

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Senior Men continue on their winning ways**

**VCARS National League Division Four Midlands Conference**  
**Derby “Trailblazers III”      58 - 90      Northants “Thunder”**

After their narrow win over Bromsgrove “Bears” the previous week it was business as usual for the Northants senior men last Sunday as they beat a young Derby “Trailblazers” third string by 32 points. The win maintains the team’s unbeaten record and the Conference championship title is almost within their grasp. Against “Trailblazers III”, “Thunder” dominated from the outset and all of their players including Will Reid who scored his first ever National League points, got onto the score sheet in an excellent all-round team performance.

The “Thunder” scoring was led by Leon Henry who totalled 27 points with excellent support coming from Jonny Yates and Nick Waller who contributed 18 points apiece while Jason Tucker pulled down 10 rebounds and dished out a dozen assists.

### **Junior Men suffer the ‘slings and arrows’ of sport**

**Junior Men’s Premier Division North**  
**Northants “Thunder”      73 -54      Leeds Carnegie**

The Northants junior men went into this Premier Division North game with one thing on their minds; that was revenge for one of their worst performances of the season. They came out for the first quarter with an intensity on defence that shocked the Leeds players and thanks to the efforts of Luke Lewis, Jason Moore and skipper Matt Yates “Thunder” opened with an 11-zero run. After a time out Carnegie showed they weren’t about to ‘lie down and die’ by responding with a 13-zero run of their own midway through the period. “Thunder” were able to keep their noses in front thanks to frequent visits to the free throw line and at the end of the first period of play the home team were leading 23-18.

As the game became increasingly physical the Leeds big men found themselves in foul trouble which enabled Linas Bajorunas, Kamesi Fawehinmi, and Sam Pursey to gain rebounding superiority. Leeds were relying heavily on their guard Hurd and because of his efforts “Thunder” were only able to win the second period of play 17-16 to open up a 40-34 half time lead.

The third quarter was a dour affair punctuated by a number of fouls but “Thunder” seemed to have gained a decisive advantage when they opened up a 12 point lead but once again Leeds battled back before Luke Lewis, Sam Pusey and Josh Round scored decisive baskets to give “Thunder” a 53-43 lead going into the last ten minutes of play.

Matt Yates who hadn’t enjoyed his best days ‘at the office’ broke lose in the fourth quarter pouring in 12 personal points and Moore brought the crowd to their feet with a drive and scoop shot as “Thunder” outscored their opponents 20-11 to take a 19 point win which was rather harder than the score line suggested.

For “Thunder”, Yates top scored with 26 points while Luke Lewis put in an impressive defensive shift and scored 14 points. Other good performances came from Bajorunas and Fawehinmi who scored 9 points apiece and rebounded superbly while Coach Rob Eddon was full of praise for the defensive efforts of Jack Thomas.

**Newcastle Eagles”      75 -74      Northants “Thunder”**

With the previous evening’s win over Leeds still in their minds the Northants junior men set off for the long journey to Newcastle-upon-Tyne knowing that a win over “Eagles” would just about keep alive their slim hopes of claiming an end of season Play Off place. The journey home through blizzard conditions was a sombre affair after the team had suffered a one point loss at Tyne Metropolitan College.

The Duke of Wellington once said that, “.....battles are won and lost because of tiny incidents”; and so it proved on Sunday.

After trailing for most of the game “Thunder” had taken a 74-70 lead thanks to scores from Matt Yates and a three-pointer from Linas Bajorunas. “Eagles” responded with a score and bonus free throw from Zak Whelan to take the score to 74-73. A “Thunder” offence was repelled and “Eagles” took a time out to move the ball up court. Their out of bounds play produced a shot which missed and was rebounded by Bajorunas who made an outlet pass to Yates and then sprinted up court. Yates hit the Lithuanian with a superb pass who made the lay up only to see the score disallowed for a travel violation.

On their next offence Newcastle were contained by some excellent “Thunder” defence and forced up ‘a prayer’ which hit the rim and was rebounded on the weakside by the “Eagles” captain Horta who scored with the ‘put back’. With his team trailing by a single point Coach Rob Eddon took a time out and his team did manage to get off what would have been a game winning shot but it rimmed out.

The Northants players were not to be consoled by the knowledge that they had been involved in an excellent competitive match and the “Thunder” coaching staff were even more disappointed when video evidence clearly showed that Bajorunas had not travelled.

