

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Last weekend seven teams from the Northants Basketball Club were in action and all seven won, a tremendous performance from players, coach and managers.

### **Lightning accelerate to decisive win**

#### **Women's Division Two (North Conference)**

**Leicester "Riders II"                      52 -72                      Northants "Lightning"**

At half time Lightning led Riders II by 40 points to 19 in this Division 2 North Conference game. During the first two periods of play Lightning had caused the home team problems with their aggressive press and some impressive fast break offences. During the half time break the Lightning coaching staff emphasised the need to maintain their up-tempo play to keep Riders under pressure. In the event the Northants team was guilty of dropping the intensity of their defence, while on offence they took bad options and stopped running. The consequence was Riders taking the third period 20-10 to get themselves back in the game at 39-50.

In the final quarter Lightning returned to the good habits of the first two with their defence restricting Risers to just 13 points while scoring 22 themselves to secure a 72-52 victory which moves them up to second in the Conference table.

In the 20 point win the Lightning scoring was led by Stephanie Ogden with 20 points while the Riders top scorer was Northamptonshire born Jordan Elliott-King with a 21 point haul. Other Lightning players to make significant points contributions were Rionan Blessyn, Esme Kinghorn and Ruchae Walton while Erin Clarke led the team well from the back court and Natasha Wesley and Tara Hinds rebounded superbly. Lightning played this game with just three senior players and Coach Karen Goodrich was quick to pay tribute to her six under-age players.

### **Three point barrage sees Thunder home against Dynamite**

#### **Junior Men's Midland Conference**

**Northants "Thunder"                      68 - 62                      Leicester "Dynamite"**

It's six weeks since the Northants junior men played their last game a heavy loss to Milton Keynes Cobras in the national cup, so they went into this game against local rivals Leicester Dynamite almost 'playing from memory. When the two teams met earlier in the season, Thunder had won by a single point so a close encounter was expected and so it proved.

After such a long lay off it wasn't surprising that both teams made a lack lustre start to the game with neither team able to take control. The two teams exchanged baskets but then Thunder jumped out to a 12-8 lead thanks to some strong close to the basket play from George Calvey. Dynamite responded with a 6-zero run of their own to take the lead 14-12 forcing a Northants timeout but the visitors were able to keep their noses in front to lead 19-16 at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter followed the pattern of the first, and then Thunder successfully tied the game up thanks to seven points from George Paul. They were then guilty of a number of sloppy turnovers which allowed Dynamite to capitalise with a 10-2 run to take a 37-31 half time lead. Coach Rob Crump was not satisfied with his team's effort and energy levels in the first half and reminded his team that this was a significant game for the team as they bid to achieve a play off place at the end of the season.

The start of the third quarter saw Josh Round inspiring his team through some strong rebounding and hustle whilst nailing five consecutive points to reduce the deficit. Thunder's match up zone was causing Dynamite some problems by limiting scores inside and forcing unsuccessful shots from the perimeter. Thunder successfully re-established their lead midway through the quarter with an 11-3 run to take the period 16-6 and jump out to a 47-43 lead.

With everything to play for in the fourth quarter it was the visitors who made the better start with a 6-2 run to recapture the lead. Thunder responded with some excellent perimeter shooting with Carlo Nieva and George Paul hitting five, three pointers to give their team a 64-57 lead with two minutes of the game remaining. Dynamite made one last surge to reduce the deficit to 64-62, but an inside score from Calvey and an acrobatic finish from Ollie Thomas sealed the game for Thunder to win 68-62.

In the six point win Thunder's scoring was led by George Paul with 23 points and he was well supported by George Calvey and Carlo Nieva who scored 15 and 11 points respectively.

Coach Crump commented "The first half reminded me why I dislike coaching the first game back after the Christmas break so much! Our performance lacked lustre, showing no urgency in our delivery; you would have thought we were 40 points down at the half. However, the team did show a positive response in the second half with some excellent outside shooting. Nevertheless, this must improve for next week when we face a tough double header on the road against Notts Nova and Loughborough Riders

### **Cadet's defence too much for "Met's"**

#### **Under 16 Boys Midland Conference**

**Northants "Thunder"                      73 – 21                      Birmingham "Met"**

With his team being inactive over four weeks Coach John Collins asked his team for a solid defensive performance against a tall and athletic Birmingham Met team. He also encouraged all his players to look for scoring options to augment the team's three top scorers Ayo Oluyede, David Nieva and Jacob Round. His team certainly delivered his first demand with a defensive performance that resembled Scrooge at Christmas and he was reasonably pleased that ten of his twelve players contributed to the 73 points final total.

"Met's" arrived at the Northants Basketball Centre with little time for a proper warm up after being delayed in motorway traffic and after a first period 29-5 blitz one or two of the Birmingham players looked as if they wished they hadn't bother to turn up at all. Thunder had forced a number of turn overs from their zone press with Jacob Round playing a pivotal roll.

The second quarter saw Met's getting their act together on defence but they were still finding it difficult to pierce the Thunder defence with the home team taking the period 15-10 to lead 44-15 at half time.

Collins' half time message was simple, "Maintain the defensive pressure" and Thunder did just that restricting their opponents to just six second half points. Thunder were unable to recapture their earlier scoring magic but still took the second half by 29 points to 6 to run out winners by 52 points with their scoring led by Round with 19. Good support came from Nieva and Hayden Sayers with 13 and 10 points respectively.

