

Thompson unbeaten as Cubs maul Bullets

Leicester Cubs provided 12 heat winners and three maximum men as they maintained their push for the National Development League (NDL) play-offs with a stunning 59-30 victory in the Borders, writes George Dodds.

Berwick Bullets were blown out of the water by rampant Cubs as Joe Thompson returned from injury with four unbeaten rides, getting a full house on his return from injury and Lee Complin, guesting for the injured Dan Thompson, claiming his second NDL maximum of the season at Shielfield. It could have been more as reserve Tom Spencer was only denied by a retirement in his second ride.

Star of the show was Ashton Boughen, the 15-year-old living up to the hype with a performance mature beyond his years, underlining why his 16th birthday later this month is likely to launch a stampede for his signature.

His only real problem came in heat one as Connor Coles forced his way past into second place only for his engine to grind to a halt, handing the Cubs a 5-1.

Berwick's luck never really improved as they had no answer to the red-hot pace of their opponents. They didn't have the best of good fortune either in the early stages.

Danny Phillips could have expected to get a second chance after falling on the first bend of heat three but there was no stop light and, despite Jamie Halder's emphatic victory, the heat was shared.

Heat six saw all the action behind Thompson and Coles. Greg Blair marking his return from injury with a high-speed trip into the third bend fence. He appeared to collect Vinnie Foord who fell awkwardly and was unlucky to be excluded along with the Bullets' skipper, the referee somewhat contentiously ruling the crashes were two separate incidents.

Steve Boxall managed to keep the two Maxes – Perry and James – at bay before Blair suffered more misfortune and failed to beat the two-minute warning.

Heat ten began chaotically as Perry snaked off the startline and was collected by Coles, falling awkwardly but making it into the rerun. Blair was half a lap adrift after problems with his fuel tank and fell on the first bend, scaling the barrier to clear the track as the referee delayed putting the red lights on. Amid the mayhem Coles recorded Berwick's third and final heat win.

Complin followed Boughen home in 11 despite losing his steel shoe mid-race but the loss of another piece of equipment stunned onlookers in 12.

Parry again looked out of control from the start and tangled with Mason Watson on the first bend, being thrown heavily into the barrier and losing his helmet in the process.

There were sighs of relief all round as the teenager got back to his feet from what could have been a much worse incident.

Leicester finished strongly and would have had three successive 5-1s had James not suffered problems with his arms and pulled up when he was comfortably second behind Boughen in 15.

Veteran Complin organised the celebratory pit-gate bumps for his young team-mate, surely the first of many for the talented Norfolk lad.

Bullets team manager Kevin Little reflected: "We were well beaten on the night by an excellent Leicester side. It was a disappointing performance, but we just couldn't match Cubs from the gate."

Bullets: Connor Coles 6, Greg Blair 1, Jamie Halder 5+2, Danny Phillips 5, Steve Boxall 6, Kieran Douglas 1, Mason Watson 6+1

Cubs: Lee Complin 10+2, Ashton Boughen 13+2, Max Perry 4+2, Max James 8+1, Joe Thompson 12, Vinnie Foord 2, Tom Spencer 10+2

PICTURE: Danny Phillips hits the deck behind Max Perry.
Picture *Keith Hamblin*