

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Senior Men record win number two in high scoring thriller

National League Division 3

(South Conference)

London "United"	101 - 103	Northants "Thunder"
	(88 - 88)	

The Northants senior men recorded win number two of the season after a gutsy performance against London United last Sunday. Thunder pulled back from a nine point deficit going into the fourth quarter to tie things up at 88 all at full time and take the game into overtime. In a nail biting overtime period Thunder edged it 15-13 to win the game and move off the bottom of the Division 3 South table.

After taking the first quarter 24-21 Thunder lost the initiative to the Harefield based team losing the second period of play 22-27 and the third 17-24 to trail 63-72. After a run of losses things didn't look bright but on this occasion the team dug deep to win the final quarter by 25 points to 16, so setting up the extra period.

In the overtime victory Jacob Holt once again, led the Thunder scoring with a 26 point haul and he received good support from Benji Henry and Richard Higgins who both contributed 14 points.

Coach Grahame Yates was naturally delighted with the win and is confident of reaching the six win total he believes will be enough to avoid relegation. This can be achieved if the team can continue to field a full roster, can reduce the number of turn-overs committed and concentrate on team play rather than 1 versus 5 tactics.

This Saturday the team entertains the students of Loughborough with the expected return to the Basketball Centre of Linas Bajourunas and George Paul.

Junior Men push on without breaking sweat

Junior Men's East Midlands Development League

Northants "Thunder"	100 - 24	Notts Nova
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Northants Thunder 100 (24, 49, 74)

Notts Nova 24 (8, 14, 22)

Northants Thunder Junior Men remained undefeated in the East Midlands conference displaying a dominant performance against Notts Nova. Thunder won by a massive 76 points in a game which very early on became completely one-sided.

Thunder took immediate control of the game storming into 15-2 lead thanks to some good pressure defence which saw guards Ollie Thomas and Carlo Nieva stealing the ball on a number of occasions to spark Thunder's offence. The Northants team also displayed a good presence on the offensive boards with James Barden collecting numerous rebounds to convert second chance shots which extended Thunder's lead to 24-8 at the end of the first quarter.

Nova opened the second quarter with a lay up score but Thunder responded with some aggressive defence forcing Nova turnovers and limiting the visitor's offence. Nova switched to a 2-3 zone in an attempt to limit Thunder's dominance around the basket, and unlike in previous games, Thunder failed to successfully nail shots from the perimeter. However, good ball movement on Northants offence overloaded Notts zone leading to Barden and Jacob Killeya scoring inside. Thunder took the quarter 25-6 to lead at 49-14 at the half.

Third quarter saw Thunder display some good man to man defence and extend their lead to 74-22 with Carlo Nieva scoring nine personal points. With the game out of reach, Thunder limited Nova to just one basket in the fourth quarter while pouring in 24 points themselves. With 10 points coming from point guard Ollie Thomas.

In the decisive win, Thunder were led in scoring by Ollie Thomas who netted 28 points, with good support coming from Killeya and Nieva who totalled 20 and 16 points respectively.

Coach Rob Crump commented "We displayed a dominant performance today and it was good for the boys to remain focussed throughout the game limiting Nova to single figures in all quarters. Overall, it was a good team performance with all players contributing on offence. I was particularly impressed with the progress of James Barden who did an excellent providing a strong presence inside."

That win maintains Thunder's unbeaten record but they face a much tougher test this Saturday when they face local rivals NEBC Titans.

Gutsy Cadet Boys prevail against "Giants"

Under 16 Boys Midlands Development League

Northants "Thunder" 76 – 73 Mansfield "Giants"

At half time Thunder had established a 12 points lead at 42-30 lead thanks to a dominant second quarter which had seen them outscore Giants 27-14. During this quarter Coach Grahame Yates had decided to field two of his taller players in order to compete against the taller Giants line up. Earlier his injury hit team had been outmuscled by Giants who edged the first period of play 16-15 despite the defensive efforts of Ainsley Reynolds.

