

Lawson and Worrall inspire Pirates at Berwick

Poole Pirates won at Berwick Bandits for the first time in 12 attempts, Richard Lawson and Steve Worrall inspiring them to a 50-40 victory in the Cab Direct Championship which also tied up the aggregate bonus point, *writes George Dodds.*

It was a hard-earned win against a battling Berwick side which was finally silenced by three successive 5-1s race wins between heats 11 and 13.

Rory Schlein returned from injury to lead the home challenge while there was a combative debut from Hans Andersen and young skipper Leon Flint continued to rattle up the points at Shielfield Park.

But they were unable to tame a Pirates side which once again has its sights set on the end of season silverware with two of their lesser lights setting up the win.

Zach Cook may be the less talked about of the two Australian brothers, but he is definitely effective around Shielfield while Lee Complin continues to be the guest rider of choice at his former home having already enjoyed victories filling in for Edinburgh and Workington while also tasting success with his own sides Glasgow and Mildenhall this year.

Earlier, the teams traded early 5-1s, Jye Etheridge winning heat three and earning some much-needed cash after being hit with a £300 fine imposed by the SCB earlier in the week following his pit-gate altercation with Redcar's Connor Bailey the previous week, Flint getting past Zach Cook, right on the line after an epic four-lap battle.

Andersen (pictured *by Taz McDougall* and courtesy of Berwick Bandits) marked his home debut by cutting inside Worrall to win his first race in Berwick colours, then Flint outfought Richard Lawson with Etheridge keeping Kyle Newman at bay to give the Bandits a slender lead.

Briefly, as it was all square again after Schlein was held off by Worrall and Poole regained the lead when Zach Cook roared up the inside of Andersen, brother Ben taking the vital third.

The match swung the visitors' way in heat eight with Newman and Complin well ahead when Coles' primary chain snapped causing him the fall, Knudsen showing lightening reflexes to lay down his bike. Even so Coles' helmet was wrecked in the crash, although he was able to get back to his feet.

Flint and Etheridge maintained the six-point deficit with a shared heat in nine allowing team manager Kev Little to play his tactical card.

Andersen made a high-speed hash of the first bend in 11 but it played into the Bandits' hands, the chaos caused by the Dane's tight entry to the bend and drift towards the fence opening up a gap which Schlein drove through, the Dane recovering to relegate the Cook brothers to the minor point, reducing the deficit to two.

Poole response was brutal, Lawson and Newman blocking out Andersen, Ben Cook and Rowe leaving Etheridge and Boxall in their wake and then Worrall holding off a four-lap onslaught from Schlein and being allowed to take the flag by team-mate Lawson who had been untroubled up front.

Despite the match being beyond their reach the Bandits ended a strongly. The return of regular home fixtures has allowed Berwick fans to see their young skipper at his best and he once again was the star of heat 14, holding off a determined effort from Zach Cook with Boxall, despite losing his fuel cap during the race, making it a 4-2.

He then watched from third place as Schlein and Lawson ended the night with another monumental battle, the Australian just having a good enough run off the fourth bend to the line as he won by half a bike's length.

It capped an impressive return from injury for the winter signing as he topped the scorecharts, a point ahead of his young skipper and team manager Kevin Little said: "We battled away against a very good Poole side, but those three 5-1s were impossible to claw back."

He added: "Poole are a very strong side, and I was pleased with the way that the team battled to stay in touch. It's now a case of concentrating on Plymouth this Tuesday night. You couldn't get two more contrasting circuits, but the boys are determined to do the business in Devon.

"While neither will be pleased with their final points' tally there was plenty of promise on show from both of our new signings while Rory and Leon were both involved in some tremendous races."

Bandits: Rory Schlein 11, Jonas Knudsen 2+1, Jye Etheridge 7, Leon Flint 10+2, Hans Andersen 8+1, Steve Boxall 2, Connor Coles 0

Pirates: Richard Lawson 12+1, Kyle Newman 5+1, Ben Cook 4, Zach Cook 7, Steve Worrall 11, Anders Rowe 5+2, Lee Complin 6+2