

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

“Thunder” lose to “Ducks” after a nightmare last three minutes

National League Division 3

(South Conference)

Northants “Thunder”

74 – 84

Brunel University “Ducks”

On the face of it a ten point defeat to a team in contention for a play off place looks to be a reasonable result but the final score does not tell the full story of a dramatic finish to last Saturday’s Division 3 clash between Thunder and the Duck of Brunel University.

Leading 42-41 at half time, Ducks extended their advantage to 63-58 going into the last quarter. This lead was extended to 12 points thanks to a 7-zero start to the period but then Thunder woke up to the task at hand. They launched a 12-zero barrage on the Middlesex based team to tie the game up a 70 points all with three minutes to play and it looked possible that Thunder might claim a major scalp. In the event it wasn’t to be as Ducks scored 14 points in those last three minutes while Thunder could manage just two baskets from Jacob Holt.

Stand in coach Johnny Yates commented that he was disappointed that the team had been unable to capitalise on their promising position late in the game but recognised that the team now has to concentrate on this weekend’s fixture against the team just below them in the table, Barking Abbey Crusaders.

In Saturday’s ten point loss the games leading scorers were Henrys; for Thunder, Benji netted 18 points while the Ducks variety scored 23. Also featuring in the scoring for Thunder were Jacob Holt and Devon Adams who both contributed 12 points.

Junior Men go down again despite storming comeback

Junior Men’s East Midlands Development League

Mansfield “Giants”

89 – 85

Northants “Thunder”

The Thunder junior men slipped to their third successive defeat when they narrowly lost on the road, to a strong Mansfield Giants outfit. This was the first of three games between the two teams with both of them going in search of a play off spot.

It was the home side that seized the initiative at the start of the game jumping out to a 12-5 lead and exploiting their back court height advantage. This height advantage also cost Thunder dear in the rebounding stakes with Giants able to secure a number of offensive rebounds and score with put backs and establishing a 25-17 lead by the end of the first quarter.

In an attempt to resolve the rebounding problem Coach Rob Crump switched his team to a zone defence at the start of the second period of play but despite a brace of three-pointers from Carlo Nieva they struggled on offence. The Giants back court duo of Allan and Burton were controlling the game so Crump decided to resort to a ‘box and 1’ defence and Ollie Thomas was able to do a good job containing Allan but despite this Giants comfortably won the second period of play 22-10 to take a commanding 47-27 half time lead.

A heavy defeat looked to be on the cards but thanks to some smart switching defence they were able to confuse the Giants players. When Thunder extended their defence up the floor they were able to force turn overs and this combined with a barrage of seven three-pointers saw the Northants boys outscore Giants 33-17 to close the gap to just three points at 60-63 going into the final quarter.

With everything to play for another three-pointer from Nieva gave Thunder hope but an 8-zero Giants run inspired by their forward Nathan Halstead saw the initiative slip back to the home side at 73-63. Once again Thunder were able to re-group and respond as they reduced the deficit to just five points but with time running out they were forced to foul to stop the clock and send Mansfield to the free throw line. The Giants players were able to hold their nerve and hold on for the win despite the best efforts of the Thunder players

In the narrow defeat Thunder were led in scoring by Ollie Thomas with 27 points and he was well supported by Carlo Nieva who scored 19 points. In all Thunder hit seventeen 3 pointers in the game with thirteen coming in the second half.

Coach Crump commented “The boys demonstrated a lot of character in the second half, particularly in the third quarter. To be 20 points down at half time and to reduce the deficit to just three points was an excellent effort. As a team, we are concerned that we are yet to win in 2016 and we will look to forward to the challenge next week at home to Titans II.”

Cadet Men bounce back with a win over “Arrows” despite fourth quarter nightmare.

Under 16 Boys Midlands Development League Derbyshire “Arrows” 55 - 66 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants cadet men travelled to south Sheffield to take on Derbyshire Arrows without the services of their bigger players for various reasons. Coach Grahame Yates stressed how important it was for players to make sure they stuck to their defensive assignments and handed a key role to Jared Ryan

Thunder’s defensive urgency at the start of the game caught Arrows off guard and the Northants boys were able to post a 19-7 lead at the end of the first period of play. On the downside two players had picked up two fouls each which could well have been vital later in the game.

Recognising his team’s height advantage the Arrow’s coach went with a ‘big’ five in the second quarter but with determination and not a little bravery the Thunder players coped well with this aerial threat. Their excellent defence produced a number of turn-overs but they were guilty of failing to convert open lay ups so what might have been a comfortable half time lead was in fact 36-23 and Arrows were still ‘in the game’.