The third quarter saw Giants throw everything at Thunder. While Coach Yates had to be aware of not exhausting his bigger players, the Giants coach did not have this problem. He was able to rotate his big players keeping two of them on court at all times. The quarter went the way of the visitors 20-14 but Thunder were working hard to stay in the game. They were using good ball movement and penetration to score with Ed Taylan scoring seven of his team's 14 points. Meanwhile, Giants were employing more direct methods using their height advantage to score from put backs.

With just six points the difference between the two teams the fourth quarter started with both teams striving for the victory they thought could be theirs. The period turned out to be a breath-taking affair with Reynolds once more putting his body and on one occasion his nose, 'on the line' for the cause. Chris Amankonah was working hard in defence and together with Shekina Ntumba secured a number of key rebounds, allowing Taylan and Josh Lloyd to fast break and score. While Giants took the quarter 23-20, it was a case of not who won the battle but who won the war as Thunder edged the contest by a mere 3 points.

In the 76-73 win Ntumba top scored with 26 points with excellent support coming from Taylan and Lloyd with 16 points apiece. Although these three players topped the scoring the victory was firmly based on a massive team effort which got the result. Before the game Coach Yates had highlighted the importance of the game for both teams in their attempt to make the Play Offs and while there is still lots of improvement to be made, the overall performance showed a good foundation to work on. If the team continues in the same vein there is no reason that they cannot make Play Offs and they face another big challenge this weekend when they take on NEBC Titans who like Thunder have lost just three games.

Blank weekend for Under 14 Boys

Under 14 Boys Midlands Development League

Northants "Thunder" 59 – 84 Worcester "Bears"

The Thunder under 14 boys had two games last weekend and finished with nothing to show for them. Against a talented Worcester Bears team they made an excellent start and led 12-6 after seven minutes but were unable to maintain their efforts and found themselves trailing 18-21 after the first period of play.

Thunder continued to be competitive in the second quarter and they won a low scoring affair 11-10 to trail by just two points at 29-31 at half time.

There was no doubt that top of the table Bears were rattled and the third and fourth quarters saw their coaching staff make a decisive defensive change. Not for the first time this season defenders were allowed to stand in the keyway making little or no effort to mark a player. With close to the basket scoring opportunities made very difficult Thunder were restricted to shooting from the perimeter and when these shots missed Bears were able to mount fast break offences to take the period 28-17.

It was the same story in the fourth quarter which Thunder lost 13-25 and slip to a 25 point defeat at 59-84. They could be proud of their first half efforts and there was every suggestion that this was a case of winning the game was more important than teaching young players to defend properly.

For Thunder Jonathan Ntumba top scored with 30 points while Jude Carmichael scored 16 and Ashley Kitchen chipped in with 8.

Leicester “Dynamite” 75 – 65 Northants “Thunder”

After the previous day’s heavy loss there was a very real possibility of a collective hangover and so it proved with the whole team performing well below par. Dynamite won the first two periods of play to lead 38-29 with 18 of Thunder’s points coming from Jude Carmichael.

The second half saw a different Thunder team stepping onto court and a 10-zero run in the four minutes immediately after half time saw them take the lead at 39-38. Dynamite rallied strongly and at a time when some good team defence was needed the Thunder players were unable to step up to the mark and the home side edged ahead 54-48 at the end of the third quarter.

The fourth period of play was all important with Thunder still in with a chance of taking the game but the players seemed to lack confidence and Dynamite were able to close out the game at 75-65.

In the 10 point defeat Carmichael top scored with 28 points with Jonathan Ntumba supporting well with 20 points, 15 of them coming in the second half. Of the other players Matteo Baja and Ashley Kitchen scored 8 and 6 players respectively.

THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION

Saturday 12th December

No Junior “Ballers” Session.
The programme will resume on **9th January**

10-00am	Cadet Boys versus NEBC Titans
11-45am	Junior Men versus NEBC Titans
1-45pm	Senior Men versus Loughborough Riders

These games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Sunday 20th December

Under 14 Girls travel to NEBC Titans

For further information contact John Collins on 07801 533151