

= Keith Fahey =

Keith Declan Fahey (born 15 January 1983 in Dublin) is a retired ex @-@ Republic of Ireland international footballer who played most of his career with League of Ireland side St Patrick 's Athletic as well as English side Birmingham City . He played predominantly as a central midfielder , but also occasionally as a winger .

Fahey started his professional career as a trainee with Arsenal . He played for Aston Villa , Bluebell United , St Patrick 's Athletic and Drogheda United before his transfer to Birmingham City . With Birmingham City he won the 2011 League Cup in England , as well as helping the club gain promotion from the Football League Championship to the Premier League during the 2008 ? 09 season . He left the club at the end of the 2012 ? 13 season , and returned to St Patrick 's Athletic for a third spell with the club .

With Ireland , he was part of the team that secured qualification for UEFA Euro 2012 . Manager Giovanni Trapattoni called Fahey into the Irish squad for the tournament , but he was later sent home due to injury .

= = Club career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Fahey started his professional career as a trainee with Arsenal before signing for Aston Villa in April 2000 for a fee of £ 250 @, @ 000 . He played for Villa 's youth and reserve teams , but never made a first @-@ team appearance .

= = = Return to Ireland = = =

Having failed to settle in England , Fahey returned home in 2003 . He initially played a few games in non @-@ League football for Bluebell United , before a six @-@ week trial at St Patrick 's Athletic led to a contract . He made his League of Ireland debut and had a goal disallowed at Waterford United on 21 April .

He contributed to St Pats 's victory in the League of Ireland Cup and scored a " stunning " free kick in extra time of the semi @-@ final replay against Bohemians to reach the FAI Cup final . However the final turned out to be very disappointing for both team and player , who was sent off for a " two @-@ footed lunge " on Longford Town 's Sean Prunty after 77 minutes as the Saints lost 2 ? 0 .

He joined Drogheda United in exchange for Alan Reilly and a cash adjustment in July 2005 . He was involved in Mark Leech 's golden goal that won the Setanta Cup for Drogheda in April 2006 , but a few months later was released , following a disagreement with manager Paul Doolin , and returned to St Pats .

RTÉ reported that " Danger man Fahey was quieter than usual " as Pats lost 2 ? 0 to Hertha BSC in the first round of the 2008 ? 09 UEFA Cup , held at the Olympiastadion ; however , in the second leg , despite Pats ' " excellent performance " failing to overturn the deficit , an RTÉ feature picked out " Keith Fahey 's control of the game , dictating almost every Pat 's attack with that delicate but incisive right foot of his . Fahey stood head and shoulders above the many highly decorated full internationals in the Hertha team , showing the full range of his passing from deep and from close range , and generally showing a poise and guile on the ball that you would not expect from a League of Ireland player amongst such illustrious company . "

His performances for St Pats in 2008 , in which he scored 11 goals in all competitions , earned Fahey the PFAI Player of the Year award . He also won Monday Night Soccer 's 2008 Goal of the Season . After Pats were beaten by Bohemians in the FAI Cup , Fahey declared that he wished to move to an English club to further his career .

= = = Birmingham City = = =

On 2 December 2008 , Fahey signed a pre @-@ contract agreement with Football League Championship side Birmingham City to join the club when the transfer window opened in January 2009 . The Irish season having finished , Fahey joined up with Birmingham in mid @-@ December for training , though manager Alex McLeish suggested supporters should not " expect him to walk straight into the team " when he became eligible in January .

Fahey made his Birmingham debut on 17 January 2009 , coming on as a late substitute in a 1 ? 1 draw against Cardiff City . He scored his first goal for the club , a " delicate lob " which the player admitted was meant to be a cross , to clinch a 2 ? 0 home victory against Nottingham Forest on 14 February . His second goal gave the Blues a 1 ? 0 home win over Southampton some weeks later . Fahey retained his place in the side for the rest of the season (keeping loan signings Scott Sinclair and Hameur Bouazza out of the starting eleven) , and was a key player for Birmingham in their successful bid for promotion to the Premier League , scoring a goal and making a goal in a vital 2 ? 1 win at Reading on the last day of the campaign .

Fahey made his Premier League debut in the opening game of the 2009 ? 10 season at Old Trafford , in the 1 ? 0 defeat against Manchester United . He made 34 appearances in his first Premier League season (18 of which he started) , but failed to score all season , as Birmingham finished in ninth place , their highest ever position in the Premier League . In July 2010 , Fahey 's contract was extended to 2013 , in recognition of his having " proved to [McLeish] that he 's a Premier League player " . He was part of the starting eleven as Birmingham won the 2011 League Cup , defeating favourites Arsenal 2 ? 1 at Wembley Stadium . However , the season would prove to be less successful for both player and club , with Fahey making only 24 appearances in the league (although he did score his first Premier League goal) , and Birmingham finishing 18th , and being relegated on the last day of the season , following a 2 ? 1 defeat to Tottenham Hotspur .

