

Wood on fire as Monarchs edge champions

Leicester Cubs roared to the National Development League title, but they were stopped in their tracks by Stellar Monarchs Academy at Armadale.

Prior to their visit to West Lothian, Cubs were unbeaten with an unblemished record of nine wins from nine meetings.

Stellar Monarchs Academy produced their A game and a determined display saw the septet emerge with a 47-42 victory to bring the season at Armadale down on a high note.

Mitchell Davey, the stand-in team manager for the night as Scott Wilson was unavailable, praised his squad and said: "Sensational effort, all the boys were up for it.

"They really wanted to put their stamp on it to show that they were a competitive team, and they all worked really well together. It was awesome."

Dayle Wood (pictured by **James Kenny**, courtesy of Edinburgh Moanrchs) was a 14-point hero, but the whole side showed a determination and belief despite the visitors taking 4-2 results in the first two heats won by Joe Thompson and Arran Butcher,.

Wood won heat 3 impressively and Monarchs racer Sam McGurk took a point even though he started off 15 meters after missing the two minutes warning hooter.

Cubs suffered a blow in Heat 4 when Butcher fell while leading, then team-mate Vinnie Foord fell in the same spot in the re-run, handing a 5-0 to the Academy to give them the lead.

That inspired the home side who went on a run of six successive race wins, with Wood, Connor Coles and Max Perry all victorious against visiting top men Thompson, Foord and Max James.

Guest Harry McGurk won Heat 8 then his brother Sam passed Vinnie Foord to join Wood for a 5-1 in Heat 9 and, by adding a further 4-2 in Heat 10, the Academy held a 35-24 lead.

Leicester hit back with a 4-2 followed by a 5-1 after a machine failure for Sam McGurk in Heat 12, cutting the gap to five going into Heat 13 and Max James earned his first race won beating Wood in the second last race.

That set up a last heat decider, with Leicester requiring a 5-1 to win, but another determined gate by Wood and Coles ensured that did not happen.

Academy signed off the season with two victories in two nights having won 46-44 at Middlesbrough Tigers on Friday, but it will be next spring before there is more speedway action at Armadale.

Edinburgh Monarchs Academy (47): Connor Coles 9+0, Harry McGurk 7+0, Sam McGurk 3+1, Dayle Wood 14+0, Max Perry 9+1, Mark Parker 2+0, Kyran Lyden 3+1

Leicester Lion Cubs (42): Joe Thompson 11+0, Sonny Springer 5+1, Tom Spencer 4+1, Max James 11+0, Vinnie Foord 3+0, Lee Harrison 1+0, Arran Butcher 7+2