

Edinburgh Monarchs claim point at Redcar Bears but boss Campbell wanted more

Edinburgh Monarchs boss John Campbell agreed with the decision to call off the last heat at Redcar Bears after a heavy shower as the visitors earned a point in a 45-39 defeat on Teesside, but he groaned: "We would have liked to do better."

The sharp shower arrived during three attempted runnings of Heat 15 and Campbell (pictured to the right with co-promoter Alex Harkess by *Nigel Duncan*) said: "We were pleased to get a point though we would have liked to do better."

And he argued that the decision to abandon the meeting could have been made sooner as none of the riders wanted to take risks on the difficult surface.

Monarchs three Australian heat leaders produced the bulk of their scoring with skipper Sam Masters and Josh Pickering setting new track records on a track re-shaped this season. Pickering finished as record holder on 52.8sec in Heat 3 and Kye Thomson also beat the previous record.

Earlier, race wins in Heats one, three and four produced a feeling that Monarchs top men could dominate the match on a track with a fair bit of dirt on the outside line, but after Heat Ten Monarchs had skidded ten points behind.

Pickering tracked as a tactical substitute in Heat 11 and skipper Masters powered ahead with Pickering speeding past Bears for a 5-1 to re-ignite optimism of a positive result.

Masters won Heat 13 to bring Monarchs within four points of the home side with two races left, but the win was settled in a thrilling Heat 14 in which Jason Edwards and Paco Castagna

rode neck and neck, Paco almost squeezing through on the inside several times.

Then came the saga of Heat 15. The heat was stopped, Monarchs claimed needlessly, after the first attempt as the riders entered the back straight, then it was stopped again as Wright and Pickering came down. Then it rained making for a difficult track with a grippy outside and slick inside. The match was abandoned after Heat 14 but the result stands leaving Monarchs ninth in the 11-strong table with eight points from seven matches.

Redcar are fifth with 16 points from nine outings with Leicester Lions leading the title race with 23 points after ten outings and Glasgow Tigers are second with 20 points from eight fixtures.

Redcar Bears (45): Charles Wright 10+0, Adam Roynon 3+2, Erik Riss 10+1, Kasper Andersen 4+1, Lewis Kerr 6+0, Jason Edwards 4+0, Ben Morley 4+1

Edinburgh Monarchs (39): Sam Masters 11+0, Lasse Fredriksen 1+1, Kye Thomson 9+0, Paco Castagna 1+1, Josh Pickering 9+1, Jacob Hook 0+0, Kyle Bickley 6+1