

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Busy weekend for the Northants club with some important wins

“Thunder” beat “Mets II” despite nightmare third quarter

Division Four National League (Midlands Conference)

Birmingham “Mets II” 59 – 75 Northants “Thunder”

So far this season the Northants senior men have found numerous ways of trying to lose games. Against Birmingham “Mets II” last Saturday they explored yet another method, namely let’s go almost seven minutes without scoring.

This happened at the start of the third quarter with “Thunder” leading 42-30, and came after a dynamic start that had seen them rush into a 10-zero lead. “Mets” had recovered in the second quarter but there was no way of predicting the dramatic “Thunder” collapse. Their first six offences of the third quarter all resulted in reasonable shots which failed to drop but after Jacob Holt missed a dunk, “Thunder’s” discipline disappeared and once again their efforts became based entirely on individual rather than team play. “Thunder” managed just five points in the quarter but at least their defence held tight allowing their opponents only 12 points but at 42-47 the winless “Mets” sensed victory.

“Thunder” seemed to have been phased by the physical nature of the game but to their credit they re-grouped for the fourth quarter and their smart defence generated a number of turn-overs leading to easy scores. They took the final stanza 28-17 to secure a 75-59 victory which takes them to third place in the Midlands Conference table with a won five lost three record.

In the 16 point win Holt had another double-double with 19 points and 10 rebounds and good contributions came from Jason Tucker and Matt Yates with 18 and 11 points respectively.

Cadet Boys come up with a win against Coventry “Elite”

Under 16 Boys National League (Midlands West Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 76 – 71 Coventry “Elite”

The Northants “Thunder” Cadet Boys secured their second win of the season in dramatic fashion despite once again playing without key players.

“Thunder” started the game assertively storming into a 15-4 lead, thanks to some good execution in transition and with debutant Demantas Cebatoriumas providing some much needed presence on the defensive boards “Thunder” looked to be in good shape. A Grigori Litsai three pointer extended “Thunder’s” lead to 22-9, but the team was in foul trouble with Cameron Leighton, Cebatriummas, Kalen Spatcher and Ashley Kitchen all on two fouls. Coventry took advantage of this and they were able to reduce the deficit to 22-15 to conclude the quarter.

“Thunder” continued to struggle with foul trouble through the second quarter with no less than four players on three fouls. Forced to make numerous substitutions “Thunder” lacked consistency on the

floor and Coventry were able to establish a 24-28 lead but a 7-2 “Thunder” run saw them regain the lead at 31-30. At this stage the visitors were able to take advantage of “Thunder’s” smaller line up and they were able to ease into a 43-40 half time lead.

In the third quarter, Coach Crump employed a 3-2 zone and carefully rotated players who were in foul trouble. ”Thunder” did a great job, limiting scores inside forcing Coventry to shoot the ball from long range and a run led by Ali Solazzo and Ashley Kitchen saw Thunder regain a 60-51 lead. Coventry responded instantly to reduce the deficit but a Kris Dambraukas lay up saw Thunder secure a 62-59 lead entering the final quarter.

It was the visitors who stormed into an 8-2 run to open the quarter to lead 67-64 but Kitchen and Cebatoriumas calmed “Thunder’s” nerves with back-to-back scores but with 2:30 remaining Thunder surrendered the lead and at 68-71 Coach Crump was forced to call a ‘time out’ during which he encouraged “Thunder” to keep their composure. His team responded positively closing the quarter with an 8-zero run to take the game by 71 points to 76.

In the narrow win “Thunder” were led in scoring by Ashley Kitchen and Ali Solazzo who both scored 16 points supported by Demantas Cebatriumas with 13 points.

Coach Crump commented “Throughout the game we suffered with foul trouble, but my players showed excellent composure and resilience in key moments of the game, especially in the final two minutes of the game. It is important the team builds on this result going forwards against tougher opposition.”

Junior Men lose to table topping Bristol and lose Josh with injury

Junior Men’s (Premier Central League)

Bristol Academy “Fliers” 93 – 52 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants Junior men made the long journey to Bristol last Saturday and returned a player short with Josh Taylor hospitalized with a back injury after a heavy fall in the third quarter. At this time “Thunder” were trailing by a significant margin of over 30 points and despite the best efforts of the team they slipped to a 41 point defeat against the unbeaten “Fliers”.

In the heavy loss Chris Amankoma top scored with 15 points, but no other “Thunder” player was able to score in double figures.

Overtime road win for Cadette Girls

Under 16 Girls (North Conference)

**Hatfield “Fliers” 49 – 51 Northants “Lightning”
(47- 47)**

The Northants under 16 girls picked up a battling win against Hatfield “Fliers” after a tense period of overtime.

Both teams found scoring difficult in the first quarter with “Fliers” easing ahead 8-5. “Lightning” were able to take the lead in the second quarter thanks to some aggressive defence and at half time they lead 26-20.

All the confidence of the second quarter disappeared in the third and “Fliers” were able to reduce the gap to 33-37 gong into the final ten minutes of the game. “Fliers” kept pushing hard in the final quarter, but scores from Dina Kosnikovska and Lucy Needham kept “Lightning’s” noses in front.

Going into the final seconds of the game “Lightning” still held a two points lead but right on the buzzer Hatfield’s guard, who gone scoreless throughout the game, threw up a ‘Hail Mary’ which caught nothing but net to tie up the scores and take the game into overtime. The additional five minute period was a tense affair taken 4-2 by “Lightning” as they held on for a 51-49 win.

