

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

MEDIA RELEASE

“Thunder” slip to second league loss of the season

Men’s National League Division 3 North

Derby “Trailblazers II” 89 – 77 Northants “Thunder”

Things are beginning to get very interesting in the North Conference of Division 3 and they’re going to get even more interesting this coming Saturday. After last Sunday’s loss to Derby “Trailblazers II”, Northants “Thunder” are still top of the table with two losses but this Saturday they face Sefton “Stars” who have also lost just two games.

Against the “Trailblazers” second string “Thunder” turned in a lacklustre performance which saw them edged out in all four periods of play. Trailing 59-66 going into the final quarter “Thunder” did manage a rally that got them back to within four points of their opponents but the Derby outfit re-grouped and on the back of some fine perimeter shooting from Henderson who finished with 27 points, closed out the game to win by 12 points.

For “Thunder” Leome Francis and Leon Henry led their scoring with Jonny Yates chipping in with ten points.

Junior Men hammered by “A’s”

Junior Men’s Premier Division North

Birmingham “A’s” 111 – 55 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants junior men who are still without a coach travelled to Birmingham to take on an athletic and well drilled “A’s” team who had suffered just one defeat this season. If “Thunder” were going to make any kind of challenge they would need all their players to step up and be counted. In the event this didn’t happen and the team was subjected to a lesson in what the top level of junior basketball is really like.

From the start “A’s” were physically intimidating and their zone press forced a number of “Thunder” turnovers resulting in easy scores. The Northants players knew exactly what they needed to do to advance the ball through the press but on the day this went totally out of the window and they were guilty of over dribbling, standing still and passing poorly. If this wasn’t bad enough they found “A’s” hot shot Salem Hanson-Young in prime form and he finished the game with nine three pointers in his 50 plus points haul.

“Thunder” were heavily outscored in all four periods of play although they did enjoy some success in the fourth quarter when their trapping zone caused the Birmingham team some irritations. Their scoring was led by Linas Bajournas with 17 points, Sam Round and George Paul supported well with 15 and 14 points respectively but no other “Thunder” player was able to score in double figures although George Calvey and Kiran Virdee battled hard on the boards.

The game was notable in one respect with Jacob Round making his junior men’s debut at the tender age of 13. He actually scored a point when he converting a free throw.

No problems for Junior Women

Junior Women’s Midlands South West Conference

Sporting Club Albion 18 – 74 Northants “Lightning”

The Northants junior women completed a routine win over an enthusiastic but inexperienced Sporting Club Albion team. The home team scored just one basket in the first period of play and by half time “Lightning” had built up an unassailable lead at 38-6. Coach Stacey Shakespeare was able to rotate her players freely and despite a slight improvement from “Albion” in the second half five of her players scored in double figures led by Lauren Brookes with 21 points. Rio Blessyn supported well with 16 points, Tara Hings contributed 13 and both Lois Bain and Hannah Nolan scored 10.

Two wins keep Cadet Men on top of the pile

Cadet Men's Midlands Conference

Northants "Thunder" 77 – 55 Sporting Club Albion

Last Saturday the Northants cadet men took on Sporting Club Albion in what was their first fixture for two weeks. This was clearly evident as "Thunder" started sluggishly by missing six easy lay ups and could only score four points in the first five minutes through Jacob Killeya; as the team failed to produce any momentum on court. It was "Albion" who had the upper hand leading 7-4 but then Rhys Hill scored six back to back points to keep "Thunder" in contention but an "Albion" three point buzzer beater gave the visitors a 14-10 lead at the end of the period.

Coach Rob Crump encouraged his team to increase their defensive intensity and capitalise on their opponents offensive mistakes. His players responded positively and stormed into a 14-0 run to lead 24-14. "Albion" were only able to score five points in the second quarter which all came in the final three minutes. "Thunder" had been able to disrupt the Sporting Club offense by changing their defences and they were again led by Hill, who scored six consecutive points. "Thunder" finished the quarter in style by executing a sideline inbounds play for Will Grosvenor to score a lay up from a back door cut just beating the buzzer to give his team a 32-19 lead.

"Albion" opened the third quarter with back to back scores, but "Thunder" took control with some strong defence forcing numerous "Albion" turnovers. A good partnership of Jacob Killeya, Carlo Nieva and Will Grosvenor proved to be lethal by collectively scoring 16 points in "Thunder's" 20-1 run during the quarter; the period concluding with a score from Kaan Uyduran to extend the lead 56-30.

