

DARLO NO-SHOW A 'KICK IN TEETH'

By Sam Elliott

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DARLINGTON administrator Harvey Madden says Tuesday night's poor 1,300 turn-out was "a kick in the teeth" after all the efforts to save the club.

The Quakers still need to find over £200,000 by the start of June or they will be automatically relegated.

Shares in Darlington FC 1883 Ltd, set up in January to raise £750,000 to keep the club going, have stalled as the initial enthusiasm that saw over 12,000 fans pack out the Northern Echo Arena in the two matches after the bail-out has subsided.

Only 1,382 watched Darlington draw 1-1 with Luton Town on Tuesday night – ten days after a "very disappointing" 2,202 witnessed a 1-0 defeat to Stockport County.

The low crowds have forced the club to cut admission prices to £15 and Madden says there is a long way to go before they can pay off their football creditors in full.

He told *The NLP*: "If I am being brutally honest, Tuesday's crowd was a bit of a kick in the teeth.

"I am told Tuesdays are notoriously bad attendance-wise for Darlington, but it was still incredibly frustrating after all the positive work in the last couple of months. Of course we were expecting a downturn, but certainly not to that extent.



STAYAWAYS: Darlington's game with Luton was played in front of thousands of empty seats

PICTURE: Gareth Owen

"There's still a lot of hard work ahead. The Rescue Group have expressed their concern, but I am still hopeful we will be out of administration by May.

"We are not a million miles away from where we need to be. So far we've raised just over £300,000 with a bit more in another account. I think we will be able to exit administration if

we manage to reach £500,000.

"We're working on a number of things and, thankfully, we have all except one of our remaining five home matches on a Saturday.

"We need the town to come out in big numbers now to support the club. We have cut the price of tickets in order to help achieve this."

If Darlington fail to pay off every penny of their debts to football creditors by the June 9 league AGM, and exit administration with a CVA to repay all their others within three years, they will be relegated into the Blue Square Bet North. If they finish in the bottom four, that drop would be into the Evo-Stik Northern Premier.