

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

MEDIA RELEASE

“Thunder” win ugly to go to the top of the table

Men’s National League Division 3 North

Birmingham “A’s” 85 - 93 Northants “Thunder”

At the end of this Division 3 game against Birmingham “A’s” “Thunder” coach, Rob Eddon pronounced himself happy to have ‘won ugly’. “At the end of the season these sort of wins could be crucial”, he explained as his team sit proudly at the top of the table having suffered just one league defeat all season. The game turned out to be a see-saw affair which saw the two teams connect with no less than 23 three-point shots with “A’s” Hanson-Young being a constant threat to “Thunder’s” defence.

“Thunder” settled down the better of the two teams and closed the first quarter leading 28-20. This lead was extended to double digits midway through the third but the Birmingham team rallied strongly and a flurry of five three-pointers got them back to 42-44 down at half time.

The third period of play saw “A’s” employing a zone press and this seemed to throw “Thunder” off-balance as they contrived all manner of ways to turn the ball over. After eight lead changes “A’s” finally took the period 23-33 to go into the final ten minutes of play one point down at 65-66.

“Thunder” were still not dominating the game as they should have done but they were able to maintain enough control to take the final stanza 27-20 and the game 93-85 with Leon Henry and the returning Leome Francis both scoring in excess of 20 points while Jason Tucker made a 15 point contribution

Below strength Junior Men suffer in dangerous waters

Junior Men’s Premier Division North

Sheffield “Sharks” 86 – 66 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants Junior Men travelled to the Shark infested waters of the English Institute of Sport for this Premier Division North game without the services of the injured Linas Bajorunas and the influential Sam Round who was involved in a major music competition. Life was always looked likely to be tough for “Thunder” and so it proved with “Sharks” jumping out to an early lead. Rookie guard Carlo Nieva was able to advance the ball through the Sheffield pressure but he found it difficult to initiate his team’s offences and it was the fourth minute before “Thunder” opened their account with a three-pointer from George Paul. “Sharks” continued to dominate the period and led 28-14 at the break.

During the first ten minutes too many “Thunder” players had been beaten off the dribble and stand-in coach John Collins emphasised the importance of preventing this and how importance it was to help beaten players. His team responded and restricted their opponents to 17 points in the second quarter but scoring continued to be at a premium with “Thunder” managing just 12 to trail 26-45 at half time.

With the arrival of Round meant “Thunder” had another threat in the second half but Collins’ half time talk was more about passion and commitment than technique. His charges responded well in the third period with another rookie Jacob Killeya rising to the challenge of the increased pace of the junior game. “Sharks” had obviously become a little complacent and were visibly rattled by the Round inspired pace and passion from the Northants players. “Sharks” edged the period 24-22 and “Thunder” went into the final stanza in determined mood and a desire to outscore their opponents.

“Thunder” employed trapping zones in the final period of play and this forced a number of “Sharks” turn-overs and if the Sheffield defenders had been called for a series of ‘hip-riding’ fouls against Round, “Thunder” would have taken the period by more than the 18-17 margin they actually enjoyed. Round scored 13 points in the two periods he played but Collins was most pleased with the contribution made by his three ‘Bigs’. George Calvey scored 13 points and rebounded well while Karan Virdee (eight points) and Kamesi Fawehhimi were both important physical presences. Of the other players, George Paul contributed 11 points, Josh Round eight and Jacob Killeya six.

Cadette Girls march on

Under 16 Girls Midlands South Conference

Northants “Lightning” 104 - 26 Birmingham “A’s”

Not for the first time this season the Northants under 16 Girls were involved in a totally meaningless game which was over as a contest midway through the first period of play with “Lightning” leading 22-8. From that moment on Coach Karen Goodrich was looking for ways to keep her players interested. At least in this game there was the challenge of containing the talented Elaine Horton who ended up scoring 17 of her team’s 26 points. Goodrich employed various combination defences and was particularly successful in the third quarter with the Birmingham team restricted to just a single point.

Birmingham arrived with just five players a staggering thought for a city of over a million population and Goodrich was pleased that all twelve of her players from a county with a population a third of Birmingham’s, managed to score. “Lightning” easily won all four periods of play although “A’s” thanks to the efforts of Horton did get into double figures in the first quarter, something last week’s opponents didn’t manage.

As far as scoring was concerned for “Lightning” it was down to the usual suspects with Charlotte Berridge, Lauren Milne and Ruchael Walton all racking up 20 plus totals. Sarah Round and Caitlin Stewart controlled the game well while Eden Brown continued her impressive improvement.

The team will face a much tougher challenge this Saturday when they face North Conference side Sheffield “Hatters” in a non-league game without the services of their three England squad players.

