

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Senior Men have a weekend off as Plymouth ‘cry off’.**

**National League Division 3**

**(South Conference)**

**Northants “Thunder” versus Plymouth “Raiders II”**

Late on Friday afternoon the Northants Basketball Club were informed that the Plymouth Raiders second string were unable to raise a team for the following days fixture, because of an outbreak of ‘flu. Earlier in the season a spate of injuries and work commitments meant that Thunder had only six players for their game in Plymouth but they made the journey with a junior player and fulfilled the fixture. It is the club’s intention to claim the game

**Classy Junior Men see off “Warriors” to make it two wins on the bounce**

**Junior Men’s East Midlands Development League**

**Northants “Thunder”**

**93 – 47**

**Leicester “Warriors”**

After a barren period at the start of 2016 the Northants junior men made it two consecutive wins with a convincing win over a short handed Leicester Warriors team.

Thunder made a good start to the game jumping out to an early lead but Warriors recovered well but a 9-zero run put the home side back in control and they led 21-13 after the first period of play.

Warriors came out for the second quarter in aggressive mood but Thunder showed admirable composure in advancing the ball through the pressure and a 16-6 run put them well in control of the game. Stand in coach Darijus Maldutis was employing a changing defence and this caused Warriors a lot of problems although Birchenough was able to connect with three, three-pointers against the Thunder zone. His efforts kept his team in contention with Thunder taking the period 19-11 to set up 40-24 half time lead.

Warriors needed a big third quarter but they were hit by a 15-6 Thunder blitz and by debating decisions also conceded technical fouls. Thunder were displaying some excellent unselfish ball movement and seven of their players contributed to the 24 points the team scored in the third period while Warriors were restricted to just 11.

Leading 64-35 going into the last ten minutes of play Thunder kept playing to the end took the period 29-12 so outscoring their opponents 53-23 in the second half, to take the game by 93 points to 47 to keep their Play Off hopes alive.

In the convincing win captain Ollie Thomas top scored with 27 points while Carlo Nieva had five, three-pointers in his 21 point haul. Ayo Oluyede had a solid game scoring 14 points and seven Thunder players contributed to the final total.

**Cadet Boys go winless over double weekend**

**Under 16 Boys Midlands Development League**

**Leicester “Riders”**

**86 – 66**

**Northants “Thunder”**

Having played Riders the previous week and thrown a lead away in the fourth quarter, the Thunder cadet boys travelled to Leicester with some of their big men back in their line up and should have been positive about winning this game.

Despite this the team made a dreadful start conceding 11 points before scoring their basket. Despite this poor start Thunder fought back to take the quarter 16-14.

The second quarter was a close run thing with the Northants boys guilty of missing lay ups and free throws. By now Thunder should have established a comfortable lead but their lapses allowed Riders to edge the quarter 18-14 to lead 32-30 at half time.

There was every indication that this was going to be a close game but inexplicably the Thunder players came out for the third period in some kind of daze. Riders were able to capitalise pouring in 34 points while Thunder could manage just 14 and at 68-44 to the home side the game was as good as over as a contest. To their credit Thunder did show a little pride in the final quarter which they won 22-18 but it was a case of too little too late as they slipped to an 86-66 defeat.

In the 20 point loss Josh Lloyd top scored with 22 points and he was well supported by Shekina Ntumba and Zak Kitchen with 13 and 10 points respectively. Not for the first time this season the team's scoring against the Conferences better teams, has been dominated by just two or three players. Success will only come when more players are able to make contributions to the team's final score and for many of the players this is just a matter of confidence.

**Leicester "Dynamite"                      50 – 81                      Northants "Thunder"**

Less than 24 hours after the disappointing loss to Riders, the team was back on the road to Leicester this time to face top of the table Dynamite.

Needing a confidence boosting start to the game Thunder got just the opposite with a well motivated Dynamite team racing ahead by 27 points to 7 in the first quarter. The Northants boys were possibly suffering a bit of a hang over from their previous day's exertions but they looked dazed and bewildered and were guilty of numerous defensive lapses which allowed their opponents easy scores.

For the remainder of the game Thunder were playing catch up and never looked capable of making serious inroads into the Leicester team's 20 point lead. With the exception of Aaron Muturi the whole team seemed to be having an off day and Dynamite were able to win the remaining three periods of play albeit by narrow margins finally running out winners by 31 points. Coach Grahame Yates was at a loss for words as the team struggled to execute simple strategies they had been working on all season.

In the disappointing result only Chris Amankomah with 14 points and Shekina Ntumba with 11 were able to score in double figures.

**Cadette girls undone by Knowles and nightmare third quarter**

**Under 16 Girls Premier Division North**

**Northants "Lightning"                      57 – 81                      Barrow "Thorns"**

After a couple of heavy defeats the Northants under 16 girls went into their home fixture against Barrow Thorns in optimistic mood. Lightning had defeated Thorns earlier in the season before losing in the north-west. Saturday's defeat was down to two factors; first a nightmare third quarter which saw them outscored 22-8 and the 43 point contribution of Thorn's England international, Millie Knowles.

In the other three periods of play Lightning had been competitive with Tia Dunrad- Allen and rookie Ony Onwunehili making important offensive contributions with 22 and 14 point tallies while Precious Ojagi worked hard for her 12 point haul but these three were the only Lightning players able to make any significant contributions to the scoring.

**Huge fourth quarter helps Under 14 Boys' to get back to winning ways**

**Under 14 Boys Midlands Development League**

**Derby "Trailblazers II"                      47 - 88                      Northants "Thunder"**

Going into the final period of play in this Midlands Development League contest the Northants under 14 boys were holding a 13 point lead over the Derby Trailblazers second string. If the home side thought they might be able to mount some kind of comeback they were severely shocked as they were restricted to just eight points while Thunder poured in 36 to get back to winning ways after a two game losing streak.

Coach Darijus Maldutis has been trying to get his players to work together as a team rather than relying on one versus one options. Against Trailblazers they did this to a fault sometimes making the extra pass rather than taking the easy scoring options. This certainly changed in that final period of play with the team relaxing and playing to its full potential.

In the forty plus points win the Thunder scoring was led by Jude Carmichael who had a hatful of assists to go with his 20 point haul. Jonathan Ntumba also had 20 points while other important scoring contributions came from Oliver Dominique and Mateo Baja with 15 and 14 points respectively while Ashley Kitchen chipped in with 11 points.

