

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Busy weekend for Northants Basketball Club

“Lightning” go one and one in new league

The Northants “Lightning” Under 12 Girls made the long trip to Manchester to play in the first tournament of the new North of England Central Venue League and returned having won one and lost one game.

North of England Under 12 Girls Central Venue League

Merseyside “Mavericks” 38 – 59 Northants “Lightning”

Against Mersey “Mavericks” the ‘all must play’ rule benefitted “Lightning” with all ten players making significant contributions. “Mavericks” fielded one very strong player but she was well shackled by **Athena Thompson** and **Amelia Sterling** and these two topped the “Lightning” scoring with 13 points apiece as “Lightning” recorded a comfortable win

Manchester “Mystics” 76 – 36 Northants “Lightning”

After their comfortable win over “Mavericks”, the “Lightning” players were brought down to earth when they faced a very talented Manchester “Mystics” team. Confronted by a big and athletic outfit “Lightning” struggled to score but the Northants girls battled hard to the end despite suffering a heavy defeat. **Keris Ndubisi** top scored for “Lightning” with 15 points while **Athena Thompson** once again caught the eye with some determined defensive work

“Warriors complete ‘triple’ over “Thunder”

The Leicester “Warriors” club brought three teams to the Northants Basketball Centre for pre-season friendly games and the visitors won all three of the games

Pre-Season friendly games

Under 16 Boys

Northants “Thunder” 58 – 89 Leicester “Warriors”

The Northants “Thunder” Under 16 Boys began their pre-season preparations with a friendly fixture against Leicester “Warriors”. “Thunder” were hindered by the absence of several key players from their line up.

A tight first quarter saw very little between the two East Midlands based teams. **Kalen Spatcher** displayed some great energy offensively producing some determined drives to the basket causing problems “Warriors” defensive problems. An 8-zero run by the visitors saw them establish a 20-8 lead before “Thunder” led by **Ashley Kitchen**, responded with an 8-0 run of their own to reduce the deficit with “Warriors” edging the quarter 28-22.

“Thunder” started the second quarter very lethargically and “Warriors” capitalised with a 14-4 run, with “Thunder” guilty of poor transition defence. Trailing 26-42, “Thunder” began to cause “Warriors” problems with the Leicester team forced to foul, but “Thunder” were unable to convert the resulting free throws which left them trailing 34-48 at the half time.

A three pointer from **Grigori Litsai** opened the 3rd quarter supported by back to back inside scores from **Cameron Leighton**. “Thunder” were struggling offensively and they failed to convert from numerous trips to the free throw line and they were able to score just 11 points in the quarter as “Warriors” extended their lead to 65-45.

“Thunder” pushed their defence up the floor at the start of the final period of play, in an attempt to put pressure on the “Warriors” ball handlers but despite eight points from **Kris Dambrauskas** they were unable to prevent “Warriors” running out comfortable winners by 89 points to 58.

For “Thunder”, **Ashley Kitchen** led their scoring with 18 points, supported by **Kris Dambrauskas** and **Grigori Litsai** with 13 and 11 points respectively.

Coach Rob Crump commented “It was difficult to prepare for the new campaign missing several players. Regardless, as a team we must be prepared and ready for the unexpected, whilst this was an opportunity for players to step up and challenge for spots on the team. The outcome of the game was not significant, but we must improve stopping teams scoring in transition. We conceded far too many lay ups.”

	<u>Under 14 Boys</u>	
Northants “Thunder”	55 -76	Leicester “Warriors”

This game was far more competitive than the final scoreline suggests with “Thunder” only trailing 39-46 midway through the third period. Then, over the next 12 minutes “Thunder” were outscored by 22 points to seven and it was ‘game over’ for the Northants boys who were also guilty of missing a massive 19 free throws.

“Thunder” fielded 13 players all of whom saw some action while the visitors played just seven. For some of the “Thunder” players it was their first experience of a proper game while all the “Warriors” players were experienced campaigners.

