

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

MEDIA RELEASE

Ipswich too big and too good for Cadet Men

Cadet Men's Play Off (1st Round)

Northants "Thunder" 64 - 81 Ipswich Basketball Club

Last Sunday the Northants "Thunder" Cadet Men faced Ipswich Basketball Club in the 1st Round of the Play Offs and went down by 17 points to a tall and well organized team.

It was the home side who started the game in dominant form, storming into an 8-2 run initiated by good full court defense which intimidated the Suffolk side. Elliott Strausa looked very impressive close to basket against bigger defenders and scored eight points within the first 5 minutes extending his team's lead to 12-9. Defensively, Thunder had their hands full in trying to contain the size and presence of Ipswich 'Big Man' Freddie Ratliff, who was collecting numerous offensive rebounds. The outsized "Thunder" were having problems containing Ratliff and this resulted in Jacob Killeya picking up three very quick fouls and things were made worse for Strausa picked up his second foul. This left "Thunder" seriously undersized and Ipswich took advantage scoring with a number of put backs which helped them to a 20-16 lead at the end of the first quarter.

During the break between quarters Coach Rob Crump emphasized the need for his players to box out. He also employed a full court press with his small line up but despite his team's best efforts Ipswich were able to extend their lead to eight points at 26-18. Eventually "Thunder's" aggression paid off and thanks to scores from Brendan Ross, Will Grosvenor and Ollie Thomas they were able to produce a 10-2 run to get the deficit down to a single point at 31-32. The physical effort expended by the Northants players proved to be decisive as Ipswich closed the period with a 14-zero run over the last three minutes of the quarter to take a 46-31 half time lead.

Crump persisted with his small line up at the start of the third period of play and his team was able to reduce the Ipswich lead to 48-34 with scores coming from Ollie Thomas Rhys Hill. Despite the "Thunder" players' working tirelessly, the size of Ipswich on the boards was proving to be a key factor and Crump was left with no alternative but to re-introduced Jacob Killeya and Elliott Strausa to the game. This improved "Thunder's" confidence and provided better balance on the floor and they were able to reduce the lead to five points at 45-50. This was a key time in the game with Ipswich looking unsure for the first time since the start of the game. Cool heads were needed but "Thunder" were guilty of making poor decisions resulting in unnecessary turnovers. The visitors were able to re-group and despite winning the quarter 18-13 "Thunder" found themselves trailing 49-59 going into the last ten minutes of play.

"Thunder" needed a massive fourth quarter, and rookie guard Jacob Round inspired his team by scoring seven consecutive points but "Thunder" were leaking points at the other end and Ipswich went on an 11-2 run and to all intent and purpose that was game over. Despite losing the services of Killeya and Strausa, "Thunder" refused to give in but they were unable to prevent Ipswich deservedly recording an 81-64 victory and advancing to the next round.

In the 17 point defeat "Thunder's" scoring was by Jacob Round with 21 points with good support coming from Rhys Hill and Ollie Thomas who both scored 10 points.

Despite not progressing to the next round of the play-offs, "Thunder" coach Rob Crump believes his team should reflect positively and be proud of their successful season which saw them go through the Conference fixtures undefeated.

Challenge Games

“Hatters” Juniors too strong for “Lightning” Cadettes

Northants “Lightning” Under 16’s

70 – 87

Sheffield “Hatters” Under 18’s

With an important Play Off game against Peckham “Pride” in the offing, Lightning Cadette Women’s coach Karen Goodrich was keen to keep her team active so she jumped at the opportunity to take on a strong Sheffield “Hatters” team who fielded several under 18 players. Goodrich gave all twelve of her players ample court time and was not too disappointed about the 17 point defeat.

