

Berwick Bandits edged out at home to Redcar Bears in SGB Championship with much-changed team

The revised Berwick Bandits, due to injury and international racing, took to the track against the Redcar Bears in the SGB Championship with two guest riders and rider-replacement, the latter for Leon Flint. Nick Morris was in for Chris Harris, who was away on international Team GB duty, and Lee Complin deputised for the injured Ty Proctor.

Heat One was halted on the first bend when Charles Wright was caught up in a bunch, then Jye Etheridge spun 180 and went down heavily with Wright walking back to the pits and Etheridge needing attention. With Kyle Bickley taking his place in the re-run, Morris went hard out to win well in a shared 3-3 result. It was then announced Etheridge had suffered a suspected collar-bone injury and withdrawn from the meeting.

Both Heats Two and Three were also shared 3-3s with sizeable wins for Jason Edwards and Erik Riss respectively, the score tied at 9-9 before Lewis Kerr gave a massive chase behind Ricky Wells to the line, but it was the fourth shared race.

Heat Five was stopped when Complin went down on the first corner after some solid bunching. The referee calling back all four riders for the re-run, which was a fine win for Theo Pijper (pictured) in a fifth 3-3, the score now 15-all.

Morris led Heat Six well from the gate and won with ease as Pijper passed Kerr off bend two to join his partner in a home maximum, splitting the teams for the first time with the 5-1, the score now 20-16.

Unfortunately for the Bandits, Riss and Kasper Andersen did likewise in Heat Seven over Wells and Complin, levelling the scores again 21-21, but an unexpected gate to flag 5-1 from Wells and Kyle Bickley, despite some good challenging from Adam Roynon in third, Berwick went into the lead again 26-22.

Bickley was out again in Heat Nine as an injury rider replacement for Etheridge, but it was Kerr who made an electric start, almost passed by Pijper off bend two, but the Bear held on. At the back, Jordan Jenkins found his way round Bickley in a Redcar 2-4, narrowing the gap to 28-26, and with their solid 1-5 from former Edinburgh Monarchs skipper Riss and Kasper Andersen over Morris and Luke Crang, the Bears took the lead for the first time, 29-31.

Heat 11 was halted on the third bend, as Roynon went down as Complin went under him and the referee excluded Complin from the re-run for being the cause of the stoppage. Wright made the gate second time round and took up the lead off the second bend to take the three points in a 2-4 that took the Bears lead to four points, 31-35, and with one race to go, Redcar still led by four points, meaning the Bandits needed a 5-1 to draw the match.

Riss and Wright led off bend two, but Morris hit the wide line and races the best race of the night, passing both Bears in spectacular fashion to take a well-deserved win, but with Wells at the back, the match went to Redcar, 43-47.

Bandits team boss, Gary Flint said: "With a large chunk of our usual guys out of action, it was always going to be a tougher ask than normal, and then losing Jye Etheridge to a shoulder injury quarter of a lap into Heat One, we were well up against the odds.

"Our guest tried every ounce of the way with Lee Complin looking like the lad we used to have in the side a decade ago, while Nick Morris took a good total and a spectacular final

heat race, passing both Erik Riss and Charles Wright in a style just like the man he was covering, Chris Harris, which was a thrill to see, but well done Bears on a win certainly deserved.”

Berwick FTS Bandits Powered by Keenwood Karpets 43: Nick Morris (guest) 3,3,1,2,3 = 12Rider replacement (Leon Flint)Theo Pijper 1*,3,2*,2,2,1* = 11+3Jye Etheridge (captain) Fn, Irr, Irr, Irr = 0 withdrawn injuredRicky Wells 3,1,3,2,1*,0 = 10+1Lee Complin (guest) (r) 2,2,0,0,X,1*,N = 5+1Kyle Bickley (r) 0,1*,0,2*,0,N,2 = 5+2Number 8 Luke Crang 0 = 0

Redcar Agilia Bears 47: Charles Wright (captain) 2,2,3,3,1* = 11+1Adam Roynon 1*,1*,1,1 = 4+2Erik Riss 3,2*,3,3,2 = 13+1Kasper Andersen 0,3,2*,3 = 8+1Lewis Kerr 2,1,3,0 = 6Jordan Jenkins (r) R,0,1,N = 1Jason Edwards (r) 3,1*,0,0,0 = 4+1