

## **Blues fight back to avoid defeat in opening day clash at Birtley.**

Washington AFC travelled to Birtley to kick start their Northern League Division Two campaign. They dominated much of the first half, with Aiden Hutchinson and Jak Hanson coming close. However, they went into the break a goal down, with Kaleb Young converting a penalty on the stroke of half time. Much to Washy's credit, they continued to fight, and scored a deserved equaliser mid way through the second half, with Jak Hanson grabbing our only goal. It ended 1-1 though, in a game that could've gone either way.

There wasn't much to report in the early stages, however, Birtley's Kaleb Young broke through after 5 minutes but his lobbed effort hit the side netting.

Washington then went close on 37 minutes, with Jak Hanson firing a speculative effort towards goal from 25 yards, only to be denied by John Wardey in the Birtley goal.

With momentum clearly in their stride, Washington then went close again, as Aiden Hutchinson fired a header just wide of the Birtley goal.

The hosts then won a penalty on the stroke of half time, against the run of play you could say, as Ricardo Tanoh was fouled by Sam Lilley. The penalty was converted by Kaleb Young, as Birtley took a one goal lead into the break.

Washington's Ben Gibbon was sent to the sin bin for 10 minutes just after half time.

Although they were depleted, the visitors continued to press, with Jak Hanson having another sight of goal. However, he fired an effort wide from inside the box.

Their pressure told though, as Jak Hanson broke through again. He wasn't to be denied this time, as he slotted the ball home under pressure.

That's how it ended though, both sides piled on the pressure at the end, but neither could find a breakthrough.