

Friday night sees the long awaited return of the SSE Airtricity League after the long winter's break, and our much anticipated return to the Premier Division after last season's First Division Title winning campaign.



A tough trip to Derry City awaits, where we will travel to the fantastic Ryan McBride Brandywell stadium for the first time since it was newly renovated. Derry City will be looking to get off to a strong start to the season at home in front of a big crowd. Collie O'Neill knows his side will be up against it, however he knows his side will take a lot of confidence from their performances last season where they performed brilliantly in the league, and put it up to some of the big guns in the FAI Cup, knocking Waterford FC out at the quarter final stage.

*"We know it is going to be a tough test up there. However, at this level every game is going to be difficult, and we are going to have to be at our best if we are to have a chance of coming away with a result. We will be looking to go out and play the way we know we can play, on a good surface in a great new stadium and start showing everyone what we can do at this level."*

Collie was dealt a big blow to his preparations for the new season on Monday night in training, as Evan Osam went down when dribbling with the ball. Tests revealed a rupture of his Achilles tendon and he underwent surgery on Tuesday and looks set to miss the majority of the season.

*"Unfortunately Evan is going to miss most of the season after rupturing his Achilles in training on Monday. It's a big loss to us. He really hasn't had any luck over the last few seasons with injuries. He did his cruciate at Shamrock Rovers and then did his ankle last year and missed*

*most of the season. They've all been different injuries and he's really been unlucky with them. I feel so bad for him and it's a tough one for him to take. He's been brilliant in training, and in our College games and was really looking forward to the start of the season. He's a top class player and is a big loss for us, being an important part of how we defend and play but we have to deal with it and move on. He's a great lad though and I've no doubt he will bounce back and be determined to come back fitter and stronger."*

Collie will also be missing Paul Doyle for Friday night's trip to Derry as he continues his recovery from an ankle injury picked up in our friendly against Shelbourne.

Injured: Evan Osam (achilles) Paul Doyle (ankle)

Doubtful: None

Suspended: None

**Squad in full:**

*Goalkeepers:* 1. Conor Kearns, 16. Gavin Sheridan, 20. Tom Murphy

*Defenders:* 2. Daniel Tobin, 3. Evan Osam, 4. Liam Scales, 5. Josh Collins, 15. Luke Boore, 18. Darragh Corcoran, 22. Mark Dignam, 23. Evan Farrell

*Midfielders:* 6. Conor Crowley, 7. Neil Farrugia, 8. Gary O'Neill, 10. Timmy Molloy, 11. Jason McClelland, 12. Richie O'Farrell, 14. Jack Ryan, 17. Kevin Coffey, 21. Paul Doyle

*Forwards:* 9. Yoyo Mahdy, 13. Sean McDonald, 19. Conor Davis