

Deise hit rock bottom



Manager Niall Carew and selector Ronan Sweeney attempting to digest another defeat for Waterford's senior footballers at Carriganore on Sunday last. | Photos: Noel Browne

The Division Four table makes for grim reading at present from a Waterford perspective. With all seven opponents now above them on the table, the Deisemen are, at present, the lowest ranked county in the entire League, not what manager Niall Carew would have envisaged during his winter planning.

During the past two defeats, namely to Antrim in Creggan and to London in Carriganore last Sunday, the team failed to make it into double digit scores and in each of their four matches has failed to score more than 10 times.

And to make matters even worse, Waterford mustered only three points from play over the course of the 70 minutes. Grim statistics indeed.

Victory over London at the WIT grounds was essential if the team was to retain any hope of featuring in the shake-up at the business end of the table.

But Sunday's dispiriting defeat, in a performance that lacked penetration and conviction, now leaves Waterford sitting rock bottom of their section.

Last year's Connacht finalists looked sharper, stronger and altogether hungrier than their hosts who never came to grips with a team that hadn't picked up a single NFL point prior to Sunday last.

The Exiles (wearing WIT jerseys to avoid a clash of colours), who dominated the midfield battle for the majority of this fixture, were 1-2 up without reply after just nine minutes.

Greg Crowley, who'd pointed in the third minute, fired the ball beyond Waterford goalkeeper Stephen Enright after fine interplay between Martin Carroll and Mark Gottsche, while Sean Hickey tagged on a further white flagger for the visitors.

Paul Whyte got Waterford off the mark with a 12th minute free and repeated the feat two minutes later.

Marcus Miskelly and Shane Ahearne traded points in the 16th and 20th minutes before London wing-forward Joe Feeney struck the score of the match from an outrageous angle on the right flank after 23 minutes.

Miskelly and Feeney both pointed again in the 29th and 34th minutes while frees from Whyte (two) and Hickey in first half stoppage left London 1-7 to 0-5 ahead at the break.

Despite the 39th minute dismissal of wing-back Stephen Curran, London maintained their control of the fixture, as Waterford struggled to create scoring opportunities from play.

Whyte and Shane Ahearne kept the Deisemen in touch with points in the 39th and 48th minutes respectively, but goalkeeper Adrian Flaherty's free-taking kept London in the box seat, striking over two dead balls with Stephen Cluxton-like aplomb in the 55th and 56th minutes.

Substitute Adrian Moyles sealed London's win two minutes from time with a well-taken goal and was denied a second three-pointer when Waterford goalkeeper Stephen Enright saved his injury-time penalty.

Paul Whyte's subsequent free, in what was the sixth of seven added-on minutes completed the scoring on what proved a miserable afternoon for a sorry Waterford, who surely cannot play as poorly as this again in 2014. Waterford host Leitrim in Dungarvan on Saturday evening next (throw-in:5pm), and with matches against Wicklow and Carlow to follow, the need for a marked improvement in their form has been exacerbated by this latest disappointment.

Dermot Keyes at Carriganore