

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Crash hit “Thunder’s” lose to Nottingham Uni

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

Northants “Thunder” 54 – 68 University of Nottingham

After their heavy loss against Team Derby the previous week the Northants senior men knew they would face a tough challenge against fourth placed University of Nottingham. Their preparation wasn’t helped with the news that three of their players had been involved in a motor accident. Although not seriously injured all three were unable to play in the game so “Thunder” went into the game with just eight players.

Throughout the season Nottingham’s scoring had been dominated by their guards Yamamoto and Smith so “Thunder” coach John Collins decided to employ a combination defence. It soon became apparent that given space several other university players could score. Meanwhile “Thunder” contrived to miss a number of easy scoring opportunities and they found themselves trailing 11-15 after the first quarter.

Collins made some defensive adjustments for the second period of play but scoring remained the biggest problem for “Thunder” as they struggled to score just 15 points to trail 26-36 at half time.

Collins had some stern words for his team in the half time interval but they fell on deaf ears as the uni team opened the third quarter with a 13-5 charge to take control of the game. “Thunder” rallied with an 8-zero run of their own before a bizarre incident saw some violent play by a university player only for “Thunder” to be penalized with two technical fouls for retaliation.

Trailing by a massive 19 points going into the final ten minutes of play the game was beyond “Thunder’s” grasp but they closed with some determined play despite having lost both Yates brothers with five fouls. They took the last quarter 14-7 but Nottingham were good value for their 68-54 win.

In the 14 point loss the “Thunder” scoring was led Matt Yates and Sam Mennell with 13 points apiece Jacob Holt supporting well with 12 points while Nottingham’s total came from nine scorers.

The reasons for the loss might have been a hangover from the previous week’s defeat, the pre-game car crash or just bad play but it sees “Thunder” slip to fourth in the Conference table and their Play Off dreams a mere memory.

Overtime win for Junior Men

Junior Men's National League

Northants "Thunder" 73 – 65 Frankley "Falcons"
(64- 64)

Throughout this topsy-turvy game of run and counter run the "Thunder" supporters couldn't quite understand how their favourites couldn't 'put the game to bed'. They took a 19-17 lead after the first period of play but were then held 7 all in a dour error striven second quarter which saw "Thunder" handicapped by the loss of Ed Taylan with a knee injury.

The third quarter saw "Thunder" ease ahead on three occasions only to be caught by "Falcons". Even so the home side took the period 24-20 to establish a 50-44 lead that appeared to be a game winning margin. "Falcons" however, had other ideas and with "Thunder" looking diffident, managed to close the gap and an 8-zero run over a four minute period gave them a 64-61 lead. Turay scored for "Thunder" before Samuels was fouled giving him the opportunity of winning the game for his team from the charity stripe. He converted the first free throw but missed the second sending the game into overtime.

The extra five minute period was dominated by "Thunder" and a brace of three pointers from Wilborn and 3 points from Kitchen saw them home by 73 points to 65.

In the overtime win Cameron Samuels and Zac Kitchen led the "Thunder" scoring with 17 and 16 points respectively; Ed Wallhead contributed 9 points and Noah Wilborn's four three-pointers were invaluable.

Brave Cadet Boys go one and one over the weekend

Under 16 Boys National League **(Midlands Conference)**

Northants "Thunder" 45 -70 Stoke-on-Trent "Knights"

When these two teams met in the Potteries earlier in the season "Knights" won by 35 points led by their 2 meters tall Wallace-Steele. "Thunder" had also been undone by the "Knights" zone defence so during the previous Wednesday's practice a lot of time had been given to attacking that kind of defence. Coach John Collins also asked his team to play with passion and commitment against the athletic Stoke team and they responded magnificently until the last four minutes of the game. At this stage "Knights" led 58-45 but the "Thunder" players had given everything and over the final four minutes were outscored 12-zero to give the final score line a rather unrealistic look.

"Thunder" made a good start to the game but found themselves trailing 9-14 at the end of the first quarter. "Knight's" lead was extended to 30-13 and another rout looked to be on the cards. "Thunder" however, responded superbly and with Emeka Ayuanya playing excellent defence on Wallace-Steele they were able to close the gap to 13 points at 23-36 at half time.

"Thunder" continued to defend with tenacity in the third quarter and actually edged the period 16-13 to close the gap to 10 points and give themselves just a glimmer of a chance of snatching victory. They stayed in touch over the first six minutes of the final period of play before their spectacular collapse through sheer exhaustion.

In the gutsy performance the "Thunder" scoring was led by Connor White and Adam Lewandowski with 13 and 11 points respectively

**Northants “Thunder” 74 – 69 City of Birmingham “Rockets II”
(59 – 59)**

Less than 24 hours after their battling display against Stoke, the Northants Cadet Boys were back on court against the City of Birmingham “Rockets” second string. “Thunder” coach John Collins urged his team to repeat the previous day’s effort and they responded superbly hitting the court like a whirlwind and led by skipper Connor White roared out to an 11-zero lead. “Rockets” re-grouped but the Northants boys still led 22-16 at the end of the first period of play.

The Birmingham team came out for the second quarter employing a match-up zone which caused “Thunder” a lot of problems. “Rockets” were now dominating the game a by taking the period 17-9 moved into a 33-31 half time lead.

