

= Linfield F.C. =

Linfield Football Club is a semi @-@ professional football club based in Belfast , Northern Ireland . The club was founded in 1886 as Linfield Athletic Club , and in 1905 moved into the current home of Windsor Park , which is also the home of the Northern Ireland national team . The club plays in the NIFL Premiership ? the highest level of the Northern Ireland Football League . Linfield 's main rival is Glentoran ? the other half of Belfast 's Big Two . This rivalry traditionally includes a league derby played on Boxing Day each year , which usually attracts the largest league attendance of the season . Linfield 's average league attendance at home is approximately 2 @, @ 000 , the highest average in the division and roughly twice as large as the league 's overall average , which has remained relatively steady at 800 ? 900 spectators per game since the current league format began in 2008 . The Blues are managed by former Northern Ireland international and record goalscorer David Healy , who was appointed in October 2015 to succeed Warren Feeney . Feeney resigned in order to become assistant manager ( and later the manager ) of Newport County .

Historically , as the most dominant club in Northern Irish football , Linfield holds several domestic records and even two world records . The club was one of the eight founding members of the Irish League in 1890 , as well as the inaugural winners and one of only three clubs to have competed in every top division season , having never suffered relegation . Linfield has won a record 51 league championships to date ? more than twice as many titles as any other Northern Irish club and the second @-@ highest tally of national top @-@ flight titles won by any club worldwide ? behind the world record of 54 Scottish league titles won by Rangers . Linfield holds the world record for the most trophies won in a single season . In the 1921 ? 22 season , Linfield became the first , and to date only club in the world to achieve the feat of winning seven titles in one season , and in the 1961 ? 62 season they emulated the feat with a second seven @-@ trophy haul ? the only recorded instances in the world of this feat being accomplished . In 2006 , the club also won all four available domestic trophies to achieve a quadruple , and has also won three domestic trebles along with a world record 23 domestic doubles . The club has lifted the Irish Cup a record 42 times , the League Cup a record nine times , and has been all @-@ Ireland champion ( excluding the 12 all @-@ Ireland league titles won prior to the partition of Ireland in 1921 ) on four occasions ? 1962 , 1971 , 1980 and 2005 . The club has never won a European trophy , but did reach the quarter @-@ finals of the 1966 ? 67 European Cup .

= = History = =

= = = Formation and early years ( 1886 ? 1918 ) = = =

The club was founded in March 1886 in an area of south Belfast known as Sandy Row by workers at the Ulster Spinning Company 's Linfield Mill . Originally known as Linfield Athletic Club , the team played on ground at the back of the mill known as the Meadow . However , success on the field meant that the club had to accommodate bigger crowds , so this brought about a move to Ulsterville Avenue in 1889 . In 1890 , Bob Milne signed for the club from the Gordon Highlanders . The Scot would soon become a key member of the team , helping the Blues to lift the Irish Cup at the young age of 20 . The club stayed at Ulsterville for five years before housing development on the ground in 1894 meant that the club had to move on once again . Between 1894 and 1897 , Linfield played all of their home games at opponents ' grounds until the president of the club , Robert Gibson ? who had donated the Gibson Cup trophy to the Irish League for the championship ? along with other club members eventually secured a ground lease at Myrtlefield in the Balmoral area of the city .

However , this was another temporary home . The club stayed here until 1905 , when they moved into Windsor Park . The club 's first silverware at Windsor arrived in the 1906 ? 07 season , with the club lifting both the league title and the County Antrim Shield . This would be the first of a trio of league titles , with the 1907 ? 08 and 1908 ? 09 league titles to follow .

In 1910 , team captain Bob Milne left the club with a legacy as one of Linfield 's best ever players .

He had amassed nine Irish Cups , eight league titles , and had earned 27 international caps for Ireland during his time at the club . Another Scot , Marshall McEwan , joined Linfield in 1911 at the age of 26 . He had previously played for Blackpool , Bolton Wanderers and Chelsea . McEwan is perhaps best remembered for his performance in the 1913 Irish Cup final , described by some fans as the best in years . McEwan retired in 1916 , but remained in Belfast and later opened several businesses . In 1915 , the Irish League was suspended as a result of World War I. In its place , a temporary unofficial league known as the Belfast & District League was set up and ran for four seasons until the return of the Irish League in 1919 . As this was an unofficial competition , any titles during this time are not counted as Irish League Championships . Linfield won this competition twice , in 1915 ? 16 along with the Irish Cup , and in 1917 ? 18 .

= = = Two seven @-@ trophy seasons ( 1921 ? 22 & 1961 ? 62 ) = = =

In the 1921 ? 22 season , the club achieved a clean sweep of all the domestic competitions they entered ? the Irish League , Irish Cup , County Antrim Shield , Alhambra Cup , Belfast Charity Cup , Gold Cup and the City Cup . The club followed this up the next season by winning a treble including the Irish League , Irish Cup and County Antrim Shield in 1922 ? 23 . In 1927 , Joe Bambrick signed for the Blues , and would become one of the club 's all @-@ time top goal scorers . In the 1929 ? 30 season , Bambrick scored a remarkable 94 goals ? a record that surprisingly stood for only one season , until Glentoran 's Fred Roberts scored an incredible 96 goals during the following campaign to break Bambrick 's record . In 1930 , Bambrick scored six goals in one game for Ireland ? a 7 ? 0 win over Wales . The 1931 ? 32 , 1933 ? 34 and 1934 ? 35 league titles followed for Linfield , before Bambrick left the club to join Chelsea in 1935 having scored 286 league goals in just 183 games for Linfield ? a remarkable ratio of 1 @.@ 56 goals per game . The Irish League was once again suspended in 1940 as a result of the Second World War , with another temporary unofficial league set up which was called the Northern Regional League . Linfield won this league three times ? in 1942 ? 43 , 1944 ? 45 and 1945 ? 46 . This league ran for seven seasons until the return of the Irish League once again in 1947 .

