

Tangerine News

The Newsletter of St. Kevins Boys Club

May 2017

Barcelona Deny Saints on Penos for 2nd Time



Barcelona managed to deny the Saints their first Academy Cup title as they came out on top in a thrilling penalty shoot-out for the second year on the trot.

Last year the Saints managed to come from behind late in the game to secure a draw and in a real case of *deja vu* they managed the same feat again this year.

Barcelona had dominated the first half and but for some excellent goalkeeping from Fiachra Pagel they could have been home and dry by half time. Early in the second half they got the goal that their play deserved from centre forward, Xavier Planas Cruz. Cruz was involved in the second goal fifteen minutes later when following good work by Pol Munoz Mela he laid the ball off for Aleix Garrido Canizares to score.

At this stage it looked all over for the Saints but through sheer grit and determination they managed to drag themselves back into the game as Evan Ferguson scored from a tight angle with just three minutes left to play.

From then on it was frantic stuff and when the fourth official held up the board to reveal there would be an additional four minutes we all knew that there was a chance.

Sure enough with just a minute left the Saints were awarded a free kick to the right of the Barca goal and Jamie Mullins whipped in a brilliant cross. Ben Curtis flicked the ball on and Ferguson was on hand to force the ball in off the upright.

To say the ground went wild would be an understatement!

It was on to penalties and Barcelona showed true class as they dispatched four terrific spot kicks. Unfortunately the Saints couldn't do the same and the trophy went to the Spanish giants.

What our Under 13s achieved should not be underestimated. They pitted themselves against the best academy in the world, an academy that sees millions of euros poured into the development of players every year, and managed to match them on the pitch.

Overall, the Academy Cup was a fantastic feast of free flowing football played by teams who showed how the game should be played – with all the teams looking to win the game rather than afraid to lose it which unfortunately it all too prevalent in modern day football.

It all kicked off on Thursday night with a reception in the Clubhouse for the visiting teams and local dignitaries. Ken Donohoe, SKB Director of Football was on hand to welcome all in attendance and spoke of the importance of the tournament for both St Kevins Boys and schoolboy football in Ireland. He warned of the threat to both the Academy Cup and St Kevins Boys with the

failure of the FAI to include the Club in the proposed national leagues – something that raised a number of eyebrows from our visiting teams.

Friday morning saw our volunteers gather early to be given their assignments. As ever there was great banter among the volunteers despite the early hour and the long days that lay ahead for them.

The first game saw the teams being introduced to Lord Mayor of Dublin, Brendan Carr by SKB Chairman, Michael O'Callaghan and then the games got underway.



Lord Mayor, Brendan Carr meets the Saints and KRC Genk

Newcomers KRC Genk faced our own Under 13s and the game was evenly matched until just before the break. A stunning save by Fiachra Pagel in the Saints goal changed everything as within a minute a rare error at the back for Genk saw Evan Ferguson pounce on a mistimed pass, round the keeper and score from a narrow angle. Funnily enough his goal against Barcelona was almost identical!

The second half had only just kicked off when the Saints doubled the lead with a stunning strike from Alex O'Brien and he added a third goal on 10 minutes to see the Saints cruise to a comfortable 3-0 victory over a clearly shell shocked Belgian team.

The second game of the morning saw Deportivo La Coruna defeat West Bromwich Albion 2-1.

Later that afternoon a resurgent Genk team played Olympique Marseilles who were making their first appearance in the tournament. The game ended 2-2 but the scoreline didn't do justice to the Belgian team as they should have been 6-0 up by the end of the first half. In the end Marseilles managed to grab a late equaliser to save their blushes.



Only Shadow would find the only pitch side seats at the Academy Cup

The last game on the Friday saw both Spanish teams, Barcelona and Deportivo, both previous Academy Cup winners, face each other. It turned out to be a very close encounter with a goal from Narcis Costa Hrytsuk as time ran out seeing Barcelona recording their first win.

Report continues inside

Academy Cup sees Barcelona Crowned Champions

As the crowds streamed out of Shanowen Road the army of volunteers got busy cleaning up and making preparations for the following day.

Late in the evening our Director of Football, who should have been off shaking hands with our visiting teams, was astride the grass cutter making sure the pitch was looking it's best for the following morning – the man never stops!

Saturday morning was like groundhog day as the SKB army gathered to get their instructions.

