

The Leinster Senior League season restarts for two UCD AFC teams this weekend

By Jamie Moore

UCD AFC return to Leinster Senior League action this weekend, as both the Saturday Major 1 team and the Sunday Senior 1 Premier teams kick off their campaigns.

Both league have already kicked off but due to a number of players from both squads being away and only returning to college in recent weeks, UCD AFC will start their season a couple of weeks after the rest of the teams.

The Saturday Major 1 side had a good start to the season with a 2-1 win over Sacred Heart with goals from Stephen Doyle and Stiofan Sextonf while the Senior 1 Sunday Premier team host in form Leixlip United in Belfield on Sunday morning at 11am.

Speaking ahead of the games, Manager Diarmuid McNally gave his thoughts ahead of the big kick off.

“We want to try achieve promotion to the top leagues in both Saturday and Sunday divisions. We are currently in the 2nd highest league in both. The Sunday team is going for its 7th promotion in 9 years. Myself and Sherro (Tony Sheridan) are also hoping to get fresher’s promoted too. The objective is to achieve this and develop players good enough for Sunday Team and 1st team.”

That’s something that the club has done on a consistant basis over the last number of years. There are currently seven players in 1st team squad that have come through the LSL including midfielder Paul O’Conor and Captain Mick Leahy.

The turnover of players on the LSL teams varies season to season but McNally says this season's squads are quite similar to last season:

Stephen Doyle from 1st team and Robbie Murray from U19s are two notable additions. Former Goalkeeper Sean Coffey has returned after spells with Sacred Heart and Bluebell and former Scholarship 1st team player Fran Moran is fit after being out for a year. Notable players to resign are former scholarship/ 1st team players Hugh Davey, Kieran Harte and James Timmons as well as record goal scorer at LSL level Niall Daly.

The players from both teams have been together over pre season and have played seven games with just one defeat.

Pre-Season results:

UCD 4-0 Pegasus
UCD 1-1 Havent and Waterlooville
Bangor 3-1 UCD
St James Gate 0-1 UCD
UCD 5-2 Whitehall
UCD 2-0 Transylvania
UCD 1-1 U19s

So what are Maccers' hopes for the season? "Well again we want to achieve promotion with the three teams (the freshers season kicks off soon when college is back in full swing) and we want to do well in the intermediate cup and try and progress and develop as many of our young players particularly last year's fresher's."

McNally knows lots of tough work lies ahead: "It will be difficult league to get out of on Sunday with Sacred Heart, Dublin Bus, Belgrove, Newbridge and Leixlip to name but a few strong sides who will be in contention and there will be no easy games."

Looking ahead to Sunday's game with Leixlip, McNally is hoping for a good start

I expect a very tough game on Sunday, they have picked up 10points from 12points available so far having got promoted last year winning Senior 1A so they have continued their recent good form. It's important that we get something from game and a good start is vital for us particularly as we start later than the other teams so already we are playing catch up."

The Sunday team finished fourth last season and the club wish Dairmuid, Tony and all the players luck with the coming season. Come on you Boys In Blue!

Squad:

Goalkeepers: Sean Coffey, Conor McGroarty, Eric Barber and Bill Phelan.

Defenders: Brian O'Reilly, Patrick Brett, Huge Davey, Niall Wright, Neal Hickey, John Naughton, Tristen Dent, Cormac O'Brochlain, Steve Dillon, Robert Keogh, Jack Doyle, Darren Westman, Philip Bourke.

Midfielders: Michael Whelan, Stephen Doyle, Saheed Ogunffewora, Rory Giles, Marc Whelan, Fran Moran, Kieran Harte, James Timmons, Ronan Lynagh, Ryan McErlaine, Niall Hanley, David Campion, Robbie Murray, Jack Lehane, Paul Curtain, Brain McDonald, Eoin Roche, Darren Muldowney.

Forwards: Niall Daly, Stoifan Sexton, Michael Arnold, Brian O'Brochlain, Alan Sutton, Niall McLoughlin, Cormac Suen, Brian Doherty