

Captain Declan Keaney looks ahead to today's 1/4 final



For most the 8th of February appears to be of little more significance than the week before Valentine's Day but there will be no love lost come this morning, as the UCD freshers take on the University of Limerick in the quarter final of the Harding Cup competition in the University of Ulster, Coleraine.

It's our first taste of inter-varsity competition and the Harding Cup is a football tournament specifically for first year students and one that for many UCD lads past and present brings back good memories. This is a competition UCD have been successful in many times in the past and we are hoping to emulate this success by bringing the cup back to Belfield once again.

This is no easy task and the players understand they will have to work hard this weekend if they are to achieve this goal. With competition for places in the starting line up pushing players

towards their best, manager Tony Sheridan and his assistant Conor McCarthy will have difficult decisions to make over the weekend.

We're all expecting a big test and acknowledge that UL will be more than up for the game. Therefore we'll have to match them for desire and will have to show a real hunger to win if we can hope to progress to the semi-final.

The team met at 4 o'clock yesterday to board the bus up to our hotel in Portrush. The three and a half hour trip was a good chance for the under19s players to mix in with the Leinster Senior squad having only played together in a friendly against Glasnevin earlier in the week. The practice match proved to be a positive exercise as we won 4-1 on a wet and windy night in Belfield. UCD's Colin Jones scoring a notable hat trick. All the lads relished the opportunity to stake their claim for a place in the starting line up for Friday's game.

A strong squad of 18 players have travelled up all hopeful to play their part in what we hope will be a successful trip to the north. I would also like to mention right back Eoin Ferry who unfortunately is unfit to travel with us this weekend due to ligament damage. He has been an integral part of the freshers squad this year and all of the team and management would like to wish him a speedy recovery.

We had a nice dinner last night and a team meeting at 10pm before an early night. There's a good buzz within the squad and I've no doubt everyone will give their best and honest effort this weekend.

Updates from the game on twitter @UCDAFC and facebook.com/UCDAFC