

Monarchs and Tigers back on track as Bandits lick wounds

Friday fixtures: Cab Direct Championship: Scunthorpe Scorpions v Edinburgh Stellar Monarchs (7.30pm); Glasgow Allied Vehicles Tigers v Redcar Bears (7.30pm)

Edinburgh Stellar Monarchs will look to reverse the memory of a 54-36 home defeat to Scunthorpe Scorpions when the pair clash in the Cab Direct Championship in England on Friday night.

Richie Worrall top scored with 13 points and Kye Thomson was next best with ten points for the Armadale outfit with Ryan Douglas, Jake Allen and Connor Mountain all scoring 11 points for the visitors on May 26.

Glasgow Allied Vehicles Tigers need to re-group for the visit of Redcar Bears in the Championship on Friday after they were mugged 62-28 on the South Coast by Poole Pirates in midweek in the BSN Final, first-leg, a performance team manager Cami Brown described as “disappointing”.

Meanwhile, Berwick bosses felt the 53-37 defeat at Championship leaders Oxford in midweek did not do justice to Bandits’ efforts. Oxford turned the screws, scoring 5-1s in each of the last three heats, and the late flurry provided, they said, was a lopsided look to the final scoreline.

Until that point, inspired by the outstanding Rory Schlein (pictured) with back-up from Thomas Jorgensen, Bandits kept

within striking distance of their high-flying hosts and even harboured hopes of repeating last year's victory at Oxford.

Sam Masters received back-up from Lewis Kerr, Scott Nicholls and reserve Cameron Heeps but the support from the visiting middle order was more sporadic.

Earlier, Bandits enjoyed a stroke of luck in heat two as, having trailed the visitors into the first bend, Heeps picked off Jacob Hook and had Connor Coles in his sights when his engine gave up the ghost.

But the 5-1 was cancelled out immediately as Kerr passed Leon Flint and Jonas Knudsen to join Jordan Jenkins at the head of heat three.

Berwick were quick from the gate in the early stages with Jorgensen and Coles leading only for first Nicholls and then Heeps found a way past the reserve.

Jenkins spoiled a shared heat by passing Jye Etheridge in five as Oxford led for the first time, Henry Atkins inflicting an almost mirror-image manoeuvre on Hook in the following heat.

Flint and Knudsen looked to have the measure of Nicholls in seven, pushing him out to the fence but the veteran used all his trackcraft to dive up the kerb and win easily in the end.

Etheridge split the home pairing in eight as Oxford extended their lead to six points allowing team manager Scott Courtney to pair his two big guns in what turned out to be a superb heat nine.

Jorgensen made the gate and took off but tactical substitute Schlein – whose previous visit to Cowley had been in 2007 – rounded both Cheetahs on the bottom bends and then fought off a series of attacks from Kerr as the gap was trimmed to a couple of points.

Masters flew from the gate in ten but the action behind him

was tight, referee Mick Bates studying the electronic data before awarding Atkins third place behind Flint, Knudsen missing out on a point by a tyre knobble.

Another brilliant ride saw Schlein drive through the middle of team-riding Cheetahs Nicholls and Heeps, Knudsen and Hook then securing a share of the spoils as Berwick reached the interval four points adrift.

Any hopes they had of a road victory disappeared after heat 13. Schlein hit the front and looked to be controlling the race only for Masters and Nichols to pass him inside and out simultaneously. Even then, the visiting No 1 refused to give up, the trio crossing the line in a blanket finish.

Jenkins picked off Flint to follow Heeps home in the penultimate heat while Schlein battled all the way to the flag in 15 but just couldn't quite find his way past Kerr on the race to the line.

Berwick's team manager, Scott Courtney, said: "We're on the wrong end of a much heavier defeat than our efforts on the night deserved.

"Rory, in particular, could have ended up with another five or six points, and he wasn't the only one. In many cases the difference was barely the width of a tyre after the four laps."

He added: "If you weren't here, the scoreline will have been pretty much as a lot of people predicted before tapes-up, but it doesn't reflect the quality of racing and the amount of effort put in, often for little or no return. Now we must regroup."

Cheetahs: Sam Masters 14+1, Henry Atkins 3, Lewi Kerr 12+1, Jordan Jenkins 5+2, Scott Nicholls 9+1, Cameron Heeps 9+1, Ryan Kinsley 1

Bandits: Rory Schlein 11+1, Jye Etheridge 3+1, Jonas Knudsen 4, Leon Flint 5+1, Thomas Jorgensen 8, Jacob Hook 3+2, Connor Coles 3