

Dickson urges Bandits to keep up the good work

Berwick Jewson Bandits introduced five new riders in the closed season but the Borders club have won all three of their meetings so far, the latest a 48-42 victory over Glasgow Tigers, their first in 14 attempts against the West of Scotland club.

Edinburgh Monarchs visit on Saturday (tapes up 19.00) and a fourth win would be a massive boost in the BSN Scottish Series qualifying section before Bandits go on the road for the reverse fixtures.

Lewi Kerr led from the front last weekend, but a feature of the early-season successes over Workington and the Tigers has been the solid scoring of Berwick's middle order and the performances of reserves Bastian Borke.

He joined Berwick from Edinburgh, sponsored by Stellar Omada, during the winter and teenager Freddy Hodder has also been in fine form and they have comfortably outscored their opposite numbers so far this season.

Berwick manager Stewart Dickson is not prepared to take the foot off the pedal, especially as they welcome an Edinburgh side featuring Connor Coles who swept the board at Berwick's 2023 end of season awards' night.

Dickson said: "I have been drumming into the riders all week, and will again on Saturday's track walk, the importance of not getting carried away by what has been a good start to the season.

"We have momentum but need to keep pushing. It is important we perform well against Edinburgh. Anything less would undermine the hard work we have put in."

Dickson looked back at Saturday's win over Tigers and said: "We all saw how much it meant to so many people on Saturday. That's who we're doing it for, but Edinburgh are a very different challenge.

"They are a team which, perhaps like ours, has depth to it which means we again have to account for every point. Connor Coles will probably arrive with a point to prove while most of the Monarchs have gone well around here in recent times.

"I'm certainly not taking anything for granted, but victory would give us four points and put a bit of pressure on Edinburgh and Glasgow."

Last year saw both sides win at Shielfield Park. Berwick took advantage of Josh Pickering's first heat crash in which the Australian suffered a serious shoulder injury, to win the BSN Series fixture 51-39 (a Leon Flint paid maximum and Rory Schlein's 13+1 leading the way) just 24 hours after recording a rare Armadale victory.

But the tables were turned in the Cab Direct Championship fixture when, despite 14 points from ex-Monarch Jye Etheridge, a Bandits' side operating rider-replacement for Schlein, lost 46-44 – Flint's last lap puncture proving decisive. Edinburgh's trump card that night was young Dane Bastian Borke who switched to the Borders during the winter.

Tickets for Saturday's meeting are on sale and until midnight on Friday cost £18, including booking fee. Matchday e-tickets can be bought until 6.50pm and cost £20, including booking fee.

Cash turnstiles will also be in operation. Adult admission is £20, concessions and students £18. Credit and debit cards cannot be used for admission on the day. Accompanied under-16s are admitted free.

Bandits: Lewi Kerr, Danyon Hume, Jye Etheridge, Drew Kemp,

Rory Schlein, Freddy Hodder, Bastian Borke

Monarchs: Josh Pickering, Lasse Fredriksen, Kye Thomson, Paco Castagna, Justin Sedgmen, Connor Coles, Max James

Referee: Jim McGregor

PICTURE: Jye Etheridge in action by ***Taz McDougall*** and courtesy of Berwick Jewson Bandits