

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Undersized “Thunder” get the better of “Suns”

Men’s National League Division 3 (South Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 71 – 64 Team Solent “Suns”

Looking to battle back after the previous weekend’s defeat at the hands of Plymouth, “Thunder” were handicapped by the loss of forward Chris Fletcher who cried off off sick on the morning of the game, whilst their tallest player, Dan Turiccki had rolled an ankle during a training session. This meant that “Thunder” were limited to just eight players, while Team Solent arrived with four players standing over 6 feet 6 inches in height.

Needing a good start to the game “Thunder” came out in charity mode, their sloppy play gifting Solent a 10-zero lead after just three minutes. The Northants players realized the game could be over before it had really started and battled back with great spirit but still trailed 23-18 after the first period of play.

Early on in the second quarter “Thunder” got into their shooting rhythm early on, with guards Hadley, and Yates plus small forward Bajorunas all connecting from behind the arc. This edged “Thunder” in front 29-24 but a Solent time-out steadied things for the south coast team. Thanks to the efforts of skipper Jonny Yates, “Thunder” closed out the half in good form and by half time had extended their lead to 40-34.

The home side was able to retain their lead throughout the third and fourth quarter despite the best efforts of the Solent players who introduced increased physicality to their game. “Thunder” were initially rattled by Solent’s tactics and they were unable to ‘put the game to bed’ by missing far too many free throws. A 9-2 Solent run got them to within a single point at 59-58 but some sharp shooting from Danny Barrett and some outstanding defence on the Solent big men by Jacob Holt and Benji Henry saw “Thunder” holding on for their first win of the season.

In the seven point triumph Barrett top scored with 19pts with good support coming from Yates with 14 points while good contributions came from Bajorunas, Henry and Holt.

Coach Rob Eddon was delighted by the win and commented, “This was one of those games that just needed to be ground out for the win. The ‘hustle’ we showed could be an influential step in making this group of players into a team and in comparison to how we played just three weeks ago, we’re improving nicely. Considering the number of good ‘shooters’ we have on this team, we were terrible from the free throw line, and we should have finished Solent off much earlier.”

New girls “Lightning” find WBBL opposition just too strong.

Women’s National Cup Round 1

Northants “Lightning” 37 – 86 Nottingham “Wildcats”

The newly formed Women’s Basketball League is designed to showcase the women’s game and in the inaugural season Nottingham “Wildcats” are one of the favourites to lift the title. “Wildcats” arrived at the Basketball Centre to take on the newly formed Northants senior women’s team in the 1st Round of the National Cup. The “Lightning” team is a mixture of young players and older players returning to the sport and they knew from the outset that they would be up against it and despite the fact that “Wildcats” were unable to field all their overseas players. The Nottingham team rushed into an 8-zero lead and it was fully four minutes before Manal Cali got the scoreboard moving for “Lightning” but by the end of the first period of play the home side found themselves trailing 8-27.

During that first quarter “Lightning” had struggled against the defensive pressure imposed by the “Wildcats” players but in the second quarter they looked a lot more comfortable and were able to display their full potential and the period was only lost by 14 points to 19.

“Lightning” coaches Karen Goodrich and Stacey Shakespeare were hopeful that their charges would be able to maintain their improvement in the third quarter but despite displaying some tenacious defence in limiting their opponents to 11 points they could only manage seven themselves. With a 29-57 score line the game was as good as over as a contest and by now fatigue was a major issue for several “Lightning” players. For the first time in the game “Wildcats” began to totally dominate and a 13-2 charge over the last three minutes gave the final score line a rather unrealistic look as Nottingham took the game by 86 points to 37.

