

Brilliant Basso mugs Bandits

BSN Series, Scottish Group: Berwick Bandits 38, Glasgow Tigers 51

A flawless performance from Glasgow's Benjamin Basso powered Glasgow Tigers to a 51-38 victory Berwick Bandits much to the disappointment of the home crowd.

The rising Danish star produced six flawless rides to record a stunning maximum and it was a night to forget for many of the home men, especially Thomas Jorgensen who suffered a wretched return to Shielfield Park.

Jonas Knudsen, skipper Leon Flint, Rory Schlein and Connor Coles all showed glimpses but too often the home side were out gated and outbattled by a Glasgow side which put itself in pole position to qualify from the Scottish section of the BSN.

It was achieved without skipper Tom Brennan, a late withdrawal after Great Britain's postponed European Team Championship qualifier in Pardubice was rearranged, at short notice, for Sunday morning.

Having initially booked Jake Allen to guest and then expected to enjoy the services of their skipper, Glasgow eventually opted to use rider-replacement which yielded a modest six points.

The night began well for the home side as Knudsen showed a clean back wheel to Bandits' 2022 skipper Chris Harris in Heat One but from then on it was largely one-way traffic with Glasgow steadily opening up a gap.

Flint looked to have the measure of Harris in Heat Five only to make an error on the last lap which allowed the 40-year-old

racer to pounce.

What turned out to be Berwick's only heat advantage of the night came in Heat Seven when Coles was lucky to stay upright as Claus Vissing chopped underneath him, the reserve having to roll off the throttle to avoid slamming into the back straight fence.

Despite that he held on for third and, with Rory Schlein well ahead, there was something for home fans to cheer.

Jorgensen shot clear of the field in Heat 13 field only to be called back by the referee and warned to keep still at the start. In the re-run he was left behind and, with Schlein also adrift, it was left to Basso and Harris to mathematically seal victory with the only 5-1 on the night.

Berwick team manager Gary Flint said: "This is a side assembled to perform strongly at home and pick up aggregate bonus points and that hasn't happened tonight.

"It's not all gloom and doom as Jonas had one of his best meetings for us, Connor was again impressive and Leon improved as the meeting progressed. Glasgow worked very hard and were rewarded for attacking the track and scrapping for every point.

"I'll be looking for a reaction from our riders and much better performances when we meet Edinburgh (Monarchs) twice next weekend."

Bandits: Jorgensen 2, Knudsen 9+1, Flint 10+1, Etheridge 4+2, Schlein 8, Coles 5, Stoneman 0

Tigers: Harris 11+1, Nowak 6+1, Vissing 7, Basso 18, Complin 8, Pijper 1

PICTURE: Knudsen leads Harris. Picture by *Keith Hamblin*