

Surprised Castagna confirmed as captain of Monarchs

Italian racer Paco Castagna will skipper Stellar Monarchs this season and he admitted: “It came by surprise. I didn’t expect it.”

Castagna (pictured) is now in his third year with the Armadale club and he said: “I am truly honoured to have been asked and I will give it my all.

“The captain is someone that you look up to in the team. I already view my job as part of the team to be talking to the other riders and making sure they are all OK and things like that anyway so that won’t change.

“If something needs said, you need to be the one to say it and I feel I can do that especially with the team we have. It is a team, it is a group of seven riders and their mechanics that all work together as one and that is what I want to maintain.”

Monarchs management hope that this level of responsibility can allow Paco to kick on and the now 30 year-old said: “When the responsibility is on me that is when I step up.

“Meetings like the Speedway of Nations when Nico Covatti crashed out and I led with the flag on my chest or the home meeting against Glasgow the other year where Sam Masters got injured and I had to take lots of rides. In these instances, I step up.

“Being captain means you have to perform as you can’t be telling other guys what to do if you have scored zero so I

will make sure I am super prepared to back up anything I am saying on track also.”

With the incoming appointment of Paco it means that last year’s captain Josh Pickering takes a step back and Monarchs’ co-promoter John Campbell said the switch had nothing to do with the Aussie’s performance on or off track last year.

Co-Promoter John Campbell said: “I think he’ll (Paco) will take the captaincy in his stride and I’m hoping he’ll have it in mind that every race is vital and prove that he will be a true team captain and lead from the front.”

The first chance to hear from Captain Castagna is at the Season Launch Show at Edinburgh Napier University’s Craiglockhart campus on Friday, March 29 doors open 6:45pm with the show starting at 7:30pm. Tickets are available on the official Monarchs website.

The 2024 season goes to tapes on Friday, April 5 at Armadale Stadium as the Stellar Monarchs take on Glasgow Tigers (7.30pm).