Earlier in the game “Eagles” had troubled the “Thunder” 3-2 zone by attacking through the high post area and had taken a 43-36 half time lead. For their part “Thunder” had found it difficult to penetrate the Newcastle 2-3 zone but had kept in contention through sheer determination. “Thunder” edged the third period of play 21-20 then when “Eagles” switched to a man-to-man defence skipper Matt Yates ran riot scoring 12 points at the start of the final quarter to get his team back into contention; then came the crucial play on which the battle was won and lost.

In the one point defeat Yates scored 33 points with Bajorunas and Luke Lewis both contributing 12 points; Bajorunas pulled down 14 rebounds and Kamesi Fawehinmi 11

### **Junior Women go four and zero against “Pumas”**

#### **Junior Women’s South Conference**

**Northants “Lightning”                      99 -21                      Chiltern “Pumas”**

Teams in the Junior Women’s South Conference play each other three times so with an earlier National Cup game this was the fourth time the two teams had met this season. Against a very young “Pumas” team “Lightning” duly made it 4 and 0 without really breaking sweat. To their credit the Chiltern girls never gave up and battled hard to the end but they were unable to score in double figures in any of the four periods of play.

For “Lightning” Izzy Johns scored 31 points including six three-pointers while Chelsey Hallam and Amy Boot contributed 23 and 19 points respectively. The win keeps the Northants girls in a solid second position in the South Conference

### **Cadet Men pick up their first win of 2013**

#### **Cadet Men’s Premier Division North**

**Northants “Thunder”                      78 -71                      Leeds Carnegie**

When the Leeds forward Evans scored back-to-back baskets at the end of the third period of play fans of the “Thunder” cadet men’s team could have been forgiven for thinking that yet again the team was about to waste another winning opportunity. Earlier “Thunder” had kept their noses in front despite struggling to contain the perimeter shooting of Leeds and their superior rebounding power but those two baskets gave Leeds a 59-57 lead and a major boost going into the last ten minutes of play.

Throughout the game “Thunder” had persisted with a 3-2 zone and had even experimented with a combination defence but with the aim of showing something different Coach John Collins matched his team up in a man-to-man defence. The idea was to switch back to a zone but suddenly his team generated more defensive energy as the two teams traded baskets so Collins persisted with the defence. Midway through the period Leeds still led 67-66 but three quick scores from Pauli Laurinolli who was playing with stitches in an eye injury, and a huge perimeter shot from Josh Round saw the initiative swing to the home side.

“Thunder” outscored their opponents 12-4 over the last five minutes of the game as they closed out the 78-71 win the team’s first of 2013.

For “Thunder”, Laurinolli top scored with 24 points while George Paul had six three-pointers in his 21 points and Josh Round had an awesome game scoring 23 points, pulling down eight rebounds and making five steals whilst being responsible for defending a leads player considerably bigger than himself.

### **Massive week for Cadette Women”**

The Northants Under 16 girls had a massive week which saw them record three important wins to move into a play Off place in the Midlands South West Conference. It was also significant that the toughest game they had was the fixture against the club’s under 15 team.

#### **Cadette Women’s Midland, South-West Conference**

**Northants “Lightning Too”**

**59 - 54**

**Northants “Lightning**

This game was played mid week and it was a delight to see 20 young ladies from the same club putting on an excellent display of competitive and keenly fought basketball . “Lightning” took an early lead thanks to some excellent shooting from Charlotte Berridge and at then end of the first quarter held a 15-14 advantage. This lead was extended to 31-28 by half time with Berridge and Sarah round looking impressive while for “Lightning Too” Amy Boot was single-handed keeping her team scoring ten personal points.

The third period of play saw a change of fortunes with “Lightning Too” increasing the intensity of their defence and forcing a number of turn-overs. They took the quarter 14-11 to tie the scores up at 42 and a large crowd waited anxiously for the deciding stanza. They weren’t disappointed as “Lightning Too” went on a 10-zero charge thanks to some excellent shooting from Laren Brookes, to establish what was to prove to be a game winning 52-42 lead.

It looked all up for “Lightning” but power forward Ruchae Walton had different ideas. After Berridge and Lauren Milne had reduced the deficit Walton went on the rampage scoring with moves close to the basket, a jump shot and a put back to get the score back to 54-57. Walton had been fouled on the last shot but she missed the ensuing free throw, Rio Blessyn hauled down the rebound and Boot launched Steph Ogden on a fast break. Ogden had taken a limited part in the game because of foul trouble but as the “Lightning” defenders rushed back she coolly pulled up and hit a decisive 12 foot jump shot.

