

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Men's Division 3 South Conference Northants "Thunder" versus Eastside "Eagles"

For the second week running the Northants senior men were left without a game when Eastside "Eagles" were unable to raise a team. The Northants Club understands that "Eagles" have withdrawn from the National League.

National Cup Round 1 Nottingham "Hoods" 77 – 53 Northants "Thunder"

After three weeks of enforced inactivity the Northants senior men finally got onto court last Sunday when they took on 2nd Division Nottingham "Hoods" in a National Cup game. Without any competitive preparation it wasn't surprising that "Thunder" made a tentative start to the game. They were guilty of 'coughing up' the ball on too many occasions leading to easy scores for "Hoods".

Trailing 9-21 after the first quarter "Thunder" were far more competitive in the second period of play which the Nottingham team took 15-13 to lead 36-22 at the half. During that quarter Matt Yates did a good job of shutting down former BBL player "Tin Tin" Watts and for the rest of the game "Thunder" remained competitive without ever threatening to close the gap. They lost the third and fourth quarters 16-22 and 15-19 respectively, struggling at the offensive end throughout the game.

In the 24 points defeat newcomer Devane Reynolds-Anderson top scored with 12 points while Matt Yates and Omar Arelone both contributed nine points. For "Hoods", Watts led the way with 18 points.

Junior Men go down to coachless "Mets"

Junior Men's Midland Conference Northants "Thunder" 51 – 66 Birmingham "Mets"

After their encouraging win the previous week the Northants junior men slipped to a disappointing defeat at the hands of a short-handed Birmingham "Mets" team who lost the services of their coach midway through the third quarter.

From the start of the game "Thunder" struggled against the athletic "Mets" and they went three minutes before opening their scoring. Their problems continued throughout the first quarter and "Thunder" found themselves trailing 8-17 at the end of the period, all eight of their points coming from David Nieva.

"Thunder" were more competitive in the second period of play but still struggled to score with "Mets" gaining encouragement from numerous blocked shots with the "Thunder" 'bigs' failing to use fakes to get their opponents airborne. Despite this a 6-2 run for "Thunder" closed the gap to just five points but then they were hit by an 8-2 "Mets" charge as they opened up a 33-23 half time lead.

The pattern of the game continued at the start of the third period with "Mets" extending their lead to 40-25 before their coach was ejected from the game for questioning the decisions of the referee's once to often. This was a huge opportunity for "Thunder" to take the game against a coachless "Mets" and a 12-zero run got the score to 37-40 before "Mets" responded with the last four points of the quarter.

Those two scores seemed to boost the visitor's confidence and they opened the final stanza with a 9-2 run to open up a 14 point lead which they held on to for the rest of the game.

In the disappointing loss David Nieva with 26 points led the "Thunder" scoring but no other Northants player could get into double figures something that coach Darius Maldutis will have to address during this week's practices.

Cadets too strong for Mansfield second string

Cadet Boy's East Conference

Northants "Thunder" 96 – 43 Mansfield "Giants II"

The Northants cadet boys proved to be far too strong for a young but determined Mansfield "Giants" second string eventually running out winners by over 50 points. After a nervous start which saw them trailing 3-7, "Thunder" were able to get into their stride and hit their opponents with a 23-2 blitz capitalising on a number of turnovers forced by some aggressive defence.

The second period of play saw a similar pattern to the first with "Giants" scoring six points before Josh Lloyd and Ed Wallhead seized the initiative back for the Northants team. They contributed 18 of "Thunder's" 26 second quarter points as the home side extended their lead to 52-19 at half time.

With the game as good as won Coach John Collins was able to give all his players plenty of court time in the second half and he was particularly pleased with the contribution made by Tom Myers. "Thunder" won the third and fourth periods of play despite dropping back to a half court defence and trying to run a previously never practiced offence.

In the 96-43 win nine players scored with Lloyd and Wallhead dominated the "Thunder" scoring with 36 and 27 points respectively while Chris Amankonah chipped in with 13 points and Myers contributed nine.

"Hoopsterz" Under 15 Central Venue League

Duston "Hawks" 35 – 48 Northants "Thunder"
NEBC "Titans" 24 – 43 Northants "Thunder"

While "Thunder" were completing their convincing win over Mansfield eight more players were competing in the county Central Venue League. Under the guidance of young coach, Roman O'Hara "Thunder" were able to see off Duston "Hawks" and "Titans" with Tom Herron looking particularly impressive.

