

Berwick Bandits team warned that every point is vital in this weekend's double-header

Gary Flint has spelled out exactly what is required of Berwick Bandits seven riders in a double-header at Redcar Bears on Friday (7.30pm) and at home to Glasgow Tigers on Saturday (7pm).

Bandits' team manager said that each lap and every point over each of the 30 races is vital this weekend as the Berwick FTS Bandits, powered by Keenwood Karpets, look to place one foot into the Knockout Cup semi-finals and they are also desperate to get their play-off ambitions back on track.

Standing in their way are Bears on Friday in the Knockout Cup quarter-final, first-leg, and then high-flying Tigers visit Shielfield Park on Saturday (tapes-up 7pm) in the SGB Championship.

Rising star Leon Flint (pictured) returns after injury along with Ty Proctor who have been out of action since crashing within 24 hours of each other at the start of the month.

Teenager Flint, Gary's son, dislocated his shoulder in a freak clash with team-mate Theo Pijper on the cool-down lap in Berwick's 54-36 home victory over Newcastle on April 30.

The following day, Australian Proctor suffered neck and nerve damage after a first ride crash in the return fixture at Brough Park.

However, Bandits continue to be minus Aussie ace Jye Etheridge who fractured a previously plated collarbone when Friday's combatants met in the Championship at Shielfield Park 13 days' ago, a meeting Redcar won by four points.

Berwick will use rider-replacement for Etheridge for both meetings with Flint, Proctor, Pijper and reserve Kyle Bickley all eligible to take his rides, along with the No 8, Luke Crang at Redcar and Greg Blair – who guests for Edinburgh Monarchs on Friday night – against Tigers.

Bickley scored six points as a guest for Edinburgh at Redcar last Sunday while Proctor began his British career with the Cleveland outfit and Flint played a starring role when the teams drew the league match at the Ecco Arena last season.

Redcar welcome back reserve Jordan Jenkins after a knee injury sidelined him against Edinburgh.

On Saturday, Glasgow visit in what has, in recent seasons, proved to be one of the meetings of the season. They are still smarting over dropping home points against Poole Pirates last time out but arrive knowing that they won both clashes in the Borders last season.

Their No 1, Craig Cook, is a former track record holder, while captain Ulrich Ostergaard and Tom Brennan also have impressive records at Berwick.

Highly-rated Danish racer Benjamin Basso makes his first appearance at the track and Flint said: "I was delighted when Leon and Ty declared themselves available for selection at the start of the week.

"With four other teams in action on Friday night, the choice of replacements, had they not been available, would have been limited to say the least.

"They are bound to be a little rusty after such a long time off the bike, but both have been helping their team-mates in the pits while they have been sidelined and were desperate to get back on their bikes.

"We know that we have to keep our eye on the ball in every

race this weekend as the odd point won or lost is likely to be decisive in two evenly matched encounters.

“Redcar ride Shielfield well and we generally go well there so there is not going to be much in it. Any race over the two legs could be the one that decides which of us will reach the semi-finals.

“We’ve got to be switched on from heat one all the way through to 15 and the same goes on Saturday as Glasgow will not give us any respite and will pounce on any errors or misfortune. We know that we have it within us to beat anyone, home or away, on any given night.”

Flint said that fans have been eagerly awaiting the visit of Glasgow with Chris “Bomber” Harris, a former Tigers star, in against Craig Cook and Flint said: “This is obvious box office, but every heat has tasty match-ups with four ex-Tigers in our line-up possibly with a point to prove and they will ultimately decide who gets the points.

“It’s going to be a weekend when everyone needs to be at the top of their game – including the fans who have a big part to play in what has become a real must-see meeting.

“It’s a shame that Jye is still sidelined – he thrives in these kind of situations – but a real boost to have Leon and Ty back.”

Redcar beat Oxford 94-86 on aggregate in the first round of the cup while Berwick received a bye. The second leg will be raced at Shielfield Park on Saturday 11 June. Tapes-up 7.30pm at Redcar on Friday, 7pm Shielfield on Saturday.

Anyone buying tickets online can add under-16s to their ticket free.

Berwick FTS Bandits: 1 Chris Harris, 2 rider replacement for Jye Etheridge, 3 Theo Pijper, 4 Leon Flint, 5 Ricky Wells, 6

Ty Proctor, 7 Kyle Bickley, 8.

Redcar Agilia Bears: 1 Charles Wright, 2 Adam Roynon, 3 Erik Riss, 4 Kasper Andersen, 5 Lewis Kerr, 6 Jason Edwards, 7 Jordan Jenkins.

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