

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Snow the winner

The inclement weather last Saturday caused the closure of the Northants Basketball Centre and the cancellation of the four scheduled games. Next weekend has been declared deadline day for games to be played by England Basketball, but several under aged players are due to attend England training camps that weekend and coaches are reluctant to play without those players.

The games called off were:

VCARS Division Four Play Off 1st Round
Northants "Thunder" versus Stockport "Spartans"

Several Stockport players were literally 'snowed in' so even before the closure of the Basketball Centre this game was in doubt.

Cadet Men's Premier Division North
Northants "Thunder" versus Cheshire "Panthers"

Cadette Women's Midland, South-West Conference
Northants "Thunder" versus Bromsgrove "Bears"

Under 14 Girls Midland South West Conference
Northants "Lightning" versus London "Youngbloods"

Both these games have an important bearing on the final positions of Conference play and these in turn have a bearing on Play Off opponents and home advantage.

"Warriors" are too tough for Junior Men

Junior Men's Premier Division North
Northants "Thunder" 61 - 73 Leicester "Warriors"

Leicester "Warriors" arrived in Northampton last Monday knowing that a win would guarantee them a Play Off spot, and almost certainly gain them third place in the league. On the other hand the Northants team were playing for their pride as they were certain of their mid-table finish, but with no playoffs to look forward to.

Not surprisingly it was the visitors who opened the game with intensity and structure, whilst Thunder struggled to get into the game. "Warriors" pushed out to a 10-02 lead, with Northant's Matt Yates and Kamesi Fawehinmi being the only players registering a score for the home side. Northants were able to pull the deficit back slightly, but still trailed by 5points at 13-18 at the end of the first period of play.

The second quarter turned into a very physical affair with a total of 21 free throws being shot. Unfortunately, "Thunder" could only muster two field goals in the quarter, with 7 points coming from the charity stripe. With three minutes to go until halftime "Warriors" commanded a 16 point lead and the game looked to be as good as over. Northants persisted however, and whilst "Warriors" shots started to rim out, "Thunder's", Yates and Linas Bajorunas hit five points from the free throw to drag the score back to an 11point deficit at 25-36.

Defence was put on the sidelines by both teams after the halftime interval as a total of 50points were scored. Whilst Leicester continued to attack the rim well, Thunder's Bajorunas, Round and Thomas were combining well on the offensive end for 14 points. But it wasn't until the final three minutes of the third, that "Thunder" came out of their 'sleeping mode' and raised their game. By this time, Warriors had pushed out to a 15 point 63-48 lead, and it was going to take a small miracle for Thunder to turn the result around.

The final period play proved to be "Thunder's" most productive as they limited "Warriors" to just 10points, although they could only muster 13 points themselves. Just when it looked like "Thunder" might just claw the deficit back into single figures, "Warriors" captain Pollock scored his teams last two buckets of the game and gave them a 12point win. In a well fought contest, "Warriors" were deserving of the win, after being consistent for the majority of the game.

In the team's last game of the season Mat Yates with 28 points was the only "Thunder" player to score in double figures and that unfortunately has very much been the story of the season for Coach Rob Eddon's team. A slow start, play catch up and rely on Yates to score points. Despite the disappointment of not reaching the Play Offs Eddon was full of praise for the commitment of his players.

"Lightning Too" finish with a 'double'

Cadette Women's Midland, South-West Conference

Wiltshire "Demons"	40 – 106	Northants "Lightning Too"
Wiltshire "Demons"	38 - 105	Northants "Lightning Too"

Cancellations earlier in the season meant that the Northants cadette women's team were left with two games to play against Wiltshire "Demons. The two clubs agreed that the two games would be played 'back to back' in Wiltshire last Saturday so while the rest of the country froze the two teams met in the balmy climate of the west country.

"Demons" are a young inexperienced team who are languishing in the lower reaches of the Conference table so it was no surprise that despite two determined to performances from "Demons" "Lightning Too" recorded two decisive wins that moves them up to second place in the table although their sister team "Lightning" and Nottingham both had games 'snowed' off last weekend.

