

Berwick Bandits skid to third straight home defeat but Bullets move clear in Development League title race

Berwick FTS Bandits, powered by Keenwood Karpets 41, Leicester Lions 49

Berwick suffered a third successive home Championship defeat after being given a gating lesson by a top of the table side, this time Leicester Lions.

Despite that, Bandits went into the final heat knowing that a 5-1 would earn them a draw but those hopes evaporated when Chris Harris (pictured by *Keith Hamblin*) was excluded after tangling with his opposite number Nick Morris as they battled for second place behind Kyle Howarth, Leon Flint a distant fourth when the race was stopped.

Referee Michael Breckon chose to exclude the home captain after the former Bandit was sent tumbling over the start line running out of space as he tried to squeeze down the outside of Harris.

In contrast to Berwick's low-scoring reserves, Redcar's Jason Edwards racked up 11 points as guest for the retired Anders Rowe including victory over Flint, Berwick's only other consistent threat on the night, in the penultimate heat which ended any hopes of a victory.

Bandits team manager Gary Flint said: "It's hard not to be frustrated by another performance when we just didn't have that extra bit of magic to see us home.

"I cannot agree with the referee's decision to exclude Bomber

(Chris Harris) in Heat 15. He was in front and it wasn't really up to him to ensure that Nick Morris had room to come through.

"Even so we left ourselves too much to do from the starting gate again and against a team with three strong heat leaders that was always going to be a huge ask."

Berwick Bandits: Chris Harris 12+1, Theo Pijper 5+2, Leon Flint 13, Ricky Wells 6, Lee Complin 4+1, Kyle Bickley 1

Lions: Nick Morris 11+1, Richie Worrall 6+1, Joe Thompson 5, Kyle Howarth 13+1, Jason Edwards 11+2, Dan Thompson 6.

Grant Henderson Tankers Berwick Bullets 49, Leicester Lion Cubs 41

Bullets cemented their spot at the top of the National Development League denied the visitors a bonus point, albeit Dan Thompson was half a wheel away from clinching it as he tried desperately to overhaul Kyle Bickley in a thrilling Heat 15 chase.

The home side, however, enjoyed good fortune as Connor Coles shed a chain on the back straight of Heat three and then the following race was stopped and awarded after Vinnie Foord's silencer fell off and left debris on the track, the exhaust extension coming adrift again in Heat 14.

Bullets coach Kevin Little said: "That was as tough a match as we have had all season and Leicester asked a lot of questions of the Bullets.

"As has been the case all year, everyone stuck to their task and the reward is another good win. I think we saw two sides likely to feature very strongly in the end of season play-offs."

Bullets: Kyle Bickley 14, Mason Watson 5+1, Ace Pijper 6+2, Greg Blair 8+1, Luke Crang 7, Kieran Douglas 6+1, Ben Rathbone

3+2

Lion Cubs: Dan Thompson 12+1, Mickie Simpson 2, Connor Coles 7, Tom Spencer 6+1, Joe Thompson 11+1, Kyran Lyden 0, Vinnie Foord 3+1