With the game practically out of reach for "Albion", "Thunder" were urged to remain focussed and finish the game with a strong performance. "Thunder" saw debutant Jack Norridge score his first points for Northants with a finish around the basket to extend the lead to 64-38 but the highlight of the quarter saw point guard Ollie Thomas produce two big blocks on an Albion big man close to basket. Despite a small run from Albion to reduce the lead to 19 points, it was too little too late as "Thunder" saw out the quarter to win 77-55.

For "Thunder" all nine players contributed to the final total led by Rhys Hill and Jacob Killeya who scored 19 and 18 points respectively and they were well supported by Will Grosvenor and Carlo Nieva who both contributed 10 points.

Bromsgrove "Bears" 36 – 127 Northants "Thunder"

Less than twenty-four hours after their win over Sporting Club "Albion", "Thunder" travelled to winless Bromsgrove "Bears" and duly completed a weekend double. The difference in quality of the two teams was evident from the first minute as good pressure defence and some quick transition offense saw "Thunder" storm into 16-0 run forcing a timeout from the home side; six points coming from Will Grosvenor. "Thunder" continued to extend their lead, demonstrating some excellent up-tempo offence which "Bears" just couldn't contain with a lot of credit going to Ollie Thomas who was able to advance the ball quickly and control the game from the back court. With Coach Crump rotating his players frequently throughout the quarter it was "Thunder's" big men who took control of the scoring as Jacob Killeya and Elliott Strausa scored eight and seven points respectfully alongside some strong defensive rebounding. It had been a dominant quarter for the Northants boys as they took a 32-9 lead into the second period.

"Bears" attempted to employ a full court press in the second quarter in an attempt to slow down the "Thunder" ball carriers came to nothing and "Thunder" were able to score on the break almost at will. Rhys Hill produced a strong scoring quarter display scoring 12 personal points helping his team to a 65-20 lead by the end of the quarter.

With The game as good as won "Thunder" Coach Rob Crump challenged his team to limit "Bears" to 40 points. Spurred by this challenge "Thunder" opened the third period of play with a 20-zero charge to take their points tally to 85. Jacob Killeya scored 12 quarter points as he dominated play close to basket. Late in the quarter Coach Crump decided to go with a much smaller five and this proved to be just as effective, as "Thunder" took the quarter 36-8 to extend their lead to 101-28.

The fourth quarter saw all the "Thunder" players enjoying plenty of court time. They won the quarter 26-8 ton run out winners by a massive 91 point margin at 127-36.

The “Thunder” scoring was led by Jacob Killea who scored 36 points well supported by Rhys Hill who scored 22 pints. Thunder had no less than five players in double figures the other three being Elliott Strausa, Will Grosvenor and Ollie Thomas.

Reflecting on a successful weekend Coach Crump expressed his pleasure that his team had produced two strong scoring performances after the two week break. His team face a tougher challenge this weekend with another double header against City of Birmingham Bulls and league contenders Coventry Trojans.

Cadette Women stride on

Under 16 Girls Midlands South Conference

Northants “Lightning” 121 – 24 Solent “Suns”

For the second time this season the Northants cadette women ‘topped the ton’ in defeating a very young and inexperienced Solent “Suns” team.

After the two teams had exchanged opening scores “Lightning” went on a 27-zero charge thanks to some aggressive defence which was far too intense for the Solent girls to cope with. With a 39-10 score line after the first quarter the game was as good as over as a contest and in the second quarter, the “Lightning” bench players’ maintained control of the game for their team winning the period 20-12 to put the final result beyond doubt.

There was no seasonal charity from “Lightning” in the third period during which time they added another 28 points whilst keeping their opponents scoreless. “Suns” managed a single basket in the final quarter while “Lightning” piled in 34 to complete a 121-24 final score and once again Coach Karen Goodrich was left to ponder how she can get some meaningful competition for her team. That competition will certainly come this Sunday when “Lightning” take on the highly talented Southend “Swifts” in the National Cup

Under 15 Boys well beaten by Nova

Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

Notts Nova 81 - 35 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants under 15 boys team travelled to Trinity School in Nottingham last Saturday to take on second placed Notts Nova. They made the return journey contemplating a 46 point defeat and nursing quite a few bruises.

From the outset Nova employed an aggressive trapping defence which caught the “Thunder” players completely unawares. They were also rather shocked by the amount of contact that was allowed by the game officials and it took them the whole of the first half to get used to the physicality of the game by which time they were trailing 11-34.

With Ayo Oluyede and Justin Trory rebounding strongly and David Nieva driving strongly to basket “Thunder” were far more competitive in the third and fourth quarters and up to the eighth minute of the fourth quarter the points count was 35-24 in favour of Nova. The re-introduction of Nova’s point guard to the game for the last three minutes of the game saw the home side go on a 12-zero run to complete the 81-35 win.

