

Pulkkinen eager to stand-up to Giants

Belfast Giants lead the Challenge Cup section and enjoyed a perfect record over Fife Flyers last season, including a 9-3 win in the Challenge Cup Final, but newcomer Teemu Pulkkinen can't wait to get to Northern Ireland on Friday.

The Finnish-born right wing loves playing in a big atmosphere, in major arenas and in front of packed crowds and the 5ft 9in forward understands that the Kirkcaldy club are up against it having been involved in the 1-0 defeat to Giants at The Fife Ice Arena earlier this season.

Pulkkinen, who made himself an instant hero with success-starved Flyers fans when he slotted a penalty shot after 31 minutes of the Kirkcaldy club's 5-1 home win over Glasgow Clan in the Challenge Cup last month, is loving life in Kirkcaldy and said it feels like home as he lives right beside the Forth Estuary.

The 28-year-old acknowledged that Flyers have a tough assignment on Friday and they have a return sea crossing right after the game and will arrive home in the early hours before Giants, sponsored by Stena Line, come calling, this time in the Elite League, on Saturday night (face-off 19.15).

Pulkkinen said: "They (Giants) are a decent team. We played them once this year and I feel it was a good game. We just

have to clean up a few things and we will be ready to go.

“There are not many weak points in their game and we will have to play well defensively and take our chances when they come our way.”

He has been surprised at the quality of play in the Elite League despite speaking to two friends who have played in Britain and he said: “They said there are a lot of good teams and a lot of good players.”

PICTURE: Action from this season courtesy of the Elite League