In 1957 , Jackie Milburn famously signed for the Blues as player @-@ manager from Newcastle United , and won the Ulster Footballer of the Year award for his performances during his first season at the club . Milburn 's presence dramatically increased average crowds at matches , with the Belfast Telegraph calling it the " signing of the century " . Milburn is famous for scoring Linfield 's first ever goals in European competition . In September 1959 , he scored both goals against IFK Göteborg in a 2 ? 1 Linfield win at Windsor Park in the first leg of the 1959 ? 60 European Cup preliminary round tie ? the club 's European debut . Milburn was also the Irish league 's top goal scorer on two occasions before leaving the club in 1960 to join Yiewsley . In 1962 , forty years after Linfield 's remarkable seven @-@ trophy season , the club repeated the feat in the 1961 ? 62 season under manager Isaac McDowell . They won another seven @-@ trophy haul including the Irish League , Irish Cup , County Antrim Shield , Gold Cup , City Cup and the Ulster Cup . They also won the North @-@ South Cup final that season , but it was actually the conclusion of the 1960 ? 61 competition . Fixture congestion had meant that the final could not be played before the end of the previous season , so it was rescheduled to take place during the 1961 ? 62 season . A commemorative event was held in April 2012 , celebrating the 90th and 50th anniversaries of the 1921 ? 22 and 1961 ? 62 seven @-@ trophy @-@ winning teams .

= = = Roy Coyle 's 31 @-@ trophy haul ( 1975 ? 1997 ) = = =

Following a spell in England playing for Sheffield Wednesday and Grimsby Town , Roy Coyle joined the club as player @-@ manager , taking over the reigns from outgoing manager Billy Campbell . After a tough start to his managerial career at the club , Coyle went on to become the most successful Linfield manager in history , winning numerous trophies during his time at Windsor Park . His first season in charge was without silverware . In fact , having been Irish Cup runners @-@ up the previous season when Coleraine defeated the Blues 1 ? 0 after two replays , Linfield suffered

one of the biggest upsets in Northern Irish football history when B Division club Carrick Rangers defeated the Blues 2 ? 1 in the 1975 ? 76 Irish Cup final on 10 April 1976 . This giant @-@ killing act in which a junior club defeated a senior club in the Irish Cup final had only happened twice before in the cup 's history , and not since 1955 ? 21 years earlier . The club stuck by Coyle however , and it was not long before he brought silverware to the club . His first honour arrived in the 1976 ? 77 season in the form of the County Antrim Shield . However , the Blues suffered defeat in the Irish Cup final for the third consecutive season when they once again lost out against Coleraine ? losing 4 ? 1 . The 1977 ? 78 season saw the club win an Irish League , Irish Cup and Ulster Cup treble . Runners @-@ up in the last three Irish Cup finals , this time they were not to be denied . A 3 ? 1 victory over Ballymena United secured the club 's third trophy of the season .

Coyle retired from playing duties in 1980 , but continued as manager . In 1982 , future manager David Jeffrey joined the club following a stint in the Manchester United youth team and played for Coyle under many of his trophy successes , captaining the side for much of that time . One of Coyle 's biggest achievements as manager was leading the club to six consecutive league titles between 1981 ? 82 and 1986 ? 87 , equalling the record for the most consecutive titles which was set by Belfast Celtic in 1947 ? 48 . 1986 was the year that Noel Bailie began what would turn out to be a 25 @-@ year career at the club . Although a defender for most of that time , Bailie began as a left midfielder .

Coyle 's final trophy as Linfield manager was the Gold Cup in 1989 ? 90 . During his 15 years at the club he had amassed 10 League titles , 3 Irish Cups , 7 Gold Cups , 4 Ulster Cups , 5 County Antrim Shields , the Irish League Cup , and the Tyler Cup ? 31 major honours in total . Coyle left the club in April 1990 . Eric Bowyer was appointed as Coyle 's replacement , but it was a relatively unsuccessful reign that only lasted for two years until he was sacked in 1992 , with David Jeffrey also leaving the club that year to join Ards . Next into the managerial hot seat was Trevor Anderson , who brought more silverware to the club during his five years in charge between 1992 and 1997 , including 2 Irish League titles and 2 Irish Cups . After retiring as a player in 1996 following a one @-@ year spell at Larne , David Jeffrey returned to the club as Anderson 's assistant manager . This partnership lasted until Anderson resigned on the morning of 4 January 1997 . Anderson later became Director of Football at Newry Town .

= = = The David Jeffrey years ( 1997 ? 2014 ) = = =

Jeffrey took charge of the team in a caretaker capacity for a league match against Portadown that afternoon , and remained as caretaker manager for the following match against Ballyclare Comrades in the Floodlit Cup on 7 January . He was officially appointed as manager on a permanent basis on 8 January 1997 . In his first full season in charge he led the club to three trophies ? the League Cup , County Antrim Shield , and Floodlit Cup ? and narrowly missed out on the league title to champions Cliftonville by four points . Jeffrey won his first league title as manager in the 1999 ? 2000 season however , along with a third consecutive League Cup triumph . The Blues retained the league title the following season , and also won the Charity Shield and the County Antrim Shield . The 2001 ? 02 season saw the club win a cup double , lifting both the Irish Cup and the League Cup . In 2005 , the inauguration of the Setanta Cup meant the return of an all @-@ Ireland cup competition for the first time since 1980 . The Blues qualified as league champions , but started the competition poorly ? losing 2 ? 1 away to Longford Town . However , they recovered to eventually reach the final against Shelbourne , and although the Blues were major underdogs going into the match against professional League of Ireland opposition , they overcame the odds to become inaugural winners of the competition by defeating Shelbourne 2 ? 0 . Incidentally , Linfield were in fact the reigning all @-@ Ireland champions at the time , having won the final staging of the Tyler Cup in 1980 before the competition was discontinued .

