

THE CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

[INCORPORATING THE HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT]



Season 2014 / 2015

- First of all I would like to welcome everybody here to the Club's 41st AGM, especially those who are here for the first time.
- After an horrendous start to our 41st season, where we conceded 19 goals in our first three home league games, it was quite remarkable that we finished 4th in the Premier Division, behind winners FC Sportslink Ailesbury, runners-up Sandyford Utd. and last season's champions Clontarf Athletic and obviously staying in the premier/top UCFL Division for the 41st consecutive season - an amazing feat in itself.
- Having been relegated last season, VEC 2nds started very well in Division 2A, though drawing 5 of their first 8 league games effectively finished their title hopes - eventually finishing 9th. The team however had a great run in the MMI Cup, reaching the semi-final, where we lost 3-6 to eventual winners Aston Village FC.
- In other Cup competitions, VEC lost out to a very strong Crumlin Utd. in the 3rd round of the Leinster Junior Cup and to a not-as-strong Cherry Orchard in the 4th round of the FAI Junior Cup! In the UCFL Challenge Cup, and in the Richard Knight Cup, we lost out in both at the semi-finals stage to FC Sportslink Ailesbury: being knocked out of the first on penalties. To compound matters, we also lost out on penalties to San Marino FC at the quarter-final stage of the Premier Shield. So near and yet so far!
- After 21 consecutive years, unfortunately the 3rd team disbanded before the start of the season, due to shortage of numbers. In effect, the 2nds and 3rds from the previous season amalgamated.
- Quite a number of players from the previous season were not available: notably Neil Spring (USA), Tom Delaney (Australia), Andy Waugh (UK), Marc Doherty (UK), Desar Hysa (Canada), Ross McDonald, Sean Fox, John & Julien Dingle, Conor Byrne, Dave Fox, Robbie McGrane and John Burke. During the season, we also lost Kevin O'Hanlon to a serious knee injury, as well as Andy Myler, Pat Meghen and newcomer Shane Moran - also to lengthy injuries - while another newcomer Benny Magennis transferred back to Willow Park in January. But on a positive note, we welcomed back Joey Byrne from his travels and Sean O'Shea together with some others who joined: Owen & Brian Martin, Alan Barry, Gavin O'Donovan and Richie Donnelly.
- Having finished last season very strongly with 7 goals in the final 5 games, Aidan Hyland scored 12 goals in his first 7 games of this season (including a remarkable 5 goals* in August against Arthur Griffith Park FC), thus scoring in 12 consecutive games and smashing the previous record of scoring in 9 consecutive games set by Joey Byrne in 2005-2006. Aidan was also the Club's leading goal scorer on 30 goals - only the 4th player to score 30 or more in a season: however Joey still holds the record of 36 goals in a season. The 2nds leading scorer was again Ron Doyle (with 14). [All goal-scorers attached].

**John Gleeson scoring six goals in a cup game in the Phoenix Park around 1980 is still a record.*

➤ Club Captain Anto Dunne only missed one game and Aidan Hyland only missed two of the 31 games played by the firsts! That showed true dedication. [Games played by all attached].

➤ The 17th Annual Willie Kissane Tournament took place in August 2014 in the VEC Sportsgrounds in Terenure. The winners (after a penalty shoot-out) were Knocklyon Utd. with VEC Fc (right) finishing as runners-up.



➤ I have to thank the managers - on behalf of the Club - for their tireless work throughout the season. It is a thankless job in many ways! Well done to 1st team manager Paul Hutchinson, and 2nd team managers Dave Carroll (Jayo) & John Doyle.

➤ Thanks to the other members of the club who assisted the managers and the Club along the way. For example, Neil Spring's hard work with Pick-a-Winner; and Dave Carroll's and Brendan Giffney's Tuesday night training sessions: and of course Noel Ryan.

➤ Well done and thanks also to Brendan Giffney in his second year as Honorary Secretary. Brendan also organised a trip to Carlingford in June 2014, as part of our 40th anniversary celebrations, although very little football was played!

