

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **“Thunder” lose to “Titans despite huge final quarter effort**

#### **Men’s Division Three North**

**Greenwich “Titans”                      77 – 73                      Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants senior men travelled to south-east London last Sunday without two key players but thanks to an outstanding defensive performance got to within four points of Greenwich “Titans”.

After a lack lustre first quarter it looked as if “Thunder” might be in for a heavy defeat as they slipped 12-20 behind. They took the second period of play 21-19 to reduce the deficit to 33-39 at half time as they began to play with more confidence and commitment.

Their third quarter was a low scoring affair with “Thunder” managing just 13 points but thanks to their tenacious defence they restricted “Titans” to just 17 points and at 46-56 they were still in with a chance of winning the game.

Led by the scoring efforts of Jacob Holt and Devon Adams and prompted by skipper Johnny Yates, “Thunder” did everything they could to take the game and won the final quarter 27-21 but it wasn’t quite enough as the home side held on for the four points win.

In the battling loss Holt and Adams top scored with 20 and 19 points respectively; Yates supporting well with 16.

This game was a re-arranged fixture so “Thunder” will have an early opportunity for revenge with “Titans” travelling to the Basketball Centre this Saturday.

### **Overtime win earns Junior Men back-to-back victories**

#### **Junior Men’s Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”                      89 – 80                      Shropshire “Warriors”  
(69 – 69)**

A short-handed Northants Junior men’s team followed their morale boosting win over Team Birmingham “Elite” the previous week with a nail-biting overtime victory over Shropshire “Warriors” to claim revenge for a defeat earlier in the season.

Leading 41-31 at half time, “Thunder” saw their lead eroded during the third and fourth periods of play and found themselves trailing 67-69 with just over a minute left to play. Jaz Cambell was able to score the equalising basket and “Thunder” had further opportunities to win the game but failed to do so.

As the game went into the third minute of the extra period of play, “Thunder” hit their opponents with an 11-2 barrage from which “Warriors” never recovered. The visitors were forced to send Northants players to the free throw line but David Nieva and Ainsley Reynolds remained calm converting six of six free throws as “Thunder” cruised to a nine point victory.

For “Thunder”, Nieva and Campbell had 31 and 20 points respectively with excellent support coming from Micolás Kimlavias with 15 points and Shequila Ntumba with 13.

This weekend the team travel to Notts Nova another team they narrowly lost to earlier in the season.

## **Big second half earns Cadets victory against much improved Mansfield second team**

### **Under 16 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Mansfield Giants II                      41 – 76                      Northants “Thunder”**

Having seen an 11 point lead evaporate the Northants under 16 boys faced a situation where their efforts of the previous week, when they beat top of the table Nottingham “Hoods”, might well be undone by the Mansfield “Giants” second string.

“Thunder” had been the dominant force in the first period of play restricting “Giants” to just five points but a recurrence of the previous week’s malaise of missing free throws (they missed seven in the period) saw them manage only 16 points themselves.

The home side opened the second quarter in confident mood and a 10-4 run saw the “Thunder” lead cut to just five points. With their offence struggling against “Warriors” sagging man to man and zone defences “Thunder” were really struggling but were boosted by a buzzer beating three pointer from Chris Amankonah on the stroke of half time.

If the “Thunder” players were expecting a roasting from Coach John Collins during the half time interval they were surprised as he asked them to respond positively to the situation by getting back to the basics of high pressure defence and up-tempo offence. A smaller line up at the start of the third quarter saw the team respond superbly with an 18-2 charge at the start of the period of play. In that third quarter “Thunder” outscored their opponents 24-9 to open up a 55-30 lead to leave Mansfield with the preverbal mountain to climb.

“Giants” continued to battle in the fourth quarter without ever closing the gap and as they began to tire “Thunder” hit them with a 10-zero closing charge to complete a comfortable looking win which was far from that midway through the second quarter.