The 2005 ? 06 season was the most successful of Jeffrey 's tenure , with the Blues achieving a clean sweep of all four domestic competitions ; the Irish Premier League , Irish Cup , Irish League Cup , and County Antrim Shield . However , they did fail to retain the Setanta Cup as defending champions when they were narrowly beaten 1 ? 0 at Windsor Park in the semi @-@ finals by

eventual winners , Drogheda United . In April 2010 , former captain Noel Bailie made his 1,000th appearance for the club when he played in a 0 ? 0 draw against Crusaders in the league . A few days later , Linfield won their 49th league title after a 1 ? 0 home win against Cliftonville . The following year , a landmark 50th league title arrived during the club 's 125th anniversary year . Bailie retired from football in April 2011 at the age of 40 , after making 1 @, @ 013 appearances for the club in all competitions since making his debut against Ballymena United in March 1989 . Linfield subsequently retired the number 11 shirt in his honour . In the 2011 ? 12 season , Linfield won a league and cup double for the third consecutive season and the sixth time in seven seasons ? a record 51st league title , 42nd Irish Cup win , and 23rd double overall .

The 2012 ? 13 season was undoubtedly a low ebb for the club under Jeffrey 's reign . The Blues were off the pace for most of the league campaign ? their season encapsulated in a 3 ? 1 home defeat by newly promoted Ballinamallard United in October 2012 . Cliftonville were the eventual champions , securing their fourth league title after defeating Linfield 3 ? 2 at Solitude on 13 April 2013 . Crusaders secured the runners @-@ up place , leaving the Blues in third place ? a distant 29 points behind the champions . The club went out of the 2013 Setanta Sports Cup after a heavy aggregate defeat in the quarter @-@ finals , went out of the League Cup at the semi @-@ final stage , and exited the Irish Cup in the fifth round after a replay . The club 's first Irish Cup defeat in four years was also the first time in 16 years they had lost their opening tie of the competition .

When the 2014 Setanta Sports Cup was confirmed in December 2013 , the club opted not to enter the competition , citing inconvenient fixture scheduling , reduced prize money , and the difficulty faced by Linfield supporters attending away games as the reasons behind their withdrawal . However , the club did not rule out future participation . League champions Cliftonville also withdrew from the competition for similar reasons , with the next two highest placed sides from the previous season 's league table ( Ballinamallard United and Coleraine ) being drafted in as replacements . In February 2014 , Jeffrey announced that he would be stepping down at the end of the 2013 ? 14 season , bringing an end to his trophy @-@ laden reign after 17 years . In March 2014 , the Blues lifted the County Antrim Shield for a record 43rd time by defeating Crusaders 4 ? 1 on penalties following a 0 ? 0 draw after extra time in the final . This was a significant milestone for Jeffrey ? his 31st and last trophy as Linfield manager , equalling Roy Coyle 's record . Jeffrey still had the opportunity to win a record @-@ breaking 32nd trophy as manager in the form of the 2013 ? 14 league title . However , despite topping the league table for much of the season , the Blues had to settle for the runners @-@ up spot , six points behind champions Cliftonville . Jeffrey 's reign came to a winning end with a 5 ? 2 victory over Glenavon on the final day of the 2013 ? 14 league season .

= = = Feeney & Healy ( 2014 ? present ) = = =

Former Northern Ireland international Warren Feeney succeeded Jeffrey as Linfield manager . Feeney had been player @-@ assistant manager at English Conference Premier side Salisbury City at the time of his appointment . His cousin , Lee Feeney , played for Linfield in two different spells between 1997 ? 1999 and 2002 ? 2003 . Former Blackburn Rovers player , Andy Todd , was appointed as Feeney 's assistant . Feeney 's only full season in charge of the club ended without silverware . The Blues challenged for the league title for most of the season , but ultimately had to settle for the runners @-@ up spot for the second successive season , behind champions Crusaders . One positive for the season was the team 's record in the four " Big Two " league derbies against Glentoran , of which the Blues won three and drew the other . The lowest point of the season for the team was undoubtedly a shock 1 ? 0 loss against second @-@ tier side Ballyclare Comrades in the second round of the 2014 ? 15 League Cup , while their 2014 ? 15 Irish Cup campaign ended when they were eliminated in the quarter @-@ finals after losing 3 ? 2 to eventual runners @-@ up Portadown .

In May 2015 , the Blues were invited to compete in the Setanta Sports Cup scheduled to take place in June 2015 . The club declined once again , with inconvenient fixture scheduling still remaining a concern . The competition was ultimately cancelled , when suitable fixture dates could not be agreed

upon . With the Blues top of the table after 10 games of the 2015 ? 16 NIFL Premiership season , Feeney 's reign came to an end in October 2015 , when he resigned to become assistant manager ( and subsequently the manager ) of English Football League Two side Newport County .

Former Northern Ireland striker and the country 's all @-@ time record international goalscorer David Healy was appointed as Feeney 's successor , with Andy Todd staying on as Healy 's assistant manager . However , in January 2016 Todd also departed the club to join Newport County and reunite with Warren Feeney , who had subsequently been promoted to County 's manager following the departure of John Sheridan . Todd once again became Feeney 's assistant manager .

= = Stadium = =

Since 1905 , Windsor Park in south Belfast has been Linfield 's home ground . In the initial years after the club was formed in 1886 , Linfield had to change grounds several times for various reasons such as housing development . The numerous ground changes and the club 's desire to have a permanent home with which to build an identity resulted in the purchase of a piece of land known as the ' bog meadows ' just off lower Windsor Avenue on 1 October 1904 . Later known as Windsor Park , this became the club 's permanent home as well as the venue for international matches . The first game at Windsor took place on 29 August 1905 , with Linfield playing out a 0 ? 0 draw against Distillery in a friendly match arranged to officially commemorate the opening of the stadium . The first competitive game played at the stadium took place just a few days later on 2 September 1905 , and ended with a 1 ? 0 win for Linfield over Glentoran ? the other half of Belfast 's Big Two ? though Belfast Celtic were Linfield 's main rivals at the time .

