

Masters blow as Monarchs skid to defeat at Scorpions

SGB CHAMPIONSHIP: Edinburgh Monarchs 51, Scunthorpe Scorpions 39

Sam Masters was forced to withdraw from the meeting after Heat Five and that proved a major blow for play-off chasing Edinburgh Monarchs at Scunthorpe Scorpions, despite 18 points from Josh Pickering (pictured).

The home side certainly responded after team boss Rod Godfrey apologised to fans for their performance in Friday's defeat at Armadale.

What the Fork Monarchs started well before falling away ultimately leaving Scunthorpe pointless going down 51-39 at the Eddie Wright Raceway.

Scorpions are one of the teams tussling with the Armadale men for the final play-off spots and the Monarchs headed south to Lincolnshire looking for points.

Club No 1 Masters won Heat 1 this after injuring an ankle racing in Poland on Saturday and he retired in Heat Five and team manager John Campbell said: "Sam probably shouldn't have ridden, but he always wants to give it a go. He was in quite a bit of pain after his second ride.

"I'm not sure if we would have claimed a point with Sam fit as it's not a track our riders go well on. Josh was the exception to that, of course, and I was happy with how Lasse Fredriksen and Jacob Hook got stuck in. We needed a bit more from some of the others though."

Monarchs actually won four of the first six races with Masters' Heat 1 success backed by Kye Thomson in Heat 3 and

Josh Pickering in races four and six, the former seeing Thomson backed up by team-mate Paco Castagna for a 5-1, giving Monarchs a four-point lead.

The home men grew into the encounter especially after a lengthy track grade after Heat 6 and Scorpions took advantages in heats seven, eight, nine and ten, meaning Monarchs lead had been reversed into a ten-point deficit.

The bleeding was at least stopped over the next few races with Pickering the busiest of the Monarchs covering a ride for Masters alongside taking a tactical ride holding the fort, a seven rides for 18 points.

There was little backup as the form of Thomson and Castagna faded leaving a spirited display from Lasse Fredriksen the only real back-up for Pickering.

Take nothing whatsoever away from the home men who stuck to their task, Ryan Douglas leading the way with 14 points backed by Simon Lambert, James Wright and Zaine Kennedy who all hit double-figures.

So, no points gained for the Monarchs means there can be no further slip-ups the rest of the way with the big concern now being the extent of Masters injury.

Scunthorpe Scorpions (51): Ryan Douglas 14+2, Simon Lambert 10+3, Kasper Anderson 4+0, James Wright 11+0, Jake Allen 0+0, Connor Coles 0+0, Zaine Kennedy 9+0

Edinburgh Monarchs (39): Sam Masters 3+0, Lasse Fredriksen 5+0, Kye Thomson 5+0, Paco Castagna 3+2, Josh Pickering 15+0, Jacob Hook 2+0, James Sarjeant 3+1