In the 35 point win the “Thunder”, Big 3 dominated the scoring led by Amankonah and Ed Wallhead with 22 and 21 points respectively, excellent support coming from Josh Lloyd with 19 points.

By virtue of having played more games “Thunder” top the Midlands Conference table but Nottingham “Hoods” and Leicester “Dynamite” who “Thunder” play in three weeks time, have both lost just one game.

## **Under 14 Boys back to winning ways against Shropshire “Warriors”**

### **Under 14 Boys East Midlands II Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”                      101 – 34                      Shropshire “Warriors”**

After the previous weeks disappointing loss, the Northants “Thunder” under 14 boys put on a dominant performance to record an overwhelming win over an inexperienced Shropshire “Warriors” team.

The opening five minutes of the quarter was a tight encounter with Thunder managing to secure a 10-6 lead but the introduction of Patrick Adedji saw him score nine consecutive points including a 3 pointer enabling Thunder to build a comfortable 19-9 lead by the end of the quarter.

“Thunder” were well aware that a comfortable lead early in the game was meaningless as they had learnt in their previous fixture against the Worcester “Wolves”. “Thunder” displayed a dominant quarter limiting to Warriors to a single basket, whilst producing a stunning 20-0 run displaying some good team offense that saw six different scorers contribute to the run.

With “Thunder” Holding a 39-11 lead at half time, Coach Rob Crump was able to freely rotate his bench. “Thunder” opened the third quarter with another 20-0 run thanks to some confident perimeter shooting from duo Ally Solazoo and Ashley Kitchen, whilst Jonathan Ntumba was dominant inside the paint scoring consecutive baskets. Another perimeter shot by Kitchen in the final minute saw Thunder take a 68-22 at the end of the third period of play.

With the final result a foregone conclusion Crump was able to give his younger players court time and they showed some standout individual performances. Ten year old Benas Maldutis demonstrated some good defence on the “Warriors” ball handler forcing consecutive turnovers. This was later followed by a strong baseline drive by Tom Greenfield that saw him finish confidently around the basket converting a reverse lay up. “Thunder” were able to outscore their opponents 33-12 in the final quarter to run out comfortable winners by over sixty points. “Thunder” were led in scoring by Jonathan Ntumba with 28 points supported by Patrick Adedji with 21 points.

Coach Crump commented “It was very important to respond after last weekend’s disappointment with a win. It was very pleasing to do it in dominant fashion, especially with the damage occurring in the first half. I thought it was a good team performance, providing the younger players with significant amount.

Crump will be hoping his team will be able to repeat this confident performance when they face local rival Northamptonshire “Titans” this weekend.

### **No joy for Under 14 Girls against well drilled “Wolves”**

#### **Under 14 Girls East Conference**

**Northants “Lightning”                      46 – 66                      Oaklands “Wolves”**

Faced by a team with the same number of wins as themselves the Northants under 14 girls went into their game against Oaklands “Wolves” hopeful of a positive result. In the event they were well beaten by a well drilled and organised “Wolves” outfit.

The visitors outscored “Lightning” in all four periods of play and the home side were hampered by the fact that only Dina Kosnikovska and Lucy Needham could score with any consistency. By the end of the game these two players had scored 22 and 18 points respectively which meant that the other ten “Lightning” players had contributed just six points.

Things won’t get any easier for the team this Saturday when they take on second placed County Upper “Wolves”

#### **THIS WEEKENDS ACTION**

##### **Saturday 28th January**

9.30 am until 11am

11-30am

1-30pm

3-30pm

Junior “Ballers”

Under 14 Girls versus County Upper “Wolves”

Under 16 Boys versus Leicester “Riders”

Senior Men versus Greenwich “Titans”

**These games will be played at the Basketball Centre which is situated at  
Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton**

Under 14 Boys travel to N.E.B.C. “Titans”

Under 15 Boys Hoopsterz CVL Tournament at NSB

**Sunday 29th January** Junior Men travel to Notts Nova

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