Windsor Park is the largest Association football stadium in Northern Ireland , with Glentoran 's ground , the Oval , being the next largest . The governing body of Northern Irish football , the Irish Football Association , leases the ground for use by the Northern Ireland national football team . The club currently receives 15 % of Northern Ireland international gate receipts as rent . This is controversial as rival Irish League clubs see this as giving Linfield an unfair advantage by allowing them to offer more attractive wages and have a larger squad than all of the other clubs . In 2010 , UEFA provided ? 500 @,@ 000 towards substantial refurbishment of the stadium , to increase capacity and improve safety .

In 2011 , the Northern Ireland Executive allocated £ 138 million for a major programme of stadium redevelopment throughout Northern Ireland , with £ 28 million allocated to the redevelopment of Windsor Park . In June 2012 , further details of the stadium 's redevelopment were released . The plan was to redevelop Windsor Park into an 18 @,@ 000 all @-@ seater stadium with a series of phased works originally intended to begin in the middle of 2013 . The redevelopment would include the demolition of the existing East and South Stand structures , to be replaced by new purpose built stands that would partially enclose the stadium ; complete renovation of the existing North and West Stands ; and construction of both new conferencing facilities and a new headquarters facility for the IFA .

In February 2013 , planning permission for the redevelopment was granted . The cost of the project was estimated to be around £ 29 @.@ 2 million , of which £ 25 @.@ 2 million would come from government funding . It was initially planned for the work to begin in September 2013 . Two months later however , Crusaders began legal proceedings against the redevelopment . The club called for the process to be judicially reviewed , believing it to be against European Union competition laws and also a form of State aid towards Linfield . When Crusaders played Linfield at Windsor Park at the end of April , their club officials were allegedly informed that they would not be welcome in the directors box or the boardroom during the game ? an apparent reaction to Crusaders ' legal challenge of the stadium redevelopment . In a hearing that took place on 22 May 2013 , Crusaders ' request was granted . It was ruled that it was a possibility for the redevelopment to be classed as state aid towards Linfield . The aspect of the challenge concerning competition law however , was dismissed .

In July 2013 , Crusaders agreed to a possible settlement brought forward by the judicial review . The details of the settlement were not made public , but Crusaders said that it had the " potential to

benefit the entirety of the football family " . In September 2013 , sports minister Carál Ní Chuilín said that she was still committed to making sure the redevelopment went ahead as scheduled , after previously stating that she would not sign off on the funding until the IFA resolved " governance issues " surrounding David Martin 's return to the role of deputy president .

In December 2013 , three months after the work was originally scheduled to begin , the redevelopment was finally given the green light . The sports minister signed off on £ 31 million to complete the project . The redevelopment finally got under way on 6 May 2014 after the 2013 ? 14 domestic season had finished , eight months later than originally planned . The work is due to be completed in 2015 . On 31 March 2015 , the West Stand of the stadium was sealed off after cracks in the structure were discovered . Construction work related to the stadium redevelopment had been ongoing behind the stand in the weeks prior to the damage , but it was not known if that was directly related . Originally planned for refurbishment as part of the redevelopment , it was later decided that the West Stand would be demolished and eventually replaced .

= = Supporters and rivalry = =

= = Big Two rivalry = =

Linfield 's main rivals are Glentoran from east Belfast ? a rivalry which is commonly known as Belfast 's Big Two . However , this term did not always refer to Linfield and Glentoran . Up until 1949 , the Big Two consisted of Linfield and Belfast Celtic , as they had traditionally been the two most successful clubs in Northern Irish football to that point . However , after Belfast Celtic withdrew from the league in 1949 , Glentoran gradually established themselves as Linfield 's biggest rivals . The earliest recorded match between the two clubs was played on 1 October 1887 ? just over a year after Linfield 's formation . A friendly match played at King 's Field , Westbourne in Ballymacarrett was won 3 ? 1 by Linfield ( then known as Linfield Athletic ) . In 1890 , the two teams played each other competitively for the first time , during the inaugural Irish League season . Linfield won 7 ? 0 at Musgrave Park on 18 October , and 6 ? 0 at Ulsterville Avenue on 21 March 1891 . The first meeting at the Oval took place on 8 October 1892 , and the first meeting at Windsor Park took place 13 years later on 2 September 1905 .

At the height of the second World War in 1941 , the Oval ? including terraces , offices , kits and club records ? was destroyed in a bombing raid on the nearby Harland & Wolff Shipyard . Glentoran approached Distillery to play at Grosvenor Park , which they did until the Oval was rebuilt with help from other clubs , most notably Cliftonville . During this time , Glentoran considered resigning from senior football to become a junior club , but after borrowing kits from Distillery and Crusaders they continued to compete at Grosvenor until 1949 . Out of 14 league games at Grosvenor Park however , they were only victorious over Linfield on one occasion .

Traditionally , the two clubs play each other in the league on Boxing Day every year , with the match usually attracting the biggest league attendance of the season . However , in 2009 the match was removed from the fixture list by the Irish Football Association due to crowd trouble at Windsor Park . The match returned in 2011 , and usually alternates venues between the Oval and Windsor Park each year .

= = Trophy dominance = =

Linfield and Glentoran have been the two most successful clubs in Northern Irish football to date , regularly being the two main contenders for honours . They have won more league titles , Irish Cups , and League Cups than any other clubs . Linfield hold the record for the most League titles ( 51 ) , Irish Cups ( 42 ) and League Cups ( nine ) . In comparison , Glentoran have won 23 league titles , 22 Irish Cups and seven League Cups . Almost half ( 47 @. @ 4 % ) of the 135 Irish Cup competitions to date have been won by one of the two clubs , with at least one of the clubs reaching the final on 88 occasions ( 65 @. @ 2 % of all finals ) , winning the cup a combined 64 times . Of

those 88 finals , the two clubs have met in 15 of them ? making it the most common final . Linfield have won eight of the head @-@ to @-@ head final meetings compared to Glentoran 's seven wins , with the most recent meeting between the two clubs in the final occurring in 2006 , when Linfield won 2 ? 1 to lift the Cup for the 37th time . Approximately two @-@ thirds of all Irish League titles have been won by one of the Big Two . Of the 114 completed league seasons , the title has been won by either club on 74 occasions ( 64 @. @ 9 % of them ) . The duo also make up two of the three clubs that have appeared in every season of the Irish League since its inception in 1890 ; the other club being Cliftonville .

