

In-form Pickering guests for Bandits

Stellar Monarchs' No 1 Josh Pickering stands in for crooked Lewis Kerr as the tapes go up for Berwick Jewson Bandits in their Cab Direct Championship campaign at home to Poole Pirates on Saturday (7pm).

Pickering top scored for Monarchs against Poole in the Knockout Cup, quarter-final, second-leg at Armadale on Friday, scoring 13 points including three heat wins in five starts in a 47-43 win.

The popular Aussie also recently accumulated 16 points at Shielfield Park for Edinburgh. Bandits, incidentally, normally track Richard Lawson as guest but he lines up at No 1 for the Pirates on the night.

Jye Etheridge is fit to return for Bandits after missing their last meeting with back and neck injuries and Berwick team manager, Stewart Dickson, said: "Poole are many people's pre-season favourites and they are a good side, but I also think there are areas where we can hurt them.

"We need the Drew (Kemp) who scored 12 points against Scunthorpe and we need Jye to rediscover his early season home form as well as everyone else doing their jobs.

"This is one of those meetings that you just want to win to

set the tone for the season. It doesn't matter whether it's by two points or ten, just get the points on the board."

Pirates promoter Dan Ford said: "We might have something of a 'secret weapon' in that Richard has always gone well there and only last week he scored an impressive maximum when he covered for the injured Lewi Kerr, but one man can't win a meeting on their own.

"The lack of meetings as a unit has not helped us and we would have preferred to have gone into this schedule with more meetings behind us, but the weather has just been foul and we can now only hope that we are through the worst of conditions and look forward to a flurry of meetings."

PICTURE: Josh Pickering and his pit crew before a meeting at Armadale. Picture *Nigel Duncan*