

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Men's National League Division 4 **(Midlands Conference)**

Team Derby end "Trailblazers" unbeaten record

Team Derby put pressure on Northants "Thunder" by beating previously unbeaten Derby "Trailblazers II". Team Derby have an identical record as "Thunder" with the two teams meeting in a crunch game in two weeks time.

Great 'road' win for Junior Men

Junior Men's National League **(Midlands West Conference)**

Worcester "Wolves" 80 - 107 Northants "Thunder"

After their disappointing defeat at the hands of Coventry "Tornadoes" the previous weekend the Northants Junior Men bounced back with a comfortable 'on the road' win against bottom of the table Worcester "Wolves".

There was no suggestion of "Thunder" 'leaving their game on the bus' as they stormed out to 39-17 lead after the first quarter as "Wolves" foundered themselves outmuscled by the "Thunder" 'biggs'.

"Wolves" were far more competitive in the second period of play which they edged 24-21 and despite the third and fourth quarters being competitive there was no way back for the Worcester outfit as "Thunder" breezed to a 27 point win which keeps them top of the Conference table albeit because they have played more games than all their opponents.

In the 107 to 80 win, Ed Wallhead and Zac Kitchen led the "Thunder" scoring with 27 and 21 points respectively with good support coming from Cameron Samuels with 14 points while Sam Savory enjoyed his best ever National League outing with 9 points.

Saa and Magish lead "Tornadoes" to big win over Under 14 Boys

Under 14 Boys National League **(Midlands West Conference)**

Northants "Thunder" 56 - 106 Coventry "Tornadoes"

The Northants "Thunder" Under 14 Boys have yet to win a game in 2018 after suffering a heavy defeat against Coventry "Tornadoes" another mid-table team.

"Thunder" opened Saturday's contest with a 7-2 run, however, the Tornadoes responded with an 11-0 run of their own to gain a 13-7 lead and forcing a "Thunder" time out. "Thunder" was guilty of not boxing out the "Tornadoes" who capitalised on the offensive boards with a number of 'put backs'. Thunder did reduce the deficit to 18-21, but back to back scores for Coventry boosted their lead 26-18 by the end of the first quarter with Saa scoring 14 of those 26 points.

Despite reducing the deficit to 25-30 early in the second period of play, Thunder failed to contained the “Tornadoes” who continued to dominate the boards and capitalised on the fast break to lead 54-31 at the half; Saa contributing another 16 points.

During the half time break Coach Crump enforced to his team that majority of “Tornadoes” points had come from offensive rebounds. Unfortunately for Thunder the message was not clear enough, as Coventry’s opening four points came straight from put backs. This saw the deficit increase by 35 points entering the final period.

With the final result already decided and Coach Crump giving some of his younger players some court time “Tornadoes” were on a mission to score as many points as they could. The Coventry outfit outscored “Thunder” 31-16 over the last ten minutes Magisha and Saa scoring 25 of those points. There was one bonus for “Thunder” with 11 year old Tom Bates scoring 5 points including converting an ‘And 1’ play.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by Ashley Kitchen with 21 points supported with 13 points from Benas Maldutis and Kris Dambruskas contributing 13 and 11 points respectively, while for “Tornadoes”, Saa had 50 points including six three-pointers, Magisha adding 24.

Coach Crump commented “We struggled against Coventry for all four quarters today and it was very disappointing in the manner how we lost the game. As a team we failed to box out our opponents allowing them to score second or third chance points consecutively. Failing to address this aspect in our performance, we were always going to struggle.”

Below par Cadet Boys well beaten by “Bears”

Under 16 Boys National League

(Midlands West Conference)

Worcester “Bears” 65 – 37 Northants “Thunder”

Against another mid-table team the Northants Cadet Boys slipped to a disappointing defeat against Worcester “Wolves” last Saturday. Defensively “Thunder” worked hard but in the first and third quarter they could only manage 5 points and many of the players seemed to have lost all confidence in their ability to score.

