

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Nightmare weekend for boys teams of the Northants Club but the girls come up trumps**

#### **Junior Men's (Premier Central League) Oaklands "Wolves" 107 – 34 Northants "Thunder"**

Not for the first time this season the Northants Junior Men travelled without key players due to non-availability and injuries. Not surprisingly the team suffered a heavy defeat against an athletic and aggressive team that employed a full court pressure defence for the whole of the game.

"Thunder" made a good start to the game and after six minutes the scores were all tied up but when "Thunder" introduced less experienced players to the game the carnage began. The Northants players battled hard but were unable to score in double figures in all four quarters. With very lenient referees "Wolves" were able to impose their physical superiority as they ran out comfortable winners.

Coach Darijus Maldutis couldn't fault the effort of his players but with key players missing on a regular basis the decision to play in the Premier League has to be questioned.

Against Oaklands Chris Amankoma and Ed Wallhead top scored for "Thunder" with 14 and 12 respectively while Jacob Barlow- Herdiman who was sidelined for much of last season rebounded superbly.

- There was good news of Josh Taylor who suffered a back injury during the previous weekend's game against Bristol "Fliers". Josh has been discharged from hospital in Bristol and is back home.

#### **Under 16 Boys National League (Midlands West Conference)**

#### **Worcester "Bears" 118 – 30 Northants "Thunder"**

The Northants "Thunder" Cadet Boys suffered a heavy defeat on the road against Worcester "Bears" last Saturday.

"Thunder" struggled from the opening tip finding it difficult to contain the "Bear's" fast break. The home side also displayed some confident shooting from the floor nailing four 3 pointers and "Thunder" trailed 8-30 at the end of the quarter. "Thunder" continued to struggle in the second quarter, particularly offensively and could only score four points in the quarter as the deficit increased to 59-12 by half time.

"Thunder" attempted to contain their opponents by employing a 3-2 zone defence, but struggled to cope with the size of the "Bears" players. Thunder did put up a more energetic performance in the third quarter but poor execution on offense resulted in numerous turnovers which saw "Bears" extend their lead to 89-21 by the end of the third. The "Bears" continued to dominate the game, limiting "Thunder" to single figure points scored in all four quarters eventually winning 118-30. In the heavy defeat no "Thunder" player was able to score in double figures Demantas Cebatorionas leading the way with 9 points while Ashley Kitchen managed 5 points.

**Under 14 Boys National League**  
**(Midlands West Conference)**

**Worcester “Bears”                      90 – 45                      Northants “Thunder”**

“Thunder” made a slow and sluggish start to the game and seemed happy to play half court basketball instead of their usual up-tempo pressure style. A 13-1 run by the “Bears” at the end of the first quarter saw them lead 20-6 leaving “Thunder” with a lot to do if they were to win the game.

It was an improved “Thunder” team that entered the floor in the second quarter, and their aggression was rewarded by 18 visits to the free throw line during the first half, however they were guilty of missing 8 of those free throws. “Thunder” did spark some momentum reducing the lead to 31-21 with three minutes of the half remaining but an 8-zero “Bears” run saw them extend their lead to 41-21 at the half.

A competitive third quarter saw both teams exchange baskets with Jaffrey Haidar and Dylan Dominici scoring back to back baskets for “Thunder” but a 10-4 run by the “Bears” saw them edge the quarter to extend their lead 60-34 going into the final stanza.

Some frustrations started to creep in to “Thunder’s” performance in the final quarter with players trying to take individual responsibility to score rather than working as a team. This saw a lack of ball movement on “Thunder’s” offence which became very predictable and failed to open up the “Bear’s” defence. A 12-zero run by the “Bears” midway through the quarter denied “Thunder” any opportunity to put pressure on the “Bears” lead who cruised to a comfortable win.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by Tom Greenfield who scored 15 points while Jaffray Haidar supported well with 14 points.

**Under 14 Girls gain revenge over County Upper**

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

**Northants “Lightning”                      78 – 52                      County Upper “Wolves”**

When these two teams met earlier in the season in Bury St Edmunds, County Upper won by a single point, so it was a very determined “Lightning” team that took to the court last Saturday for the return game. That determination was rewarded in the first quarter with “Lightning’s” pressure defence forcing a number of turn-overs which help them to establish a 24-9 lead. During that first quarter Oti Ata caught the eye with a number of defensive rebounds while Lucie Wilson-Gray was a constant threat on offence.

“Wolves” played with more confidence during the second quarter but “Lightning’s” strength in depth proved to be crucial with the ‘all must play’ rule in force. Wilson-Grey continued to be a threat on the break often fed by the excellent rebounding of Gee Joksaite. “Lightning” edged the quarter 19-12 to lead 43-21 at half time.

Coach Karen Goodrich’s half time message to her team was very simple. “Do not be complacent.” Her advice was accurate as County lead by the talented J. Kent, who finished the game with 26 points, played with more authority. They won the third quarter 19-18 and with the possibility of being able to play just their stronger players in the final quarter the game was still in the balance.

Coach Goodrich continued to play all eleven of her players in the fourth quarter while the “Wolves” coach rarely changed his line up. Initially this paid dividends, but as fatigue set in “Lightning” were able to capitalize to close the quarter with a 15-8 charge and take the game by 78 points to 52.

In the 26 point win all eleven “Lightning” players scored led by Wilson-Grey with an 18 point haul.

**Great road win for Under 13 Girls**

**Norfolk “Inceni”                      54 – 60                      Northants “Lightning II”**

Having narrowly beaten “Inceni” earlier in the season the Northants Under 13 girls expected a close game when they travelled to Norwich last Sunday, and so it proved.

After the long journey, “Lightning II” made a lethargic start and slipped behind 6-14 but their ‘second’ five were able to pull the deficit back to 14-16 by the end of the quarter with Lorraine Zgurean and Amelia Stirling working extremely hard on defence.

The two teams exchanged baskets through the second quarter with neither team able to establish a clear advantage. “Lightning II” were putting in a good team performance with the passing of Latesha Betsy and the general play of Deyarna Singh-Hurditt catching the eye. Both teams scored 12 points in the second quarter so at half time the home side still held a two point advantage at 28-26.

A substantial contingent of parents had made the journey to Norfolk and in the second half their contribution was to prove to be significant when “Lightning II” slipped 39-32 behind. Their encouragement and some excellent rebounding by Uzor Onyibor and Mia Gajaga helped their team to mount an 11-2 run with Ashi King scoring decisive points. The Northants team edged the quarter 17-16 which took them into the final ten minutes of play trailing 43-41.

With tiredness playing an important part “Lightning II” spurred on by their supporters put in an excellent defensive performance in the final stanza restricting “Inceni” to just 10 points while scoring 17 themselves despite missing seven free throws to take the game by 60 points to 54 lead by 16 points from Ashia King.

The win moves “Lightning II” up to joint 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Midlands East Conference table an excellent effort for a team playing a year young.

### **THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES**

#### **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

9-30am to 11am	Junior “Ballers” Session
11-30am	Under 16 Boys versus Coventry “Tornadoes”
1-30pm	Under 16 Girls versus Manchester “Mystics II”
3-30pm	Under 18 Boys versus City of Birmingham “Rockets”

The “Ballers” sessions and the three games 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 14 Girls travel to Northamptonshire “Titans”

#### **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

Senior Men travel to Charnwood  
Under 18 Boys travel to Team Birminghama “Elite”  
Under 13 Girls travel to County Upper “Wolves”

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