

Chris Harris inspired but Glasgow Tigers edge Berwick Bandits

Berwick FTS Bandits, powered by Keenwood Karpets 42, Glasgow Tigers 48

An inspired performance from Berwick skipper Chris Harris could not prevent Glasgow from inflicting a second successive Shielfield defeat on the home side, *writes George Dodds*.

Harris dropped just two points to an opponent from his five rides, but it was the fast-starting Scottish side which drew level on points with Leicester and Poole at the top of the Championship.

Berwick's evergreen No 1 showed his class by team-riding teenager Leon Flint to a 5-1 in Heat 15 which denied Glasgow a fourth league point on the night and prevented them from taking top spot outright.

For much of evening, it was Harris against Glasgow's young guns who, despite subdued performances from Craig Cook and Ulrich Ostergaard, had opened up an eight point lead by Heat five, Cook and Danyon Hume leading home a struggling Theo Pijper and Flint, still battling for match fitness following a shoulder injury.

Ty Proctor fell heavily on the third lap of heat one and also struggled for points and Berwick brought Harris in as a tactical substitute in heat seven. He obliged with a comfortable victory but Ricky Wells, who had won his first race, was tailed off at the rear.

There were signs of a Berwick comeback when Kyle Bickley, ineffective in the early stages of the meeting, battled his

way through from another poor start to help Flint share heat eight behind Hume, but they were quickly dashed when the excellent Tom Brennan and reserve Broc Nichol combined and extended Glasgow's lead to 12 points in Heat Nine.

Berwick's first heat advantage did not come until the tenth race, won by Harris, again from the back, with Proctor picking off Ostergaard for a hard-earned point.

Bickley had taken confidence from his earlier ride and was a man transformed as, after another poor gate, he roared around first Cook and then Nichol – in for the tape-breaking Hume – to join Wells at the head of heat 11, trimming the lead to six points again.

In the next heat he again had the outside run working to round Nichol but any hopes Berwick had of a comeback victory were dashed when Brennan and Cook combined to keep Harris at bay.

Benjamin Basso became Glasgow's fifth different race winner in Heat 14, Bickley again showing his ability to battle as he pipped Nichol on the run to the line after an excellent chase.

Brennan and Hume deservedly won the Heat 15 nomination for the visitors, but it was the Berwick pairing of Flint and Harris who finally made the gate, Harris dropping back to protect his young team-mate from the hard-charging Brennan.

Berwick team manager Gary Flint conceded: "Fair play to Glasgow they have given us a lesson in gating tonight and deserved their win." "We had too many riders either struggling or still feeling their way back after injury.

"The one thing we did do was refuse to just roll over and we really got among Glasgow in the closing stages. I'm delighted for Kyle because his last four outings showed everyone the talent that we know he has.

"Leon also got better as the night went on and, even by his

standards, Bomber was brilliant, his Heat 15 ride to make sure that the excellent Tom Brennan couldn't get near Leon at the front was a different class."

Bandits are in action next Saturday (June 4) when current Championship leaders Leicester at the visitors to Shielfield. The meeting also features a National Development League match between Berwick Bullets and Leicester Lion Cubs and the sides then meet again in the east Midlands the following day.

Bandits: Chris Harris 15+1, Jye Etheridge rider replacement, Theo Pijper 1+1, Leon Flint 12, Ricky Wells 6, Ty Proctor 2, Kyle Bickley 6+3, Greg Blair 0

Tigers: Craig Cook 6+2, Danyon Hume 7+1, Ulrich Ostergaard 5+2, Benjamin Basso 9, Tom Brennan 10+1, Broc Nichol 8+1, Connor Bailey 3+2