

Berwick Bullets shoot down Kent Royals to move clear in NDL title chase

National Development League: Grant Henderson Tankers Berwick Bullets 53, Kent Iwade Garage Royals 37

Berwick moved nine points clear at the top of the National Development League (NDL) after an eventful evening at Shielfield Park against second-placed Kent Royals who arrived in the Borders unbeaten.

Bullets are now on 16 points after six fixtures with Kent on seven after three matches, but the home side were their own worst enemy at times during the match, skipper Kyle Bickley, Ben Rathbone and Ace Pijper all breaking the tapes and earning their points the hard way after starting off 15 metre handicaps.

Alfie Bowtell was the individual star of the meeting despite having to lay his bike down at high speed to avoid fallen team-mate Ben Morley in the first running of Heat 13.

While Morley left the track in an ambulance having suffered a leg injury, Bowtell picked himself up to re-appear in the re-run and enjoyed a stroke of luck as Bickley suffered a puncture on the back straight of the final lap while leading comfortably.

Joe Alcock gave support to Bowtell and Morley as the visitors' three-pronged attack kept the home side in the contest but it was not enough against a Bullets side in fine form.

Six of Bullets' squad won one or more races and Reserve Kieran Douglas (pictured by *Keith Hamblin* alongside Kent rider Jamie Halden and Berwick riders Luke Crang) enjoyed a productive in

a fine all-round team performance with action man Greg Blair also scoring well and earning a Heat 15 ride.

Bullets team manager Gary Flint said: "The boys deserve to celebrate another victory as they had to dig deep at times on a night when not everything went smoothly.

"Once again our reserves were the key. It may be different personnel, but Ben and Kieran really backed up the top five and their points were crucial in the final analysis. Kent are a good side so to win by 16 points is an outstanding performance."

Bullets: Kyle Bickley 11+1, Mason Watson 4+1, Ace Piper 6, Greg Blair 9+2, Luke Crang 9+1, Kieran Douglas 8+1, Ben Rathbone 6+1

Royals: Alfie Bowtell 13, Jamie Halden 3+1, Danno Verge 3, Joe Alcock 9, Ben Morley 7, Chris Watts 1, Sam Woolley 1+1