

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Nightmare third quarter costs “Thunder” dear

Men’s Division 3 (South Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 68 – 77 Hackney “White Heat”

The reasons for “Thunder’s” loss in this mid table clash, were clear for all to see. Missing 15 of 22 free throws certainly didn’t help but even worse was a third quarter which saw “Thunder” outscored by 18 points to six including a 14-zero Hackney run.

Going into that disastrous third period of play, “Thunder” were well in contention despite trailing 33-39 at half time. In the first half there had been signs that Benji Henry, Jacob Holt and Dan Turiccki were capable of scoring close to basket so there was no reason for the team not to be optimistic. Midway through the period “Thunder” had outscored their opponents 5-4 although they had missed three tree throws, then the drought set in. “White Heat” didn’t increase their defensive intensity; “Thunder” just missed a number of easy, often uncontested shots and found themselves trailing 39-57 going into the last period of play.

The Londoners had increased that lead to 21 points with just four minutes of the game remaining when Danny Barrett, up until then scoreless, suddenly found his shooting touch and drained five three-pointers. There was never any real possibility that “Thunder” could close the gap but by outscoring their opponents 29-20 in that final quarter was a clear indication of what might have been.

For “Thunder”, Barrett top scored with those 15 final period points while Holt had 14 points and Turiccki 10.

The Northants team have slipped to 7th the South Conference and will need to re-group before their first game in 2015 which is away against 3rd placed Solent “Kestrels”

“Riders” edge out gutsy “Lightning”

Women’s Division 2 (North Conference)

Loughborough Student “Riders II” 57 – 54 Northants “Lightning”

The Northants senior women slipped to a three point defeat against the Loughborough “Riders” second string despite a gutsy defensive performance in a very physical game.

“Lightning” opened with a full court zone press while the “Riders” pressure came from a man-to-man set and throughout the first period of play the two teams traded baskets and were tied at 15 all after the first period of play.

“Lightning” had been troubled by the standing height of the “Riders” but as they concentrated on eliminating this threat, “Riders” Estonian off-guard Karpova began to connect from the perimeter. For “Lightning” Stephanie Ogden and Manal Cali were a constant threat, but “Riders” edged out to an eight point lead. “Lightning” battled back and scores from rookie Ruchae Walton got the score back to 23-25 in favour of the home team at half time.

Worried about “Riders” rebounding through the seams of his team’s 3-2 zone, Coach John Collins opened the third period in a man-to-man defence but he was unhappy with the physicality of “Riders” play which left him with two injured players. “Riders” were scoring at will inside the paint particularly through their centre Jones so Collins quickly switched back to a zone defence. Despite this defensive adjustment “Riders” took an 11 point lead into the final quarter at 47-36.

It looked as if “Riders” were gong to cruise to an easy win but “Lightning” had other ideas and scores from Walton and Stephanie Ogden got the margin down to single figures and it might have been less if the ‘move of the game’ by Cali hadn’t been called a ‘travel’. “Lightning’s” tallest player Angelina Browne had been injured in an earlier clash but she returned to the game and made an immediate impact with back to back scores to reduce the margin to just three points but time ran out for “Lightning” as “Riders” held on for the win.

For “Lightning”, Ogden and Walton top scored with 14 and 13 points respectively; Cali contributed eight and Vicki Hinds seven while for “Riders”, Jones had a massive 22 points. For her pains Browne had to spend the night under observation in hospital back in Northampton.

Comfortable win for Junior Women

Junior Women’s South West Midlands Conference

Northants “Lightning” 84 – 48 Gloster “Jets”

With several players in action for the senior women’s team this 36 points win represented a very creditable performance by the Northants junior women. “Jets” were still in contention after the first period of play which “Lightning” took 24-19 but could only manage seven points in the second quarter as “Lightning” increased their defensive intensity.

Leading by 40 points to 26 at half time it was important that the Northants girls didn’t relax their efforts and thanks to some dynamic play from rookie Holly Winterburn they outscored “Jets” 26-15 to open up a 25 points lead at 66-41.

Any thoughts of a “Jets” comeback were quickly dispelled as “Lightning” once again ‘turned the defensive screw’ restricting “jets” to just two field goals in the final quarter to close out the game 84-48; a win which keeps them in contention for the end of season Play Off.s.

In the conclusive win Winterburn top scored with 23 points with good support coming from Eden Brown, Lauren Brookes, Tara Hings and Hari Owens all of whom scored in double figures

Big win for Cadet Men

Under 16 Boys Midland Conference

Northants “Thunder” 100 - 29 Ilkeston “Outlaws”

As a group the Northants under 16 boys have spent a great deal of time talking about playing the game in a particular style and against the “Outlaws” of Ilkeston last Saturday they got close to their aim. Their defence was intensity personified restricting their opponents to single figures in all four periods of play while after a hesitant start, their offence both in transition and in the half court was ruthless.

All teams need a catalyst in their ranks and Jacob Round is certainly proving to be just that with the team. On Saturday he was just one assist off a triple double scoring 33 personal points, hauling down 12 rebounds and dishing out nine assists but nine other “Thunder” players contributed to the final total led by Hayden Sayers and Ayo Oluyede with 15 and 13 points respectively. Coach John Collins was quick to praise the defensive input of Justin Trory and the recent improvement of Jake Naylor.

