

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Last week Jacob Round one of four siblings playing for the Northants Basketball Club had major surgery for a burst appendix and the ensuing peritonitis. All the game played by the Club on Saturday were dedicated to Jacob in the hope of a full and speedy recovery. Before their tip offs all the teams playing at the Basketball Centre were photographed in front of a "Get Well" poster.

The Club's players responded magnificently with seven wins from the nine games played.

Yates the key to Junior Men's victory

Junior Men's Premier Division North

Northants "Thunder" 93 – 78 Sefton "Stars"

Another virtuoso performance from guard Matt Yates saw the Northants junior men to victory over Sefton "Stars" in a niggling, foul-punctuated game. Yates had a personal haul of 40 points accumulated through a combination of powerful drives to basket, perimeter shooting and even a number of 'put backs'. Yates received good scoring support from Linas Bajorunas, Paul Laurinolli, and Lewis Moody who all scored 10 points plus the defensive rebounding efforts of Bajorunas and Kamisi Fawehinmi.

The first half was pretty dour affair with both teams struggling for any kind of fluency after last weekend's enforced snow break. Sefton edged the first quarter 17-15 but "Thunder" took control of the second period of play and inspired by 12 points from Yates took the quarter 24-19 to lead 39-36 at half time.

A large enthusiastic crowd anticipated a "Thunder" charge in the third quarter but a determined Sefton team had other ideas as the two teams traded basket for basket. The decisive period of the period came when rookie Laurinolli took the contest by the scruff of the neck scoring from a fast break, then a put back before making a steal. "Thunder" edged the quarter 21-19 and in the final stanza completed the job as a number of "Stars" players fouled out of the game. Sefton were outscored 33-23 with Yates pouring in 18 personal points leading his team to a hard-earned 93-78 win that just about keeps his team's Play Off hopes alive.

Junior Women calm the "Storm" and tame the "Pumas"

Junior Women's Midlands South-West Conference

Northants "Lightning" 71 -43 Bristol "Storm"
Chiltern "Pumas" 23 – 86 Northants "Lightning"

The Northants junior women stormed into second place in the Midlands South-West Conference after a brace of wins last weekend. On Saturday against a tall Bristol side it was the "Lightning" 'biggs' who dominated the early exchanges with Lois Bain, Emma Goulding and Chelsey Hallam all doing good work close to basket. This enabled "Lightning" to take the first period of play 18-8 then a superb defensive effort in the second quarter restricted "Storm" to just four points giving them a 37-12 half time lead.

In the third and quarter it was the "Lightning" guard Izzy Johns who caught the eye as "Lightning" extended their lead to 54-22 but they were guilty of rather relaxing their efforts during the last ten minutes of play which they lost 17-21 so winning the contest by 71 points to 43.

In the 28 point victory Johns Led all scorers with 18 points with Hallam and Goulding both scoring in double figures.

Less than 24 hours after the win over Bristol "Lightning" were back on court against an inexperienced Chiltern "Pumas" team. Unavailability of some older players meant that "Lightning" themselves were forced to field some under 15 players and all contributed to an excellent all-round team performance which ended in a very comfortable win for the Northants girls.

"Pumas were restricted to single figure in all four periods of play while the "Lightning" guards, Charlotte Berridge, Izzy Johns and Steph Ogden scored freely at the end of numerous fast breaks. When they did miss Chelsey Hallam and Lauren Milne were on hand to convert 'put backs' and all five of these players scored in double figures with all the other "Lightning" players getting on the score sheet.

No trouble for “Lightning Too” but blank weekend for Under 15 Girls

Cadette Women’s Midland, South-West Conference Gloster “Jets” 24 – 72 Northants “Lightning Too”

The Northants cadette women travelled to Gloucester for this Midland South-West Conference game with just seven players and dully recorded a convincing win which moves them into the fourth place in the Conference table.

“Lightning Too” took the first quarter 24-11 but then Coach Stacey Shakespeare asked her players from a supreme defensive effort and they responded magnificently. In the next twenty minutes of play the Northants girls restricted “Jets” to just three points while scoring 40 themselves. With a 64-14 score line going into the last period of play “Lightning Too” could be forgiven for easing off a little and this allowed “Jets” to edge the fourth quarter 10-8 but the final result was never in doubt.

In the 48 point win all seven Northants players scored led by Amy Boot with 17 points with good support coming from Hannah Nolan and Steph Ogden with 15 and 14 points respectively while Lauren Brookes and Tara Hings contributed 10 points apiece.

