

# **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 tall.

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

The second quarter saw “Thunder” get 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. Led by 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 1<sup>st</sup> Round of the National Cup. The “Lightning” team is a mixture of young players and older players returning to the sport.

The Northants girls knew 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. After four minutes Manal Cali got the scoreboard moving for “Lightning” but by the end of the first period of play they found themselves trailing 8-27.

During that first quarter “Lightning” had struggled against the defensive pressure imposed by the “Wildcats” players. 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 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 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 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**

### **“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 they cruised to a

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.

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

#### Under 15 Boys Midland South Conference

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

1 <sup>st</sup> quarter A 20 – B 11	Jacob 11	Wallhead 3	Taylan 2	Laurence 2	Toby 2	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter A 26 – B 25	Jacob 10	Wallhead 10	Taylan 4	Ntumba 2		
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter A 38 – B 13	Jacob 28	Zak 2	Taylan 2	Laurence 2	Toby 2	Jared 2
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Wallhead	Zak	Tyler	Laurence	Toby	Jared

A 11 –B 12	2	2	2	2	2	1
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The first quarter saw Thunder attacking successfully and going up 12 points to only one reply. The Trojans however responded well and through some poor defending from thunder, saw them bounce back 14 -9. J. Round leading the score with 11 saw the first finishing 20-11

The second quarter was to see a gutsy performance from Trojans, who were determined and played with passion. However E Wallhead was on a charge, with joint top score for the quarter, he ensured that thunder stayed ahead. The quarter was closely contested, with 51 points scored in the quarter and thunder just edging it.

The third quarter saw Thunder run away with the score board. This was largely due to two factors. The defence had picked up and two of Trojans forward players being in 5 fouls. J Round was controlling the game and scored 28 points

The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter saw very little scoring as J Rounds was rested up and Trojans now having 3 players on 5 fouls. This is cause for concern as the squad seem to be too reliant on J Rounds and appear lost without him. Although Thunder did win, coach felt that there was too many missed scoring opportunities and players not living up to expectations. However the team are combining well and are responding well to the task at hand.

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

#### **Under 14 Girls Midland Conference**

**Northants “Lightning”                      107 – 36                      City of Birmingham**

### **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

### **“Hoopsterz” Central Venue League**

“Thunder loose to Vipers despite significant rally in the second half: 47-43

A young Thunder team failed to capitalise on Viper’s lack of imagination in going forward. Despite strong play from Rhys Hill an Brendan Ross supported by excellent defensive rebounding by Elliot Wallace and Solomon Day-Adley, the first half was littered by Thunder’s inability to convert simple shots and layups. Thunder lost the first half by seven points, 24-17.

Thunder pulled together in the second half and reduced the deficit to a single point. Thunder managed to turn over the ball on seven consecutive occasions , however, only managed to convert one of these to points. Despite outlying Vipers in the second half, Thunder failed to win the game, loosing by four.“

## THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> 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**

13 Boys travel to Leicester "Warriors"

### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> 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**