For “Lightning” only Cali with 13 points could score in double figures but seven players did get on the score sheet; and there was some encouragement for the Northants girls with the news that “Wildcats” had won their first WBBL game by 113 points to 26. “Lightning” will be hoping that games against teams from their own division will be slightly easier

Brave Cadets hold on to beat “Mets”

Cadet Men’s Midland Conference

Birmingham “Mets” 42 – 51 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants Cadet Men opened their Midland Conference campaign with a battling win over Birmingham “Mets” after a bruising encounter at Sutton Coldfield. “Thunder” were the technically superior side throughout the game but they did well to overcome an athletic and extremely physical “Mets” outfit.

“Thunder” bossed the first quarter jumping out to a 20-9 lead thanks to three, three pointers from David Nieva and one from Hayden Sayers. Nieva connect with another two triples in the second period of play but “Thunder” could manage only eight other points as “Mets” edged the quarter 17-14 to close the gap to 34-26 at half time.

Towards the end of that second period “Thunder” had found difficulty containing “Mets” athletic guards so Coach John Collins switched to a zone defence for the third quarter. This ploy proved to be very successful limiting “Mets” to just 16 second half points although “Thunder” could only manage 17 themselves. Collins was very pleased that his players had refused to be intimidated when the game became more physical.

In the nine point victory nine “Thunder” players contributed to the scoring led by Nieva with 17 points while good support came from Rob Clarke with 10 points

“Lightning” too experienced for game “Titans”

Under 16 Girls Midlands South Conference

N.E.B.C. “Titans” 36 – 95 Northants “Lightning”

The first of the local derbies between the Northamptonshire Elite and Northants clubs at Northampton Academy ended in a comfortable win for “Lightning” over an enthusiastic but outgunned “Titans” outfit.

“Lightning” got off to the best possible start opening with a 9-zero charge that forced “Titans” coach Barry Powell to call a time out. This had the effect of halting the tide of points but three more significant by “Lightning” saw them lead 30-7 after a foul-punctuated first period of play which had lasted 32 minutes.

Needing a solid start to the second quarter “Titans” were rocked by a 23-3 “Lightning” charge led by the dynamic Ruchae Walton. Another player to catch the eye during that second quarter was rookie Holly Winterburn with some strong drives to basket. With a 60 to 15 half time score line the game was as good as over and this was extended to 78-21 by the end of the third.

To their credit “Titans” continued to play with courage and enthusiasm and with “Lightning” coach Karen Goodrich rotating her players “Titans” enjoyed their best period of the game scoring 15 points to “Lightning’s” 17 as the Northants girls cruised to a 95-36 win.

In the 59 points triumph Walton recorded a double-double with 29 points and 14 rebounds while Winterburn bagged a similar 29 points. Caitlin Stewart was her usual steady self with eight rebounds and six steals to go with her 12 point haul. Possibly the most pleasing sight for “Lightning” fans was the re-appearance of Sarah Round who is still recovering from a chronic foot injury and credit to both clubs with a total of 24 girls participating in the contest.

“Trojans” given their marching orders by rampant “Thunder”

Under 15 Boys Midland South Conference

Northants “Thunder” 95 – 61 Milton Keynes “Trojans”

The game opened with an impressive “Thunder” charge which saw them jump out to a 12 points to one lead. “Trojans” responded well and thanks to some poor defending from “Thunder” mounted a 7-zero run of their own. “Thunder” regrouped and thanks to the efforts of Jacob Round had established a 20-11 lead by the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter saw “Trojans” playing with a great deal of determination and passion as they went head to head with “Thunder” with the home side depending a great deal on Ed Wallhead and Round for their points. The Northants boys edged the period 26-25 to lead 46-36 at the interval but they made their way to the locker room knowing they were still in a game.

Whatever the “Thunder” coaching staff said to their team during the half time break certainly worked as their team increased the intensity of their play by several notches in the third quarter. With Round scoring for fun “Thunder” set the scoreboard on fire with 38 points in the period while restricting their opponents to just 13.

With the game over as a contest and “Trojans” having lost three players with five fouls, Round was rested for the fourth quarter. Immediately the “Thunder” scoring machine dried up and Milton Keynes took the period 12-11 with the Northants boys missing a number of easy scoring opportunities.

