

Castagna fails to back-up Pickering

Josh Pickering continued his recent form for the Stellar Monarchs in the Championship Pairs, top scoring with 15 in the qualifying round, but club skipper Paco Castagna fell short.

He scored two points as Monarchs finished fifth on a night in which Redcar Bears, represented by Danny King and Charles Wright, were crowned champions for the second time in three years.

Castagna struggled to find the speed required to back up the in-form Aussie, according to Monarchs' stand-in boss, Dave Harley, who said: "It just wasn't to be.

"With the nature of the draw, the two races we really needed to win were off the more difficult outside gates and we fell just short.

"Paco tried his absolute best but just didn't quite have the speed to get in the points to backup Josh who was excellent."

Things started brightly for Monarchs as they took a 6-3 victory over Workington Comets in their opening heat, Pickering hitting the front and Castagna getting the better of Antti Vuolas, but it went downhill from there.

Glasgow Tigers, Oxford Cheetahs, Poole Pirates and Redcar eventually made the final four and Bears then faced Cheetahs

in the final.

Bears hit the front with King clear, Wright was hanging on but seven-time British champion, Scott Nicholls, dived under him entering bend three, lap three. Nicholls and Wright came together.

The referee disqualified Nicholls meaning victory for Redcar.