“Lightning’s” main scorers were Needham and Kosnikovska with 20 and 17 points respectively but Coach Emma Salisbury was quick to praise the efforts of all her players and made special mention of the defensive play of Grace Cosford

Under 14 Girls too strong for “Wildcats”

Under 14 Girls National League **(Midlands East Conference)**

Nottingham “Wildcats” 40 – 70 Northants “Lightning”

Having beaten “Wildcats” earlier in the season, “Lightning” travelled to Nottingham last Sunday in confident mood and after a close run first half they duly recorded a comfortable win.

“Wildcats” made a confident start to the game jumping out to a 4-zero lead before “Lightning” took control with an 11-2 charge thanks to some aggressive defence which forced a number of turn-overs leading to easy scores on the break for Fiona Arthur.

The second quarter was a close run affair which “Lightning” edged 13-11 to extend their lead to 24-17 at half time, but at this stage “Wildcats” were still very much in the game.

The second and third quarters saw “Lightning” ‘up’ their game with Arthur and Lucie Wilson-Grey scoring freely while Ellouise Gregory dominated the rebounding at both ends of the court.

“Lightning” were able to restrict their opponents to 23 second half points while pouring in 46 themselves to record a 30 point victory in which all ten players contributed to the points total.

The “Lightning” scoring was led by Arthur and Wilson-Grey with 20 points while Gregory recored a double-double of 11 points and 10 rebounds. Coach Karen Goodrich was also pleased with the contributions of Gee Joksait and Kyla Soya-Bongay but was quick to praise the defensive effort of all ten of her players.

The win takes “Lightning” up to second place in the Conference table and on Saturday they entertain County Upper a team that beat them by a single point earlier in the season.

Under 12 Boys go one and one

Central England Under 12 Boys Central Venue League

The Northants “Thunder” Under 12 team played their third Tournament last Sunday and came up with a win and a narrow loss.

Northants “Thunder” 30 – 35 West Bromwich Albion

In the first quarter against West Bromwich Albion “Thunder” played some determined defence against an athletic Albion team but found difficulty scoring themselves and trailed 4-10 at the end of the period. The good defence continued in the second quarter and with Athena Thompson adding some fire to “Thunder’s” offensive effort “Thunder” was able to close the gap to 14-17 at half time.

“Thunder’s” attacking problems returned in the third quarter during which they managed just a single point as the West Midland team extended their lead to 26-15. in the final quarter Coach Peter Dewsnap was able to substitute freely and his players responded superbly forcing a number of turn-overs leading to breakaway scores. They took the quarter 15-9 but it wasn’t quite enough to secure the win

Leicester “Riders” 38 – 36 West Bromwich Albion

Leicester “Riders” 23 – 32 Northants “Thunder”

Having seen “Riders” narrowly defeat West Bromwich, “Thunder” knew they were in for a tough game when they took on the Leicester team but they were boosted by the addition of Ben Koolen to their line up and he was able to add more attacking options to the team.

Playing with far more confidence “Thunder” shocked their opponents in the first two quarters of the game opening up a 24-9 lead. “Riders” staged a comeback in the third quarter reducing the deficit to 20-26 but thanks to some excellent defence in the final stanza “Thunder” were able to hold on for the win.

Tom Bates, Athena Thompson were stand out players over the two matches while Ben Koolman had an excellent debut for the club in the “Riders” game.

After the tournament Coach Dewsnap commented, “Thunder are improving and today saw two good performances from the squad. It was disappointing to lose the first game but the team started very slowly in the opening quarter against West Brom giving us a lot to do over the rest of the game, but it was very pleasing to beat Leicester after an early season defeat.”

“Mystics” too strong for Under 12 Girls

North of England Central Venue League

Northants “Lightning” 34 – 62 Manchester “Mystics”

The Under 12 Girls of the Northants Club played their third North of England tournament last Saturday but were robbed of the second game because Derby were unable to raise a team.

When “Lightning” played the talented “Mystics” earlier in the season they lost by 40 points so their aim was to reduce this margin and they were successful in achieving this goal as they coped with the speed and intensity of the game far better than in their first encounter.

The first two quarters were exciting close run affairs with “Mystics” taking a 24-18 half time lead. For “Lightning”, Athena Thompson and Karly Osgood were a consistent scoring threat while Mia Gajaga was rebounding well. “Mystics” extended their lead by four points in the third period but in the fourth period with Manchester able to field their best players the northerners to able to extend their lead finally winning by 28 points.

Lightning coach Kim Thompson was really pleased with the improvement shown by her players and made special mention of Rosie Hodgson and Amelia Sterling who were both scoring threats whenever they were on court.

With Derby not able to play in the tournament two friendly games were arranged. In the first of these games “Lightning” played against Manchester’s younger players and won **24-21** with Athena Thompson scoring 10 points.

“Mystics” then took on a Northants Under 13 team and after a very intense and exciting encounter “Lightning” came out on top by **47 points to 41** with Ashia King scoring 15 points and pulling down 10 rebounds while Uzor Onyibor rebounded well and Deynarna Singh-Hurditt led her team superbly and contributed 10 points.

With many clubs struggling to promote girl’s basketball these three games were a wonderful advert for the female game and the three coaches involved should be very proud of the players they’ve encouraged.

THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 8th December

9-30am to 11am

11-30am

Junior “Ballers” Session

Under 14 Girls versus County Upper “Wolves”

The "Ballers" sessions and the game will be staged at the Basketball Centre which is based at Northampton School for Girls, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 16 and Under 14 Boys travel to Worcester "Bears"

Under 18 Boys travel to Oaklands "Wolves"

Sunday 9th December

Under 13 Girls travel to Norfolk "Incenie"

For more information on this Press Release contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151