

FOOTBALL

THERE'S just one word to sum up the 2019/20 Northern League Division One campaign and that is "expunged", meaning no teams reap the benefits of promotion or suffer the heartache of relegation after the FA's decision last week to cancel all remaining fixtures in the non-league set-up in which the league competes.

For West Auckland Town, the implications of this drastic ending hasn't affected their status in the slightest.

West end this extraordinary campaign in ninth with 11 wins, nine draws and nine defeats, totalling 42 points from 29 matches played. Yet it all could have been so different had they started the season stronger.

Amassing just five points from their opening seven games, it was an underwhelming start to say the least and one which ultimately ruled them out of challenging for one of the three promotion spots up for grabs at the time.

However, form significantly improved during recent months as Gary Forrest's side suffered defeats in only five of their 22 league games (winning ten, drawing seven) between September 2019 all the way through to March 2020.

Notable results, particularly at the Wanted Stadium, against the likes of Bishop Auckland (2-1), Shildon (4-0), Consett (2-1), Whitley Bay (5-1) and Penrith (6-0) showcased their potential and how dangerous they were at home, boasting the second best defensive record in the league behind only runaway league leaders Stockton Town.

By contrast, West failed to keep the momentum going on the road and in the 15

away games played, they won just three (Whitley Bay, Seaham Red Star and Bishop Auckland) and scored 18 goals in total – to put that into context only five teams scored fewer.

In the cup competitions, a valiant effort in the FA Vase saw West bow out in the last 16 at the hands of Plymouth Parkway before taking National League North side Spennymoor Town to penalties in the quarter-finals of the Durham Challenge Cup after an ultimately competitive but unsuccessful encounter at the Brewery Field.

What turned out to be West's final game of this campaign, on March 11 was a 2-1 win at Guisborough Town in the Mirre Brooks Mileson Memorial League Cup quarter-finals, a competition which they now have remained unbeaten in for over two years.

With a new clubhouse on the horizon and promotion the target, there's a chance for next season to be a memorable one for all connected with West Auckland Town.

Harry Crowe
IN the local leagues, Bowes FC were beginning to put a run together when the FA announced all grassroots action should cease.

Sitting second in the Crook and District League, the team had games in hand on those around them and the danger looked to be coming from Middlestone Moor Mason's Arms who, although lying in sixth place, had only played six league matches, such as their form been in the cup competitions.

Evenwood and Glaxo Rangers struggled throughout the campaign and with each having only four games remaining, there looked to be

little way out of the bottom two spots.

In the Sunday morning leagues, Toft Hill had already completed their programme.

Due to resignations, the first division was left with just six sides. Sadly for Toft Hill, they went winless in their ten matches, bagging just two points.

In the second division, first season

Gainford were settled solidly in mid-table, which reflects the team inconsistent performance this campaign. However, the club did make it through to the division two cup final.

In the Darlington Sunday Morning league, Middleton-in-Teesdale have shown a steady improvement in their first season

Crook & District League Division 1

	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
Willington WMC	10	7	2	1	18	23
Bowes	8	6	0	2	9	18
Stanhope SSC	11	5	1	5	-5	16
Shildon Railway	9	5	0	4	9	15
Cockerton Club	10	4	1	5	-2	13
M Moor MA	6	4	0	2	11	12
Evenwood Town	10	2	1	7	-18	7
Glaxo Rangers	10	1	1	8	-22	4

Wear Valley Sunday League Division 1

	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
Witton Park	7	7	0	0	26	21
Bishop Pavillion	9	6	1	2	11	19
M Moor MA	9	5	1	3	8	16
Coundon WMC	8	4	1	3	1	13
WA WMC	9	1	1	7	-24	4
Toft Hill	10	0	2	8	-22	2

Wear Valley Sunday League Division 2

	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
BA Bay Horse	15	13	0	2	39	39
BH Blues	16	10	3	3	45	33
Shildon Elm Road	15	9	4	2	37	31
NA Sports Club	12	9	1	2	30	28
Gainford X Keys	14	6	1	7	9	19
Coundon 3 Tuns	15	6	1	8	-29	19
Wearhead	15	3	4	8	-29	13
Spenny Ash Tree	16	4	1	11	-30	13
North Bitchburn	16	3	3	10	-31	12
NA Gretna	14	0	4	10	-41	4