For “Lightning” it was the ‘usual suspects’ who played the most prominent roles with their scoring led by Sarah Round and Charlotte Berridge who scored 19 and 17 points respectively. Ruchae Walton seemed to have recovered from her recent injury contributing 11 points while Lauren Milne and Caitlin Stewart also made significant contributions and Hari Owens rebounded impressively

Under 15 Girls just lose out to “Hatters”

Northants “Lightning” Under 15 Girls

83 – 85

Sheffield “Hatters” Under 14 Girls

The “Lightning” under 14 girls boosted by some under 15 teams fought out a tremendous battle with Sheffield “Hatters” at the Basketball Centre last Saturday.

“Lightning” were trailing 41-48 at half time with Sheffield’s Harrison contributing 34 of her team’s total. Thanks to 14 personal points from Holly Winterburn, “Lightning” put in a tremendous effort in the third period of play which they took 25-20 to get within two points of their opponents. The two teams exchanged scores at the start of the final quarter before an 8-zero “Lightning” charge gave them the lead at 78-76. “Hatters” responded with a 9-zero Harrison inspired run of their own to lead 85-78 but “Lightning” weren’t done getting the score back to 83-85 thanks to a score from Ellie Alake. Winterburn had the opportunity to take the game into overtime but she was unable to convert from the free throw line as “Hatters” held on for the win.

For “Hatters”, Harrison had a massive 57 points while “Lightning” very pleasingly had four players, Lucy Amena, Bahira Barakat, Precious Ogaji and Holly Winterburn all in double figures.

Wallhead inspired “Thunder” see of Ipswich

Northants “Thunder” Under 13 Boys

81 – 65

Ipswich Basketball Club

With the regular season over and having not made the play-offs, a friendly match was arranged between “Thunder” U13 Boys and the Under 13’s of Ipswich Basketball Club. Hosted at the Northants Basketball Centre, it proved to be a tremendous exhibition of youth basketball.

From the tip-off, both teams were well-organised at both ends of the floor and played with great energy and composure. “Thunder’s” tactic from the off was to stop Ipswich from fast-breaking and then try to contain them by playing good help defence. The teams traded baskets through the first quarter but a late score by the ever-improving Chris Amankonah gave Thunder an 18-16 lead at the first break.

In the second period of play, Ed Wallhead led a 12-0 run which opened up a gap between the two teams. At half-time, the score stood at 42-33 and it looked like “Thunder” might pull away, but Ipswich had other ideas. With a 13-2 run, they tied the game at 46 all and it was all to play for again.

Going into the final quarter, Thunder had a slender 59-54 lead so Coach Round went strong. This proved to be decisive as Thunder went on a 13-3 run and, with Ipswich getting into foul trouble, the home side able to cruise to a 81-65 victory. Ipswich proved to be very worthy opponents and at the end of the game the large crowd applauded both teams for what had been a great match. Ed Wallhead led the scoring for Northants with 38 points and he was well supported by Chris Amankonah who hit 18 points. Coach Mike Round was particularly impressed by the two debutants, Max Evans and Sam Ali-Mohamed, and the offensive rebounding of Wallhead, Amankonah and Gio Prati. Round commented, “This is all good news for next season.”

Northants teams do well in County Central Venue Leagues

The Northants Basketball Club entered two teams in last Saturday's County Central Venue League. The Under 15 Boys won their section with a played three won three record while the Under 13 Boys finished joint runners up in their group after winning one and losing three of their games.

Big weekend for Under 16 Girls and Under 14 Boys

With the Under 16 Boys and Senior Men having already been knocked out of the Play Offs, the club's last hope of glory this season lies with the Under 14 Boys and Under 16 Girls who both play this Sunday.

The girls will take on Peckham "Pride" who finished 4th in South Conference with a won 8 lost 6 record; while the boys play North Conference team York "Eagles" who were 3rd their Conference having won 12 and lost 6 of their games.

Both teams would be very grateful of all the support they can get; so get along to the Basketball Centre on Sunday and, "Make some noise."

Details of tip off times can be found below.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Sunday 6th April

1-00pm

Under 14 Boys versus York "Eagles"

(Play Off Game)

3-00pm

Cadette Women versus Peckham "Pride"

(Play Off Game)

These games will be played 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**