

# Speedway – Monarchs look set for title tilt

What the Fork Monarchs endured a tough night but ultimately stuck to task going down 52-38 at Birmingham which means that barring the most unlikely of events the Armadale men can look ahead to the end of season play-offs and a crack at their sixth league title.

It was not an easy night with the Monarchs being undermanned from the start due to Anders Rowe's recent injury and with no guest up to the level of Nathan Greaves available.

Monarchs team boss John Campbell said: "38 was the minimum we needed and I didn't think it would be such a struggle to get to that 38. It was panic stations a little when Sam Masters (pictured) had his bike problems before Heat 15 as he had been the only one consistently doing well.

"Richie Worrall rode brilliantly in that heat to get the win and he had to as, Chris Harris had been brilliant all night. He was the only one able to pass on that track but Richie made the start and rode the dirt line that was out wide by that point.

"Drew Kemp requires a special mention. He got stuck in and made it to the first corner in the points more often than not and, without his points, we wouldn't have been as close."

Birmingham knew coming in to evening that a home defeat would all but end their own hopes of making those playoffs and were at it from the off. Three heat advantages out of the first four races gave them a lead they would never surrender and from there it was damage limitation for the visitors.

Heat 6 looked like the arrears would be reduced as the Monarchs jetted from the gates but Harris had other ideas

rounding both to share the spoils.

Monarchs did reduce the lead to four points after a Heat 9, 5-1 from Worrall and tactical substitute Masters, but this was quickly erased by advantages for the home men in Heats 10 and 12.

This meant with three races to go the home lead was ten and, by this point, passing was nigh on impossible so gating was the name of the game.

Masters blitzed away from the start in this race but no advantage could be gained as Worrall slid off in third, this guaranteeing the home men victory.

Any hopes the Monarchs would snatch a consolation point were gone in the penultimate race as the home men jetted off for a 5-1 and with Masters suffering engine issues meaning he missed the two-minute allowance for the last race it was left to Worrall to nullify the damage and confirm the 14 point deficit.

From the Monarchs point of view, this means they finish in the table above Scunthorpe and, barring two monstrous wins for Kent over fellow title challengers Leicester, it will be all guns blazing for another title tilt.

Birmingham 52: Harris 13, Grobauer 0, Shanes R/R, Morris 11+4, Riss 12+1, Castagna 13, Thompson 3+1

Edinburgh 38: Masters 12+1, Rowe R/R, Thomson 6+1, Pickering 3, Worrall 9+1, Kemp 8+3, Woolley 0