Both games last Saturday's were very similar with "Lightning Too" able to run their transition offence to good effect with "Demons" unable to cope with the Northants 'big's'. The team is now assured of a Play Off place but will have to wait to see exactly where they will finish in the final table

Improved Under 13 Girls well beaten by "Fire"

East of England Under 13 Girls League

Brentwood "Fire"	111 – 47	Northants "Lightning"
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The Northants under 13 girls suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of a rampant Brentwood "fire" team but the loss represented a big improvement for the inexperienced team from the previous game. "Fire" played an aggressive pressing defence even when the outcome of the game had been decided but Bahira Barakat handled the pressure well and Ellie Solomon managed to score 16 points. Another "Lightning" players to shone was Precious Ogaji who recorded her second successive double-double with 14 points and 18 rebounds.

THIS WEEK'S ACTION

Because of all the cancellations last weekend those games will have to be re-arranged for full details please look on the club's website which www.northantsbasketballclub.net

Huge honour for Sarah

The extraordinary talents of Sarah Round who plays for the under 14 and 15 girls teams of the Northants Basketball Club have been recognised by the sport's governing body. Sarah who is a pupil at Northampton School for Girls is one of just two English players to be invited to attend a Camp in Postojna in Slovenia.

The camp which will be held in July, is run by FIBA the European governing body with just two players from all the European nations being invited to attend so this is a massive honour for Sarah and reward for her hard work and dedication.

This season has helped both her club teams reach the end of season Play Offs as well as playing in the Northampton School for Girls under 17 team that has reached the National Schools Final.

SCHOOLS BASKETBALL

It's Final time for NSG

Dynamix Under 17 Girls Schools Championships

Loreto Vith Form College 93 – 121 Northampton School for Girls

The Northampton School for Girls under 17 team have booked themselves a place in the Final of the Dynamix Championships after a convincing win over Loreto Vith Form College from Manchester in a two leg semi-final.

NSG won the first leg 57-55 at the Amaechi basketball Centre in Manchester and were confident going into the second leg last week. Even they were surprised at the eventual ease of their 64-38 win to earn them an aggregate 121-93 win. In last week's game Lois Bain turned in an excellent defensive performance while Amy Boot and Sarah Round controlled the back court leading to a number of easy scores for Steph Ogden.

In the Final on 6th April, Karen Goodrich's team will face formidable opponents in the form of Greig City Academy from Haringey.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Brave Moulton come up just short

British Colleges Men's Midlands Men's Elite League

Moulton College 55 -59 Gateway College

When these two teams met in November of last year, Moulton returned from Leicester contemplating an 80 point defeat. Yesterdays' four point defeat therefore represented a massive improvement although the Gateway coach did sit his front line players out of the game for substantial periods of time. Even so Moulton's performance showed just how far several individuals and the team as a whole have come.

Moulton opened the game in aggressive mood rushing out to an 8-zero lead with their Amoeba zone defence forcing a number of turn overs leading to easy scores. Gateway rallied strongly and by the end of the first period of play had reduced the deficit to six points at 10-16.

Moulton opened the second quarter with two huge three-pointers from skipper Matt Yates to increase their lead to 22-10 and forcing the Gateway coach Karl Brown to introduce his leading players into the game. This allied to a full court man-to-man press caused Moulton a number of problems but Linas Bajoranas was still causing them problems and at half time Moulton still had their noses in front at 28-25.

The start of the second half saw Gateway employing a zone defence of their own and this had the effect of curtailing the Moulton scoring once their fast break offence had been stopped. Too often Moulton were guilty of over-dribbling instead of passing and too frequently they resorted to hurried three point attempts. Gateway edged the third quarter 14-12 so Moulton went into the final ten minutes holding Moulton narrow 40-39 lead.

Gateway took the lead for the first time early in the fourth quarter but Moulton were in no mood to sacrifice the game and began to attack the Gateway zone with some crisp passing and penetrative drives. They went on an 8-2 run of their own to retake the lead at 48-46 and with less than three minutes of the game remaining still led 55-51. Those closing minutes were a nightmare for Moulton. First, the referees missed a blatant foul which led to a Gateway score; then Moulton rushed an offence and from the missed shot failed to cover their back court leading to a breakaway score. Coach John Collins desperately called a time out but from their next offence his team missed an easy score and Gateway took the lead with a put back. Moulton missed yet another shot and were forced to foul and two successful free throws gave Gateway the game.

In the exciting four point loss Moulton's top scorers were Yates and Bajoranas with 20 and 18 points respectively with Byron Wing contributing 8 points. Bajoranas also pulled down an impressive 14 rebounds but he wasn't very happy with his total of nine turn overs.