

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

“Thunder” suffers another Play Off set back

Men’s Division Three North

Northants “Thunder” 63 – 76 Greenwich “Titans”

The Play Off chances of the Northants senior men took another hit last Saturday when they went down by 13 points to Greenwich “Titans”. “Thunder” went into the game in optimistic mood having lost to the south east London team by just four points the previous week without the services of two key payers. As Coach Grahame Yates commented after the game, “What a time to put on your worst performance of the season.”

“Thunder” made a nervous start to the contest with “Titans” opening with an 11-4 surge. “Thunder” were able to steady the ship but still trailed 15-22 at the end of the first period of play.

Encouraged by a sizeable crowd and boosted by 8 points from Matt Yates and some great defence, “Thunder” were able to close the gap by two points to 32-38 at half time with every possibility of a revenge win on the cards.

The third quarter saw “Titans” become heavily reliant on their ‘pick and roll’ offence which caused some problems for the “Thunder” defence. Despite this the home side were able to close the gap to a single point before they were rocked by a 10-3 “Titans” run to close the period giving the visitors a 59-49 advantage going into the final stanza.

“Thunder” had shown that when they played as a team they had the measure of “Titans” and a run of six unanswered points reduced the deficit to 55-60 restoring optimism amongst their supporters. Then, rather than rely on team offence “Thunder” resorted to individual efforts often when outnumbered. This resulted in a number of turn overs and they were hit by a 12-3 Greenwich run and it was as good as ‘game over’.

In the disappointing defeat, Matt Yates top scored for “Thunder” with 20 points, good support coming from Devon Adams, Richard Higgins and Jacob Round.

Great defence earns Cadets victory over “Riders”

Under 16 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 71 – 35 Leicester “Riders”

During the practice preceding this game the Northants team had spent a great deal of time working on their team defence. The effort put in certainly paid off as they restricted Saturday’s opponents Leicester “Riders” to just 35 points which included single figure totals in the first three periods of play.

“Riders” were without the services of their leading scorer but their well organised transition defence was able to successfully combat “Thunder’s” fast break offences. The home side successfully went to their isolation offences and this resulted in Chris Amankonah and Ed Wallhead having a field day close to basket scoring 26 and 23 points respectively.

Coach John Collins was pleased that nine players contributed to the final points tally and even more pleased that no less than 22 under 16 boys had played competitive basketball during the day.

“Thunder Too” claim second place in latest *Hoopsterz* Tournament

Northants “Hoopsterz” Central Venue Tournament

Milton Keynes	22 - 18	Northants “ThunderToo”
Kettering “Phoenix”	12 - 18	Northants “Thunder Too”
Market Harborough	17 - 19	Northants “Thunder Too”

Twelve “Thunder” squad players played in this tournament and acquitted themselves very creditably winning two and losing one game.

The first game against the Milton Keynes “Speeders” looked as if it was going to be a close win for “Thunder” after they led at half time, however, as the bench was rotated and new players came on, the team lost their composure and “Speeders” were able to mount a scoring run to give them a 10 point lead. “Thunder” mounted a spirited fight back with Tom Heron scoring six points to close the gap to just 4 points at the end of the game.

Next up for “Thunder” were Kettering “Phoenix” and the team pulled off a convincing win although their defence was still not at the standard it should have been. “Thunder” players were guilty of just watching the ball on shots instead of working hard to secure rebounds and this allowed “Phoenix” to score easy points from put backs or re-setting their offence.

“Thunder’s” last game was against Market Harborough and despite trailing at half time, the team finally got into a rhythm and were able to keep pace with a strong team. The two teams exchanged baskets with Max Kerry contributing vital scores to help tie the scores up at 17 each. “Thunder” retrieved a good defensive rebound and were able to run their fast break options easily with seconds to go which resulting in Jamal Jack converting a buzzer-beating "put back" to end the game at 19-17. “Thunder” emerged as the runners up in the tournament.

Coach / Manager Al Reid commented, “The whole team played well; their individual and team skills are improving but they still need to work on getting fully settled; working hard on defence and moving around more on offence when they are playing so that they can continue to build on leads that they make instead of losing confidence and throwing leads away.”

(Report by James Reid)

Under 14 Boys beat local rivals “Titans”

Under 14 Boys East Midlands II Conference

N.E.B.C. “Titans”	55 -72	Northants “Thunder”
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Northants “Thunder” faced NEBC Titans for the third and final time this season with “Titans” having won the previous two games.

The game was a tight contest in the early stages of the quarter with the teams tied at 7 apiece with “Thunder” relying on scores from Jonathan Ntumba and a three pointer from Ally Solazzo. “Thunder” made a break through midway during the quarter executing a 12-0 run led by strong inside scoring from Ntumba and Cameron Leighton and this gave them a 19-7 lead at the end of the quarter.