As of April 2016 , the two clubs have met a total of 262 times in the Irish League ? excluding unofficial wartime results between 1915 ? 1919 ( first World War ) and 1940 ? 1947 ( second World War ) . Linfield have won 118 of the meetings , with 72 Glentoran victories and 72 drawn matches . Linfield 's record victory over their rivals is 8 ? 0 . This occurred on 21 November 1891 , during the 1891 ? 92 Irish League season . Linfield 's record post @-@ war win over Glentoran in all competitions is by a six @-@ goal margin ? a 7 ? 1 win over the Glens at Grosvenor Park in the 1961 ? 62 North @-@ South Cup , and a 6 ? 0 victory at Windsor Park in the 2006 Setanta Sports Cup group stage .

Since 2009 , the intensity of the rivalry has waned as the duo 's domination of the domestic game has decreased . This is partly due to the resurgence of North Belfast derby clubs , Cliftonville and Crusaders . In 2013 , Cliftonville became the first club other than Linfield or Glentoran to lift the league title since Portadown did so in 2002 . In 2014 , Cliftonville went on to retain the title for the first time in the club 's history , with Crusaders then winning the 2014 ? 15 title in convincing fashion , finishing 10 points ahead of runners @-@ up Linfield . During this time , Glentoran lifted the Irish Cup in 2013 and again in 2015 , but their overall fortunes on the field have taken a relative downturn . The club has won only three league titles since the turn of the 21st century ; in 2002 ? 03 , 2004 ? 05 and 2008 ? 09 . Since then , they have twice finished as low as sixth place ; in 2011 ? 12 and 2014 ? 15 . The last season in which the two clubs finished as champions and runners @-@ up in either order was 2008 ? 09 , and they have not met in a major domestic cup final since 2006 , when they contested both the Irish Cup and the League Cup finals .

= = = Sectarianism and violence = = =

Linfield are generally regarded as a ' Protestant club ' and draw the vast majority of their support from one side of the community . However , the squad itself is one of the most diverse in the Irish League . The club has also been regarded as sectarian in the past , both in respect of its alleged employment policy and of the behaviour of its fans . This sectarian reputation is partly the result of the actions of fans who have a history of occasional anti @-@ Catholic behaviour ranging from sectarian chanting on the terraces to outright violence . Part of the problem has been attributed to Windsor Park 's location in a part of Belfast that is predominantly Protestant . A relatively small number of local Catholics played for the club during the Troubles , which led to an accusation that the club held a historical policy of not signing Catholic players . However , the existence of such a policy has been disputed :

Sectarian tensions have long been a cause of conflict at football matches in Northern Ireland , and crowd trouble occasionally marred games involving Linfield throughout the twentieth century . In 1948 , Belfast Celtic withdrew from the Irish League after years of sectarian crowd problems culminated in a Boxing Day match against Linfield at Windsor Park which ended in a pitch invasion and riot in which Belfast Celtic 's Protestant centre forward , Jimmy Jones , suffered a broken leg .

In the 1979 ? 80 European Cup , Linfield were drawn to face Dundalk from the Republic of Ireland . In the first leg , which was played in Dundalk and ended in a 1 ? 1 draw , crowd disturbance prompted UEFA to switch the second leg to the Haarlem Stadion , Netherlands . Linfield were held almost entirely accountable for the events , and were forced to pay Dundalk 's costs to travel to the Netherlands as well as an additional £ 5 @, @ 000 for damage sustained to Oriel Park . Dundalk were fined £ 870 for providing insufficient security at the match . Dundalk eventually won the match 2 ? 0 to progress 3 ? 1 on aggregate . In the 1987 ? 88 campaign , Linfield 's home game against

Lillestrøm was marred by missile throwing , resulting in UEFA sanctions which meant that the club had to play their next two home games in European competitions at Welsh club Wrexham in 1988 ? 89 and 1989 ? 90 .

A 1997 match against Coleraine was abandoned when Linfield fans hurled bottles onto the pitch after two Linfield players were sent off . In May 2005 there were disturbances in Dublin at the Setanta Cup final between Linfield and Shelbourne . In the same month , Linfield fans were banned from travelling to the Oval for a match against Glentoran , allegedly as a result of disturbances involving both sets of fans the previous month . However , Glentoran denied this was the reason behind the ban , citing health and safety regulations that forced them to close the away stand . In 2008 , three Linfield fans were charged in a Dublin court with public order offences at a Setanta Cup match against St Patrick 's Athletic , but were released . In November of the same year , Linfield player Conor Hagan was struck by a rocket that was fired from Cliftonville supporters in the crowd following Linfield 's 2 ? 1 defeat , and the following month riot police were called into Glentoran supporters in the Boxing Day match after Linfield had taken a 2 ? 0 lead .

The management of Linfield has attempted to reverse the stigma of negative press attached to the club . The club has moved forward in co @-@ operation with the Irish Football Association , which has launched a campaign called " Give sectarianism the boot . " It assisted a local Camogie team who needed space to train in 2005 , and also built links with the Gaelic Athletic Association which has traditionally had little support from the Protestant community in Northern Ireland . In 2006 FIFA President Sepp Blatter commended Linfield for their anti @-@ racism . A play dealing with the conflict between Linfield and Belfast Celtic , Lish and Gerry at the Shrine , was staged by the IFA at Windsor Park in October 2010 , with the co @-@ operation of the Linfield management .

