

Monarchs bosses target win over champions

Poole Pirates are flying high in the Cab Direct Championship and the defending champions arrive at Armadale on Friday (tapes-up 7.30pm) with a former Monarchs star in their squad.

Steve Worrall plus ex-Glasgow Tigers rider, Richard Lawson, and the Aussie-born Cook brothers, Ben and Zach, are real danger men but Monarchs took five league points from their two matches with Berwick Bandits recently.

Heat leaders Josh Pickering (pictured), Craig Cook and back-to-form Kye Thomson all carry at threat at home but but the home side are still missing Paco Castagna. Max Clegg steps up from the Stellar Academy to replace crooked Lasse Fredriksen at Reserve.

Victory is certainly being targeted on Friday by Monarchs bosses and Alex Harkess, the home side's team manager, said: "Poole come with a reputation, and people will look at it and say they are probably favourites.

"If our three heat leaders perform how they did last week, for me it will be very, very close, and, if we can get our reserves scoring, then I'm hopeful as I never look at us being underdogs at home, never ever. If we do what we are supposed to do we will be OK."

Poole are in fourth spot in the nine-strong championship table

and Stellar Monarchs currently sit in sixth position, good enough for the play-offs if they can stay there, but there is going to be a fierce fight for that spot probably featuring Berwick (now strengthened), Plymouth and Birmingham.

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

WESSEX MARINE PIRATES: Richard Lawson, Kyle Newman, Ben Cook, Zach Cook, Steve Worrall, Anders Rowe, Adam Roynon.

The Championship Fixture will be followed by a Northern Junior League match between Armadale Angels and West Lothian Wildcats.