The second quarter was a very even encounter; and despite trailing the hosts displayed a very determined effort in an attempt to eat into “Thunder’s” lead. Although “Thunder” executed some confident scoring, they were lacklustre defensively allowing “Titans” easy scores and several second chance shots; luckily for “Thunder” they still maintained their double figure advantage at the half with the score standing at 35-25.

“Thunder’s” composure was tested in the opening stages of the third period of play with “Titans” reducing the deficit to 33-39 in the opening minutes of the quarter forcing a time out by Thunder. Patrick Adedeji and Jonathan Ntumba installed confidence in Thunder’s performance combining for a 9-1 run to extend Thunder lead to 34-48. “Titans” were determined to put “Thunder” under pressure and produced an 8-2 run to conclude the quarter with all eight of Titans’ points coming from Isaac Round.

Coach Rob Crump reminded his players of the importance of a strong final quarter and not to become reliant on their lead as they had done in their previous visit to Weavers earlier in the season. “Titans” reduced the lead to six points at 46-52 early in the fourth quarter, but an ‘And 1’ from Patrick Adedeji followed by scores from Solazzo and Ntumba denied Titans any momentum. With five minutes remaining “Thunder” led 65-50, and the team was urged to close the game and not allow a late Titans’ run. Despite back to back scores for the home team, strong scoring from Adedeji and Ntumba helped “Thunder” secure the win by 72 points to 56, to earn their first win over the Titans.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by Jonathan Ntumba with 31 points and he was well supported by Patrick Adedeji with 18 points.

Coach Crump commented “Playing NEBC “Titans” on their court is never an easy fixture; however I was very pleased for the boys to secure a win against our local rivals. I was happy with the response we made in the fourth quarter, especially as we had been in that situation earlier in the season and lost the game.”

(Report by Rob Crump)

Junior Men keep that winning habit against Notts Nova

Junior Men’s Midlands Conference
Notts Nova 61 – 69 Northants “Thunder”

Having tasted success in the past few games the Northants “Thunder” junior men were keen to continue the winning habit when they travelled to Notts Nova.

The first quarter saw an even contest, but towards the end of the quarter, Nova managed to edge themselves ahead by exploiting gaps in the Thunder zone set up to lead 22-15 at the end of the first period of play.

Scores from David Nieva and critical offensive put-backs from Shekina Ntumba helped the travelling side outscore Nova 23-16 in the second quarter to tie matters up at 38 all at half time.

The two teams exchanged scores during the third quarter as “Thunder” tried to gain an edge over their opponents. They were frustrated because as soon as they scored Nova swiftly answered with a score of their own. “Thunder” edged the period 14-12 to edge ahead but the game was very much in the balance.

In that third quarter “Thunder” had managed to seal up their defence and in the fourth they were able to pull off critical stops followed by transition scores to edge in front at the critical moment. Clutch free throws were drained by David Nieva as Nova had to resort to fouling, but time was on the side of “Thunder”, and they managed to hold on for a 69-61 victory.

In the eight points win which gave “Thunder” a three game win streak, their scoring was led by David Nieva and ‘Shaq’ Ntumba with 23 and 20 points respectively while Jaz Cambell supported well with 14 points.

(Report by Ayo Oluyede)

Under 14 Girls competitive for three quarters against table-topping “Wolves”

Under 14 Girls East Conference

Northants “Lightning”

48 - 63

County Upper “Wolves”

When Dina Konikovska penetrated into a packed keyway to convert an under pressure lay up at the end of the third period of play she tied the scores up between “Lightning” and high-flying County Upper “Wolves”, at 38 all. Unfortunately, the effort had come at a price with key players picking up fouls with the team using an aggressive full court defence. The players had also expended a great deal of energy and “Wolves” capitalised to win the fourth quarter 25-10 to take the game by 63 points to 48.

“Wolves” edged a low scoring first quarter 11-8 but led by the efforts of Sade Chambers “Lightning” won the second 15-14 and tied matters up in the third thanks to Kosnikovska and Lucy Needham.

In the 15 point defeat Kosnikovska top scored with 21 points; Chambers and Needham supporting well with 10 points apiece.

There were plenty of positives to take from the game but the team still needs more players to contribute to the scoring effort and understand the difference between aggressive and illegal defence

THIS WEEKENDS ACTION

Saturday 28th January

9.30 am until 11am

11-30am

2-00pm

Junior “Ballers”

Under 14 Girls versus Southend “Swifts”

Under 14 Boys versus Worcester “Bears”

Senior Men versus Thames Valley “Cavaliers”

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

Junior Men travel to Coventry “Tornadoes”

Under 16 Boys travel to Leicester “Warriors”

Under 19 and Under 11 *Hoopsterz* CVL Tournament at NSB

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