

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Trafford get the better of below par Junior Men

Junior Men's Premier Division North

Northants "Thunder" 84 – 91 Trafford

Midway through the third period of this Premier Division North game the Northants junior men were holding a narrow 58-54 lead over Trafford who earlier in the day playing as Manchester Cadets had seen off Northants "Thunder" in their own age group. The next five minutes were to prove decisive. "Thunder" were outscored 16-6 but possibly of more significance was a foul his fifth, called against their leading scorer Matt Yates. Yates left the game with a personal total of 39 points and Northants knew that the rest of the game was going to be an uphill journey.

Trailing 64-72 going into the last period of play "Thunder" take the period 20-19 but went down 84-91 and too often during that final quarter much of their play was based on the efforts of individuals rather than a team effort. The loss sees "Thunder" slip down the Premier Division North table and a Play Off place will only be theirs if they record wins against teams with superior records.

Earlier in the season "Thunder" had seen off Trafford on their own court by 20 plus points but from the outset last Saturday it was obvious that this was going to be a much closer run affair. In a foul punctuated game "Thunder" edged the first quarter 23-16 but Trafford showed they weren't just on court to make up the number as they stormed back to take the second period of play 24-22.

"Thunder" extended their 45-40 half time advantage in the third quarter before losing Yates and surrendering the lead. They will look back on a number of reasons for losing the contest but Coach Rob Eddon was hugely disappointed that his team had missed no less than 24 of the 40 free throws they had been awarded.

In the seven point setback Yates top scored with 39 points with Lewis Mooney and Luke Lewis supporting with 13 and 12 points respectively.

"Saints" dump "Thunder" out of the Cup

Sure Shot National Cup 1/4 final

Sheffield "Saints" 75 - 68 Northants "Thunder"

Less than twenty-four hours after their loss to Trafford the Northants boys were back on court in Sheffield to take on "Saints" in a Sure Shot National Cup quarter final tie. In a league clash earlier in the season "Saints" had prevailed by just four points and another close game was expected and so it proved.

The first quarter was a see-saw affair with neither team able to gain a significant advantage. The period ended with the scores tied at 22 points all with "Thunder" scoring freely against "Saints" pressure defence while at the other end they were having problems containing the Sheffield big men as they scored with a number of 'put backs'.

With Matt Yates causing the "Saints" defence a number of problems "Thunder" were able to open up a five point lead midway through the second quarter. They were then hit by a 23-5 "Saints" run with the Sheffield off guard Frost hitting a trio of three-pointers against "Thunder's" zone defence.

With his team trailing 50-37 at half time "Thunder" coach Rob Eddon switched his team to a man-to-man defence and this had the immediate effect with "Saints" struggling to score. They managed just eight points in the third period of play as "Thunder" closed the gap to eight points at 58-53 and it was very much 'game on'.

"Thunder" continued looked to be the more confident team in the final quarter but three pieces of action were to prove decisive. First, "Thunder" missed a breakaway lay up, then they failed to score from three successive 'put back' shots and finally turned the ball over close to the "Saints" basket and followed this by committing a foul which sent "Saints" to the free throw line. "Thunders'" only hope now was to send the Sheffield players to the free throw line in the hope they would miss the resulting free throws but in the event the Saints" guard Skaines converted all four of his free throws leading his team to a seven points win.

In the 75-68 reverse Matt Yates led the “Thunder” scoring with 31 points converting 18 of 22 shots from the free throw line. Luke Lewis had 15 points and Lewis Mooney 10 points but no other “Thunder” player could get into double figures”

Second half defensive effort sees Junior Women home

Junior Women’s Midlands South-West Conference

Northants “Lightning” 59 – 43 Bucks “Hornets”

An end of season Play Off place moved a little closer for the Northants Under 18 girls after this 16 point win over local rivals Bucks “Hornets”. When the two teams clashed in Aylesbury before Christmas “Lightning” triumphed by just five points so a close game was expected and so it proved.

“Lightning” looked very lethargic at the start of the game and the visitors were able to take an early lead. Seven points from Steph Ogden saw the initiative swing to the home side and by the end of the first quarter they had eased ahead by 14 points to 13.

“Hornets” responded positively in the second quarter draining four three-pointers with the “Lightning” defenders unable to exert any kind of pressure on the shot. Coach Stacey Shakespeare called a time out and switched her team to a trapping zone defence and an 11-3 run helped her team to take the period 17-14 so opening up a narrow 31-27 half time lead.

