

Pickering back as Monarchs look to turn season around

Stellar Monarchs and Birmingham Brummies meet at Armadale on Friday (tapes up 7.30pm) and both believe they can turn things round and bid for one of the six play-off positions.

Neither Monarchs nor Brummies had won a home match in the Championship prior to the start of this week, though Birmingham got off the mark with a home win over Berwick on Wednesday. Both the sides have had an away win, Monarchs' one being of course at Birmingham (54 points scored).

Monarchs will be welcoming back both Josh Pickering (pictured), who has been out since late April, and Craig Cook who has not ridden since mid-May when Monarchs won at Birmingham (with Cook scoring 14).

The absence of these stars has had much to do with subsequent poor results. Rider replacement will be used for Paco Castagna who is now injured.

Birmingham have also strengthened substantially and are now fielding an impressive heat leader trio of Nick Morris, Troy Batchelor and Justin Sedgmen. They are now under the guidance of Stewart Dickson who has taken over as team manager.

Monarchs' team boss Alex Harkess said: "The team Birmingham are tracking this week is a bit different but there is only one result that is acceptable, it's as simple as that. We have to win it and we'd like to win it fairly comfortably."

STELLAR MONARCHS: Josh Pickering, rider replacement for Paco Castagna, Bastian Borke, Kye Thomson (captain), Craig Cook, Dayle Wood, Lasse Fredrik sen.

CURTIS SPORT BRUMMIES: Nick Morris, Alfie Bowtell, Troy

Batchelor, Dan Thompson, Justin Sedgmen (captain), Sam Hagon,
Joe Thompson.

Following this is a Northern Junior League match, West Lothian
Wildcats v Redcar Cubs.