

# Berwick Bandits still believe despite setback at Redcar Bears

Redcar Bears 51, Berwick Fire Training Services Bandits, powered by Keenwood Karpets, 39

A superb performance from Chris Harris (pictured leading, courtesy of Berwick Bandits) means that Berwick are still in with a chance of reaching the Knockout Cup semi-final after an eventful night in Cleveland, *writes George Dodds*.

But with, Ricky Wells apart, support for the skipper sporadic, they will have to claw back a 12-point deficit when the second leg is staged at Shielfield Park on June 11.

Having won the toss, Harris marked his intentions for the night by storming up the inside of Adam Roynon and winning the first heat comfortably.

Jordan Jenkins and Kyle Bickley have already enjoyed some good duels in the National Development League this season and they were at it again for their Championship sides in heat two, Jenkins diving inside the Bandit and ending up in the safety fence.

Ty Proctor, having made his return from injury as Jye Etheridge's rider-replacement in heat one, was leading when the red lights came on but in the rerun it was his team-mate who gated, Jason Edwards splitting the visiting pair.

Leon Flint and Theo Pijper benefitted from Kasper Anderson's awful three gate but could not make an impact on Erik Riss, the Bears levelling matters on the night when Jenkins rounded Bickley with Lewis Kerr well clear of Ricky Wells at the front.

Harris swooped around Riss in heat five and with Proctor third, Berwick were back in front, Wells winning a shared heat six.

The impressive Jenkins sailed around Flint and Pijper to join Kerr at the head of heat seven before the teams traded 4-2s – Wells winning heat nine – which meant Berwick trailed by just two points – 28-26 – after heat nine.

Any hope of Friday night glory for the visitors effectively disappeared over the next three races as the Bandits were outscored 13-5, maximum heat wins for Roynon and Wright – over Flint and Pijper – and Riss and Jenkins – Pijper and Proctor – sandwiching Harris' first defeat of the night, to Kerr in heat 11 although Flint relegated Edwards to last to share the spoils.

Harris overcame his Redcar counterpart Charles Wright to win heat 13 but, crucially, Wells was tailed off at the back.

Flint flew from the gate in the penultimate heat but Edwards overtook him on the inside with Bickley tailed off at the back.

Just to add to the frustration for the visitor both Harris and Wells appeared to have more speed than Riss in heat 15 but the German rode a superb defensive race to prevent the Berwick pair from clawing back any more points.

Just two points came from Jye Etheridge's rider-replacement races as Flint and Proctor eased their way back from injury while Pijper and Bickley, after his first ride heroics, will want to consign the evening to the history book and move on.

Team manager Gary Flint said: "We have left ourselves more to do in the second leg than we hoped for but the tie is still very much alive.

"Leon and Ty were obviously short of time on the bike but they

adapted well, Ty pipping Adam Roynon on the line for an extra point in heat eight could yet prove vital.

“Bomber was typical Bomber on the night while Ricky was also at the races.

“Even though Redcar ride Berwick well we know that on any given night we are more than capable of beating anyone at home by 12 or more points. The prize of a semi-final place is still very alive.”

Bears: Charles Wright 7+2, Adam Roynon 7+1, Erik Riss 11, Kasper Andersen 3, Lewis Kerr 10+1, Jason Edwards 7+1, Jordan Jenkins 6+1.

Bandits: Chris Harris 13, Theo Pijper 3+1, Leon Flint 6+1, Ricky Wells 9+1, Ty Proctor 6, Kyle Bickley 3, Luke Crang DNR

Berwick are back in action tonight when Glasgow Tigers with Championship points at stake, start 7pm.

Berwick will certainly be hoping that with Flint and Proctor now having a meeting under their belts and home track advantage they can tame the Tigers who are still searching for the elusive Championship title after losing in the previous two Play-off finals, and currently sit third in the table.

Berwick FTS Bandits: 1 Chris Harris, 2 R/R (Jye Etheridge), 3 Theo Pijper, 4 Leon Flint, 5 Ricky Wells, 6 Ty Proctor, 7 Kyle Bickley, 8 Greg Blair.

Glasgow Allied Vehicle Tigers: 1 Craig Cook, 2 Danyon Hume, 3 Ulrich Ostergaard, 4 Benjamin Basso, 5 Tom Brennan, 6 Broc Nicol 4.94, 7 Connor Bailey.

Tickets: [berwickspeedway.com/tickets](http://berwickspeedway.com/tickets)