Throughout the final two periods of play “Lightning” struggled to score freely but some magnificent team defence and 11 points from Izzy Johns took them to victory by a convincing 16 points. Johns led the “Lightning” scoring with 13 personal points a total matched by Ogden while Lois Bain scored 8 points and hauled down as many rebounds.

Cadet Men outclassed by “Magic”

Cadet Men’s Premier Division North

Northants “Thunder” 39 – 94 Manchester “Magic”

On a number of occasions this season the Northants cadet men have been heavily defeated but on all those occasions they have been competitive. Regrettably this wasn’t the case against a Manchester “Magic” team that has only been beaten once so far this season. The writing was on the wall from the outset with “Thunder” unable to score until the eighth minute of the game. Midway through the second period with “Magic” leading 35-7 and “Thunder” struggling to execute their offence the game was as good as over.

“Magic” were leading 48-19 at half time but with the introduction of rookie Jacob Round, “Thunder” looked far more competitive in the third period which they only lost 20-13 but the carnage returned in the final stanza which Manchester won 26-7 to take the game by a massive 55 points.

For “Thunder” only two players Pauli Laurinolli and George Paul with 20 and 12 made any significant contributions to the paltry 39 point total

Big double for “Lightning Too”

Cadette Women’s Midlands South-West Conference

“Lightning Too” moved into the Play Off places of the Midlands South-West Conference with Important wins over Bromsgrove “Bears” and Bristol “Storm”.

Bromsgrove “Bears” 42 – 95 Northants “Lightning Too”

Against Bromsgrove “Bears” the Northants girls looked confident from the tip off as they stormed out with a 15-3 run in the first two minutes of the game with a number of steals from Stephanie Ogden which she converted into easy scores. By the end of the first period Lightning Too” had opened up a 24-9 lead and were looking set for the win

In an attempt to stop the driving play of Ogden “Bears” switched to a zone to stop the penetration and this gave numerous shooting opportunities for “Lightning’s” Amy Boot, Lauren Brookes and Hannah Nolan and they didn’t disappoint, all three knocking down big shots from the perimeter helping their team to a 47-22 half time lead.

In the third quarter Coach Stacey Shakespeare switched her team to a trapping zone defence and this had the effect of putting even more pressure on the Bromsgrove offence. The aggressive defence led to a number of steals and easy scores for the Northants girls and when shots were missed Rio Blessyn, Amber Leiba and Tara Hings were on hand to rebound and score with put backs. "Lightning Too" outscored their opponents 23-8 in that third period and at 70-30 it was as good as 'game over'.

To their credit "Lightning Too" didn't sit back on their lead and took the fourth period 25-12 to record an overwhelming 53 point win in which all seven players contributed to the scoring led by Ogden, Brookes and Boot with 25, 21 and 20 points respectively. Excellent support came from Nolan who scored 14 points and Blessyn who netted 10 points

Northants "Lightning Too" 54 – 40 Bristol "Storm"

Less than 24 hours after their blowout against Bromsgrove "Lightning Too" were back on court against Bristol "Storm" and this proved to be a much tighter affair. "Storm" proved to be very determined opposition and actually led 32-30 at half time.

Throughout the first two periods of play the Northants girls had struggled to function efficiently on offence so Coach Stacey Shakespeare's emphasis at half time was tough defence. Her players responded superbly restricting "Storm" to a total of just eight points in the third and fourth quarters whilst scoring 24 themselves and taking the game by 54 points to 40.

In the low scoring game only two "Lightning Too" players were able to score in double figures Steph Ogden leading the way with a 21 point total while Hannah Nola had 10 points.

Under 15 Girls pick up another road win

Gloster "Jets" 47 – 62 Northants "Lightning"

At the start of the season the Northants under 15 girls beat "Jets" 65-58 so to win on the road by a bigger margin looks on the face of it, to be an excellent achievement. "Lightning" coach Karen Goodrich however, felt that her team could and should have won by an even bigger margin and was disappointed that they couldn't have put together a more consistent performance. On the other hand she was delighted that after back-to-back wins on the road kept her team in contention for the end of season Play Offs.

Saturday's game was really won and lost in the first quarter with "Lightning" charging out to a 24-10 lead thanks to some aggressive man to man defence. For the second quarter Goodrich switched to the zone defence which had been so successful against Bromsgrove the previous week but with less pressure "Jets" looked far more comfortable and were able to convert from the perimeter and the period was tied 14 points all.