In the 21 points defeat **Tom Greenfield** top scored with 16 points and he was well supported by **Dyland Dominic** who contributed 13. Coach John Collins was pleased that nine of his players contributed to the final total but the team can expect another tough game this Saturday when they travel to Birmingham for their first Conference game of the season

	<u>Under 12 Boys</u>	
Northants “Thunder”	21 – 60	Leicester “Warriors”

A very young and inexperienced “Thunder” team suffered a heavy loss at the hands of a “Warriors” team that was bigger physically and much more ‘street-wise’. “Thunder” were guilty of giving the ball away far too easily resulting in breakaway scored for the visitors who dominated all four periods of play. All ten of the “Thunder” players battled hard defensively but many of them are still learning the game and this game proved to be just a little too much for them.

Encouraging ‘double’ for “Lightning”

With no national competition for Under 13 Girls the Northants Club has entered two teams in the Under 14 National League one team playing a year young. Both teams were in action last Saturday and both came up with encouraging wins

	<u>Under 13 Girls</u>	
Northants “Lightning”	56 – 50	Solent “Kestrels”

With nine capable players, “Lightning” benefitted from the ‘all must play rule’ which has been adopted for the National League this season. “Lightning’s” strength in depth saw them take a 22-6 first quarter lead which they maintained until the half time break.

In the third period of play “Kestrel’s”, Goddard began to cause the “Lightning” defence as the south coast team outscore “Lightning” 21-10 to close the gap to six points going into the final quarter.

Needing someone to contain Goddard, Coach Karen Goodrich turned to her youngest player, **Athena Thompson** and the rookie did a great job over the final ten minutes restricting the Solent 'star' to just six further points. The final period of play was tied 14 all, "Lightning" holding on for a 56-50 win which they just about deserved.

For the Northants team there was a good spread of scoring with **Latesha Betsy** leading the way with 12 personal points, **Ashia King** rebounded well while Coach Goodrich made mention of the contribution of **Deyarna Singh-Hurditt**.

Under 14 Girls
Northants "Lightning" 54 – 45 Brentwood "Fire"

With just seven players, Brentwood were unable to comply with the 'all must play' rule and initially this benefitted them as "Lightning" freely rotated their players. However, towards the end of the game "Fire" were clearly fatigued and "Lightning" were able to take the game with a strong finish. "Fire" rushed out to a 13-zero lead after eight minutes of play and "Lightning" were playing catch up for the next 30 minutes. Brentwood led 23-16 at half time and were still ahead 34-26 going into the final period of play but "Lightning" were boosted by a **Fiona Arthur** three-pointer at the close of the third quarter.

As the Brentwood players visibly tired their defence became more and more zone like but a 9-zero "Lightning" run saw them tie the scores at 40 all. Coach Goodrich gave free reign to her perimeter sharp shooters **Arthur** and **Lucie Wilson-Gray** and they responded with three baskets from beyond the arc to clinch the game for "Lightning" as the home side closed the contest with a 14-2 rush.

In the nine points win **Arthur** and **Wilson-Gray** connected with six three-pointers between them as they scored 20 and 16 points respectively. **Leisha Easton** rebounded well while **Elouise Gregory** did a great defensive job on "Fire's" six feet plus centre.

Mennell injury a blow for "Thunder" senior men's team.

The "Thunder" senior men's team will go into the first game of the season against City of Birmingham "Rockets" this Sunday without the services of sharp shooting **Sam Mennell**. The off-guard fractured his hand at the end of last Thursday's practice and will be side lined for several weeks. "Thunder" will be further handicapped by the absence of power forward **Jacob Holt** who is on vacation

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 22nd September

9.30-11.00am	Junior "Ballers" Session
11.30am	Under 13 Girls vs Norfolk "Inceni"
	Under 16 Girls vs Leicester "Warriors"
2.00pm	Under 16 Boys vs Worcester "Bears"
4.00pm	Under 14 Girls vs "Ipswich "Bobcats"
6.00pm	Under 18 Boys vs Oaklands "Wolves"

These games and the "Ballers" session will take place at the **Northants Basketball Centre** which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill road, Northampton

Under 14 Boys travel to City of Birmingham II

Sunday 23rd September

Under 12 Boys travel to West Bromwich to play West Bromwich and Worcester.
Senior Men travel to City of Birmingham "Rockets"

For more information on this Press Release contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151