“Lightning” coach Karen Goodrich called a time out and her team did get away a shot but it rimmed out and “Lightning Too” had taken the win by five points. The two teams left the court with a standing ovation ringing in their ears.

For “Lightning Too” Amy Boot had an outstanding game scoring 25 points with Lauren Brookes providing excellent support with 12 points while for “Lightning” Ruchae Walton scored 12 points and pulled down as many rebounds. Charlotte Berridge top scored for her team with 13 points while Lauren Milne worked tirelessly for her team

**Northants “Lightning Too”**

**110 - 41**

**Solent “Suns”**

Last weekend “Lightning Too” had the opportunity to consolidate their Conference position after their exciting win over Northants “Lightning”, with games against Solent “Suns” and Reading “Rockets”. Solent arrived at the Basketball Centre with a very young team who from the outset looked determined to cause a shock and in the first quarter they rocked a rather complacent “Lightning Too” with some confident play. The Northants girls edged the period 18-14 but midway through the second period “Suns” were still well in contention at 26-24.

At this stage coach Stacey Shakespeare switched her team to their pressing zone defence and this had an immediate effect. Under pressure from Amy Boot and Hannah Nolan, Solent began to ‘cough up’ the ball allowing “Lightning Too” to go on a 27-2 streak to lead 53-26 at half time

The third and fourth quarters saw more of the same with the “Lightning Too” ‘Bigs’, Rio Blessyn, Tara Hings and Amber Leiba scoring with a number of put backs. The Northants girls won the second half 57-10 against a shell-shocked Solent team to run out winners by 110 points to 41, Amy Boot once again leading the team’s scoring with 27 points. Good support came from Lauren Brookes and Steph Ogden who both contributed 21 points while Rio Blessyn and Tara Hings also scored in double figures.

**Reading “Rockets”****35 - 94****Northants “Lightning Too”**

Less than 24 hours after their win over Solent, “Lightning Too” were ‘on the road’ for a game against Reading “Rockets”. Reading have an outstanding men’s team and are working industriously at developing their under aged girls programme but the team that took the court against the Northants girls was very inexperienced. Coach Shakespeare was able to work on fine tuning her team’s offences and highlighting some defensive detail.

“Lightning Too” dominated the first two quarters and by half time had established a match-winning 51-12 lead. To their credit the Reading girls kept battling to the end and the third and fourth periods of play were much more competitive with “Rockets” getting into double figures in both quarters but “Lightning Too” still cruised to a comfortable 94-35 win.

For “Lightning Too” all eight players scored led by Steph Ogden with 30 points and Hannah Nola with 22 respectively while Amy Boot, Rio Blessyn and Tara Hings all scored in double figures.

**Under 14 Boys well beaten by C.O.B.****Under 14 Boys Midland Conference****Northants “Thunder”****41 - 90****City of Birmingham**

The Northants “Thunder” under 14 boys entertained second in the table City of Birmingham last Saturday and came off a very poor second best. C.O.B. fielded a tall well drilled team who dominated all four periods of play as “Thunder” struggled to score in double figures in each period.

The “Thunder” boys battled hard to the end not least of all David Nieva who scored 28 of his team’s 41 points but no other Northants player could get into double figures.

**Third quarter burst sees Under 14 Girls home****Under 14 Girls Midland South West Conference****Herts “Warriors”****48 - 70****Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants under 14 girls kept their Play Off hopes alive with a battling 22 point win over Herts “Warriors” last Saturday. The win came thanks to an amazing 24-zero charge at the start of the third period. During this five minute period the pattern of the game was repeated time after time. “Warriors” shot and missed, Ruchae Walton rebounded and passed to Sarah Round who launched a fast break usually finished by Caitlin Stewart. When a shot was missed Walton was invariably on hand to score with a put back.

Until that crazy five minutes “Lightning” had been unable to establish their authority on the game and the home side actually led 25-22 at half time. Leading 54-35 going into the final period of play Coach Karen Goodrich was able to give all twelve of her players time on court and nine of them responded by scoring.

Overall the “Lightning” scoring was led by Ruchae Walton who had a massive game with 20 points, 18 rebounds and eight steals. Caitlin Stewart totalled 19 points and pulled down eight rebounds while Sarah Round controlled her team superbly dishing out 10 assists and scoring 12 points.

