

Speedway – injury worries for Bullets and Comets

Both teams are anxiously awaiting fitness bulletins as the GHT Berwick Bullets and Workington Comets prepare to do battle again on Sunday, *writes George Dodds.*

Josh Embleton and Luke Crang were both involved in alarming crashes at Shielfield Park. The Berwick man was thrown into the air and landed heavily in a heat two crash which ended his involvement as he suffered rib injuries.

Workington skipper Crang was left with nowhere to go after team-mate Elliott Kelly fell in front of him and withdrew from his last ride with an injured leg.

Workington took advantage of a string of misfortune for the home side to win by ten points at Shielfield Park, guest Lee Complin one of a number of Berwick old boys behind a victory which ends the Bullets perfect home league and play-off record at 13, stretching back to the team's formation in 2021.

Embleton's spectacular crash came in the rerun of heat two after fellow reserve Mason Watson had been excluded for bringing down Elliot Kelly. The resulting 0-5 gave Workington a seven point lead after two heats which they not only never relinquished but extended.

Engine failures on the startline for Connor Coles and Jamie Halder also cost the home side valuable points, a fall for Watson when comfortably third adding to the Bullets' woes. In

the end it was left to Greg Blair and Danny Phillips to take the fight to the visitors.

Phillips' only point was dropped to Complin whose later race battles with the Berwick skipper had the fans roaring their approval.

Heat 13 was the race of the season so far in the borders as Complin initially took Blair out to the fence, leaving a gap for Coles to dive through only for the Glasgow/Mildenhall veteran to hit the front again.

Blair was not to be denied, stalking Complin and eventually pulling off an audacious pass on the inside of the fourth bend. Phillips then produced a brave second bend to force his way past Harry McGurk and share the points again.

Coles produced the perfect start in the final heat clamping Complin to the kerb and allowing Blair to come round to join his team-mate. It was short-lived however, as the Comets' guest roared back inside, Coles hitting the deck but clearing the track to allow his skipper to fend off a series of attacks to take the chequered flag, his personal joy tempered only by the loss of both two points and the Bullets' perfect home league record.

Workington suffered too, the impressive Kelly dropping points in the incident in which Crang was injured and then – after Berwick's sole representative Coles had broken down on the startline – Harry McGurk's engine gave up the ghost leaving his brother to record a rare 3-0 race win.

Kevin Little, Bullets' team manger, said: "Josh was initially keen to try and continue but both he and his machinery were distinctly second-hand after the crash.

"Mason was also still feeling the effects of the hand injury which kept him out of the trip to Kent but he kept on battling despite the points not coming. Workington are one of the

fancied teams in this league so we were always going to be up against it.”

He added: “Jamie and Connor both blowing engines as the tapes rose cost us valuable points, Connor’s being especially damaging as he was our only rider in that race.

“On the plus side both Greg and Danny really took the fight to the Comets with the skippers’ two battles with Lee Complin as good as you’ll see on any track in any league. Obviously, it’s a quick turnaround, but we’ve been in this position before this season and once again we’ll be looking for a positive response.”

Bullets: Connor Coles 6, Jamie Halder 6+1, Danny Phillips 11, Greg Blair 15, Mason Watson 0, Josh Embleton 0

Comets: Lee Complin 12+1, Ace Pijper 9+1, Sam McGurk 9, Harry McGurk 3+1, Luke Crang 6, Kelsey Dugard 3+1, Elliot Kelly 6+2

PICTURE: Action by *Keith Hamblin*