

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Junior Men ‘downed’ by Manchester**

**Manchester “Magic”                      79 – 51                      Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants junior men duly lost to unbeaten Manchester “Magic” but were well in contention at half time when they trailed 39-31. All this after they had made a very tentative start allowing “Magic” to go on a 15-4 run which was only stemmed with the introduction of the under-aged Pauli Laurinolli and Josh Round. “Thunder” lost the first period of play 21-12 but rallied strongly in the second which “Magic”, playing some efficient offence edged 19-18. “Thunder” were relying on individual efforts with Linas Bajorunas, Lewis Mooney and Jack Thomas all responded with successful shots from beyond the arc.

“Thunder” made the best possible start to the third quarter with Luke Lewis scoring from a steal and reducing the deficit to just six points. That seemed to stir “Magic” into action and they hit “Thunder” with a 28-8 blitz to establish a 67-41 lead by the end of the period.

The final period of play was punctuated by frequent trips by the Manchester players to the free throw line as “Thunder’s” defensive efforts weren’t to the liking of the match referees. Fortunately “Magic” contrived to miss 11 of these free throws just edging the quarter 12-10 to take the game by 79 points to 51.

For “Thunder” Coach Rob Eddon was pleased to see eight players contributing to his team’s scoring which was led by Mooney with 15 points on 50% shooting but the only other Northants player to score in double figures was Matt Yates with 10 points who also picked up a painful hip injury. Eddon was also full of praise for the defensive efforts of Jack Thomas who competed superbly against the much taller “Magic” players and despite being ill throughout the week.

### **Cadet Men are sunk by Trafford**

**Trafford                                      93 - 68                                      Northants “Thunder”**

A much depleted Northants cadet men’s team travelled to Manchester to take on Trafford in a Premier Division North game and were well beaten by a team that is the Manchester under 15 team. The Northants boys realised what a difficult afternoon they were in for from the very first minute as they struggled to contain the Trafford offence and when their opponents scored they were forced into a number of errors by Trafford’s full court pressing defence.

Trailing 35-48 at half time Coach John Collins tried his best to instil some confidence into his shell-shocked team during the half time interval. The game plan was to get the deficit down to single figures in the third quarter before mounting a charge in the final period of play. A sound plan but “Thunder” couldn’t have made a worse start to the quarter. In less than a minute they contrived to throw the ball to Trafford from the end line, step into court and then throw the ball out of bounds. Trafford went on a 21-2 charge to lead 74-49 and the game was as good as over as a contest.

“Thunder” showed a little pride in the final quarter which was tied at 19 all but they never looked like getting back into the game and to be beaten by such a young team was difficult to take.

In the 25 point set back Pauli Laurinolli top scored with 22 points with Goerge Paul contributing 20 points and Josh Round 15. Round also pulled down 15 rebounds and willingly filled in as point guard in order to give Carlo Nieva a rest. There were few positives to be drawn from the game but Coach John Collins expressed pleasure in the performance of David Radford who chipped in with six points

## **Under 15 Boys win latest local derby**

### **Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Northants "Thunder" 82 – 53 Northamptonshire "Titans"**

Northants "Thunder" faced local rivals Northamptonshire Titans for the first time this season and opened the game in devastating style, blasting out with a 10-zero run. "Titans" were able to respond with a 5-0 run of their own but despite facing a bigger team "Thunder" refused to be intimidated as they extended their lead to 18-5. The Northants boys were able to capitalise on "Titans" turnovers, forced by their aggressive full court man to man defence. This was, backed up with strong defensive rebounding sparking quick scores in transition. The first quarter concluded with Thunder leading 24-7 with 10 points coming from Ed Hall.

"Thunder" had played some of their best basketball of the season in the first period and this continued in the second period of play which they took by 20 points to nine to extend their lead to 44-16 by half time. The period ended with a Kaan Uyduran jump shot but the highlights of the quarter were a number of well executed "Thunder" fast breaks and a spectacular blocked shot from Ollie Thomas the smallest player on the court.

During the half time interval Coach Rob Crump was reminded his players that the game wasn't over and they needed to display the same effort and intensity levels to maintain their lead. "Thunder's" flood of points was stemmed by some determined "Titans" defence but the home side were still able to break efficiently with Will Grosvenor making a number of strong drives to basket while Josh Arimoro and Jacob Killeya helped their team to extend their lead to 68-31 going into the final quarter.

