

Aaron Summers back in saddle for Bandits

Aaron Summers (pictured) will race for and against his former club this week. The hugely-popular Aussie appeared to have called time on his speedway career when he retired on an emotional evening against Glasgow Tigers at Shielfield last September.

But Oxford tempted the 34-year-old back on track as a replacement for injury victim Jack Thomas last month and he will be in Cheetahs colours when the Bandits make their first visit to Sandy Lane since 1991 on Wednesday.

Then, on Saturday he will be back in the colours of the FTS Bandits, powered by Keenwood Karpets, as a guest replacement for Leon Flint in the rearranged Knockout Cup quarter-final second leg.

Flint is in Riga, Latvia, on Saturday competing in the European Under-19 Pairs Championship alongside Oxford's Sam Hagon.

It's a busy week for Berwick's local hero which began when he was part of the Wolves team which won at Peterborough on Monday night – despite an 18+1 haul from his Berwick team-mate Chris Harris – continues at Oxford and then moves onto Redcar, where he will start as one of the favourites in Thursday's British Under-19 Final, and Glasgow's Ashfield Stadium on Friday night when the Bandits and Tigers launch the Scottish section of the newly named Championship Jubilee League.

Then it's off to the airport for an early-morning flight to Latvia.

Flint is also expected to feature in Great Britain's Speedway of Nations II squad in Denmark on July 29 and will line up

alongside Harris in the British Championship at Belle Vue on August 1 with a wildcard slot in the British Grand Prix at Cardiff on offer to the highest-placed non-GP qualified rider.

Good performances in the red, white and blue could also push Flint, averaging just under seven points for Berwick this season, into the frame for a wildcard nomination for the GPII event to be held at Cardiff the day after the British Grand Prix and which will definitely feature Berwick's new signing Jonas Knudsen who qualified for the new event earlier in the season.

Berwick promoter and team manager Gary Flint said: "Obviously it's a blow not to have Leon in the side as we look to claw back a 12-point deficit from the first leg, but I doubt we could have booked a better – or more popular – guest than Aaron in his place."

Berwick need to break their away duck if they are to stand any chance of reaching the end of season play-offs but face an Oxford side also scrambling to stay connected with the sixth and final qualifying spot currently occupied by Redcar.

On Friday they face Glasgow Tigers in the section of the new mid-season competition which also includes Edinburgh. Leicester, Redcar and Scunthorpe compete in the Northern section and there is a four-team southern mini-league comprising of Birmingham, Oxford, Poole and Plymouth.

All teams meet home and away with the section winners featuring in the final at Sheffield to be run as a three-team tournament featuring six-rider teams.

Flint added: "It's an interesting tournament and one designed to give clubs something new to focus on as the league fixtures come to an end. From our point of view it's an opportunity to prove the theory that we are a better side than our Championship results show and that injury has played an overly influential role on our position at the foot of the table.

“And we still have the opportunity to progress in the cup even if Redcar probably come thinking that 12 points is a big enough cushion, especially with their impressive record around Shielfield.

“But the cup is a different beast – not least because there is not tactical substitution available to stop momentum when a team gets a roll on.

“One or two riders showed signs of getting over their recent slumps against Poole and we will need everyone firing on all cylinders this week.

“From a team point of view not having Leon is a blow on Saturday but as Promoter at Berwick Speedway – not to mention his dad – I am very proud that he is one of the first names mentioned when it comes to Great Britain teams at under-19 and under-21 level.

“It is reward for the work he has put in on and off track, especially since the abandoned 2020 season, and reflects well on both him and Berwick speedway.”

Wednesday night’s meeting at Oxford will be streamed on the British Speedway network while tickets for Saturday’s KO Cup clash are available via the website and again include the opportunity to add under-16s free of charge.

Saturday’s cup match will be followed by a Northern Junior League clash between Berwick’s Academy side – Ace Pijper, Callum Foy, Stene Pijper and guest Liam Morris – against Tees-side Tigers: Edward Davidson, Laylen Richardson, Dan McTeer and Rocco Webb.

Bandits: Chris Harris, Theo Pijper, Jye Etheridge, Ricky Wells, Leon Flint (Aaron Summers guests on Saturday), Jonas Knudsen, Nathan Stoneman.

Oxford Cheetahs: Scott Nicholls, Dillon Ruml, Paul Starke,

Aaron Summers, Troy Batchelor, Cameron Heeps, Adam Roynon
(guesting for Josh MacDonald)

Glasgow Tigers: Craig Cook, Danyon Hume, Ulrich Ostergaard,
Benjamin Basso, Tom Brennan, Broc Nichol, Connor Bailey. Redcar
Bears: Charles Wright, Jason Edwards, Erik Riss, Kasper
Andersen, Lewis Kerr, Kyle Bickley, Jordan Jenkins

Berwickspeedway.com/tickets

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