

Darragh Cox

Vorskla end Sligo's European adventure

Sligo Rovers 0 Vorskla Poltava 2 (Aggregate 0-2)

SLIGO ROVERS boss Paul Cook says that Irish clubs still have a long way to go before they can compete with Europe's strong leagues.

Rovers were beaten 2-0 at home by Ukrainian side Vorskla Poltava at the Showgrounds last night, and Cook could only pay tribute to the visitors, who looked in trouble after being held to a scoreless draw in the Ukraine a week ago.

But two quickfire first-half goals in the space of a minute left the home side shell-shocked, and it could have been worse for the hosts, with Vorskla hitting the crossbar twice in the closing stages.

Cook said: "We were beaten by a better team all over the pitch. Technically they were very good and very fit, and we can have no complaints.

"We are all doing our best in Irish football to aspire to better levels in Europe and to do well, but we still have a long way to go."

Vorskla made three changes to the team that was held by Rovers last week, while the home side were dealt a blow before kick-off as Alan Keane was ruled out with a thigh injury picked up in training on Wednesday.

The visitors started brightly in front of the crowd of almost 3,500, and took the lead after just 16 minutes.

They created it from deep inside their own half as the excellent Ahmed Dallku worked the ball to Vasyly Sachko via Oleg Krasnoperov and Jovan Markoski.

Sachko held onto possession inside the area before slipping the ball into the path of the on-rushing Serhiy Zakarlyuka, who squeezed it low into the net from a tight angle.

Before Rovers had a chance to come to terms with that blow, they had conceded a second. This time the goal came from the left-hand side, with Ivan Krivosheenko just doing enough to hold off the challenge of Conor Powell, and firing a low cross into the area for Pavel Rebenok to fire home.

Rovers' best chance of the game came in the second half from another Ndo set-piece, with Jason McGuinness directing a header straight at a relieved Dolhanskiy.

But the visitors could have had a couple more goals on the counter-attack before the end.

SLIGO ROVERS: Clarke, Ventre, McGuinness, Peers, Powell, Cretaro (Dillon 69), Ryan, Ndo, Kirby, Greene (Doyle 53), Blinkhorn (Russell 69).

VORSKLA: Dolhanskiy, Dallku, Kurylov, Chesnakov, Selin, Krivosheenko, Markoski, Zakarlyuka (Oberemko ht), Krasnoperov (Asipenka 80), Rebenok, Sachlo (Bezus 68).

¶¶Referee: Emir Aleckovic (Bosnia & Herz).