

KEITH FAHEY EXCLUSIVE DUBLINER LOOKING FOR A FRESH START

AFTER AN INJURY-RAVAGED FEW CAMPAIGNS

KEVIN: LEEDS NOT FOR ME



DELIGHT: Fahey celebrates for St Pat's

FAHEY WILL COME HOME

KEITH FAHEY will return to the Airtricity League one day — but only after another few seasons in the UK!

The former St Patrick's Athletic and Drogheda United midfielder is eager to see out his career at home. And he added that he would not be motivated by money when it comes to his next move.

He said: "I'll wait and see who's interested and who's not interested and what are the options, and I'll make a decision that won't be purely based on money."

Buy

"It won't be based on who pays the most or who is going to give me the most — it will be based on what I buy into and what I want to do."

"Hopefully I'll have the options, but it will depend on where I can see myself settling and having a right go."

As for his return to the Irish game, he said: "I would like to play in

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Ireland again someday, but at the moment I don't think it's the right time.

"If I can get another few years abroad I'd have to take that. But further down the line I'd like to come back and play."

Meanwhile, he hopes to find himself back in the international frame when he comes back from injury later this year.

"I've been watching the games. There are a fair few players coming through, so it will be hard for me to get my face back in there," he said.

KEITH PLAYING WAITING GAME

KEITH FAHEY is not leaving anything to chance as he continues his recovery from hip surgery.

The Ireland midfielder was told after the operation that he faced a ten-12-week rehabilitation timetable.

After years of groin problems relating to his hip injury, however, the 30-year-old said: "I'd be thinking more 12-16 weeks."

"With all the problems I've had, I just want to give everything a chance to settle down."

Fahey would love to complete his recovery in England.

"The hope is that further down my recovery and rehab I will get in somewhere that maybe will be interested in signing me," he said.

"I have to try to earn a deal somewhere. That's the way it's gone. I only played a handful of games last season and I'm just looking to get back in and earn a contract somewhere."

He added: "I'm working hard already. I'm putting in good sessions on the bike and I'm surprised with how mobile I am and how quickly it's feeling good."

"I've been playing the last two or three years, or

possibly even longer, with this, though the symptoms have only really kicked in over the last two or three years."

"I've been playing and I've played well with the injury, so I'm looking forward to playing when I'm fully fit."

"It would have restricted my movement, everything. It would have affected my game in different ways but you get used to it."

"I'm looking forward to having the injuries behind me and getting about the pitch much better, and being able to move."

Ball

Meanwhile, Fahey maintains the thing he's missed since he was forced to go under the knife is quite simply — the ball.

"I miss just passing and kicking a ball around. I love football, I've grown up with football and I've always had a football."

"I'd be making my own games up in my head — hard already. I'm putting in little skill games I used to do with tennis balls or with footballs."

"If there was no one coming out to play, I'd play on my own."

"So that's it — I miss the actual feel of a ball."



IRELAND'S CALL: Fahey is looking to force his way back into Trap's (left) plans



GREEN GIANT: Fahey celebrates with Paul Green after his crucial strike in Armenia

HE OPTS for a dark corner of the Old Mill pub in Tallaght during the brisk lunchtime trade, but Keith Fahey can't escape the well-wishers.

A popular figure around these parts, he ponders: "How many carvery dinners have I had here?"

"I'd say I've had at least three, probably four!"

This week? What would the nutritionists think?

"Ah, you've earned this one," says the chef as he spoons a breast of chicken with all the trimmings onto a plate.

Fahey agrees. It's Friday afternoon and he has just come from a first punishing session in the pool since undergoing a long-overdue hip operation to cure his injury ills.

Had the surgery taken place two years earlier, the midfielder would not have missed out on Euro 2012.

The untimely onset of a groin problem — a regular occurrence during two years in which the hip was treated with injections — cost him his place a fortnight before the finals began.

Sure

But he's finally on the mend. And he's on the lookout for a club.

"I should have been in the pool about three or four days ago but I was just making sure my wounds were properly healed," he told the Irish Daily Star.

"And I was putting it off for a couple of days because I'm not a fan of the pool."

I'll have to re-convince managers that I can do a job and how good I am when fit

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EXCLUSIVE
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"I've been on the bike a lot though. I got a bike into the house about two days after the operation."

"I'm lashing away on the bike and that will keep me sane until I can start running again in a couple of weeks."

"I've been doing mobility stuff — real boring stuff that you don't think you need to do."

Expert

"I've been going to the gym too, doing core work, for the last week or so. Everything is going well, touch wood."

Fahey finally went under the expert knife of Dr Patrick Carton three weeks ago yesterday at the renowned Whitfield Clinic — an operation he forked out for himself.

