

# Under-strength Newcastle Diamonds cut down by Edinburgh Monarchs

What the Fork Monarchs comfortably moved into the quarter-final of the SGB Championship Knockout Cup on a 107-73 aggregate thanks to a 58-32 scoreline in the first round, second-leg against an injury-hit Newcastle Diamonds side.

The Tyneside team were minus their No 1 Bradley Wilson-Dean and former Glasgow Tigers star Paul Starke was a late withdrawal with food poisoning. Perthshire-based William Lawson answered a late call to guest.

In the circumstances, observers felt Diamonds were doing well to trail by just 26-34 at Heat 10 but Monarchs pulled away after that and team manager Alex Harkess said: "We didn't get going until we turned on to the second page of the programme but, in the end, there were some things to be pleased about.

"James Sarjeant was very good and I was very happy to see some points for Jacob Hook. Sam Masters was working with him, changing things on the bike and, in his last two rides, he got a good third followed by a paid win. He's definitely showing promise.

"Our middle pair is improving. Paco Castagna seems to take a while to get going, but he won his last two heats."

Although the opposition was not strong they still had some riders who are not easy to beat at Armadale but it was no great surprise that Masters (pictured) and his Aussie countryman Josh Pickering scored maximums.

They were joined by James Sarjeant who showed a lot of determination to stay unbeaten.

MONARCHS 58: Masters 14, Pickering 13, Sarjeant 11, Thomson 8, Castagna 7, Hook 4, Fredriksen 1.

DIAMONDS 32: Wethers 10, Clegg 8, Complin 6, Wright 4, Congreve 2, Lawson 2.