Northants “Lightning (Postponed) Nottingham Wildcats”

There was disappointment for the Northants under 15 girls team with Nottingham “Wildcats” unable to fulfil the Conference fixture because of a National Cup game which had been called off the previous weekend

Notts Nova record an impressive double

Brave Cadet Men go down to Nova

Cadet Men’s Premier Division North Northants “Thunder” 68 – 74 Notts Nova

These two teams have met on two occasions already this season in Premier Division and Cup games with the Nottingham based team winning by 20 plus points on both occasions but last Saturday’s game was a very different affair. Possibly Nova went into the game in complacent mood or possibly “Thunder” raised their game as a tribute to young Jacob Round. Whatever the reason it was obvious from the start that this wasn’t going to be another Nova blowout.

“Thunder” made a dream start playing some hard-nosed defence and scoring freely from fast break offences converted by Pauli Laurinolli and excellent perimeter shooting from George Paul as the Northants boys jumped out to a 14-zero lead to the amazement of their supporters. Nova recovered to close the gap to 18-10 by the end of the first period but it was clear that this was going to be a close run affair.

The “Thunder” impetus was lost during the second period of play which the visitors took 22-13 to lead 32-31 at half time. It was very much make or break for “Thunder” and they responded superbly winning the third quarter 23-14 to open up an eight point lead and raise hopes of an unlikely win against a team lying in second place in the Premier Division North table.

Nova mounted a massive effort in the final quarter but “Thunder” still led 62-61 with less than three minutes to play. By now fatigue was playing a major part in the proceedings and a series of errors allowed Nova to score eight answered points and take the lead at 69-62. Laurinolli closed the gap with two free throws and a coast-to-coast lay up but now “Thunder” were forced to foul and send their opponents to the free throw line in the hope they would miss. In the event Nova didn’t oblige as they held on for a 74-68 win.

In the six point defeat Laurinolli top scored with 31 points with excellent support coming from George Paul and Josh Round who scored 15 and 13 points respectively both these players also pulling down double figure rebounds. Coach John Collins was disappointed that his team hadn’t been able to hold on for a win but was very proud of his team’s efforts and highlighted the contribution of Karan Virdee who scored seven points and recorded a massive 15 rebounds.

Much improved Under 14 Boys still lose

Under 14 Boys Midland Conference

Northants "Thunder" 59 – 85 Notts Nova

Earlier in the season the Northants "Thunder" had been hammered 98-35 by a talented Notts Nova team so this 26 point defeat represented a massive improvement. For long periods of the game "Thunder" were able to keep in touch with Nova but they were guilty of losing concentration allowing their opponents to go on crucial scoring runs. Nova outscored "Thunder" in all four periods of play but not significantly and there were many positives to take from the game.

For "Thunder", David Nieva scored 30 points while Ayo Oluyede rebounded superbly and chipped in with 9 points while Hayden Sayers contributed 8 points

Pressure defence does it for Under 15 Boys

Under 15 Boys Midland Conference

Northants "Thunder" 98 – 68 Coventry "Trojans"

Northants Thunder faced play-off rivals Coventry Trojans with both teams are attempting to secure the highest possible seeding in the Midlands Conference. When the two teams met earlier in the season the game was a close run thing until "Thunder" were able to mount a late charge to record a 22 point win.

The first quarter was a close encounter with "Thunder" holding a small lead throughout, but finding it difficult to stop a tall "Trojans" team scoring from a number of 'put backs'. "Thunder" edged the period 25-22 thanks to ten points from Ed Hall but there was concern that both Josh Arimoro and Jacob Killeya had picked up consecutive fouls.

The second period of play saw "Thunder" changing their defensive tactics resorting to a 2-3 zone which was extended up the floor after a score. This allowed the home side to go on a 9-2 run midway through the quarter to extend their lead to 41-34 thanks to scores Carlo Nieva, Kaan Uyduran and Josh Arimoro. "Trojans" responded positively closing the gap to just four points at 44-40 at half time and it was well and truly game on.

"Thunder" came out for the third quarter with a much more aggressive mind-set with Will Grosvenor adding massive energy to his team's zone press defence. His efforts forced a number of turn-overs which sparked a 15-2 to give his team a 63-47 lead. By now some of the Coventry players were getting a little frustrated resulting in a plethora of petty fouls which saw some of their key players fouling out of the game. The impressive "Thunder" took the quarter by 25 points to nine to extend their lead to 69-49 with victory seemingly secured.

"Trojans" showed they weren't about to submit coming up with a spirited 7-zero run but without a recognised ball handler they found it difficult to advance the ball up court. "Thunder" were once again able to capitalise on this making a number of steals leading to easy scores. The home side closed the game with a 12-4 run to record a convincing 98-68 win with Ed Hal and Carlo Nieva both scoring 22 points. Good support came from Josh Arimoro, Jacob Killeya and David Nieva with 11 points apiece while the all-action Will Grosvenor scored nine but Coach Crump pointed out that this was a win firmly based on the efforts of all twelve of his players.

