

Students punish horrendous defensive mistakes

League of Ireland Premier Division

UCD 4 Waterford FC 1

The Belfield Bowl jinx struck one again for Waterford FC on Friday night last. Down through the years the South Dublin venue has proved to be something of a bogey stadium for the Blues and this outcome was perhaps the worst of them all. The Waterford team went into the game on the back of two home league victories allied to an EA Sports Cup win over Galway United and they had prepared well. The team showed one change from the one which defeated Finn Harps 4-0 the previous week. Aaron Simpson came in at right-full back, replacing Rory Feely.



JJ Lunney on the ball for the Blues on the attack against UCD

The Blues started the game on the front foot and created the first chance on five minutes. Scott Twine slipped the ball out to Aaron Simpson whose cross was cleared straight to JJ Lunney, but his cracking effort from 20-yards fizzed inches over the bar. Matt Connor made a smart save sixty seconds later when he kept out a well struck Daniel Tobin shot. UCD took the lead from the penalty spot on 21 minutes. Molloy linked up with midfielder Gary O'Neill, who was tripped in the area by captain Damien Delaney, and O'Neill dusted himself down to beat Connor from the spot.

The students doubled their lead less than three minutes later when Gary O'Neill hammered an unstoppable free kick off the underside of the crossbar and striker Yoyo Mahdy planted the rebound header past a helpless Matt Connor. Waterford got back into the contest when they scored the third goal of the game on 37 minutes. Karolis Chvedukas sprayed the ball behind the UCD defence to Aaron Drinan whose shot was parried by Conor Kearns and Scott Twine fired the rebound to the net.

Blues boss Alan Reynolds made two changes at the half time with the introduction of both Bastien Héry and Rory Feely but his side conceded from a set piece two minutes into the second period. Gary O'Neill sent in a corner kick and Richie O'Farrell powered a close-range header past Connor. That goal more or less wrapped up the game and the Blues never recovered from what was an extremely soft goal because O'Farrell was completely unmarked when he headed the ball. Aaron Drinan should have done better with a chance on the hour mark when Rory Feely's cross was knocked down by Scott Twine into the path of the in-form striker, but Drinan failed to hit the target from an advanced position.

Shane Duggan had a half chance to pull a goal back for the Blues on 69 minutes but couldn't direct his free header on target. UCD were gifted a fourth goal after some more kamikaze Waterford defending on 73 minutes. From a Kevin Lynch back pass Matt Connor played the ball straight off Sean McDonald who couldn't believe his luck when he slotted the ball to an empty net. McDonald was only on the pitch for less than a minute when he was presented with the goal.

Aaron Drinan went close to scoring seconds later when he fired in a shot that took a deflection off Liam Scales but UCD keeper Conor Kearns showed his class to make a top save. Overall this was a night best forgotten but that will be hard to banish it quickly.