

Crash puts paid to Alex's Scottish title challenge

ALEX Gault's hopes of winning the Scottish championship ended abruptly when the Carluke motorcyclist crashed out of his last race at Knockhill.

The teenager had needed to take the chequered flag in all of the remaining races to overhaul the lead held by Craig McLelland, but crashed out as he pursued his rival in the second race of the latest competition double header.

Alex had been unhappy with the handling of the RVF400 bike in a curtailed practice session, consisting of only six laps, due to an oil spill and red flag on the Fife circuit.

However, he was confident of being able to negotiate the track in the wet race-day conditions, which he proved by taking pole in the qualifying session.

The track dried up ahead of the first race, though, and he could only finish a distant second behind McClelland, after a race-long battle with Lewis Farrow.

Knowing that it was all or nothing as he set out for the second race, the local youngster lost control as he pushed to stay with McLelland and crashed out, ending his hopes of winning the championship in his debut season.

After a rapid and extensive repair job to the damaged bike, he then travelled to Donington to

compete in both the seventh round of the CB500 Cup, in which he is the overall leader, and the weekend's 400cc race.

He endured mixed fortunes, not being credited with victory in the opening race due to a technical error, but winning the second against riders on more powerful bikes.

The local rider qualified sixth overall and third in his category for the CB500 Cup race, taking the lead by the end of the first lap and winning a see-saw battle with Andy Burbridge to win by five seconds.

However, it was then discovered that he had raced without a transponder, a small electronic timing device, attached to his bike as it

had been transferred during a busy qualifying period to his other machine and had not been switched back.

The rules state that not having a transponder results in disqualification, and the win was awarded to the second-placed rider.

However, he shrugged off that disappointment and dealt with the belated discovery of a petrol tank

leak in his repaired RVF400 bike to produce one of his best races of the season in a mixed 400cc and 600cc race later that day.

Alex led his own category by the second lap and was closing in on the overall leader by the fifth lap when red flags were waved to signal a crash and subsequent restart.

He was placed third after the first lap when the race got underway once

again, and chased down 600cc leaders Ivan Lintin and Jonty Dixon, overtaking the pair on the final lap and recording an outright win — and with fuel to spare.

It gave him victory by more than 30 seconds from closest 400cc competitor Nick Chadwick, while he beat championship leader Ritchie Welsh into third place by almost 42 seconds.