For “Thunder” David Nieva top scored with 19 points but no other “Thunder” player could manage double figures and they were left to reflect on missing no less than 15 free throws.

Cricket rules as Under 14’s beat “Saints”

Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference

Sheffield “Saints” 106 – 124 Northants “Thunder”

If you think you are seeing things when you look at this score line then be assured you aren’t as these two teams attempted to burn out the scoreboard at the All Saints sports centre. Defence went out of the window as the two teams appeared to run a lay up drill and the scores were tied at 58 all at half time.

With “Saints” main scorer in foul trouble and sitting out the third period of play “Thunder” were able to seize the initiative winning the quarter 39-20. The final stanza was a closer run affair just edged by the home side but “Thunder” held on to take the game by 18 points.

The crazy looking score line was nothing to the box scores with “Thunder’s” Jacob Round scoring a staggering 96, yes 96 points with good support coming from Zac Kitchen.

Under 14 Girls no match for “Bobcats”

Under 14 Girls Midlands South Conference

Northants “Lightning” 47 – 86 Ipswich Basketball

After picking up a couple of excellent wins against weaker sides in the Midlands South Conference the Northants under 14 girls were brought back down to earth against Ipswich Basketball last Saturday. Ipswich fielded a tall athletic team but they are the sort of team that the younger “Lightning” should be targeting as they attempt to move to the next level.

In the first quarter the Northants girls were initially taken aback by the intensity of the visitor’s full court man-to-man defence and when they were able to breach that defence they were guilty of missing some easy close to basket shots.

Trailing 25-48 at half time “Lightning” needed a good start to the third period of play but they could manage only nine points during the ten minutes of play and trailed 34-72 going into the final quarter. With Ipswich fielding some of their bench players during the last period “Lightning” were far more competitive and only lost the quarter 13-14 to go down by 47 points to 86.

For “Lightning” the hard working Holly Winterburn top scored with 14 points while Lucy Amena, Bahira Barakat and Precious Ogoji all contributed nine points

Under 13 Boys make it four wins in a row

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Mansfield “Giants” 41 – 73 Northants “Thunder”

“Thunder’s” road trip to Mansfield proved to be a very satisfying one as the team responded to the hard work done in practice by recording their fourth win in four games. After a pre-match discussion about a missing licence, all players present were eventually given the okay to play by the match officials and the game could begin. There wasn’t much to separate the teams in the first quarter until Thunder went on a late run which gave them an 18-13 lead at the end of the period.

At the start of the second quarter, Ed Wallhead scored Thunder’s first five baskets and pulled down numerous rebounds on his way to a double-double. Relentless full court defence kept the pressure on the hosts and forced a number of turnovers, which “Thunder” successfully converted into fast-break points. At the other end of the floor, the “Giants” were held to just nine points so by half-time, “Thunder” had established a 10 point lead at 32-22.

Mansfield’s talented guard caused Thunder some problems in the third quarter scoring seven of his teams 11 points, but by now the Northants boys were in full flow and were starting to dominate the game. When the fast-break wasn’t an option, Northants moved the ball extremely well to create an easy score. Eight of the “Thunder” team contributed to the 25 points they scored in the third period, which meant that they entered the final stanza with a commanding 57-33 lead.

The impressive scoring spread continued in the fourth quarter as seven players added 16 points to “Thunder’s” total and, although the defence had dropped back to half-court, Mansfield had their lowest scoring quarter managing just eight points.

Ed Wallhead finished the game with 20 points. Gio Prati and Chris Amankonah also reached double figures with 11 and 10 points respectively. Coach Round was pleased to see that all the hard work done in the recent training sessions resulted in a great all-round team performance.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 7th December

9.30am to 11am Under 12 Practice
10am to 11am Junior Ballers
11.30am Under 13 Boys versus Notts Nova
Under 15 Boys versus Leicester "Blaze"
1.30pm Under 16 Girls versus Exeter "Eagles"
Junior Women versus Gloster "Jets"
3.30pm Junior Men versus Trafford
5.30pm Senior Men versus Sefton "Stars"

Cadet Men travel to City of Birmingham II
Under 14 Boys travel to Mansfield "Giants"
Under 16 Girls Central Venue League @ Northampton School for Boys
Under 11 Central Venue League @ Northampton School for Boys

Sunday 8th December

11.30am Under 13 Boys versus Sheffield "Saints"
Under 14 Girls versus Bucks "Hornets"
1.30pm Under 16 Girls versus Southend "Swifts" (National Cup)
Cadet Men versus Coventry "Trojans"

All the games and practices on Saturday and Sunday 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