After three periods of superb play "Thunder" were guilty of becoming rather sloppy during the final quarter and to their credit "Titans" responded strongly taking the final stanza 22-14 to reduce the final deficit to 29 points but bragging rights belonged to the "Thunder" boys thanks to 17 points apiece from Grosvenor and Killeya while Arimoro, Hall and Carlo Nieva all recorded double figure totals. Coach Crump was quick to acknowledge the hard work of all ten of his players

### **Under 16 Girls Midlands South-West Conference**

#### **Cadette Women are second best in Nottingham**

**Nottingham "Wildcats" 43 – 79 Northants "Lightning Too"**

The "Lightning Too" under 16 girls took on local rivals Nottingham "Wildcats" in a Midlands South-West Conference game last Saturday and after a close first half came off second best. Both teams made a slow start to the game with "Wildcats" edging the first quarter by 16 points to 10. "Lightning Too" enjoyed an excellent second period of play which they took 12-8 to trail by just two points at half time.

"Lightning Too" took to the court full of optimism for the third quarter but were blitzed by Nottingham's full court trapping zone defence. Time after time the Northants girls were guilty of turning the ball over leading to easy "Wildcats" scores which saw them go on a devastating 28-2 run. They took the quarter 33-7 to establish a 57-29 lead and leaving the "Lightning Too" players with only pride to play for.

"Wildcats" won the final period of play 24-14 to record a well deserved 79-43 win which keeps them on top of the Conference table with an unbeaten record.

For "Lightning Too" Steph Ogden scored a creditable 27 points while Hannah Nolan and Lauren Brookes battled hard for their eight points

## **Slick Under 15's see off "Demons"**

**Wiltshire "Demons"**

**20 – 87**

**Northants "Lightning"**

Even without the services of their influential guard Sarah Round the Northants under 15 girls recorded an impressive win over a game but inexperienced Wiltshire "Demons" team. The win elevates "Lightning" to the dizzying height of third place in the table despite playing a year young in the Conference.

From the outset "Demons" were put under pressure from "Lightning's" pressure defence while Caitlin Stewart was able to efficiently control their offence. The Northants girls had taken a 20 points to one lead after the first quarter and this was extended to 39-11 by half time.

With the game as good as over as a contest Coach Karen Goodrich was able to experiment with a zone press defence and even asked her team to alternate two different defences. All this was useful practice against a game "Demons" team who kept trying to the end despite failing to be really competitive.

No less than ten "Lightning" players got onto the score sheet led by Lauren Milne who had 29 points and pulled down 16 rebounds. She got excellent support from Ruchae Walton who recorded her usual double, double scoring 14 points and pulling down the same number of rebounds while other notable contributions came from Charlotte Berridge and Hari Owens who both scored 12 points.

## **Under 14 Boys snatch defeat from the jaws of victory**

### **Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Leicester "Blaze"**

**65 – 64**

**Northants "Thunder"**

When twelve thirteen year old boys sit in silence then you know something is wrong but that is exactly what happened when the Northants under 14 boys travelled back from Leicester last Saturday. With less than three minutes left of the game "Thunder" held a slender eight points lead but seemed to have the game under control. It was then that nerves took over and "Blaze" scored seven unanswered points to put the game back in the mix. At this stage David Nieva was fouled and went to the free throw line but the young guard who had enjoyed a tremendous game scoring 30 personal points missed both free throws. "Blaze" launched a long pass which resulted in a lay up score to take a one point lead and "Thunder" were unable to respond and so lost a game they had led for most of its duration.

Earlier in the game "Thunder" had established a 34-29 half time lead thanks to some excellent rebounding from Ayo Aluyede which allowed Nieva and Jacob Round countless scoring opportunities. "Blaze" edged the third period of play 19-18 to set up the grandstand finish but "Thunder" seemed to have done enough to secure victory when they eased into that eight point lead but it wasn't to be and the silent bus was testament to how disappointed the Northants boys were.

## **Under 14 Girls put out the Brentwood fire**

### **Under 14 Girls Midlands South Conference**

**Northants "Lightning"**

**109 – 37**

**Brentwood "Fire"**

The Northants Under 14 girls moved up the Midlands South Conference table with a routine win over a game Brentwood "Fire" team. In the overwhelming win no less than six "Lightning" players scored in double figures. Three of those players Caitlin Stewart, Sarah Round and Ruchae Walton figure regularly in the high scoring stats so it was pleasing to see three others, Abbie Hobbs, Charlotte Price and Abi Turner scoring 15, 12 and 16 points respectively while Taylor also hauled down 13 rebounds.

