, the Arm Barr Take Down becoming the stuff of legend throughout the Superleague world. Jamie O'Riordan occupies the space on the wing, Brennan describes him as a "Silky skilled veteran". It's a disturbing turn of phrase and for some reason the image of a sleazey old man will not fade but if it works for H Bam then that is all that matters. Stopping Brennan short of mentioning his whole team as ones to watch was difficult but one Conor Barnwell slipped in as the rock on which the Bam defence is built.

Manager Brennan is another in the long line of gaffers that believe in keeping cross words in house something not encouraged in the UCD AFC Superleague. When pressed on who were the players that have caused him most heartache there was a deafening silence. Eventually the name Mate Salacan sprung forward, doubtless a made up name, of a made up footballer who "tried hard but not hard enough" according to Brennan. It turns out that Mate Slacan may in fact be an anagram for Eoin Brennan himself. Admittedly I'm not sure how anagrams work, but it appears Eoin has not covered himself in glory of late, what the strange substance was has never been discovered but it was covering his hands. Old butter fingers here was so calamitous in goal he dropped himself from the team.

H Bam have cultivated an expansive, if not expensive, brand of football, finding a dear home on the cleverly pruned plastic blades of the GAA Astro. Their insistence on playing the game the way Dunphy would like it to be played is admirable and natural at the same time, with a midfield packed with creative quality the juices flow like honey through a lush green valley when H Bam are on song. This approach to the game saw them wrap up Premier Saturday, scoring 25 goals without reply in three games in January.

This was the first win since an ill fated take over bid by Stephen Williams. Williams alienated many of the fans when he applied for a name change that saw the birth of HIV Eindhoven. That is not where the shady dealings ended as Williams was implicated in a deal that involved more third parties, image rights and under the table dealings than a Rangers takeover bid involving Kia Joorabchian. All appears to be forgiven but one wonders whether Williams has heard the last of this.

The wondrous 25 goal achievement, as it became known, will live long in the memory but it is tempered with bitterness. H Bam were drawn against bitter rivals The Absolute Gents, another Colaiste Eoin side. In Superleague's first ever all Gaeilge Sacar Beo i Belfield ar nos na gaoithe not to be covered by Teilifis na Gaeilge, the Bam were sent down emphatically by the Gents. The game finished 6-2 and they can only wish they had saved some of their 25 goals for that game, 21 would have done the trick, 21-6 would have beaten the Gents in fact, it wasn't to be however and H, like their popular namesake, acknowledged the Tragedy and moved on.

Wednesday's final will go some way to erasing that bitter memory. ABCDE FC will prove tricky opponents Brennan acknowledges, "They are definitely plucky opponents, we saw their game the other day and they have a lot about them. We are confident we can beat them though, confident, not cocky".