

Edinburgh Monarchs skid to disappointing defeat to high-flying Leicester Lions

A 39-50 home defeat by Leicester was one of the most disappointing results for the Monarchs for a long time, according to an Edinburgh Monarchs spokesman who confirmed that this was and the second time the new-look team have failed to reach 40 points during a match at Armadale this season.

And What the Fork Monarchs' captain Sam Masters (pictured by *Nigel Duncan*) declared: "Two home defeats and two away is not really what we want is it? It's tough, without sounding disrespectful, we just have a couple of stragglers. Myself, Kye and Josh can't really do it all.

"It's the same problem as our last meeting here, we just weren't getting off the start. I was a little bit better but it was first to the dirt line wins."

Nick Morris and Richie Worrall, both experienced campaigners with a knowledge of the tight Armadale track, got to the front and were, according to Masters, pretty much impossible to pass. He added: "If we could get out the start better it would make life a lot easier."

The track was tricky due to the after-effects of rain, but the Leicester riders simply coped better, according to the spokesman. Their gating was far superior. Time and again the red-and-yellow race suits raced ahead, and there were also several occasions when home riders seemed to have made decent starts only for them to be out-manoeuvred out of the second bend and down the back straight.

After an opening heat 4-2 to Monarchs, Lions took the lead in

Heat 2 with a 5-1 and from then on there was never a feeling that we were going to be able to regain the advantage.

Once again Paco Castagna made a very poor start to the meeting with a last place in Heat Three and, unlike previous weeks, he did not bounce back with some race wins.

Josh Pickering had probably the ride of the night in Heat Four, passing both Leicester riders including a daring outside move on race leader Howarth. However James Sarjeant was not in the form of the earlier meetings and he fell in this race.

Monarchs were six down by Heat Six but didn't choose to use a tactical sub and took a second 4-2 from the opening pair. Lasse Fredriksen had beaten both Dan Thompson and Kyle Bickley to this point, but up against the same pair again in Heat Eight, although he made a decent start, he came down on the second bend.

When Masters' bike failed in second place in Heat Ten the writing was really on the wall. The captain came into Heat 11 as tactical sub and duly won the heat, but Josh was just short in his attempt to peg back Worrall.

Seven down with three heats remaining, Monarchs needed two 5-1s in Heats 13 and 15, but Worrall won Heat 13 with Josh coming off trying to find the outside line.

Kye Thomson got a race win from the back in Heat 14, but it was too late. Top Lion Morris again got the better of Masters on the opening bends in the final heat and the visitors had hit 50.

Apart from Morris, Worrall and Kyle Howarth were very solid heat leaders and their reserves easily outscored the home boys. Leicester had every reason to be happy with their night's work.

Edinburgh Monarchs (39): Sam Masters 14+0, Lasse Fredriksen

2+0, Paco Castagna 3+1, Kye Thomson 9+0, Josh Pickering 7+0, Jacob Hook 1+0, James Sarjeant 3+1

Leicester Lions (50): Richie Worrall 11+0, Dan Thompson 1+0, Nick Morris 14+0, Connor Mountain 6+2, Kyle Howarth 8+0, Kyle Bickley 5+1, Joe Thompson 5+2