"Lightning" came out for the third period in determined mood and put on a superb defensive performance restricting their opponents to just seven points. Unfortunately, they couldn't match this defensive effort at the offensive end where they were guilty of forcing shots. They managed just 12 points so extending their lead to 51-31 going into the last ten minutes of play. With the game lost "Jets" were able to relax and they actually outscored "Lightning" 16-12 in the final quarter but for the Northants girls it was a case of 'job done' as they occupy second place in the Midlands South West Conference table.

In the 15 point win the "Lightning" scoring was led by Charlotte Berridge who totalled 17 points with Srah Round contributing 13 points. Lauren Milne and Ruchae Walton both scored 10 points Milne recording a double-double with 13 rebounds.

Last quarter nightmare is fatal for Under 15 Boys dear

Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants "Thunder" 47 - 53 City of Birmingham

Going into this the fourth quarter of the Midlands Conference game "Thunder" held a 44 points to 42 lead over City of Birmingham a team they had lost to by 21 points earlier in the season. The tension in both teams was apparent at the start of the final period with neither team able to score for five minutes. C.O.B. had resorted to a 3-2 zone defence and this had the effect of containing "Thunder's" big men and the team was forced to resort to long range shooting. This proved to be less than effective as Birmingham critically won the period 11-2 to take the game 53-47

Earlier in the contest “Thunder” showed just how much they have improved since the start of the season as they coped with C.O.B.’s pressure defence with great composure. After the first quarter the Northants boys had shown how competitive they were going to be despite trailing 15-16. The second quarter started in the best possible way for “Thunder” with Ollie Thomas fouled whilst making a long range shot and with Jacob Killeya rebounding strongly at both ends of the court they took the period 17-13 to take a 32-29 half time lead.

Needing a strong start to the third quarter “Thunder” were rocked by an 8-zero Birmingham charge as the visitors regained the lead at 37-32. Coach Rob Crump took a time out in attempt to restore concentration and his team responded superbly as his team eased ahead 44-42 by the end of the period. Then came that fourth quarter ‘freeze out’ and the knowledge of a much improved performance wasn’t enough to dispel the feeling of frustration and disappointment in the “Thunder” camp.

The “Thunder” scoring was led by Carlo Nieva with 16 points with important contributions coming from Josh Arimoro, Jacob Killeya, Jacob Round and Ollie THomas

Big win for Under 14 Girls over a big Ipswich team

Under 14 Girls Midlands South Conference

Northants “Lightning” 73 – 63 Ipswich “Bobcats”

The Northants under 15 girls moved into a Play Off place after a ten point win over a much bigger and physically stronger Ipswich “Bobcats” team. The win was very much based on the points scoring of the more experienced Northants players but Coach Karen Goodrich was particularly pleased with the efforts of her bench players who worked tirelessly on defence.

In the first two periods of play “Lightning” looked to be the most efficient team both on offence and defence and by half time they moved ahead by 50 points to 32. That lead had been extended to 65-40 midway through the third quarter but for some reason “Lightning” relaxed their efforts and found themselves outscored 8-zero. The county girls were unable to get back to their earlier standards in the fourth quarter which “Bobcats” took 15-8 and although the final result was never really in doubt it was a disappointing end to the game for the team.

For “Lightning” Ruchae Walton had another dominant game with 25 points and 15 rebounds and she received good support from Caitlin Stewart and Sarah Round who both scored 13 points while Abbi Hobbs contributed 8 points

Under 13 Girls burnt up by “Fire”

East of England Under 13 Girls League

Northants “Lightning” 37 -127 Brentwood “Fire”

Against a much more experienced Brentwood “Fire” team the Northants under 13 girls found themselves on the end of a big beating which will test their resilience and powers of recovery. “Fire” pressed for the entire game and continued to run in lay ups making no effort to practice their half court offence.

“Lightning” were overwhelmed in all four periods of play but the girls never gave up and tried their very best to the end of the game. This character and determination was particularly shown by Georgia Collins, Ellie Soloman and Holly Winterburn.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 19th January

11.30am	Under 14 Girls versus Southend "Swifts" Under 13 Boys versus Reading "Rockets"
1.30pm	Under 15 Boys versus Birmingham "Bulls"
3.30pm	Senior Men versus Leicester "Warriors II"

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

Junior Men travel to Sheffield "Saints"
Junior Women travel to Reading "Rockets"
Cadet Men travel to Wellingborough to play Northamptonshire "Titans"

Sunday 20th January

Junior Women's travel to Sevenoaks "Suns" (Sure Shot National Cup ¼ Final)