

Bandits sting Scorpions to take confidence-boosting win

Berwick dug deep to ensure that their Cab Direct Championship campaign got off to a winning start thanks to a 47-43 home win over Scunthorpe Scorpions, taking full advantage of two mechanical mishaps from visiting No 1 Ryan Douglas along the way, writes George Dodds.

Flying Ryan was living up to his nickname, leading heat 11 by some distance when he ground to a halt on the second lap having failed to turn on his fuel tap. Rory Schlein took full advantage to take the race win, Bandits levelling the scores in the process.

Leon Flint and Connor Coles backed it up with a 5-1, the home reserve riding a determined back straight to join his captain at the front.

Coles, named rider of the month for April by the Bandits' Supporters Club, had been a doubtful starter right up until lunchtime on Saturday. His six-month-old daughter had been hospitalised with sickness and diarrhoea and was only released just in time for him to make the trip north.

He was also pivotal in a frantic heat 14, making a great start and at one point holding a 5-1 with Jye Etheridge.

But Jake Allen hit back to win the race, Etheridge being

caught on the run to the line by Connor Mountain giving Scunthorpe a heat advantage which meant that they trailed by just two points going into heat 15.

Flint and Thomas Jorgensen packed the minor places behind Douglas to ensure victory but as the Australian slowed again on the last two bends Jorgensen burst through for the win and Flint was one hundredth of a second behind the visiting number one.

A heavy mist which worsened as the night unfolded obscured some good racing in a tight match which the home side trailed by six points after five races.

Jonas Knudsen, still suffering the after effects of his big Glasgow crash, gated in six and with Jorgensen getting the better of Nathan Ablitt after a good tussle, the deficit was cut to a couple of points.

Finding heat winners has been a failing all season for the Bandits and they struggled again as first Allen and then Lambert nudged the visitors' lead to four points.

Ablitt then shot out of the gate in nine but first Flint and then Etheridge hunted the recent signing down to level the scores after nine.

The meeting was still very much in the balance until Douglas' fuel tap mishap gave the Bandits' a glimmer of hope which they turned into victory.

Captain Leon Flint admitted that his side had to dig deep to secure victory and added: "Scunthorpe are a good side, home and away. We've had a tough couple of weeks and not everything went as we would have hoped tonight.

"We had a couple of bits of good fortune with Ryan but a win's a win. Conditions were really tough with the mist getting thicker as the match went on. It wasn't easy to get a good

sight of what was going on but in the end everyone got on with the job in hand.

“It was the same for all four riders on track and, to be honest, we’ve probably all ridden in worse conditions.”

Bandits: ThomasJorgensen 11+1, Jonas Knudsen 5, Leon Flint 7, Jye Etheridge 4+1, Rory Schlein 9+1, Greg Blair 2+1, Connor Coles 6+1

Scorpions: RyanDouglas 11, Simon Lambert 8, Max Clegg 0, Jake Allen 11, Michael Palm Toft 3+1, Nathan Ablitt 1, Connor Mountain 9

PICTURE: Leon Flint and Jake Allen at high speed. Picture *Keith Hamblin*