

Pickering injury adds to Monarchs woes

BSN Series: *Berwick Bandits 51, Edinburgh Monarchs 39*

The Stellar Monarchs lost No1 Josh Pickering (pictured) in the opening race in a 51-39 defeat at Berwick Bandits and the popular Aussie could be on the sidelines for some time with a shoulder injury.

This meant the rest of the Monarchs all had extra rides and exhausted Lasse Fredriksen said: "We lost Josh so we all had to take extra heats and that's tough at Berwick.

'We got better as we went on, although we got beat and at least we should all know the track when we come back in the league.'

Monarchs were able to hold on in the early stages with Craig Cook in top form taking the checkered flag in heats 1 (as a replacement for Pickering) 4 and 6 but, as he ran out of steam, the match drifted away.

However, Fredriksen, Paco Castagna and Jacob Hook all had their best matches around Shielfield but Bandits, excellently led by captain Leon Flint, who raced to a paid maximum, were able to take advantage.

The Berwick lead was only six going into heat 13 but, after Fredriksen couldn't hold on to a strong gate, Bandits hit a 5-1 that confirmed the win for the home side.

A further maximum in heat 15 made it a comfortable looking win or the Bandits but, in reality, both teams will know they were

in a match.

Monarchs now need to dust themselves off as they head into KO cup home and away against Oxford starting on Wednesday with Pickering likely to be sidelined.