Under 15 Boys stay unbeaten

Under 15 Boys Midlands South West Conference

Northants “Thunder” 108 - 55 Bracknell “Cobras”

Coach Grahame Yates, ‘went big’ with his starting five and the tactic worked superbly as “Thunder” took the first quarter 34-7. “Cobras” could manage just one field goal while “Thunder” had seven scorers led by Jacob Round with 16 points and Ntumba looking especially impressive as he dominated the rebounds and scored six points.

The second quarter saw the “Thunder” defence go to sleep as Bracknell fought back. Coach Yates continued to rotate his bench, and Ainsley Reynolds responded well with a couple of drives to the hoop to score a quick four points. By the end of the period all eleven “Thunder” players were on the scoreboard, but the home side only won quarter 21-20 being outscored 7-20 over the last five minutes.

It was business as usual in the third quarter which “Thunder” romped 35-10 to extend their lead to 90-37 and put the final result beyond doubt. The “Thunder” ‘bigs’ were dominating in the rebound department which allowed and Tyler Mutemasango Laurence Williams to control the play.

In the final period of play saw Coach Yates give all his players ample court time and they didn’t disappoint with Toby Oxford and Ed Wallhead both take their points tally into double figures. All eleven “Thunder” players contributed to the 53 points victory which sees the team sitting proudly on top of the Midland Conference table with a perfect played eight won eight record going into the Christmas break,

Another win for Under 14 Boys

Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants Thunder 85 – 61 City of Birmingham

Going into the clash between “Thunder” and City of Birmingham, both teams had only lost one game so far this season which made this was an important game in terms of league places. Coach Round was unavailable for the majority of the game due to a family commitment, but his absence didn’t seem to affect the team. Inspired by Coach Yates’s pre-game speech, Thunder took an early lead; however, 12 unanswered points from City of Birmingham gave the visitors a slender 16-15 lead at the end of the first quarter.

“Thunder” fell further behind when the game re-started, but then found their true form. Strong drives to the basket from Ed Wallhead and solid team defence resulted in Thunder going on a 17-4 run which gave them back the lead; a lead that they would not relinquish for the remainder of the game. By half-time, “Thunder” had opened up a seven point gap and this was extended in the third period thanks to Josh Lloyd, who was on his way to a personal total of 21 points.

Coach Round eventually turned up to see his team leading 65-49 going into the final quarter. Some impressive drives from Chris Amankonah and great ball movement to find the open shot stretched the gap between the two teams by another eight points and the game ended with “Thunder” winning by a 24 point margin at 85 to 61.

Throughout the game, City of Birmingham had struggled to cope with Lloyd, Amankonah and Wallhead, sending them to the charity stripe no less than 30 times and between them they hit almost 60% of their free throws. Wallhead led all scorers with 33 points and Amankonah made it three players reaching double figures with his 13 points. Whilst there are still some areas for improvements, the Northants boys thoroughly deserved their victory and now have a very realistic chance of securing a play-off spot when the league games resume after the Christmas break.

Below strength Under 14 Girls see off “Riders”

Under 14 Girls Midland South Conference

Northants “Lightning” 45 – 15 Leicester “Riders”

Playing without the services of their two leading scorers against a team with two very tall players this represented an excellent performance for the Northants under 14 girls. Stacey Shakespeare was able to ‘blood’ a number of her young players some of whom were playing in the first national league game.

Both teams found scoring extremely difficult in the first quarter which “Lightning” edged 8-2. “Lightning” continued to lay good defence in the second period restricting “Riders” to just six points while scoring 20 themselves. There was no way back for the Leicester girls as “Lightning” ran out comfortable winners by 45 points to 15 to retain their unbeaten record and top spot in the Midlands South Conference.

In the 30 points win over “Riders”, Bahira Barakat was “Lightning’s” court leader and top scored with 14 points well supported by Akilah Chambers with 11 points while Odera Onwumechilli and Tia Dunrod-Allen also did well.

Game under 13 Boys go down to Nova

Under 13 Boys Midland Conference

Northants “Thunder” 99 – 50 Notts Nova

When these two teams met in the first game of the season Nova were winners by a massive eighty points. The talented Nottingham team won by almost fifty points on Saturday but there are signs that the young “Thunder” team is making improvements. In fact going into the final period of play “Thunder” were within thirty points of their opponents but they rather ran out of steam in the fourth quarter which Nova won by 33 points to 12.

On a number of occasions “Thunder” played excellent defence and forced Nova to put up poor shots but Nova’s physical superiority and standing height allowed them to claim offensive rebounds and score with ‘put backs’.

For “Thunder”, Ashley Kitchen with 15 points had an excellent game while Oliver Dominique and Jude Carmichael supported well with 13 and 12 points respectively.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 20th^h December

No "Ballers" sessions or home games

Junior Women travel to Gloster "Jets"

Cadet Men travel to Sporting Albion

Cadette Women travel to City of Birmingham

Under 13 Boys travel to Shropshire "Warriors"



The Northants Basketball Club now goes into its customary Christmas break and the players, coaches and officials of the Club would like to wish the all the parents of our players and our many fans a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous 2015

For further information contact **John Collins** on **07801 533 151**