➤ Our thanks go to our Honorary Treasurer Séamus Doherty for his management and reconciling of the accounts. This wasn't all that he did! He arranged trophies, the Willie Kissane tournament, etc. etc. Séamus also had to balance these activities with his work as Hon. Treasurer on the UCFL Committee, which is very demanding. It wasn't an easy year health-wise for Séamus as you all know. Because of his enforced absence during the season, a significant amount of monies remain outstanding from you, the members of the Club, which you will see from this season's accounts. This is really unacceptable as it's so easy to pay monies owed directly through the Bank Account. It is great to see Séamus back to himself and in full health, so expect a knock on your door, if you owe anything to the Club.

➤ On the social side, there was a special function to celebrate our 40th season. Our very successful 40th Anniversary B-B-Q was held in the Morrison Hotel on Ormond Quay on 11th October 2014 and there were nearly 80 in attendance. (Regrettably, many still owe money for these tickets). Apart from present-day players, we were privileged to have with us on the night John Gleeson (joined in 1977), Mick Finnerty (1982), Frank Devereux (1985), and the 4 x B's who joined in 1988 - Billy Sweeney, Brian Kelly, Brian Langton, Brendan Mateer: Padraic Donlon was also there: John Eager and Ken Donoghue (1984) who are probably better known for the sterling work they put in for many years as Treasurer and Secretary (12 years) respectively: Karl McCafferty (Cafu) - who kept the 3rds going for years was there, as was Conor MacArtain, Tommy Doherty, Paul Hutchinson, Shane Spring and finally Dara Doherty, who flew in especially from Norway where he is now domiciled.



Our guests included the current Chairman of the UCFL Barney Blood and Barney's brother - a good friend to the Club over many years and a former President of the Football Association of Ireland - David Blood. Our Groundsman Nicky couldn't make it but his assistant Ken Carpenter did.

The Chief Executive of the Football Association of Ireland John Delaney graciously accepted our invitation and attended together with his partner and friends.

- With regard to fundraising, www.pickawinner.ie has always provided a great (and much needed) source of income for the Club as does the very successful FAI draw. It was expected that they would have prevented us increasing membership fees: however, they were very poorly subscribed to by the members, with a profit of only 25% of previous seasons. The days are gone when we can expect to receive significant sponsorship. Unless players/members of the Club make better efforts to make these a success again, membership fees will have to be increased in order to survive.
- Our annual Table Quiz towards the Injured Players' Fund was held in Templeogue Utd's Clubhouse on Saturday, 7th February 2015. Thanks to those who sponsored prizes. Winners with Quizmaster (right).
- Unfortunately the VEC Golf Society annual June trip failed to materialize for the 2nd successive year, mainly due to lack of interest.
- On Saturday, 6th June 2015, we had our annual Presentation of Trophies and Awards in Brady's. Sicco Lansu received the second team player-of-the-year award (2014-15); Aidan Hyland received the first team player-of-the-year award (2014-15) as well as the award for top goal-scorer in the Club (2014-15) - with 30 goals.
- VEC Football Club has always strived to provide the best possible experience for the players including top class pitches, the best facilities possible and the best gear, footballs & kits. It helps create a great vibe throughout the club and makes it special. We also give the players (current & past) the best online experience with our website. While there has been a great social outlet in the club in the past, this has diminished somewhat in recent times. We need to resurrect those meetings after matches (in Brady's) and create talking points, exchange experiences and news from the VEC teams and most importantly keep everyone constantly thinking about the club and their next game. We also receive some sponsorship from Brady's in Terenure - for which we are grateful - on the basis that we visit that establishment frequently! It would be nice if players from both VEC teams would make an effort to drop in after their games on Saturdays, whenever possible - even if only for a recovery sports drink! Maybe we could plan this for once a month as a start.
- Again thanks to the groundsman in Terenure (Nick and Ken) for having the facilities in tip top shape: to our sponsors Brady's Pub (*supplied 40" TV for the raffle in the Morrison*) for their support and to Templeogue United for making their facilities available to us at various times.
- Thanks to you the loyal players, without whom we would not have such a successful Club.
- Finally we need more club members to "step up to the plate" and help with the weekly running of the club, for too long the same few are left to do most of the work!



David Spring, Chairman

18th June 2015