The first game saw the Saints play Marseilles and following a scoreless first half the Saints opened the scoring through Adam Coyle. Marseilles grabbed a goal back to see the game finish 1-1 and safely see the Saints into the semi-finals as group winners.

Next up was West Brom and Barcelona and what a lot of people thought was one of the best games of the weekend. Barcelona grabbed the lead and were looking like they would win the game but a defensive mix up saw the ball fall to Reyes Cleary on the edge of the area and he coolly lifted it into the net to see the game end 1-1.

So the afternoon semi-finals saw St Kevins Boys face Deportivo La Coruna and Barcelona up against Olympique Marseilles.



The Saints celebrate their semi final win

The Saints booked their place in the final with a thrilling 2-0 victory against a very good Deportivo side as Evan Ferguson and Ben Curtis scored the goals.

Barcelona saw off Marseilles comfortably 3-0 to set up a meeting, again with the Saints.

Yet again as the crowds left we started the task of cleaning up and preparing for the finals the following day and yet again Ken stayed late as he gave the grass a slight trim and rolled the pitch.

Sunday morning and the SKB army left their Easter Eggs until later as we all met up for the final games.



West Brom played Genk in the 5th/6th place playoff with the Belgians registering their first win of the weekend. Next up Deportivo dispatched Marseilles 3-0 in the 3rd/4th place play off. The two teams were led onto the pitch by our Little Saints Development Squad (pictured above).

And then onto the final and joy and heartbreak in equal measures for the Saints. Our own Under 8s led the teams out onto the pitch and following the pre match formalities the teams kicked off and the game got underway.

As reported already Barcelona looked to be on their way to victory until the dying minutes when the Saints managed to secure a draw and bring the game to penalties.

Barcelona were only the second team to win the Academy Cup twice and in fairness to them they were an outstanding team with incredible talent.

Despite the good weather it was decided to present the trophies in the hall and it was a good decision as we got a quick shower of rain to remind us all that we live in Ireland during the game. While the final was being played there was an army of people setting up the hall for the proceedings.

Ken presented the leading goalscorer trophy to Evan Ferguson and the goalkeeper of the tournament to Fiachra Pagel both of St Kevins Boys. There was a special award to the St Kevins Player of the Tournament in honour of the late, great Lar Madden and it was rightly won by Sean Grehan. The Player of the Tournament went to Barcelona midfielder, Adriá Capdevila Puigmal.

There were a number of speeches by the visiting teams who all praised the organisation, hospitality and quality of the tournament and all hoped to be invited back next year.



Some of our Catering Crew who rarely see the light of day over the weekend

Most people don't see everything that goes into the organisation of a tournament of this scale and over the weekend we had a crew of volunteers catering for the teams, acting as liaison officers to ensure that the teams' needs were met, driving the bus (courtesy of Dublin Bus) that transported the teams to and from the hotel (well done Dave Bolger, top job!) and indeed dropping them and collecting them from town when they felt the need for retail therapy, sorting dressing rooms, keeping social media sites up to date (a magnificent job Foxy), updating the scores on the Club website (well done Sharon) and a host of other tasks.



Lunchtime for the volunteers

During the breaks in the games these people were still in the Clubhouse beavering away so all we can say is THANK YOU and without you it wouldn't happen.

The teams were very appreciative of all that was done for them and the photos of Barcelona and Genk in Lifestyle and indeed the clip of the Genk players singing along with the busker in Henry Street are just priceless.

Finally, it must be said that Club coach Alan Caffrey, in conjunction with those already involved in our Under 13s – Joe Quinn, Willie Burke, Karl Lambe, Rob Doran and Frank Loftus, did a tremendous job in preparing our team to take part and perform so well in the games. Most people are unaware that this team were on the training pitch every day in the week leading up to the games and their hard work paid off. Well done to every one of you and especially the players.

Saints Look To Make SFAI History

St Kevins Boys are looking to make history in Irish football by winning four of the five Schoolboy Football All Ireland trophies during the month of May.

Following a gruelling campaign that saw our teams cover most parts of Ireland we are delighted to say that four of the teams qualified for the Skechers All Ireland Cup finals that will be played in Jackson Park on Saturday 13th May and Sunday 14th May.