"I basically came home and I paid for my own operation because it needed to be done," said Fahey.

He hinted time and again yesterday at his frustration at how the injury was dealt with at Birmingham, though he refused to express it outright.

"The season before we went to the Euros, I went through a really good spell of playing — getting to my best, I thought, for Birmingham, and we were really doing well," he said.

"I had chronic groin problems then. It was painful. It was very painful playing through it."

"But I was trying to play through it, not train and then play again. But there's only so much of that you can do. Then obviously I broke down."

"I thought I was going to the Euros, I was feeling good and then first day back in training (with Ireland) there was a little pull again in my groin."

Would an earlier operation have allowed him to go to Poland? "Yeah, I would say so. I went to see a surgeon in London about two years ago and he

Out of the shadow and into the light



ABSENT: Fahey missed Ireland's disastrous Euro 2012 campaign



CITY SLICKER: Fahey in action for Birmingham

said there was a problem there," he replied.

"He said they could inject it and that it might give me more range of movement. It did, but that's when the groin injuries started."

But that's all behind him now and Fahey is on the road to recovery.

He paid tribute to Ireland team doctor Alan Byrne, who recommended Whitfield Clinic specialist Dr Carton.

"He (Dr Byrne) has really looked out for me. He recommended Dr Carton and said he was the best in the country at what he does," said Fahey.

"The reports from the surgeon have been very positive. He came into me the night he did it and he said everything went brilliant. He said the joint was in pretty good shape and everything should be fine. I should get another few

years at the top-level, if I get there, and internationals too."

Of course the timing isn't great. Out-of-contract and on-the-mend, it could be another three months before he is back to full fitness.

Scratch

Fahey acknowledged: "It's about really starting from scratch really for me now. Like I said, I haven't played a lot in the last year."

"You can speak about the last four-and-a-half years and I've done a lot: winning promotion, winning the League Cup, playing and scoring for Ireland. But in the last year I haven't played a lot."

"So I'll have to re-convince managers I can do a job and just remind everyone how good I am when I'm fit."



GLORY DAYS: Fahey celebrates League Cup glory with his Birmingham teammates in 2011

KEVIN DOYLE says he met Leeds United boss Brian McDermott at Shane Long's wedding last weekend.

However the Wolves and Ireland striker insisted there would be no joining together of the pair at Elland Road next season.

A Doyle reunion with his former Reading manager had been mooted following Wolves' relegation to League One.

"I was with Brian at a wedding at the weekend and we had a bit of fun together."

"He signed me at Reading when he was chief scout but no, I won't be signing for Leeds," he said.

The 29-year-old will return to pre-season training at Molineux next week.

Start

That's not to say he will be there by the start of the season — with Celtic boss Neil Lennon still an admirer of the Wexford native.

Speaking on the Ray

IN DEMAND: Doyle has been tipped to make his Molineux exit

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D'Arcy show yesterday, he said: "There's always talk of this, that and the other but honestly I don't know what's happening."

"We've been relegated but I don't know, we'll see."

Games

He added that Ireland's World Cup bid remained on track — and that 59-goal hitman Robbie Keane was still the country's number one striker.

Doyle said: "After the last couple of games we're sitting nicely."

"The mood has changed amongst everyone."

"It's amazing what a few good results do: not just for the players but outside that."

"Talking to fans and if you read the papers, I think it's a bit more upbeat."

On whether Keane should remain in the starting-XI, he said: "His record is ridiculous — nearly better than anyone in the world at that level."

"So I don't think there is a debate really. There's plenty of other lads to do the running around."

Quinn Rover' the moon by support

SLIGO ROVERS chairman Tony Quinn reckons the Bit O'Red's first Champions League game in 36 years could be a sell-out — before the opponents are known!

More than 2,000 tickets have been snapped up and the remaining are available this weekend.

Ian Baraclough's Sligo can land Celtic, BATE Borisov, Steaua Bucharest or Partizan Belgrade, among others, in Monday's draw.

Quinn said: "We have had a very busy and exciting week with 2,000 tickets bought in the first three days of sales and several hundred in the latter part of the week."

Support

"It is fantastic to know even prior to the draw that we have will have such a huge level of support when the game comes around in July. The remaining tickets will be available this weekend."

DRAW: Baraclough

ENDA BOOKS IN

FORMER Shamrock Rovers defender Enda Stevens will be at Tallaght Stadium this afternoon to sign copies of 'Tallaght Time' — a book chronicling the Hoops' first few years at their new home.

Aston Villa left-back Stevens will be at the Megastore from 2-3pm.

The book, written by supporter Macdara Ferris, takes a look at the title wins and big European nights since their 2009 arrival in Tallaght.