

This week was an extremely encouraging one for staff and students in Scoil Ui Mhuiri. One of our excellent third years, TJ Molloy, played his first series of matches in the UEFA Development Tournament in Serbia with the Under 15 Republic of Ireland team. For any player that would be the zenith of success but on top of that came the great honour and glory of winning the championship!

TJ, who already plays for Dundalk Juniors, has stellar ability and he also has a very positive and humble attitude. His first match was played in Serbia on the 21st of November and brought together a very capable Irish side that went on to beat the Greeks 3-1. TJ scored his first goal for Ireland twenty minutes into the first half, about a half hour later it was twinned by Cork City player David Dunne. As Ireland entered the second half, Dunne scored his brace after five minutes of play. The Greek side eventually responded with a goal in the late stages of the second half, but the Irish were able to keep the determined, yet frustrated, Greek side at bay.

Later that week, the Irish side drew with Serbia in a tense game that went to penalties – where yet again the Irish won 4-3 - but there was much more to come!

On the 26th Ireland met Venezuela in the Stara Pazova stadium beset by a hazardous snow storm. It didn't cool the fire in the Irish side. It was a tough first half with many near misses on both sides, but it was TJ, five minutes into the second half, who secured his second goal for Ireland a huge head start for the young Irishmen. Venezuela came back in the sixty fifth with a goal from a free kick but two more goals from the Irish side late in the game made it a 3-1 world championship win for Ireland.

The contribution that TJ made to that win is extraordinary and we feel nothing but pride for his achievements. It's been gratifying to see a son of SUM do so well and go so far. We know this only the beginning of something very special for TJ and we wish him every blessing. Well done indeed.