Arrows mounted a big challenge in the third quarter but yet against the Thunder players stuck to their defensive assignments none more so than Tom Myers who was marking a player several inches taller than him. As Arrows became more and more frustrated they began to commit silly fouls and with their bench players on court Thunder were able to capitalise. Ryan scoring six rapid points and five other players scoring as Thunder took the period 23-13 to extend their lead to a game winning 59-36

Having worked so hard for their lead Thunder were guilty of falling asleep in the final quarter. Arrows scored some easy baskets and suddenly felt that they might be able to turn the game around. Coach Yates took a time out and alerted his team to the fact that the game wasn’t yet over. His players responded well and despite losing the final period 7-19 took the game by 11 points at 66-55 in game where all players had enjoyed ample court time and had responded well to the game plan; except for that period at the start of the fourth quarter.

In the win that keeps Thunder in third place in the Midlands Development League, Josh Lloyd led his team’s scoring with 21 points. Ed Taylan gave excellent support with 17 points while Chris Amankonah and Jared Ryan chipped in with 11 and 10 points respectively. The team’s effort was clearly seen in the superb defensive efforts of Tom Myers.

Strong finish earns Under 14 Boys another win

Under 14 Boys Midlands Development League Northants “Thunder” 76 – 63 City of Birmingham II

Leading 42-29 at half time against the City of Birmingham second string, the Northants under 14 boys did their very best to write that famous headline, “Defeat snatched from the jaws of victory.” Having played some solid team basketball Thunder were guilty of resorting to too much one versus one and one versus five offence in the third quarter, C.O.B. took the third quarter 18-12 to narrow the gap to seven points and this was reduced to just three points at 60-57 early in the final quarter. Coach Darijus Maldutis took a time out and reminded his players that the lead had been achieved by team play not individual efforts.

Thankfully his team listened to his wise words and they close out the quarter 16-7 to take the game by a 13 point margin.

At the start of the game sparked by the efforts of Oliver Dominique and Jude Carmichael, Thunder had played moved the ball well and good floor spacing had led to easy scores with six players finding the basket.

The team's good play continued in the second quarter but easy scoring opportunities were squandered and the defensive effort lacked intensity.

The win consolidates the team's mid-table position and they have now won more games than they have lost. This weekend they face eighth placed Notts Nova with a good chance of recording another victory.

In Saturday's win Carmichael led Thunder's scoring with 24 points well supported by Dominique with 18 points with nine of the team's ten players contributing to the final total. Coach Maldutis will not be pleased by the fact that his team missed a massive 18 free throws.

“Lightning” Under 14 Girls get first win of 2016

Under 14 Girls East Midlands Development League

Northants “Lightning” 65 – 33 Oaklands “Wolves”

Without a win since the beginning of November of last year the Northants Under 14 girls went into this game against Oaklands Wolves hungry for a victory. They achieved that win with a confident team performance which will do wonders for their morale.

Coach Stacey Shakespeare asked her players for some tough defence and the girls certainly produced this in the first period of play restricting Wolves to just 3 points. The Hertfordshire team were more of a scoring threat in the second quarter which Lightning edged 12-10 to take a 24-13 half time lead.

Any chance of an Oaklands comeback was quickly dispelled at the start of the third quarter with Lightning going on a 15-2 rampage to put the final result beyond doubt. Lightning went on to win the final quarter 16-8 to secure an emphatic 65-33 win led by 34 points from Ony Onwumechili while Katie Dinnell supported well with 13 personal points.

Young mixed Northants team goes undefeated

Northants Hoopsterz Under 12 Tournament

NEBC “Titans” 1 21- 21 Northants “Storm”

**Storm also played Northampton “Vipers”, Duston “Hawks and NEBC “Titans “II”
winning all three games by wide margins**

The Northants Club played in the Hoopsterz Under 12 Mixed Tournament last Saturday and under the guidance of Coach Janis Kosnikovskis turned in a very creditable performance despite having never practiced together as a team. Coach Kosnikovsis's game plan was to play up-tempo basketball combined with strong attacking drives to basket.

Against NEBC Titans 1 this game plan was initially led by Ashley Kitchen in the first quarter and maintained in the second by Dina Kosnikovska. In contrast Titans were playing some well controlled basketball and were able to get the ball to players close to basket for easy scores which saw them ease out in front. Northants were being forced to settle for perimeter shots with limited success but a Kitchen three-pointer restored their confidence. Both teams battled hard for victory but at the final buzzer they were tied at 21 points all.

Storm played three more games winning all three comfortably. For many of the players this was their first experience of competitive basketball and they responded well and all enjoyed the joy of scoring.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 30th January

9-30am to 11am

"Ballers" Session

11-45am

Junior Men versus NEBC "Titans II"

1-45pm

Senior Men versus Barking Abbey "Crusaders"

Both these games will be played at the **Northants Basketball Centre** which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 15 Boys play in the *Hoopsterz*" Tournament at N.S.B.

Under 14 Girls travel to County Upper "Wolves"

Sunday 31st January

Cadette Girls travel to Sheffield "Hatters"

Under 14 Boys travel to Notts Nova

For further information contact John Collins on 07801 533 151