This cup is the top prize in schoolboy football as it entails playing the best teams from throughout Ireland so to have four of our teams reach the finals is a tremendous achievement in itself. The next step for us is to go and win all the finals to place St Kevins Boys at the very top of schoolboy football in Ireland – maybe then the powers that be might welcome us into the proposed national leagues. Interestingly enough there is only one League of Ireland team involved in the five national finals.

Our Under 12 DDSL Premier team who had travelled from one end of the country to the other as they played Carndonagh in Donegal and Middleton in Cork will now face Shamrock Rovers in the final. Meanwhile our Under 13 DDSL Premier team who are fresh from their encounter with Barcelona will face St Josephs Boys following their emphatic 8-0 victory over Evergreen in the semi-finals.

The Under 14 DDSL Premier recorded a 3-0 win at home over Middleton in the semi-final and now face Belvedere in the final.

And finally our Under 16 DDSL Premier team who were the only Saints team to win the SFAI Cup last year will face Galway side, Mervue United in the final following their 5-1 win over Villa United of Waterford.

So **GET OUT AND SUPPORT THE SAINTS!!!!**

Sat. 13th May: SKB U14s vs Belvedere KO 12 noon

Sat. 13th May: SKB U16s vs Mervue United KO 2.00pm

Sun. 14th May: SKB U12s vs Shamrock Rovers KO 12 noon

Sun. 14th May: SKB U13s vs St Josephs Boys KO 2.00pm

All games are being played in Jackson Park, Kiltiernan



Meanwhile our Under 17 DDSL Premier team (pictured above) defeated Sacred Hearts Under 18s to progress to the final of the Leinster Youths Cup where they will meet Nurney Villa who knocked out our Under 18s in the other semi-final. Revenge will be sweet! The final will be played at 2.00pm on Saturday 20th May in Newbridge Town FCs ground**again lend your support!!**

SKB Internationals



Four of our players were part of the ROI Under 15s squad that played in games against Norway and the Czech Republic in Prague during April.

Congratulations to Jack Funge, Armstrong Okoflex (now with Arsenal), Karl O'Callaghan and Sean McEvoy.

Meanwhile there are five current and ex-Saints in the Under 17s trip to Croatia so best of luck to Brian Maher, Cian Clarke, Kameron Ledwidge, Gavin Kilkenny and Luke Nolan.

In Profile

This month we decided to catch up with two of our Under 15s following their fantastic win in the Futuri Cup in Italy



Ross & Darragh with the Futuri Cup

Ross Reynolds has played for the Saints since joining the Club's Little Saints Coaching Academy back when he was a small lad. Since that time he has developed into a very talented left full and has enjoyed many years of success with the Saints. Meanwhile Darragh Burns joined the Saints at Under 13

level and has proved himself to be a fantastic left sided midfielder who bagged five goals for the team in Italy.

When asked about their trip to the Ravenna Tournament Darragh said that last year they were more nervous heading to the tournament as they were playing a year up as U14s playing against U15 but this year they went with a lot more confidence in themselves. Ross agreed and said that this year the plan was to play their normal game regardless of the opposition which helped.

Ross did point out that they found the opposition to be more physical than when they play Academy teams in the UK but that it didn't intimidate them in any way since their experiences last time around. Darragh said that the intention of the team was to go there and win the tournament as they both felt they had the squad of players capable of doing it. They felt that some of their opponents underestimated them which helped in the earlier games.

Both of the boys said that the games were very draining. The boys played three 50 minutes games per day and all of the players were tired and suffered from sore muscles but they helped and encouraged each other all the time which got them through.

Ross said that the worst thing about the tournament was the bus journey from the airport to the ground as it took three and a half hours to get there after their early start in Dublin. Darragh agreed and added that the heat was a killer in the games - one morning it was 19 degrees at 9.00am!

There was no time to get bored hanging around between games as the breaks were quite short so the lads said that sometimes you might have just over an hour between games which was tough.

They both enjoyed the evenings as they got to have dinner together and generally hang out which cemented the already strong bond between the players and as they were sharing 5 or 6 to a room it was great laugh especially with one joker in the room throwing biscuits at you as you tried to sleep (but Darragh refused to grass you out Sam!!).

Ross and Darragh were speechless with the reception they received when they got back to Dublin - neither of them expected the welcome they received and it made both of them proud to walk out in their Saints gear to a packed Arrivals hall. They said that complete strangers who were exiting the area were congratulating them on their win - a brilliant feeling!