Following relegation from the Premier League at the end of the 2010 ? 11 season , Barry Ferguson and Lee Bowyer left the club , giving Fahey the chance to establish himself in his preferred central position . After recovering from hernia surgery early in the 2011 ? 12 season , he partnered Jonathan Spector in a solid midfield supporting two attacking wide players . Later in the season , he played a defensive support role alongside the more attacking Jordon Mutch , and manager Chris Hughton suggested he was " enjoying playing in that central role and he 's enjoying the development he 's had there all season " . When he suffered a groin problem that caused him to miss the last few weeks of the season , Hughton called it " a real blow for us ... because he 's a player that has been in really good form " . He scored four goals during the season , including " a venomous left @-@ foot drive from 20 yards " at Barnsley and a goal he " couldn 't have hit ... any sweeter first time , or with any more power " at home to Crystal Palace that earned him the club 's Goal of the Season award .

Fahey returned to the team in mid @-@ September , and made seven appearances , four of which were starts . In November , he returned home to Ireland on indefinite compassionate leave for personal and family reasons . After two months away , Fahey took part in pre @-@ season training with Shamrock Rovers , ahead of a full fitness assessment which preceded his return to training with Birmingham in mid @-@ February . However , Fahey was ruled out for the rest of the season in April with a recurrence of a hip problem , having played just twice since his return from compassionate leave . At the end of the season , Fahey announced he was leaving Birmingham as the club had decided not to take up their option to extend his contract .

= = = Return to St. Patrick 's Athletic = = =

After a few months out of the game , Fahey trained with Sheffield United in October 2013 . Following this , he returned to Ireland , where he rejoined his old club St Patrick 's Athletic on 23 December 2013 . Commenting on his move back to Richmond Park , he said " Both the fans and the club have always been great to me , and the stability of the club behind the scenes really made me want to come back and play my football in Inchicore again . " He made his third debut for the club in a 2 ? 1 victory over Dundalk on 17 February 2014 in a Leinster Senior Cup match , scoring a free

kick . On 2 March 2014 , Fahey scored the only goal as St. Patrick 's Athletic became the first team to win the FAI President 's Cup , defeating Sligo Rovers in the process . His goal drew praise from Republic of Ireland manager Martin O 'Neill and Sligo Rover 's Alan Keane , the latter of whom stated " A wonder goal won it , it was a great strike . No keeper in the world could have saved that . "

Fahey started the first day of the season in the 1 @-@ 1 away draw against Cork City . Fahey started the famous 1 @-@ 1 draw away to Legia Warsaw in the Second Qualifying Round of the UEFA Champions League , his sublime through ball found Ian Bermingham who assisted Christy Fagan who slotted home to make it 1 @-@ 0 to the Inchicore side . He started the return leg in Tallaght , Pats lost 5 @-@ 0 . Fahey scored his first goal of the season against UCD in a 3 @-@ 2 win . Overall Fahey made 26 league appearances scoring two goals throughout the season .

= = = Shamrock Rovers = = =

On 11 November 2014 , Fahey switched to Shamrock Rovers . He announced his retirement in August 2015 having failed to recover from knee surgery . His last ever game of professional football turned out to be the 2 ? 1 FAI Cup loss to his old club St Patrick 's Athletic at Richmond Park as he was substituted off with his knee injury for the last time in his career .

= = International career = =

Fahey played for the Republic of Ireland at the 2000 UEFA European Under @-@ 16 Football Championship and scored against their English counterparts .

He also played at the 2003 FIFA World Youth Championship , where he contributed to Ireland topping their group to reach the knockout stages . In the second round match against Colombia under @-@ 20 , he came on as a late substitute to assist Kevin Doyle 's goal and help turn the game around , coming back from a two @-@ goal deficit only to lose on the golden goal .

On 25 May 2010 , Fahey won his first senior cap for the Republic of Ireland in a 2 ? 1 win against Paraguay at the RDS Arena , replacing Damien Duff in the 77th minute . He made his first start against Argentina on 12 August , in the first international match at the new Aviva Stadium . Fahey scored his first goal for the Republic of Ireland eight minutes into his competitive debut , coming off the bench to score the only goal in a Euro 2012 qualifying win over Armenia in Yerevan on 3 September 2010 . On his first competitive start , in a 1 ? 1 draw against Slovakia in Zilina on 12 October , Fahey delivered the free kick that led to Ireland 's goal , scored by Sean St. Ledger . In February 2011 , he scored his second goal for Ireland in a 3 ? 0 defeat of Wales in the 2011 Nations Cup , and his third came in March 2011 , a penalty against Uruguay .

Fahey was part of the squad that clinched victory in the inaugural Nations Cup with a 1 ? 0 win over Scotland on 29 May 2011 at the Aviva Stadium .

He was called into the UEFA Euro 2012 squad but withdrew due to injury before the tournament .

= = = International goals = = =

= = Club statistics = =

= = Honours = =

= = = Club = = =

St Patrick 's Athletic
League of Ireland Cup (1) : 2003

President 's Cup (1) : 2014
Leinster Senior Cup (1) : 2014
FAI Cup (1) : 2014
Drogheda United
Setanta Sports Cup : 2006
Birmingham City
Football League Cup : 2011
Football League Championship runner @-@ up : 2008 ? 09

= = = International = = =

Republic of Ireland
Nations Cup (1) : 2011

= = = Individual = = =

PFAI Players ' Player of the Year (1) : 2008
Monday Night Soccer Goal of the Season (1) : 2008
Birmingham City Goal of the Season (1) : 2011 ? 12 (vs Crystal Palace)