In the 34 point win Round dominated the scoring with a 45 point haul while Wallhead contributed 17 points but no other “Thunder” player could manage double figures.

C.O.B. no match for rampant “Lightning”

Under 14 Girls Midland Conference

Northants “Lightning” 107 – 36 City of Birmingham

The parlous state of girls’ basketball in England was clear for everyone to see when City of Birmingham arrived with just six players. Six players from a club based in the country’s second city is extremely worrying.

The game was no kind of contest with “Lightning” dominating physically, technically and tactically. They led 33-5 by the end of the first quarter and went on to top 30 points in the second and third quarters as well. To their credit C.O.B. kept battling to the end and actually won the final stanza 14-11 “Lightning” running out winners by a massive 71 points.

In the totally one-sided game all twelve “Lightning” players scored with Lucy Amena, Bahira Barakat, Odera Onwamedilli and Holly Winterburn all scoring in double digits.

Under 13 Boys slip to third defeat

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Leicester “Warriors” 100 - 52 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants under 13 boys made the short journey to Leicester to take on “Warriors” and suffered another heavy defeat. The game statistics make interesting reading with two “Warriors” players amassing 74 of their team’s points. In contrast nine of “Thunder’s” 12 players got onto the score sheet.

Both teams opened the game employing a full court man to man defence but it wasn’t long before Warriors’, Sandhu began to dominate the game. “Thunder” were also guilty of failing to protect their back court allowing their opponents to score a number of uncontested lay ups and seize an initiative they were to retain for the rest of the game.

In the second half “Thunder” switched to a half court defence with Ashley Kitchen trying hard to contain the talented Sandhu and to a certain extent this tactic proved successful but other Northants players weren’t as efficient allowing “Warriors” to extend their lead. A few minutes into the final period of play the “Warriors” coach sat down Sandhu and for a few minutes the game was very competitive. The sadness of under-aged coaching became very apparent as Sandhu was re-introduced to the game in order for “Warriors” to ‘top the ton’. They duly did this but “Thunder” coach Darjius Maldutis was pleased with the way his young team kept trying to the end. In the 48 point loss Isaac Round top scored with 14 points; Kitchen chipped in with 10 points while Chris White and Oscar Knight contributed 9 and 8 points respectively

Second half rally can't save "Thunder"

"Hoopsterz" Central Venue League
Northampton "Vipers" 47 – 43 Northants "Thunder Too"

The young "Thunder" team were unable to capitalise on the excellent defensive rebounding of Elliot Wallace and Solomon Day-Adley and despite some strong play Rhys Hill and Brendan Ross found themselves trailing 17-24 at the end of an error strewn first half. During that period "Thunder" had been guilty of missing a number of simple shots and layups.

"Thunder" looked a much better unit in the second half and reduced the deficit to a single point. Their defensive pressure forced seven consecutive "Viper" turn-overs but only managed to convert one of these opportunities into scores. "Thunder" took the second half but could not close the gap finally going down by four points

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 18th October

9.30 am until 11am	Under 10 and Under 12 "Ballers" Academy
10.00 am until 11am	Junior "Ballers"
11.30am	Under 13 Boys versus Leicester "Riders" Under 15 Boys versus N.E.B.C. "Titans"
1.30pm	Under 14 Boys versus N.E.B.C. "Titans" Cadet Boys versus Derby "Trailblazers"
3.30pm	Senior Women versus Leicester "Riders II"

All the games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road

Spectators are welcome and admission is **FREE**

Sunday 19th October

12 noon	Junior Men versus Worcester "Wolves" (National Cup Round 1)
	Under 14 Girls travel to Leicester "Riders"
	Under 16 Girls travel to Nottingham "Wildcats" (National Cup Round 1)
	Cadet Boys travel to Notts Nova (National Cup Round 1)

For further information contact **John Collins** on **07801 533 151**