“Bears” employed a zone defence with pressure up the floor and this put the “Thunder” ball carriers under pressure and too often they were left isolated as team mates hid at the other end of the court. In the disappointing total of 37 points, Connor White battled manfully for his 15 points before fouling out while Adam Lewandowski contributed 12 the rest of the team managing just 10 points between them

Game Under 16 Girls go down to “Mystics II”

Under 16 Girls National League

(North Conference)

Northants “Lightning” 58 – 77 Manchester “Mystics II”

When Lucy Needham scored in the fourth minute of the third quarter to tie the scores up at 39 all a “Lightning” win looked to be on the cards. The Northants girls had battled back from a 15 point deficit thanks to a 12-2 charge at the end of the second quarter and a good start to the third. They failed after converting just three of the ten free throws they were awarded in the third quarter and Manchester had been let off the proverbial hook.

With their bench reduced by illness and injury to just eight players “Lightning” struggled in the final quarter with “Mystics” opening the period with a 16-2 charge and it was game over as the Manchester team closed out a 77 to 58 win.

The “Lightning” girls who were led by 23 points from Needham and 12 from Dina Kosnikovska, could be proud of their efforts and they will have to repeat the performance when they travel to N.E.B.C. “Titans” this coming Saturday

Much improved Under 14 Girls beaten by Luton

Under 14 Girls National League (Midlands Conference)

Northants “Lightning” 55 – 90 Luton Basketball

Despite her team suffering a 35 points defeat Coach Karen Goodrich was upbeat about her team’s performance against a physically bigger Luton team. “The girls played with a lot more determination and showed a great attitude. I played all 12 girls, 11 of them scored and all 12 gave 100%.”

“Lightning” made a nervous start to the game perhaps thinking too much about the two previous encounters that had ended in 30+ wins for the Bedfordshire team, and found themselves trailing 11-30, after the first period of play. Goodrich tried to instil more confidence in her players during the break between quarters and her players responded well only losing the second quarter 16-20 with Leisha Burgess rebounding well and Dina Kosnikovska leading her team superbly.

Despite trailing 27-50 “Lightning” returned to the floor after the half time interval in determined mood and with contributions from seven players outscore their opponents 19-16. Luton were spurred into action in the final quarter which they comfortably won by 24 points to 9 to take the game by 35 points.

For “Lightning”, Burgess and Kosnikovska scored 13 and 11 points respectively, Burgess also pulling down 15 rebounds. Goodrich made special mention of the cool play of Lucie Wilson-Gray despite the guard being put under a great deal of defensive pressure

Huge learning experience for Under 12 Girls

Manchester Under 12 Girls Tournament

Manchester “Mystics Blue”	42 – 35	Northants “Lightning”
Manchester “Mystics Red”	41 – 27	Northants “Lightning”
Northants “Lightning”	18 – 18	Sheffield “Hatters”
	(19 – 20)	

In search of competitive basketball the Northants Under 12 girls made the long journey to Manchester to play in a four team tournament. Most of the girls had only been involved in comfortable wins so this was to be their first taste of ‘real’ basketball and for many of them it came as a real shock.

With the late withdrawal of Merseyside, the Manchester squad was divided into two teams with “Lightning facing the “Blue” team in their first game. From the opening tip some of the “Lightning” players found the speed and physicality of the game difficult to cope with but their full court pressure defence did force some turn overs leading to early scores. Trailing 22-28 at half time “Lightning” staged a spirited comeback in the third quarter to tie the scores up at 30 all but the Manchester team took control in the final quarter to win by 42 points to 35.

If the first game had been physical the second was more so, with the court frequently littered with bodies. Manchester “Red” stormed out to a 13-2 first quarter lead but “Lightning” took the second quarter 14-7 to reduce the deficit to 16-20 at half time. As the game became more physical one or two “Lightning” players seemed to lose heart and Manchester were able to cruise to a 41-27 win.

With the allocated time running out and Men's Division 1 game pending, "Lightning's" final game against Sheffield "Hatters" was reduced to a 'running clock' contest. The Sheffield coach opted to play strong and weak fives so the score line had a topsy-turvy look to it but a successful free throw from Keris Ndubisi tied matters up at 18 all. In the two minutes of overtime "Lightning" had their chances but could only manage one more free throw "Hatters" edging the win 20-19.

It will be interesting to see how the Northants girls react to the experience in the immediate future and when the teams meet again next month with Manchester set to field a combined team.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 10th February

There are no sessions or games at the Basketball Centre

Senior Men travel to City of Birmingham "Rockets"

Under 14 Boys travel to Abingdon "Eagles"

Under 16 Girls travel to N.E.B.C. "Titans"

Under 13 Boys Central Venue League at N.S.B.

For more information contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151