Since 2008 , the number of incidents has decreased . However , in February 2014 , Linfield were fined £ 3 @,@ 000 and Cliftonville were fined £ 3 @,@ 250 by the IFA following sectarian chanting from sections of both sets of supporters during a County Antrim Shield semi @-@ final at Windsor Park in October 2013 . Cliftonville 's fine of an extra £ 250 came as a result of their fans causing an explosion during the game . Both clubs criticised the decision , and expressed their intent to appeal against the fines . In April 2014 , the punishments were rescinded on appeal . There was also crowd trouble at a league fixture between the clubs at Windsor Park in March 2014 , with reports of missiles being thrown after the game . The Northern Ireland Football League condemned the actions of a " small minority " of supporters .

In May 2014 , Linfield were fined £ 1 @,@ 200 by the Irish Football Association over the singing of sectarian songs by supporters , ruling that Linfield fans had been guilty of breaching the code of conduct during a league game at Coleraine .

= = Players = =

= = = First @-@ team squad = = =

As of 5 February 2016

Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

Insert non @-@ formatted text here = = = Players out on loan = = = Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules . Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

= = = Retired numbers = = =

Numbers retired in June 2011 .

11 ? In honour of Noel Bailie ( 1986 ? 2011 ) 13 ? Unlucky number

= = Managers = =



Below is a list of all the managers Linfield have appointed during the club 's history . In the early years after the club was formed in 1886 , the team was selected by club committee , a standard practice by football clubs at the time . Since then , 25 different men have held the position of Linfield first team coach / manager . However , only six have been appointed in the 40 years since Billy Campbell 's departure in 1975 . David Jeffrey holds the record for the longest reign as manager , having been in charge for 17 years and 16 weeks between 4 January 1997 and 26 April 2014 . Jeffrey and Coyle jointly hold the record for the most trophies won as manager , each having led the club to 31 trophies ? a combined 62 major honours between them . Former Northern Ireland international Warren Feeney is the club 's last manager , having been appointed in May 2014 . He resigned in October 2015 to become assistant manager of Newport County .

= = Club officials = =

As of 17 March 2016

= = First @-@ team honours = =

= = = Active competitions = = =

= = = = Domestic = = = =

Irish League Championship : 51

1890 ? 91 , 1891 ? 92 , 1892 ? 93 , 1894 ? 95 , 1897 ? 98 , 1901 ? 02 , 1903 ? 04 , 1906 ? 07 , 1907 ? 08 , 1908 ? 09 , 1910 ? 11 , 1913 ? 14 , 1921 ? 22 , 1922 ? 23 , 1929 ? 30 , 1931 ? 32 , 1933 ? 34 , 1934 ? 35 , 1948 ? 49 , 1949 ? 50 , 1953 ? 54 , 1954 ? 55 , 1955 ? 56 , 1958 ? 59 , 1960 ? 61 , 1961 ? 62 , 1965 ? 66 , 1968 ? 69 , 1970 ? 71 , 1974 ? 75 , 1977 ? 78 , 1978 ? 79 , 1979 ? 80 , 1981 ? 82 , 1982 ? 83 , 1983 ? 84 , 1984 ? 85 , 1985 ? 86 , 1986 ? 87 , 1988 ? 89 , 1992 ? 93 , 1993 ? 94 , 1999 ? 00 , 2000 ? 01 , 2003 ? 04 , 2005 ? 06 , 2006 ? 07 , 2007 ? 08 , 2009 ? 10 , 2010 ? 11 , 2011 ? 12

Irish Cup : 42

1890 ? 91 , 1891 ? 92 , 1892 ? 93 , 1894 ? 95 , 1897 ? 98 , 1898 ? 99 , 1901 ? 02 , 1903 ? 04 , 1911 ? 12 , 1912 ? 13 , 1914 ? 15 , 1915 ? 16 , 1918 ? 19 , 1921 ? 22 , 1922 ? 23 , 1929 ? 30 , 1930 ? 31 , 1933 ? 34 , 1935 ? 36 , 1938 ? 39 , 1941 ? 42 , 1944 ? 45 , 1945 ? 46 , 1947 ? 48 , 1949 ? 50 , 1952 ? 53 , 1959 ? 60 , 1961 ? 62 , 1962 ? 63 , 1969 ? 70 , 1977 ? 78 , 1979 ? 80 , 1981 ? 82 , 1993 ? 94 , 1994 ? 95 , 2001 ? 02 , 2005 ? 06 , 2006 ? 07 , 2007 ? 08 , 2009 ? 10 , 2010 ? 11 , 2011 ? 12

Irish League Cup : 9

1986 ? 87 , 1991 ? 92 , 1993 ? 94 , 1997 ? 98 , 1998 ? 99 , 1999 ? 00 , 2001 ? 02 , 2005 ? 06 , 2007 ? 08

Charity Shield : 3

1993 ( shared ) , 1994 , 2000

County Antrim Shield : 42

1898 ? 99 , 1903 ? 04 , 1905 ? 06 , 1906 ? 07 , 1907 ? 08 , 1912 ? 13 , 1913 ? 14 , 1916 ? 17 , 1921 ? 22 , 1922 ? 23 , 1927 ? 28 , 1928 ? 29 , 1929 ? 30 , 1931 ? 32 , 1932 ? 33 , 1933 ? 34 , 1934 ? 35 , 1937 ? 38 , 1941 ? 42 , 1946 ? 47 , 1952 ? 53 , 1954 ? 55 , 1957 ? 58 , 1958 ? 59 , 1960 ? 61 , 1961 ? 62 , 1962 ? 63 , 1965 ? 66 , 1966 ? 67 , 1972 ? 73 , 1976 ? 77 , 1980 ? 81 , 1981 ? 82 , 1982 ? 83 , 1983 ? 84 , 1994 ? 95 , 1997 ? 98 , 2000 ? 01 , 2003 ? 04 , 2004 ? 05 , 2005 ? 06 , 2013 ? 14