Thunder will have to be at their very best this coming Sunday when they travel to Derby to take on Trailblazers the only team to have beaten them in Conference play.

### **Titans no match for Walton and co.**

#### **Under 16 Girls Midlands South-West Conference**

**Northants "Lightning"                      100 - 56                      NEBC "Titans"**

Without the services of influential guard Sarah Round there was just a little feeling of nervousness for the Northants Cadette Women's as they went into this game against local rivals NEBC Titans. In the event they had nothing to fear as they recorded a conclusive 44 point victory with eight of Coach Karen Goodrich's team contributing to the 100 point total, including career best hauls for Esther Alake, Abbi Hobbs and Zoe Milward.

Lightning made the very best of starts with a 19-zero opening charge led by Precious Ogaji and Ruchae Walton and orchestrated by Caitlin Stewart. Lightning took the opening quarter 20-8 and extended their lead to 59-24 by half time.

To their credit Titans continued to battle throughout the third and fourth quarters with Paige Vyse looking particularly impressive but there was no way back as Lightning held on for the win.

In the convincing win which keeps Lightning top of the Midlands South West Conference, their scoring was led by Walton with 48 points. She also pulled down 10 rebounds to record an impressive double-double while Hobbs had seven rebound to go with her 18 point total. Also in impressive form for Lightning was Stewart who posted the impressive statistics of 12 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists.

### **Titans blown away by rampant Thunder**

**Under 15 Boys Midlands & East Conference**  
**NEBS "Titans"                      21 - 111                      Northants "Thunder"**

This local derby saw top against bottom and the final result was never in doubt as Thunder led by Jacob Round totally dominated the first two periods of play racing out to a 50 to 7 lead. With the rules for Play off seeding possibly dependent on points difference there was no chance of Thunder easing off and the carnage continued throughout the second half.

The Northants club has made representation the sport's governing body about the points difference rule feeling that they will be forced to run in massive scores when normally they would 'take their foot off the gas' against weaker opposition.

In the fourth quarter as Titans visibly tired, Tyler Muntemasango and Ed Taylan each scored ten points as no less than eight Thunder players contributed to a 34 point haul and the team ran out winners by 111 points to 21.

In the massive win Round scored a cool half century of points and he received good support from Tyler and Taylan with 22 and 18 points respectively.

### **Winterburn destroys "Warriors"**

**Under 14 Girls Midlands Conference**  
**Leicester "Warriors"                      42 - 83                      Northants "Lightning"**

The main emphasis for the Northants under 14 girls team was a good defensive performance and despite a much improved second half performance Warriors struggled to score points throughout the game. This was due to an excellent effort from all ten Lightning players all of whom put in a major defensive stint.

Throughout the game the Warriors struggled to contain the offensive skills of Lightning's Holly Winterburn who poured in a massive 52 points. The Lightning guard also pulled down 10 rebounds and stole the ball on 14 occasions to complete an impressive triple-double while Akilah Chambers and Bahira Barakat both scored in double figures.

With six more Conference games remaining Lightning sit proudly at the top of the Midland Conference table with an unbeaten record. This weekend they entertain local rivals N.E.B.C. Titans.

### **Second win for Under 13 Boys**

**Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference**  
**Leicester "Riders"                      58 - 67                      Northants "Thunder"**

After recording their first win of the season the previous week, the Northants under 13 boys travelled to Leicester to take on Riders in optimistic mood. Earlier in the season Thunder lost by four points to Riders and they were hopeful of reversing that result.

With both teams playing tough defence both teams found scoring difficult and after the first period of play Thunder held a narrow 13-8 lead.

Both teams were more relaxed in the second quarter and Thunder got major contributions from their substitutions who scored points and added energy on defence. Thunder were able to stretch their lead to ten points at one stage but Riders rallied strongly and the period was tied at 22 all which saw Thunder leading 35-30 at half time.

In the third quarter Thunder were able to claim a number of rebounds from missed Riders shots resulting in a number of successful fast breaks. The team also moved the ball more efficiently creating open perimeter shots. This resulted in the team taking the period 22-13 so moving ahead by 57 points to 43.

Sensing that the game was won the Thunder players were guilty of relaxing their efforts in the final quarter and this resulted Dynamite winning the period 15-10 but Thunder were able to hold on for the nine point victory.

For Thunder, Oliver Dominique top scored with 23 points with good support coming from Ashley Kitchen, Isaac Round and Connor White while four other players contributed to the final total.

So two wins 'on the trot' face a tough task this Saturday when they face Derby "Trailblazers" who have only been beaten twice so far this season.

### **THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES**

#### **Saturday 24th January**

9.30am-11am

Ballers Academy Session

10am-11am

Junior Ballers Session

11.30am

Under 14 Girls vs N.E.B.C. "Titans"

Under 13 Boys versus Derby "Trailblazers"

1.30pm

Under 14 Boys versus Shropshire "Warriors"

3.30pm

Senior Women versus Mansfield "Giants"

*These games will take place at the Northants Centre for Basketball which is based at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road*

*Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE*

Junior Men travel to Loughborough "Riders II"

#### **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February**

Senior Men travel to Middlesex Medelynes

Junior Men travel to Notts Nova II

Junior Women travel to Reading "Rockets"

Cadet Men travel to Derby "Trailblazers"

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