The hopes for the future for both players is to play the game professionally. Ross said that he believes St Kevins Boys are the best Club around for helping players to progress and prepares you well for your goal of playing the game full time. He was full of praise for all his coaches especially Caffo. Darragh agreed that the Saints was the place to be to prepare him for his future goals and was delighted to be part of the team.

Finally we asked the boys for their favourite team and player. Darragh straight away said Man United and Lionel Messi while Ross said Spurs and Deli Alli - his new hero!

Saints Bring Home Part of Italy



Our Under 15 with the Futuri Campioni Cup in Ravenna

Last year St Kevins Boys Under 15s were invited to take part in the Futuri Campioni Under 15 European Cup that was taking place in Ravenna, which is on the Adriatic Coast in Italy north of Rimini.

Our Under 15s were unable to take part due to other commitments in Ireland – they were playing their SFAI Cup final on the same weekend so the tournament organisers agreed that our Under 14s could take part. Although they were playing up a year they still gave a good account of themselves. This year they returned to take part in the tournament and arrived home as champions.

This tournament, like most tournaments in mainland Europe features the professional academies from Europe, in particular a number of very strong Eastern European clubs so the standard is extremely high. Our lads were not overawed at the opposition they faced having taken part last year but it appears a few teams underestimated the quality of our Under 15s and paid the price for their error.

On the first day they won all three games that they played against local side, San Pietro in Vincoli, FC Minsk of Belarus and Nogometno Drustvo from Slovenia – all the games are 50 minutes duration, played in intense heat so credit to our players for showing great stamina throughout the day.

The following day saw them win their last group game against San Gwann of Malta to see them qualify for the last 16 and a game against French side Villiers FC.

A goal from Sean McEvoy and a hat trick from Ebookah Favor saw them beat the French team 4-0 and in the quarter final a penalty shootout following a 0-0 draw against Slovakian side Spartak Trnava saw them through to the semi-finals, where goalkeeper, Aaron Davis made two magnificent saves

Three of the teams from the Saints group ended up in the semi-finals so the Saints faced Nogometno Drustvo again and despite going a goal behind they went on to win 2-1 and a date with the English Schools Academy team BWB03 who will see six of their players sign professional contracts in the summer.

The Saints top scorer, Darragh Burns scored the only goal of the game early in the first half to see the Saints lift the trophy.

The next question was how do we get the trophy on a Ryanair flight? Step forward the Ryanair team who went above and beyond the call of duty in offering to place the magnificent trophy in the cockpit for safe keeping but instead the Saints opted to use a free seat on the flight. A hero's welcome awaited the players as they exited the Arrivals area in Dublin airport as the assembled parents and supporters had banners and balloons and plenty of cheering to see them safely home.

Snippets



Our Under 8s were delighted to have their photo taken with ex Saints, Ronan Finn and Luke Byrne who both play for Shamrock Rovers now. Straight after the photo our lads escorted the Barcelona and St Kevins Boys teams onto the pitch for the final.



Jamie Gray, Mikey Cregan, Luke Wade Slater and Liam Brady

Last year we had four players from our Under 17s and Under 18s head off to join Stevenage Borough and at the time questions were asked as to why? Well there was a very interesting article recently in the Evening Herald regarding the lads' choice of club. Stevenage play in English League Division 2 and are currently pushing for promotion to League 1. Recently Jamie Gray made his debut for the first team and the other lads are highly regarded by the club as they line out for the reserves.

The club itself is a totally professional outfit with a stadium and training grounds that put most of the League of Ireland clubs to shame. The boys are all signed as professionals and if you think that's the extent of how far they will proceed ask yourself where were Bournemouth, Leicester and Burnley a number of years ago!

Ex-Saint Set to Rock Slane



Robbie back in his playing days

Later in May, Slane Castle will play host to Guns n Roses along with a rising Irish band, Otherkin. Now you might say so what! Well sitting on the drum stool and keeping their driving rhythm going is none other than Robbie Summons who played his schoolboy football for the Saints before finding rock and roll. Naturally we would like to wish Robbie and the rest of the band the very best of luck and we look forward to them headlining Slane themselves in years to come. I doubt that the band will be fazed by Slane as in the last twelve months they have found themselves invited to play any number of large festivals throughout Europe – and all this as they await the release of their debut album!

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