= = = = All @-@ Ireland = = = =

Setanta Cup : 1  
2005

== = Defunct competitions == =

== = = Domestic == = =

Gold Cup : 33

1915 ? 16 , 1917 ? 18 , 1918 ? 19 , 1920 ? 21 , 1921 ? 22 , 1923 ? 24 , 1926 ? 27 , 1927 ? 28 ,  
1928 ? 29 , 1930 ? 31 , 1935 ? 36 , 1936 ? 37 , 1948 ? 49 , 1949 ? 50 , 1950 ? 51 , 1955 ? 56 ,  
1957 ? 58 , 1959 ? 60 , 1961 ? 62 , 1963 ? 64 , 1965 ? 66 , 1967 ? 68 , 1968 ? 69 , 1970 ? 71 ,  
1971 ? 72 , 1979 ? 80 , 1981 ? 82 , 1983 ? 84 , 1984 ? 85 , 1987 ? 88 , 1988 ? 89 , 1989 ? 90 ,  
1996 ? 97

City Cup : 24

1894 ? 95 , 1895 ? 96 , 1897 ? 98 , 1899 ? 00 , 1900 ? 01 , 1901 ? 02 , 1902 ? 03 , 1903 ? 04 ,  
1907 ? 08 , 1909 ? 10 , 1919 ? 20 , 1921 ? 22 , 1926 ? 27 , 1928 ? 29 , 1935 ? 36 , 1937 ? 38 ,  
1949 ? 50 , 1951 ? 52 , 1957 ? 58 , 1958 ? 59 , 1961 ? 62 , 1963 ? 64 , 1967 ? 68 , 1973 ? 74

Ulster Cup : 15

1948 ? 49 , 1955 ? 56 , 1956 ? 57 , 1959 ? 60 , 1961 ? 62 , 1964 ? 65 , 1967 ? 68 , 1970 ? 71 ,  
1971 ? 72 , 1974 ? 75 , 1977 ? 78 , 1978 ? 79 , 1979 ? 80 , 1984 ? 85 , 1992 ? 93

Floodlit Cup : 2

1993 ? 94 , 1997 ? 98

Top Four Cup : 2

1966 ? 67 , 1967 ? 68

Belfast Charity Cup : 21

1890 ? 91 , 1891 ? 92 , 1892 ? 93 , 1893 ? 94 , 1894 ? 95 , 1898 ? 99 , 1902 ? 03 , 1904 ? 05 ,  
1912 ? 13 , 1913 ? 14 , 1914 ? 15 , 1916 ? 17 , 1917 ? 18 , 1918 ? 19 , 1921 ? 22 , 1926 ? 27 ,  
1927 ? 28 , 1929 ? 30 , 1932 ? 33 , 1933 ? 34 , 1934 ? 35 , 1935 ? 36 , 1937 ? 38

Alhambra Cup : 1

1921 ? 22

Jubilee Cup : 1

1935 ? 36

Belfast & District League : 2 1915 ? 16 , 1917 ? 18

Northern Regional league : 3 1942 ? 43 , 1944 ? 45 , 1945 ? 46

Substitute Gold Cup : 2

1942 ? 43 , 1944 ? 45

Manchester Charity Cup : 2

1945 ? 46 , 1946 ? 47

== = = All @-@ Ireland == = =

North @-@ South Cup : 1

1961 ? 62

Blaxnit Cup : 1

1970 ? 71

Tyler Cup : 1

1980 ? 81

== = Doubles and Trebles == =

The club has achieved the double of winning the League title and the national cup in the same

season on 23 occasions ? more than any other club in the world . The club has also achieved the domestic treble of the League , national cup and League Cup in the same season on three occasions , and a domestic quadruple of those three trophies plus the regional County Antrim Shield in the same season once ? in 2005 ? 06 . Most notably absent from the list are the seven @-@ trophy hauls in the 1921 ? 22 and 1961 ? 62 seasons ? achieved prior to the inauguration of the League Cup in 1987 .

Doubles :

League and Irish Cup : 23

1890 ? 91 , 1891 ? 92 , 1892 ? 93 , 1894 ? 95 , 1897 ? 98 , 1901 ? 02 , 1903 ? 04 , 1921 ? 22 , 1922 ? 23 , 1929 ? 30 , 1933 ? 34 , 1949 ? 50 , 1961 ? 62 , 1977 ? 78 , 1979 ? 80 , 1981 ? 82 , 1993 ? 94 , 2005 ? 06 , 2006 ? 07 , 2007 ? 08 , 2009 ? 10 , 2010 ? 11 , 2011 ? 12

League and League Cup : 51986 ? 87 , 1993 ? 94 , 1999 ? 00 , 2005 ? 06 , 2007 ? 08

Trebles :

League , Irish Cup and League Cup : 31993 ? 94 , 2005 ? 06 , 2007 ? 08

3As part of a domestic treble.4Part of a domestic quadruple including the County Antrim Shield .

= = Reserve honours = =

Honours won by Linfield Swifts

Irish League B Division : 3

1951 ? 52 , 1952 ? 53 , 1975 ? 76

B Division Section 2 / Reserve League : 18

1977 ? 78 , 1978 ? 79 , 1979 ? 80 , 1982 ? 83 , 1983 ? 84 , 1984 ? 85 , 1987 ? 88 , 1988 ? 89 , 1990 ? 91 , 1991 ? 92 , 1998 ? 99 , 1999 ? 00 , 2003 ? 04 , 2004 ? 05 , 2008 ? 09 , 2009 ? 10 , 2010 ? 11 , 2014 ? 15

Irish Intermediate Cup : 11

1896 ? 97 , 1898 ? 99 , 1900 ? 01 , 1928 ? 29 , 1945 ? 46 , 1948 ? 49 , 1955 ? 56 , 1956 ? 57 , 1971 ? 72 , 2001 ? 02 , 2003 ? 04

Steel & Sons Cup : 9

1895 ? 96 , 1898 ? 99 , 1915 ? 16 , 1939 ? 40 , 1946 ? 47 , 1948 ? 49 , 1972 ? 73 , 1983 ? 84 , 1997 ? 98

George Wilson Cup : 9

1953 ? 54 , 1961 ? 62 , 1976 ? 77 , 1980 ? 81 , 1983 ? 84 , 1984 ? 85 , 1988 ? 89 , 1998 ? 99 , 2010 ? 11

County Antrim Shield : 1

1948 ? 49

= = Junior honours = =

Irish Junior Cup : 3

1890 ? 91 ? , 1893 ? 94 ? , 1905 ? 06 ?

