

### Report By Colin Chun on the GC league season 2022

Once again the 2022 GC league was split into 2 divisions, division 1 was played under a level format, while division 2 used the Advantage Handicap protocol, with players in the division restricted to those with a 6 or higher handicap.

Middlesbrough did not enter the league this season and Ripon also declined the invitation to take part in the Northern League. In both cases this was due to changes within the personnel who organised competitions and a fear that it would not be possible to field enough players to complete all the fixtures. As a result of this and the ability of Alnmouth to field 2 teams in division 2, there were 6 teams in each division.

At the end of the season Bamburgh and Durham both finished on 8 points in division 1, Durham taking the title as they won 55 games to Bamburgh's 52.

In division 2 the Alnmouth clubs both finished on 8 points, Alnmouth Blues taking the title as they won 54 games to 47 for Greens.

The final league tables were as follows:

#### Division 1

Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
Auckland	5	3	0	2	6
Alnmouth Red	5	2	0	3	4
Bamburgh A	5	4	0	1	8
Belsay Gardens	5	2	0	3	4
Durham Bede	5	4	0	1	8
Tynside Hunters	5	0	0	4	0

#### Division 2

Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
Alnmouth Blue	5	4	0	1	8
Alnmouth Greens	5	4	0	1	8
Bamburgh B	5	3	1	1	7
Belsay Castle	5	0	1	4	1
Durham Cuthbert	5	1	1	3	3
Tynside Swans	5	1	1	3	3

In division 1 the main challenge for most clubs was being able to field their strongest players in every match and there was also the rearrangement of several games, again driven by player availability.

It is unclear exactly why this happened but players "retiring" and more family "visits" away, post pandemic, certainly contributed at some clubs.

It was the first year that the Advantage Handicap process was used in division 2, as you may remember it was not unanimously endorsed by all clubs. However, after refining the process in regard to scoresheets and games not completed in the time, overall, the trial ran smoothly.

From the feedback received from the clubs the key points from the trial are:

- Most feel it is much better at "levelling" up than the bisque system.
- Overall games were much closer.
- It does not work as well when a game cannot be completed in the time allowed.
- Any issue about "fairness" is driven by consistency of handicaps across clubs, rather than the process itself.
- It would be better if all clubs followed the same method for recording hoops awarded by the system.

There were also observations as to the length of matches and that this could contribute to older players not wishing to continue.

In a similar vein it was felt that new players may be put off by the requirement to have to play singles games.

These points will be considered during the winter while discussing the format of next season.