It was very pleasing that the Club was able to field no less than 18 players on Saturday morning

Big win for Under 14 Boys

Under 14 Boys Midlands II Conference

Shropshire "Warriors" 46 – 91 Northants "Thunder"

The Northants "Thunder" under 14 Boys started their season with a convincing victory over Shropshire Warriors. "Thunder" opened with an aggressive full court defence and they stormed into a 14-0 run with eight consecutive points coming from guard Ashley Kitchen. The home side became very unsettled resulting in them consistently turning the ball over and then "Thunder" were boosted by the introduction of Jonathan Ntumba to the game and he contributed six points at the end of the quarter whilst denying the opposition scores around the basket. Thunder boasted a 22-2 lead end of the first period of play with "Warriors" only able to score from the free throw line.

"Thunder" were encouraged to continue to display a strong appetite to score in transition and "Warriors" struggled to contain these fast break offences. "Thunder" extended their lead to 34-2 before the home side scored their first field goal. "Thunder" displayed some good team offence, with all players looking to advance the ball at every opportunity and this enabled rookies Tom Greenfield and Benas Maldutis to score their first points in the National League. "Thunder" continued to dominate the quarter and by half time had established a 51-9 lead.

The third quarter saw a more determined performance from the opposition who stormed out with a 13-zero run. Coach Rob Crump was forced to take a time out and he reminded his team that the game wasn't yet over and his team's confidence was regained when an Ally Solazzo free throw and 6 consecutive points from Kalonji Campbell broke "Warriors" momentum. Despite this improvement and back to back 3 pointers by Ashley Kitchen, "Thunder" lost the quarter 15-20 but still held a 66-29 lead going into the last period of play.

Coach Crump urged his team to win the final quarter by returning to the standards they set in the first half. "Thunder" were encouraged to focus on maintaining their spacing and the use of efficient off ball movement to improve their half court offense. Some efficient dribble penetration to the basket proved to be very effective with Cameron Leighton and Tom Cole able to convert from close to the basket. "Thunder" took the

fourth quarter 25-17 to complete a 91-46 win which saw all ten of their players scoring. Ashley Kitchen with 22 points led the “Thunder” scoring while Jonathan Ntumba contributed 20 points. Excellent support came from Kaloni Campbell with 16 points while Benas Madlutis and Tom Greenfield scored 9 and 10 points respectively in their first national league appearances.

Coach Crump commented “This was a positive performance in our first game of the season. It was pleasing to see everyone score a field goal and we showed a determined attitude to try and score in transition at every opportunity. It was also encouraging to see the team reflect on areas they are aware we need to develop in practice this week. This will give the team confidence going into our fixture against NEBC Titans next weekend.”

Under 14 Girls suffer at the hands of “Swifts”

Under 14 Girls East Conference

Southend “Swifts” 74 - 35 Northants “Lightning”

For their first game of the season a young “Lightning” team faced a trip to Essex to take on Southend “Swifts”, part of one of the best female basketball set ups in the country. Under the guidance of new coach Janis Kosnikovskis the Northants girls made a promising start to the game but as fatigue set in they were guilty of failing to staying with their players on defence. “Swifts” seized the initiative and by the end of the first quarter had established a 21-10 lead.

With “Swifts” fielding a weaker line up in the second period “Lightning” were able to force some errors and thanks to some good transition play took the period 14-6. Trailing 24-27 at half time “Lightning” could be pleased with their efforts but in the third quarter they were hit by some aggressive Southend defence which forced turn overs leading to easy scores for the home side. They won the quarter 27-6 and it was a similar story in the final period which “Swifts” took 20-5 so winning the second half by a 47-11 margin and the game by 74 points to 35.

For “Lightning” only two players were able to score led by Dina Kosnikovska with 23 points and she was well supported by Lucy Needham who scored 12 points.

Coach Kosnikovska gave all his players court time and he was pleased with the effort they gave and he felt that the experience gained from the game will be of massive benefit for them as they prepare for their next game which sees them on the road once again when they travel to Norfolk “Inceni”.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 8th October

9.30am-11.00am	Junior Ballers Session	
11-30am	Cadet Boys versus Leicester “Warriors” II”	
1-30pm	Junior Men versus Milton Keynes “Trojans”	(National Cup)
3-30pm	Senior Men versus London United	

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

Spectators are welcome and admission is **FREE**

Under 14 Boys travel to N.E.B.C. “Titans”

Sunday 9th October

Junior Men travel to Derby “Trailblazers	
Cadet Boys travel to Leicester “Riders”	(National Cup)
14 Girls travel to Norfolk “Inceni”	

For further information contact John Collins on 07801 533 151