

Speedway – Bullets shot down despite maximum man Flint

Leon Flint powered to a 15-point maximum but Berwick Bullets lost to Belle Vue Colts at the National Speedway Stadium.

The Borders club went into the National Development League match having beaten track at Belle Vue, Manchester in a previous match.

Bullets' skipper Leon Flint continued where he'd left off this season with a solid win in Heat One, well ahead of Jack Parkinson-Blackburn and the Colt's captain Ben Woodhull in a shared 3-3, however the McGurk brother, Harry and Sam made the perfect pair of gates to take the challenge out of reach of the Bullets Mason Watson and Kieran Douglas in a home 5-1 shooting the Colts 8-4 ahead.

Greg Blair and Ben Rathbone hit the front for Berwick on bend one of Heat Three until Benji Compton hit the grippy high line on bends three and four to power past both off the fourth to gain three points in another shared race, which was also the result of Heat Four, won well by Kyle Bickley after he whipped up round Sam McGurk off the second bend as Connor Coles did round the Bullets' Watson in a third 3-3, moving the score on to 14-10.

Flint just took the three points from Compton in the fifth, another 3-3, before Bickley touched the tapes at the start of Heat Six, ending up off a 15-metre handicap in the re-run, again a race that couldn't move the teams further apart with Parkinson-Blackburn out in front, Bickley overcame his extra 15 metres catching up to, and eventually passing Woodhull who then slid off, clearing the track quickly as the score progressed to 20-16.

Blair hit the front in Heat Seven, but was under pressure from

Harry McGurk who tried each way to get past the Bullet, and did at the start of the third lap to take a home 4-2 as Coles had the beating of Watson taking the score now to 24-18, but a Colts' maximum 5-1 from Sam McGurk and Woodhull who had to cut hard under both Watson and Ryan Macdonald off bend two pushed the home side 10 points ahead, 29-19.

Heat Nine looked like another Colts' maximum after Paul Bowen snuck by Bickley to join Compton up front, but the two Belle Vue riders ended up causing each other problems and Bickley took advantage, passing Bowen who then packed up on the second lap for another 3-3, the score now 32-22 as the shared heats resumed maintaining the 10-point gap but Heat 12 was the hammer blow for the Bullets in a great four laps of action, with Douglas the early leader as Compton overhauled Blair on the opening bend, joining Sam McGurk with both Colts then powering up in sync passing Douglas, one on either side with Blair taking up third place and chasing Compton brilliantly all the way to the flag, but the home 5-1 effectively ended the competition as Belle Vue now held an unassailable 43-29 lead, although Flint ended up with a superb 15 point maximum.

Team manager Gary Flint said afterwards: "The guys held the Colts blow for blow early on, but come the half way mark Belle Vue hammered home their advantage and took a well-deserved victory."

Individual Riders' Score Chart:

Belle Vue Colts: 51

Jack Parkinson-Blackburn 2,3,1*,1,0 = 7+1

Ben Woodhull (Captain) 1*,F,2*,2 = 5+2

Benji Compton 3,2,3,2* = 10+1

Paul Bowen 0,1*,R,2* = 3+2

Connor Coles 1*,1,1*,0 = 3+2

Harry McGurk (r) 3,3,2,3,2 = 13

Sam McGurk (r) 2*,2,3,3 = 10+1

Berwick Bullets: 38

Leon Flint (Captain) 3,3,3,3,3 = 15 maximum

Ryan Macdonald 0,0,N,0 = 0

Greg Blair 2,2,3,1 = 8

Ben Rathbone 1*,X,0,X = 1+1

Kyle Bickley 3,1*,2,2*,1 = 9+2

Kieran Douglas (r) 0,1*,0,N = 1+1

Mason Watson (r) 1,0,2,0,1,0,X = 4