

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**“Fire” are just two big for Senior Men.**

**National League Division 3**

**(South Conference)**

**Northants “Thunder”**

**72 – 87**

**Brentwood “Fire”**

After their impressive win against Team Solent the previous week Thunder went into this game against Brentwood Fire in optimistic mood. However, they were under strength and from the outset found it difficult to match up with the size of their opponents. Despite this they held the advantage 22-18 after the first period of play and had it not been for some sloppy turn overs this lead might have been even more.

The second period was to prove difficult for Thunder as their skipper Johnny Yates picked up his third foul forcing stand-in coach Rob Crump to introduce junior player Ollie Thomas into the fray. This came in the middle of a 22-4 Fire charge from which Thunder never recovered despite their best efforts.

Trailing 38-48 at half time Thunder produced a superb defensive effort in the third quarter despite Richard Higgins picking up his third foul. Unfortunately, for the home side they missed numerous easy shots winning the period 12-11 but still trailing by nine points entering the final stanza.

By now the game had become a bad-tempered affair with players from both teams picking up technical fouls. Despite the best efforts of Thunder with Danny Barrett connecting with three 3 pointers Fire were able to extend their lead to record an 87-72 victory which keeps Thunder seventh in the South Conference table with a game against table-topping Thames Valley looming this Sunday.

In Saturday’s 15 point loss Danny Barrett led the Thunder scoring with 22 points including six, three-pointers. The only other Thunder players able to get into double figures were Richard Higgins and Johnny Yates with 10 points apiece.

### **Junior Men keep Play Off hopes alive**

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

**Northants “Thunder”**

**93 – 72**

**Nottingham “Hoods”**

Both teams entered this game looking know how important the result would be in securing a Play Off position. The two teams had already met on two occasions the spoils being shared, so the winner of this encounter would secure the head to head advantage.

Thunder started the quarter with an impressive 14-6 run with David Nieva and Ollie Thomas both contributing six points. The Northants boys maintained this lead for the majority of the quarter but the Hoods responded with a 17-2 run to conclude the period so gaining a 27-22 advantage at the end of the period.

The second quarter was a tight encounter; with the home side were becoming increasingly frustrated as they failed to convert open shots from the perimeter and this resulted them losing confidence on offence. Thunder did manage to produce a David Nieva inspired 11-zero run to give them the advantage at 35-31. Despite an impressive rebounding performance from Ayo Oluyede, Hoods responded with a 10-zero run of their own to maintain their five point cushion with a 40 to 45 half time score line.

At the end of the second period of play Thunder had been guilty of poor weak side “Help” so their aim in the second half was to limit the Hoods scores from inside the paint. They succeeded in this aim and some good execution on the fast break saw Thunder restore their lead at 52-51 midway through the quarter. This installed some confidence in Thunder’s offense and they led 60-56 going into the final minute of the period but consecutive scores saw the visitors restore their lead at 61-60.

With everything to play for in the fourth quarter, Thunder coach Rob Crump opted for a compact 2-3 zone defence which forced Hoods to shoot the ball from the perimeter. The visitors offence was totally disrupted by Crump’s tactic and Thunder were able to go on a 20-2 charge, to establish an 80-63 lead. Hoods were unable to recover from this as Thunder completed an important win.

This season Thunder have been devastating from beyond the three point arc but in this game they were only able to 'nail' three 3 pointers. This fact was compensated by the fact that six Thunder players managed to score in double figures led by David Nieva with 20 points with excellent support coming from Ollie Thomas and Ayo Oluyede with 17 and 16 points respectively.

Coach Crump commented "The boys put on a big performance against a well organised Nottingham Hoods team. We did not shoot particularly well from the perimeter today which affected our confidence on offence. A lot of praise should be given to Ayo Oluyede and David Nieva who brought a lot of energy and presence offensively and defensively to the team today. We look forward to another big game next week away to Conference leaders Leicester Dynamite which will be another head to head decider."

### **Horrendous third period costs Cadets dear**

#### **Under 16 Boys Midlands Development League**

**Ilkeston "Outlaws"                      64 -61                      Northants "Thunder"**

Going in to the third period of this Midlands Development League game the under strength Thunder team led Outlaws by 32 points to 27. They had taken the first quarter 18-11 but then seen their lead eroded in the second but this gave no clue to what happened in the third period of play. Not for the first time this season the Northants team seemed to fall asleep on defence allowing their opponents to almost score at will. Outlaws won the period 20-8 to set up what would prove to be a game winning 47-40 lead.

The fourth quarter saw a spirited fight back by Thunder led by the efforts of Noah Wilborn but despite winning the period 21-17 to was too little too late as Outlaws held on for the 64-61 victory, just their third of the season.

In the disappointing three point loss Josh Lloyd and Ed Taylan led the Thunder scoring with 22 and 18 points respectively but the only other Thunder player to make any significant contribution was Wilborn.

### **Second quarter collapse sees Under 14 Boys' go down against "Warriors"**

#### **Under 14 Boys Midlands Development League**

**Shropshire "Warriors"                      93 - 65                      Northants "Thunder"**

The Northants under 14 boys travelled to Telford last Saturday, to take on Shropshire Warriors a team that had only lost four games in the Midlands Development League. A score line of Thunder 61, Warriors 60 would have looked pretty impressive but that was just the score from periods one, three and four. In the second quarter Thunder were totally overwhelmed and outscored 33-4 and obviously this had an effect on the way Warriors approached the final two quarters but is still an indication of what Thunder can do if they play to the top of their form.

Thunder made a competitive start to the game with good spacing and excellent ball movement and when Warriors upped the tempo of their game the Northants boys were able to respond. The home side edged the quarter 20-17 thanks to a buzzer beating shot but things were looking good for Thunder. Then came that disastrous second quarter with Thunder turning the ball over far too frequently and defending poorly.

In the 28 point defeat Jude Carmichael and Oliver Dominique top scored for Thunder with 25 and 24 points respectively while rookie Ashley Kitchen contributed 9 points.

Thunder face another severe challenge this Saturday when they entertain second place Leicester Warriors.

### **Much improved Under 14 Girls still lose to "Fire"**

#### **Under 14 Girls East Midlands Development League**

**"Northants "Lightning"                      45 - 56                      Brentwood "Fire"**

After their mauling at the hands of Ipswich the previous week the Northants under 14 girls turned in a much more encouraging performance against Brentwood Fire. Despite this improvement the team still lost by 11 points and this was almost entirely down to a poor final quarter which saw them score just three baskets as Fire managed 16. The Lightning coaching staff will also be disappointed by the fact that their team missed no less than 18 free throws. On the positive side the team played excellent team defence including some spirited full court pressure in the second half but they were guilty of missing numerous scoring opportunities and have to learn to convert under pressure.

After Brentwood took the first period of play 14-12, Lightning drew level at half time when the score was 24 all. Fire eased ahead by 2 points at 40-38 at the end of the third period; then came that disastrous final ten minutes which saw the visitors take the win.

For Lightning no player was able to score in double figures but Chloe Amena, Dina Kosnikovska, Ruby Mabbutt, Lucy Needham and Ony Onwumechili all made significant points contributions.

### **THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES**

#### **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

**9.30am to 11.00am** "Ballers" Session

**11-45am** Under 14 Boys versus Leicester "Warriors"

This game will be played at the **Northants Basketball Centre** which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 14 Girls travel to West Herts "Warriors"

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

Junior Men travel to Leicester "Dynamite"

#### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March**

Senior Men travel to Thames Valley "Cavaliers"

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