

Cook stands-in for crocked Kerr at Berwick

Injury-ravaged Berwick Jewson Bandits have drafted in Craig Cook and Connor Coles for Saturday's Championship clash with Scunthorpe Scorpions at Shielfield Park (7pm).

They lost No 1 Lewis Kerr and in-form reserve Bastian Borke to crashes during their 38-52 loss at Poole Pirates on Wednesday.

Borke remains in Poole Hospital awaiting an operation after scans revealed damage to his lung and knee. The injuries are such that he will not be allowed to fly in the foreseeable future and his family have travelled from Denmark to drive him home.

Kerr's crash was the latest setback which has seen two attempts at a comeback from a fractured ankle end with him withdrawing from meetings without completing a race.

Berwick have called on 37-year-old Cook (pictured racing) whose 62.8 seconds while guesting for Sheffield in 2015 remains the fastest four laps at Shielfield Park despite the circuit being shortened and widened in the intervening years, a tenth of a second faster than fellow Cumbrian Dan Bewley's official track record.

Coles was Berwick's rider of the year in 2023 but released over the winter as new boss Stewart Dickson assembled his team, finding a spot at Edinburgh Stellar Monarchs.

Dickson said: "Bastian has been riding way above his four-

point average, especially at home, so it's almost impossible to find a direct replacement, but, in Connor, we know that we have someone who never gives up and knows his way around Shielfield. When Craig is dialled in few can touch him round here."

Dickson warned his patched-up side not to get too carried away by their 54-36 cup victory over the Scorpions last month and he predicted: "There won't be a repeat of the scoreline from April.

"Scorpions have got their act together since that night as we are only too painfully aware following the second leg hammering.

"Ever since I was appointed Berwick team manager I have said that we must win our home meetings in addition to being competitive on the road and picking up aggregate points.

"Do that and every time you read the league table we will be at the right end of it and on the right side of the cut off point for reaching the end of season knockout."

Scunthorpe have won twice on the road this season at Redcar in the BSN Series and Cab Direct Championship and have reached the semi-finals of the BSN Series and the Knockout Cup.

In-form Connor Mountain scored 13 points at Shielfield guesting for Plymouth two weeks ago while Simon Lambert and Kyle Howarth have impressive records around the Borders' bowl. Teenage reserve Luke Harrison came through the junior ranks at Berwick.

Berwick: Craig Cook, Danyon Hume, Jye Etheridge, Drew Kemp, Rory Schlein, Freddy Hodder, Connor Coles

Scunthorpe: Kye Howarth, Connor Mountain, Simon Lambert, Jake Allen, Michael Palm Toft, Nathan Ablitt, Luke Harrison