

Pickering and Masters lead from the front as Edinburgh Monarchs tame Redcar Bears

Josh Pickering (pictured) with 15 points and skipper Sam Masters with 13 were the spearheads as What The Fork Monarchs grabbed an 18-point advantage in their play-off, quarter-final at Armadale against Redcar Bears.

And Monarchs' team manager Alex Harkess said: "If you'd offered me an 18-point lead at the start I'd certainly have taken it but, in the end, I feel a little disappointed that we didn't take a bit more."

Harkess added: "I thought we rode pretty well, but there were heats we might have done better in."

There were three multi-rider pile-ups which prolonged the meeting which Monarchs won 54-36 and the sides meet again at Redcar on Saturday (tapes-up 5pm) in the return.

The match was hard-fought throughout. Monarchs were eight up by heat three, with another heat two 5-1 and they added three more 4-2s in heats six, seven and eight. Masters and Pickering looked untouchable and Kye Thomson also took a win over Wright in heat three.

Lasse Fredriksen had an excellent third over Summers in heat one and then succeeded in passing Newman in heat six late in the race with a bold outside sweep. He also got up from the heat eight crash to force his way past Andersen to win the rerun.

At that point Monarchs would be much the happier team and they only had one last place at that point. However they then had four successive last places with heat 12 resulting in a 5-1

for Redcar, bringing the margin down to ten

Masters and Pickering came to the rescue with 5-1 scorelines in heats 13 and 15. Heat 14 was won by Kyle Newman who bounced back from engine problems earlier.

A Monarchs spokesman said: "We don't generally lose by 18 away from home, but we did on their last Redcar visit, and there is still a lot of work to be done. Adam Roynon guests for Paco Castagna who is in the Italian Championship."

Edinburgh Monarchs (54): Sam Masters 13+2, Lasse Fredriksen 5+0, Kye Thomson 5+0, Paco Castagna 6+2, Josh Pickering 15+0, James Sarjeant 5+1, Jacob Hook 5+0

Redcar Bears (36): Aaron Summers 5+1, Jason Edwards 0+0, Charles Wright 10+0, Jordan Jenkins 3+1, Lewis Kerr 3+1, Kyle Newman 8+1, Kasper Andersen 7+1