Big win for Under 14 Girls in the Capital

Under 14 Girls Midlands South Conference

NASSA 39 - 74 Northants "Lightning"

The Northants under 14 girls travelled to the Olympic Park last Saturday and returned after recording what looked to be a routine win over NASSA. Coach Karen Goodrich was quick to emphasise that the win had been far from easy against a very athletic NASSA team. The win was very much based on the efforts of the three most experienced "Lightning" players although Goodrich was delighted that nine of her players got onto the score sheet.

“Lightning” ‘hit the court running’ and in the first quarter outscoring their opponents 22-7 but the Londoners re-grouped in the second period of play which they edged 8-7. It was business as usual after the half time break as “Lightning” cruised to a 35 points win which keeps them well and truly in contention for an end of season Play Off place but there are some key games coming up over the next few weeks.

In Saturday’s victory Caitlin Stewart and Rucahae Walton both recorded double doubles, Walton pouring in 20 points and Stewart 19. Sarah Round was obviously not affected by her younger brother’s illness or perhaps she was inspired, as she scored 15 points, made five steals and dished out the same number of assists.

Under 13 Boys earn local bragging rights over “Trojans”

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder”

75 -45

Northamptonshire “Trojans”

When these two teams met earlier in the season “Thunder” recorded a convincing 35 point win but without the services of the influential Jacob Round there was real concern that the result might be reversed. “Thunder” opened the game in very determined defensive mood with a massive effort from all five players on court. Such were their efforts that “Titans” were restricted to just four points but the Northants boys also struggled to score themselves and by the end of the first quarter only held a 10-4 lead.

The “Thunder” scoring problems continued at the start of the second quarter as they went over five minutes without recording a score and this allowed “Titans” to mount a comeback and they were able to take a 14-12 lead. “Thunder” coach, Mike Round called what turned out to be a game changing time-out. He demanded that his players raised the tempo of their game to initiate more fast-break offences and this had the desired effect with Laurence Williams scoring 10 points at the end of the period to give his team a 26-20 half-time lead.

Williams continued to push the ball in the third quarter on his way to a 32 point haul and with Ed Wallhead, Zak Kitchen and Josh Hannay ripping down numerous rebounds, Thunder began to pull away. They won the third quarter 22-10 and the fourth 27-15 to take the game by 75 points to 45 and so earn the local bragging rights. Coach Round was pleased with the team effort highlighted by the fact that 9 of the 10 players made it onto the score sheet, which included a 14 point haul from Jared Ryan.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Moulton beaten by Derby’s height

British Colleges Men’s Midlands Elite League

Derby College

97 – 76

Moulton College ‘A’

In the first game of the season the Moulton men’s team lost by a single point to Derby College. Last Wednesday the college travelled to Derby for the reverse fixture in confident mood and full of hope that they could record their second win of the season. That confidence was certainly affected when they saw that the 6 feet 10 inch Kingsley Okorah was in the Derby line up. Kingsley was a star for England in the 2011 European Qualification Tournament and has just returned from a scholarship in America.

It would be too easy to claim that Okorah’s presence was the key to Derby’s win but his 24 points and 16 rebounds plus his defensive intimidation were significant.

The game started at a high tempo with Moulton showing themselves able to run with their opponents with Matt Yates creating particular problems for the Derby defence. For their part Derby were shooting well from the perimeter and when they missed Okorah was usually on hand to score with put backs. The home side edged the first quarter 30-24 and this was extended by a further six points to 57-45 at half time.

During the first two periods of play the Derby coach had tried all manner of defences to contain Yates but the Moulton guard was still proving to be handful in the third quarter which was tied at 15 all and Moulton felt they were still in with a realistic chance of taking the contest. In the event they were guilty of some very poor passing at the start of the final quarter allowing easy Derby scores. This and increasing fatigue allowed Derby to win by a margin which was rather flattering to them.

In the 21 point set back Matt Yates led the Moulton scoring with an impressive 37 point haul. Good support came from Byron Wing and Linas Bajorunas who scored 19 and 10 points respectively.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 2nd February

11-30am	Under 13 Girls versus Norfolk "Incini" Under 13 Boys versus Bucks "Hornets"
1-30pm	Cadette Women versus Nottingham "Wildcats" Under 15 Girls versus to Solent "Suns"
3-30pm	Senior Men versus Bromsgrove "Bears"

These five 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 and Cadet Men travel to Cheshire "Jets"
Under 15 Boys travel to Derby "Trailblazers"

Sunday 3rd February

Junior Women travel to Sevenoaks "Suns" (Sure Shot National Cup semi final)
Under 13 Boys travel to Reading "Rockets"