

Pickering stars but Monarchs sunk by Poole

Stellar Monarchs remain at the foot of the Cab Direct Championship table but they pushed pace-setting Poole Pirates.

Alex Harkess, Monarchs' team manager, admitted his squad were "out of it" after the first third of the match, but his men battled back to be only two behind at Heat 13.

Richard Lawson gated and, with a fantastic burst off the second bend, Tom Brennan rocketed past Troy Batchelor and Josh Pickering to restore a six-point lead for the visitors. Zach Cook then won Heat 14 to clinch the win for Poole and Monarchs fans only had four races wins to celebrate.

Guests Drew Kemp and Batchelor managed one win each, but it wasn't enough and Josh Pickering top scored for Monarchs with 14 points.

Edinburgh Monarchs (43): Josh Pickering 14+1, Drew Kemp 7+0, Lasse Fredriksen 4+3, Paco Castagna 9+0, Troy Batchelor 6+0, Max James 0+0, Connor Coles 3+1

Wesses Marine Poole Pirates (47): Richard Lawson 11+0, Sam Hagon 0+0, Ben Cook 8+0, Zach Cook 5+1, Tom Brennan 12+1, Tobias Thomsen 5+0, Paul Starke 6+2

Meanwhile, along the M8, Glasgow still have a chance of reaching the Cab Direct Championship play-offs after overcoming Redcar 48-42 at Ashfield.

Tigers' victory was secured by a last heat 5-1 from Chris Harris and Leon Flint and that ensured the Bears cannot finish in the top four and keeps the defending champions' hopes alive of catching Workington for the last play-off slot.

However, with Glasgow, sponsored by Allied Vehicles, missed out on the aggregate point and it means they may well require a maximum haul of points from their remaining two matches.

Captain Harris raced to a paid maximum (13+2) against the Bears and was well supported by Flint with 12 and reserve James Pearson with 11+1. Charles Wright scored 13+1 for the visitors with Jason Edwards on 10+1.

Glasgow boss Cami Brown said: "It's still a tall order to reach the play-offs, but I'm proud of the fighting spirit from all the boys.

"Redcar are no mugs and they still had a chance of reaching the top four. They also have a great top two in Charles Wright and Danny King, but Jason Edwards and Jake Mulford also really rode well for them."

He added: "We really gave it a go and all the boys got stuck in to get the result. We wanted the bonus and that's a big blow to miss out on it."

PICTURE: Alex Harkess (blue jacket) in the pits at Armadale.
Picture by **Nigel Duncan**