County Antrim Junior Shield : 1

1904 ? 05 ?

? Won by Linfield II ( reserve team )

? Won by Linfield Swifts ( reserve team )

? Won by Linfield Pirates ( reserve team )

= = Linfield in Europe = =

As Northern Ireland 's most dominant club side , Linfield have been regular campaigners in European football . The club first participated in European competition in 1959 against Göteborg in the 1959 ? 60 European Cup . In the first round of the 1961 ? 62 European Cup , Linfield were drawn to face an East German team , Vorwärts . The away leg was played , which Linfield lost 3 ? 0

. However , Vorwärts were denied visas for entry into the UK to play the second leg , and ( similarly to Glenavon the previous season ) travelling to play the game in a neutral country was not financially viable for Linfield . They were therefore forced to withdraw from the competition .

Linfield 's most notable achievement in European competition is reaching the quarter @-@ finals of the 1966 ? 67 European Cup . After beating Aris of Luxembourg and Vålerengen of Norway they faced CSKA Red Flag in the last eight . This resulted in a 2 ? 2 draw at home and 1 ? 0 defeat away . In the 1984 ? 85 season , after overcoming Shamrock Rovers on away goals ( the first and so far only series of meetings between the two Irish superpowers outside all @-@ Ireland tournaments ) , Linfield faced eventual semi @-@ finalists Panathinaikos in the second round . After a 2 ? 1 defeat away , Linfield drew 3 ? 3 at Windsor Park in the return leg after racing into a 3 ? 0 lead at half @-@ time . Panathinaikos staged a remarkable comeback in the second half to level the match and eliminate Linfield 5 ? 4 on aggregate .

The 1993 ? 94 UEFA Champions League saw Linfield drawn with Dynamo Tbilisi of Georgia . After losing 3 ? 2 on aggregate , they were reinstated when their opponents were expelled from the competition for alleged match fixing and paying the officials . Linfield faced Copenhagen in the first round proper . They won the first leg 3 ? 0 , but lost the second leg 4 ? 0 after extra time . This proved costly , as victory would have meant a financially lucrative tie against eventual champions A.C. Milan in the next round . The club then had to wait seven years to participate in the competition again , due to the format of the two European competitions being altered . The league 's relatively low ranking in the UEFA coefficient system has meant that the club has entered in the early qualifying rounds of either the UEFA Champions League or the UEFA Cup / Europa League , with the second qualifying round being the furthest the club has progressed in either competition . In the 2012 ? 13 UEFA Champions League , the Blues entered the competition in the first qualifying round , and defeated B36 Tórshavn 4 ? 3 on penalties to progress to the second qualifying round , after both legs ended as 0 ? 0 draws . This was the first time since the 1984 ? 85 season ( excluding their opponent 's expulsion in 1993 ? 94 ) that the club had won a tie in the competition . However , they were defeated 3 ? 0 on aggregate in the next round by AEL Limassol .

The 2013 ? 14 UEFA Europa League campaign started in record @-@ breaking fashion . In July 2013 , the club won 2 ? 0 away from home against ÍF Fuglafjørður of the Faroe Islands in the first qualifying round . This was the Blues ' first win in Europe since 2005 , and their first away win in Europe since 1966 , when they defeated Vålerengen 4 ? 1 during their run to the quarter @-@ finals of the 1966 ? 67 European Cup . In the second leg at Windsor Park , the Blues won 3 ? 0 to go through to the next round 5 ? 0 on aggregate . This was the club 's largest aggregate victory in a European tie since defeating Aris Bonnevoie 9 ? 4 on aggregate in the first round of the 1966 ? 67 European Cup . It was also the first time that a Northern Irish club had won both legs of a European tie in any competition . They followed this up in the next round by winning away from home again . Despite being massive underdogs for the tie , a 1 ? 0 victory away to Xanthi of Greece made it three consecutive victories in Europe , without conceding a goal in the process ? another first for the club . However , in the second leg at home they went down 2 ? 1 after extra time , which eliminated them on the away goals rule . The following season , Linfield 's first venture into Europe under new manager Warren Feeney was in the Faroe Islands against B36 Tórshavn in the 2014 ? 15 UEFA Europa League first qualifying round , which was also Feeney 's first competitive game in charge of the club . Linfield came out 2 ? 1 victors with goals coming from Jamie Mulgrew and Michael Carvill . The return leg was played at Glenavon 's ground , Mourneview Park , due to the redevelopment of Windsor Park . Linfield had to settle for a 1 ? 1 draw , but that was enough to secure passage into the second qualifying round for the second successive season , where they were drawn to face AIK from Sweden . An 87th @-@ minute Andrew Waterworth goal in the home leg at Mourneview Park ensured a 1 ? 0 win for Linfield in their 100th competitive European match since 1959 .

= = = Summary = = =

Key : PR ? Preliminary round ; QR ? Qualifying round ; 1QR / 2QR ? First / Second qualifying round ; 1R / 2R ? First / Second round ; QF ? Quarter @-@ final

## Notes

== Overall record ==

As of 24 July 2015

== UEFA club ranking ==

Current ranking

As of the 2015 UEFA Club Rankings .

Ranking since 2011

== In popular culture ==

The Northern Ireland comedy sketch show *Dry Your Eyes* featured a character called Derek , portrayed by Martin Reid , a fanatical fan of Linfield who is thrown into life @-@ threatening situations such as aircraft hijackings and bank robberies . The character remains placid until the situation causes him inconvenience at which point he confronts the terrorists , hijackers etc . , and while everyone else in the scene cowers in fear for their lives he responds to the demands of the villains with a catchphrase " Are ye by f \* \* \* ! " and then verbally scares them into surrender , thus saving the situation .