**Jared and Laurence see Under 13’s home****Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference****Northants “Thunder”****71 - 47****Milton Keynes “Lions”**

This Midlands Conference game between the under 13 Boy’s teams of Northants “Thunder” and Milton Keynes “Lions” turned out to be an excellent contest played in front of a large, appreciative crowd. The teams traded baskets through the first period with the lead changing hands on a number of occasions. At the end of the quarter, “Lions” were 18-14 up, but it might have been a different story had “Thunder” not missed 11 of the 15 free throws they had been awarded.

In the second quarter Laurence Williams and Jared Ryan kept the scoreboard ticking over for “Thunder” while Ed Taylan and Aaran Reilly did an excellent job marking Leon Creary, the Lions' talented guard. “Thunder” were able to claim the lead and the first half with a 31-27 advantage.

In the second half, there was no separating the two teams and the third and fourth quarters finished 19 all and 21 all. Williams and Ryan were the leading scorers for Thunder with 29 and 25 points respectively, but the game would not have been won had it not been for the defensive efforts of Taylan and Reilly. Coach Round was really pleased with his team's performance, but was disappointed to see that the team missed 27 free throws during the game.

### **“Warriors” too physical for Under 13 Girls**

#### **Under 13 Girls East Anglian League**

**Herts “Warriors”                      78 – 29                      Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants under 13 girls went through another learning process when they took on a much bigger and far more experienced Herts “Warriors” team. The Northants coach Karen Goodrich was worried that the game would be very physical and so it proved with the referees unwilling to call even the most blatant contact.

Under this sort of pressure it was no surprise that the “Lightning” players turned the ball on a number of occasions leading to easy “Warriors” scores. To their credit the Northants girls kept battling to the end despite the fact that the Herts coach maintained her full court pressure throughout the game.

Despite the heavy defeat Goodrich was philosophical maintaining that the team would learn from the experience.

### **COLLEGE BASKETBALL**

#### **Improved performance isn’t enough for ‘A’ Team to beat “All Saints”**

##### **British Colleges Men’s Midlands Elite League**

**Moulton College ‘A’                      55 – 88                      All Saints College**

The first message that Coach John Collins gave to his team after this BCS Elite League game was, “This wasn’t a 33 point game”. His comment was based on the fact that with six minutes of the game remaining Moulton were only trailing by 14 points and were still in the game. A combination of factors resulted in the Sheffield based college going on the 25-4 run to give the final score line an unrealistic look. Collins was particularly incensed that the game officials who had blown ten fouls in the first three minutes of the game appeared to switch off and allowed a great deal of contact. Added to this, three Moulton players Kyle Hobbs (ankle), Sam Pursey (nose bleed) and Byron Wing (hip) were carrying injuries. As the lead stretch above 20 points Collins withdrew his more experienced players from the game and the floodgates opened.

The initial exchanges in the game were extremely physical with the referees regularly stopping play and the Moulton players appeared not to be interested in competing. Collins called a time out and for the first time this season tore into his charges. They responded superbly and with Matt Yates leading from the front only lost the first period of play 14-13.

In the second quarter two free throws from Yates took Moulton into the lead as the All Saints coach, Vanessa Ellis who was assistant coach of the Great Britain women’s team at this summer’s Olympics, was losing patience with her players and the referees. Her tirade had the necessary effect and All Saints went on a surge to take the period 27-20 to lead 41-33 at half time.

In the first half Moulton had been guilty of turning the ball over on a frightening 20 occasions but had shown they could compete with a team made up of players from three national league teams. A good start was needed to the third quarter but in the event just the opposite happened All Saints opening with a nine to zero surge. Moulton switched to a zone defence which contained “All Saints” but scoring had now become a problem for Moulton with only Yates being a consistent threat and All Saints took the period 20-10 to lead 61-43.

Moulton started the final stanza in lively form with Yates and Derice McLeod prompting a six-zero run but then the combination of injuries, fatigue and the referees change of emphasis allowed the visitors to take total control of the game and run out comfortable winners.

For Moulton Yates scored 32 of Moulton’s 55 points with Linas Bajorunas supporting well with nine points and as many rebounds.

## THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

### Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February

There aren't any games at the Basketball Centre on Saturday

Junior Women travel to Herts "Warriors"  
Under 15 girls travel to Herts "Warriors"  
Under 15 Boys travel to NEBC "Titans"  
Under 13 Boys travel to Herts "Warriors"

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February

11-00am

Under 14 Girls versus NASSA

Cadette Women versus Bromsgrove "Bears"

1-00pm

Under 15 Boys versus Birmingham "Bulls"

Junior Men versus Cheshire "Panthers"

**3-00pm**

**Senior Men versus Loughborough Student "Riders II"**

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**