

Berwick Bullets shoot down Armadale Devils

Berwick Bullets opened their National Development League (NDL) campaign with a 52-38 win at Armadale Devils despite 35-year-old William Lawson (pictured) top scoring with 14 points for the home side, *writes Lawrence Heppell*.

Early nerves saw Kyle Bickley go through the tapes at the start of Heat One, requiring him to restart off the 15 metre handicap, which initially held him back with Danny Phillips and Josh Embleton roaring off to lead, however despite being off a handicap, Bickley passed Kieran Douglas, his fellow Bullet at the start of the second lap, with Embleton drifting wide on the third bend allowing Bickley through for second and then went on to pass Phillips down the back straight of the fourth lap to take an excellent, and well deserved win in a shared 3-3 heat result.

Young Ace Pijper made a brilliant gate in Heat Two to lead right to the flag for three great points with Mason Watson joining him in second for a Bullets' 1-5, pushing Berwick into a four-point lead, 4-8 while a good gate from the Devils' skipper, Tom Woolley gave him the third well, however his partner George Rothery was subsequently excluded from the heat after a crash earlier in the heat which had seen Ben Rathbone fall, but get back on and finish the race in a shared 3-3, the score now 7-11.

Luke Crang led Heat Four but William Lawson was pushing hard from behind and forced his way through for the win on the third lap as Pijper took advantage of Lewis Millar on the fourth lap for third to again share the race, 3-3 maintaining Berwick's four-point lead.

Woolley again made a massive gate in the fifth but was pressed

hard by Bickley throughout and was passed on the third lap, but Woolley hit back and retook the lead only for Bickley to win the race after a superb battle in a Bullets' 2-4, extending the Berwick lead to 12-18.

Phillips took Heat Six over Crang in the 3-3, while Lawson passed a speedy Blair in Heat seven on the back straight of the third lap in another 3-3, the score now 18-24.

Pijper continued his great meeting by gating in Heat Eight for a good three points ahead of Embleton who held his two points over Douglas in another Berwick 2-4, the Bullets now eight-up, 20-28.

Blair led Heat Ten well for three more points but Embleton, holding third went down on the third bend allowing Rathbone in to take his point as Berwick hit home another 2-4 advantage taking the progressive scores to 25-35.

The 11th and 12th were both 3-3s, Berwick remaining ten ahead with three races to go and, in the always-important Heat 13, the balance was maintained with a win for Lawson, but had to defence hard the challenges of Crang and Bickley for his three points, the score now 34-44, and victory in the Berwick Bullets' hands, which was more than confirmed by Blair and Watson who devastated heat 14 with a solid Berwick 1-5 over Rothery and Gregor Millar, the score with one to go now 35-49.

Berwick team manager, Gary Flint said: "Great performance from the guys, really spot on, and while they all played their part, what a debut for young Ace Pijper who won his first race and went on to take some good scalps, but overall this was a cracking team performance and the thoroughly deserved their away success."

The Bullets are back in action on Saturday at Shielfield Park (7.00pm) with the visit from the brand-new boys from Oxfordshire, the Oxford Chargers in another SGB NDL encounter.

Armadale Devils 38: Danny Phillips 2, 3, 2, 0 = 7; Josh Embleton 1*, 0, 2, F = 3+1; Tom Woolley 3, 2, 3, 3, 0 = 11; George Rothery X, 0, 0, 1 = 1; William Lawson 3, 3, 2, 3, 3 = 14; Gregor Millar 0, 0, 1*, 0 = 1+1; Lewis Millar 1, 0, 0, 0 = 1

Berwick Bullets 52: Kyle Bickley 3, 3, 3, 1*, 2 = 12+1; Kieran Douglas 0, 1, 1, 0 = 2; Ben Rathbone 1*, 1*, 1, 1* = 4+3; Greg Blair 2, 2, 3, 3, 1* = 11+1; Luke Crang 2, 2, 2, 2 = 8; Mason Watson 2*, 1*, 1*, N, 2* = 6+4; Ace Pijper 3, 1*, 3, 2, N = 9+1