"Lightning" dominated all four periods of play but to their credit the Brentwood girls showed massive improvement in the second half during which they managed to score 25 points.

## Round sees “Thunder” home

### Under 13 Boys Midlands South Conference

Northants “Thunder”

92 – 72

Herts Warriors

A superlative performance from Jacob Round guided “Thunder” to a comfortable win over a hard working Herts “Warriors” team. When he wasn’t scoring points Round was rebounding superbly and proving scoring passes to his team mates. Inspired by Round’s efforts the rest of the “Thunder” team responded magnificently causing the “Warriors” ball carriers a lot of problems with aggressive up-court defence and executing their new half-court offence efficiently

The only slight concern for Coach Mike Round was his team’s inability to protect their defensive boards with their opponents too often able to secure second and third put back attempts. He was also unhappy with a five minute period at the start of the third quarter when “Warriors” illegal defence went unpunished allowing them to go on a 12-zero scoring blitz. When the referees stepped in “Thunder” regained control of the game and cruised to a 20 point win over a team that started the day one place above them in the Conference table.

### THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION

#### Saturday 8th December

11-30am	Under 13 Boys versus Bracknell “Cobras”
	Under 15 Boys versus Bromsgrove “Bears”
1-30pm	Under 14 Boys versus Leicester “Blaze”
	Cadet Men versus Cheshire “Panthers”
3-30pm	Junior Men versus Leicester “Warriors”
5-30pm	Junior Women versus Herts “Warriors”

All these games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Senior Men travel to College of West Anglia  
Cadette Women travel to Bucks “Hornets”  
Under 15 Girls travel to Reading “Rockets”

#### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December

10-00am	Junior Men versus Surrey “Rams”	(National Cup)
12 noon	Under 14 Girls versus Norfolk Iceni	
	Junior Women versus Stockport “Lapwings”	(National Cup)
2-00pm	Under 15 Girls versus Haringey “Angels”	(National Cup)

All these games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Senior Men travel to Huddersfield “Heat” (National Shield Quarter Final)

## **Moulton Men well beaten by Birmingham “Met”**

### **British Colleges Men’s Midlands Men’s Elite League**

**Birmingham Metropolitan College    107 – 49    Moulton College**

An understrength Moulton College Men’s team travelled to the West Midlands last Wednesday for a fixture against Birmingham Metropolitan College and returned home having finished on the wrong end of a 107-49 scoreline. Moulton were missing several key players because of illness, injury and travel problems and it certainly told.

At the start of the game “Mets” employed a full court trapping defence and after an early time out Moulton coped with this efficient although they did struggle with their opponent’s height advantage. This meant that when first shots missed rebounds were taken and “Mets” were able to score from the put backs as they built up 23-12 lead after the first period of play.

At the start of the second quarter “Mets” switched to a half court trapping zone defence and concentrated on keeping the out of the hands of Moulton’s primary ball carrier Matt Yates. With other players forced into ball-handling duties time and time again Moulton players were guilty of dribbling to the sidelines where they were double teamed and forced to throw speculative cross-court passes most of which were intercepted leading to easy scores for “Mets”. The Birmingham team took the period 33-14 and with a 56-26 half time lead the game was as good as over as a contest. The carnage continued in the third quarter which “Mets” took 30-15 to extend their lead to 86-41.

Moulton coach John Collins set his team the target of scoring 50 points while restricting “Mets” to a hundred and for five minutes they looked to be on course to achieve their goal as they reached 49 points. What happened next might have been caused by fatigue but Moulton totally lost their discipline and failed to score again as “Mets” went on a scoring rampage taking their score to 107.

Coach Collins expressed his disappointment that his players hadn’t been able to keep their discipline and concentrate on the process of doing simple things well and taking sensible shots. He also recognised that for many of his players this was a level well above what they are used to and hoped they would be able to learn from the experience.

In the 58 point defeat Linas Bajorunas battled hard throughout the game and completed a double-double with 20 points and an outstanding 17 rebounds. He got good support from Matt Yates with 18 points but no other Moulton player was able to score in double figures.