

# Bandits mugged by Tigers in Jubilee League

SBJ Jubilee League: Berwick Bandits 41, Glasgow Tigers 46

Glasgow Tigers turned on the power to clinch a tight match at Berwick 46-41 and the result was a real disappointment for the FTS Bandits, powered by Keenwood Karpets, who ended the inaugural Jubilee League without a point, *writes George Dodds*.

Berwick's winless streak at Shielfield now stands at eight matches and the home side suffered as the match was wrenched from their grasp between heats 11 and 14 during.

Glasgow outscored Bandits 18-6, turning a two-point deficit into a nine-point lead in the process and, as a result, the 5-1 for Chris Harris and Leon Flint in heat 15 over Benjamin Basso and Tom Brennan was, thrilling though the race was, mere consolation.

Glasgow's pairing, who along with Flint, had been on duty at Friday night's Speedway of Nations 2 Final in Vojens, were instrumental in the Tigers' victory.

Basso only arrived from his home country at 6pm on Saturday, Berwick delaying the start of the meeting to allow him to speed to the Borders from Edinburgh Airport.

Not surprisingly, he seemed at sea in the first running of heat three and was well adrift when his captain, Ulrich Ostergaard fell in an untidy heap on the third bend outside Jye Etheridge after the pair had traded first place on a hectic opening half lap.

Ostergaard was, rightly, excluded but Basso used the time he was being treated by medical staff wisely to catch his breath while making machinery adjustments and in the rerun shot from

the gate and finished well clear of Etheridge and Ricky Wells.

Etheridge and Ostergaard were battling again two heats later, the Australian tucking in behind Wells for almost the entire race only to be caught by Glasgow's captain in the race from the fourth bend to the chequered flag.

More points went astray for the home side in eight as Nathan Stoneman was overhauled by Broc Nichol for the minor place in a race won by the impressive Danyon Hume.

And Etheridge was the focus of attention again in an astonishing heat nine as he and Wells gated brilliantly and were leading the previously unbeaten Brennan when the Australian's bike lost power going into the third bend and he was thrown into the fence.

Connor Bailey had already pulled onto the infield after a bruising first bend but Wells was lightening from the gate again in the two-man rerun and comfortably ahead of Brennan when the Great Britain star's engine blew and he fell leaving the American to claim a rare 3-0 race win.

That gave Berwick a three-point lead, one which they maintained as Harris seemed to get drive from halfway up the second bend fence to roar around Ostergaard in ten. Unfortunately for the home side Basso also found a way up the inside of Theo Pijper to share the points.

Flint had enjoyed another impressive night in the tricky number five berth but even he had to give second best to the fast-starting Basso and Hume in 11, the 5-1 giving the visitors the lead for the first time since heat five.

One which they extended in the next race as Ostergaard and Nichol easily overcame Stoneman and an out of sorts Etheridge.

Brennan produced another superb ride to keep both Harris and Flint behind him to seal the win in the pivotal heat 13.

Victory was rubber-stamped when Nichol – who had awoken from his mid-meeting slumber – followed Basso home in the penultimate heat.

Once again the home side finished on a high as Harris and Flint took a 5-1 over Basso and Brennan.

In the end Berwick were left to rue points which slipped through their fingers and the fact that a delay by the UKVI in processing Jonas Knudsen's visa meant that the Dane was following a meeting he could have played a key role in via social media.

While there was no lack of effort from his stand-in, Greg Blair, Knudsen's points were sorely missed especially when compared to the paid ten haul from Nichol.

Team manager and promoter Gary Flint said: "Some recent performances have left a bit to be desired but I think tonight we genuinely battled hard as a team and have a justifiable claim to have deserved some reward for those efforts.

"Jye's fall was such a freak mechanical thing and we were on a 5-1 when it happened, although to be fair Tom Brennan also lost points in that race through engine failure.

"When you face a side such as Glasgow you need to get the rub of the green and I don't think we did.

"Individually there were some good efforts – Bomber was brilliant, Leon worked hard for his points again, Ricky was back to nearer his best and there was certainly no lack of effort from Greg or Nathan.

"We'll re-group again during the week and prepare for the visit of Plymouth on Saturday at the start of what is a big week.

"We are determined to end what has been a difficult season results-wise on a positive note."

Another bright spot on Saturday was the collection for the Speedway Riders' Benevolent Fund, which helps injured riders and their families, which raised £2,025 on the night.

"We always have a good collection for this worthy cause but I cannot remember one raising this much before," Flint admitted.

Bandits: Chris Harris 13, Theo Pijper 3, Jye Etheridge 2+1, Ricky Wells 9, Leon Flint 9+2, Greg Blair 1+1, Nathan Stoneman 4+1

Tigers: Craig Cook R/R (7+1), Danyon Hume 7, Ulrich Ostergaard 8+1, Benjamin Basso 11+2, Tom Brennan 12, Broc Nichol 8+2, Connor Bailey 0