

## Leicester first-up to defend Championship title

Contributed by John Walsh  
Wednesday, 17 February 2021

REIGNING champions Leicester will launch the defence of their Championship title on the opening night of the season.

The fixtures have been released and show Redcar visiting the Paul Chapman and Sons Arena on Saturday, May 1.

On the same night Scunthorpe head to Berwick in league action and Eastbourne will stage the Championship of Sussex.

The 12 teams will compete for a place in the play-offs and the Knockout Cup will also take place with ties arranged with travel distance in mind.

Several blank dates appear in the fixture list with promoters making contingency plans in case the scheduled May start has to be pushed back.

British Speedway Promoters Ltd Chairman Rob Godfrey said: "I know supporters will question the amount of gaps in the fixture list, but we have to allow space for any further delay to our season.

"I can also reveal a sub-committee consisting of Danny Ford at Poole, Jamie Courtney at Berwick and Graeme Campbell of Edinburgh will be looking into the logistics involved in streaming a number of Championship fixtures.

"The Championship is looking extremely competitive and I'm sure everyone is desperate to get out and see some live racing. It's been a while!"

\* To view the full list of fixtures for the 2021 season go to [www.speedwaygb.co.uk](http://www.speedwaygb.co.uk) and select each month via the 'Fixtures' tab in the main menu.

Meanwhile Plymouth local favourite Henry Atkins will join the club in their step-up to the Championship this season.

The Exeter-based 20-year-old was due to race for the Gladiators in last year's cancelled National League campaign, and scored a stunning 18-point maximum against the Young Lions in one of the two meetings which were possible at the Coliseum in the autumn.

Atkins, who will line up at reserve under the Rising Star programme, said: "I can't wait for the season to start.

"I have continued to work hard on my fitness over the winter and we really got the bikes dialed-in to the Plymouth track last year, and what an opportunity to be riding on the same team as Jason Crump and Bjarne Pedersen. I'm sure they will also help my development tremendously.

"I watched those two in the Speedway Grand Prix series when I was barely old enough to ride a bike and it's a dream come true to be now riding alongside them."