In the half time interval Collins urged his team to run the ball back before “Rockets” could set up their zone defence and apply up-court defensive pressure. An 18-6 run saw “Thunder” retake the lead and they went into the final ten minutes of play with a 45-40 advantage but there was every indication that there was a going to be a close finish and so it proved.

“Rockets” were on fire at the start of the fourth quarter and a 6-zero run gave them the lead at 51-50. “Thunder” battled back with a score from White but their cause wasn’t helped when they missed six free throws and a Birmingham put back score gave the lead back to the visitors. With C.O.B. in the penalty “Thunder’s” Patrick Adeji penetrated into their defence and was fouled. With a chance to win the game for his team the “Thunder” guard missed the first free throw but converted the second to take the game into overtime.

“Rockets” opened the scoring in the extra period but “Thunder” weren’t to be denied and two free throws from Adejo and a clutch three-pointer from Adam Lewandowski gave them the initiative which they were able to hold on to until the end despite some smart tactics from the C.O.B. coach.

In the gutsy win White top scored for “Thunder” with a magnificent 29 point haul while Lewandowski had his best game for several weeks and contributed 14 points

Northants “Hoopsterz” Under 15 Boys Central Venue League

Kettering	7 – 11	Northants “Thunder”
Kettering	13 – 17	Northants “Thunder”
	(20 – 28)	
Condos	9 – 27	Northants “Thunder”
Condos	8 – 24	Northants “Thunder”
	(17 – 51)	

Having failed to win any games in previous Central Venue Tournaments, the “Thunder” players spent some time preparing for the latest event with Coach Pete Dewsnap. The preparation was obviously beneficial with “Thunder” turning in a much improved performance.

Against Kettering team manager Barend Oosthuizen asked his team to show patience and composure and led by Ali Solazzo they did just this. Starved of possession Kettering began to foul and “Thunder” were able to hold on for narrow wins.

Condos proved to be easier opposition and with Kalen Spatcher and Sam Walker playing with a great deal of energy and Henri Berry controlling things from the back court “Thunder” cruised to two easy victories. Oosthuizen was very complimentary about the three boys in his team who have only recently joined the squad.

“Titans” complete the treble over Under 16 Girls

Under 16 Girls National League

(North Conference)

Northants “Lightning” 63 – 111 Northamptonshire “Titans”

Despite losing heavily to unbeaten “Titans”, Coach Janis Kosnikovskis pronounced himself proud of the way his players acquitted themselves. In a free-flowing game “Lightning” did well to score 63 points but conceding 90 in the final three periods of play indicated their defensive frailties as “Titans” produced a number of big runs including a 20 to zero charge at the start of the third.

Throughout the game “Lightning’s” main scoring threat came from Lucy Needham who finished with 30 personal points and Dina Kosnikovska who scored 15 points and played some determined defence while Chloe Stevens handled the ball confidently despite being put under a lot of pressure.

Under 14 Boys caught in “Flyers” need for points

Under 14 Boys National League

(West Midlands Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 37 - 101 Bristol “Flyers”

In their infinite wisdom basketball’s governing body has decreed that Play Off places will be decided by points difference; so Bristol “Flyers”, second in the West Midlands Conference on two losses arrived at the Basketball centre last Saturday intent on piling on the points. “Thunder”, already without two of their taller players were further handicapped when they lost the services of Tom Greenfield with sickness early in the game.

For most of the game the “Flyers” coach kept at least two of his better players on court and combined with pressure defence protected by the rest of the team sagging into the keyway life was very difficult for the young “Thunder” team. They managed 15 points in the first period of play but then struggled to amass 22 in the following three quarters although they were competitive in the final period which they lost 9-14 when Bristol fielded a weaker line up. For the rest of the game “Thunder” were outmuscled on the boards with “Flyers” scoring a massive number of ‘put back’ points.

In the heavy loss Ashley Kitchen battled manfully for his 19 points and all ten “Thunder” players battled hard often against much bigger opponents,

Northants Under 11 County teams

After a programme of trials and try outs the Northants Under 11 teams have been selected and five boys and three girls from the Northants club have made it into the teams.

The boys are: Thomas Bates, George Barry, Hugo Dunn, Gabriel Noel, and Ethan Swallow, and the girls: Mia Gajaga, Keris Ndubisi and Athena Thompson while Martha Pieterse and Bella Jones have been named as reserves.

The selected boys and girls will play in the East Midlands Tournament which will be played in Leicester on Sunday 11th March.

Congratulations to these ten boys and girls.

N.S.G. Girls Primary School Initiative

This programme for girls in year 4,5 and 6 is completely free of charge and offers an opportunity for complete beginners to play basketball in a fun-based approach. The coaching is led by former England player Karen Goodrich assisted by players from the Northampton School for Girls under 16 team.

There will be four more sessions on Mondays 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th March from 4 pm until 6pm.

Any parent or teacher who would like more information should contact Karen Goodrich on kgoodrich@nsg.sch.uk or girls can just turn up with their kit.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 3rd March

9-30 – 11-00am

11-30am

1-30pm

Junior Ballers sessions

Junior Men versus City of Birmingham "Rockets II"

Under 16 Boys versus Shropshire "Warriors"

These games will be staged at the Northants Basketball Centre which is based at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 14 Boys travel to C.O.B. "Rockets II"

Under 14 Girls travel to Oaklands

Sunday 4th March

Senior Men travel to Charnwood College "Riders"

Under 16 Girls travel to Lancashire "Spinners"

For more information contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151