Under 15 Boys win despite late “Warriors” rival

Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 87 – 70 Shropshire “Warriors”

The Northants Under 15 Boys picked up their second consecutive victory with a 17 points win over Shropshire “Warriors” but the final score line was not really a true reflection of the game. With three minutes of the game remaining “Thunder” led 85-58 but then complacency and appalling passing allowed “Warriors” to go on a 12-zero run to give the score line a more respectable look.

“Thunder” went into the game using an aggressive full court press and this totally rattled the “Warriors” players who ‘coughed-up’ the ball on a number of occasions. “Thunder” raced out to a 30-7 lead and there was no way back for the visitors although they were able to stay more competitive in periods two and three before mounting their late impressive comeback.

For “Thunder”, Jacob Round top scored with 34 points while Ayo Oluyede supported well with 17 points before fouling out of the game. Other significant contributions came from David Nieva and Hayden Sayers as eight “Thunder” players got on the score sheet.

Under 14 Girls win again

Under 14 Girls Midlands South Conference

County Upper “Coyotes” 36 - 73 Northants “Lightning”

The Northants Under 14 Girls travelled to the ‘wilds’ of Suffolk to take on the “Coyotes” of County Upper School, Bury St Edmonds and returned having picked up their third win of the season. Two of the team’s first three games were against the two best teams in the Midlands South Conference and Coach Darius Maljudtis’ team is now playing with a great deal more confidence.

Last Saturday, “Lightning” took some time to get into their stride just winning the first quarter 13-8. They extended their lead to 34-18 by half time but were unable to move further ahead in the third period when both teams scored 12 points. Coach Maljudtis demanded that his team ‘put the game to bed’ in the fourth quarter and with Precious Ogaji rebounding superbly and Bahira Barakat controlling the play, Lucy Amena and Holly Winterburn were able to score freely. “Lightning” took the final quarter 27-10 to run out comfortable winner by 73 points to 36.

For “Lightning”, Amena scored 15 points, Winterburn 14 and Ogaji 12 each with the Georgias, Collins and Nolan plus Barakat all making useful contributions.

Wallhead inspired Under 13 Boys get the better of “Titans”

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder”

72 – 48

NEBC “Titans”

Like the Under 14 Girls the previous week the Under 13 boys earned the bragging rights over rivals Northamptonshire “Titans” by winning the local derby in front of a large enthusiastic crowd.

“Thunder” were fired up for the game and raced out to an early 7-0 lead but “Titan’s” managed to slow the home teams progress with F. Patmore scoring six of her team’s 10 first quarter points, but by the end of that period Thunder had established an 18-10 lead. The start of the second quarter was dominated by the ever-improving Ed Wallhead who went on to record a triple double with 36 points and numerous rebounds and blocks. An 11-2 run extended Thunder’s lead, but “Titan’s” big man, Sam Grant, started to cause a few problems for the home team. In the run up to half time, he netted eight points and helped to reduce the gap between the two teams to 37-26.

Coach mike Round reminded his players that their 11 point half-time lead was not necessarily enough to consider the game won and there was more work to be done in the second half. With six of the squad unavailable, one of the Under 12’s, Lewis Reynolds and two Under 11’s, Ashley Kitchen and Isaac Round had been drafted in to make up the numbers and all three had an impact on the game in the second half with Reynolds defending well and Round and Kitchen both contributing to Thunder’s total scoring five and four points respectively. The team responded to the half-time talk by winning the third quarter 19-10 and the fourth 16-12. In addition to Wallhead’s impressive performance, Chris Amankonah hit 11 points and Dylan Edwards pulled down numerous rebounds.

Coach Round was satisfied with the team’s performance and particularly pleased to see 9 of the 11 players making it onto the score sheet. The boys will be aiming to make it four wins on the bounce when they travel to Mansfield “Giants” for their next game in two weeks time.

THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION

This weekend has been designated as a National Teams weekend for all under-aged teams so there is a limited programme of National league games. The Cadette Women will take on the talented Sheffield “Hatters” without their three England squad members while the Under 15 Boys will tackle Leicester “Warriors” without the influential Jacob Round.

Saturday 23rd November

9-30am to 11am	Under 12 Practice	
10am to 11am	Junior “Ballers”	
11-30 pm	Cadette Women versus Sheffield “Hatters”	(Non-League game)
1-30pm	Senior Men versus Leeds Carnegie II	

These games and practices will take place at the Northants Basketball Centre which is based at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 15 Boys travel to Leicester “Warriors”

Under 13 and Under 15 Northants Central Venue League at Northampton School for Boys