

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Second half blitz leads to Shield Shock**

#### **National Shield Round 2**

**NEBC "Titans"                      94 – 114                      Northants "Thunder"**

A 37 point haul from Leon Henry and an unforgiving tempo were responsible for this win for the newly formed Northants men's team. "Thunder" from Division Four, saw off local rivals NEBC "Titans" from Division Three, at Weavers Sports Centre last Sunday so on the face of it, it this looks like an upset. In truth it was a result that most people in a large crowd expected. Most of the "Thunder" players have returned to their alma mater having played for Wellingborough "Phoenix" who were "Titans" in disguise.

The "Thunder" game plan was to run, run, run and press, press, press and eventually this tactic paid off but at half time they only held the narrowest of leads at 51-47. During that first half "Thunder" had looked impressive running the ball back but their defence had struggled to contain Mark Gledhill and Ghatt close to the basket and the sharp shooting of Danny Barrett.

"Thunder" maintained their up-tempo style of play at the start of the third period and possibly the turning point came when Leome Francis pulled off an enormous block and launched Leon Henry for a dunk at the other end. "Titans" were visibly rocked by this single play. "Thunder" went on a 13-5 run to take the quarter 30-23 and extend their lead to 11 points.

"Titans" were far from done but in the final period of play they weren't helped by converting only eight of fourteen free throws while Henry and Francis combined for 21 points for "Thunder" as they cruised to a 20 point victory and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Round tie against the Derby "Trailblazers" second team.

The "Thunder" coaching staff of Rob Eddon and Grahame Yates were pleased that ten of the twelve players used got on the score sheet lead by Leon Henry with 37 points. He was well supported by Leome Francis with 18 points while Merson Paul kept his cool at the free throw line in converting 12 of 15 free throws in his 22 point total.

### **Important road win for Junior Men**

#### **Junior Men's Premier Division North**

**Sefton "Stars"                      74 – 88                      Northants "thunder"**

Not for the first time a Northants team travelling north on the M.6. were delayed in traffic congestion. The latest delay mean that the Junior Men had just fifteen minutes warm up time for their Premier Division North clash against Sefton "Stars". Not surprisingly "Thunder" made a lethargic start to the game and slipped behind 7-2 after the early exchanges. Without ever looking convincing at either end of the court they had eased ahead 25-24 after the first period of play.

In the second quarter "Thunder" were still struggling offensively and found themselves 35-40 down but sparked into life in the final two minutes of the period going on a 9-zero run to lead 44-40 at half time.

"Thunder" came out for the third period of play in a more determined mood and completely dominated the quarter. They poured in 27 points while "Stars" relied almost entirely on free throws for their 17 points. In the final stanza "Thunder" extended their lead to 19 points at one time but were guilty of losing concentration in the last couple of minutes of the quarter allowing "Stars" to reduce the final deficit to 14 points.

In the 88-74 win “Thunder’s” scoring was once again dominated by Matt Yates who poured in 36 personal points but eight other players contributed to the final total; Andre Arissol looking particularly impressive in scoring 10 points. Coach Rob Eddon was very pleased with his team’s effort in a difficult venue and against determined opposition.

### **Junior Men cruise into 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Cup**

#### **Junior Men’s National Cup Round 1**

**Northants “Thunder”                      101 – 36                      City of Birmingham II**

Less than 24 hours after their long trip north the Northants “Thunder” junior men were back on court for a National Cup tie against the City of Birmingham second string. C.O.B. were ecstatic after scoring the first basket of the game but from then on struggled at both ends of the court. “Thunder” took the first period of play 33-15 then romped away with the second 30-3 to take an unassailable 63-18 half time lead.

Coach Rob Eddon was able to run a number of different player combinations and defences in the second half which was no more competitive than the first “thunder” took the half 38-18 to win the game 101-36 with all twelve players scoring led by Linas Bajorunas who had four three-pointers in his 24 point haul. Three other players Pauli Laurinolli, Lewis Mooney and Jack Thomas all scored in double figures.

### **Junior Women see off gutsy Albion**

#### **Junior Women’s South-West Conference**

**Northants “Lightning”                      60- 35                      Sporting Club “Albion”**

S.C. “Albion” arrived for this Junior Women’s South-West Conference game with just five players. Not surprisingly the visitors elected to employ a zone defence aimed at restricting “Thunder’s” scoring close to the basket. Initially “Thunder” resorted to long range speculative shots and could manage only 13 points in the first quarter. Luckily their defence was very sound and “Albion” could manage only seven points.

The same pattern continued through the second and third periods which “Thunder” won 12-7 and 12-10 so going into the final quarter “Thunder” still only led 37-24 and “Albion” were still well and truly in the hunt.

In the final quarter “Thunder” were able to pick up the tempo of their play and with the “Albion” players visibly tiring “Thunder” captain Izzy John cut loose as her team took the period 23-11 to record a 60-35 win.

In the 25 point victory Johns top scored with 25 points and she was well supported by Lois Bain and Hannah Nolan with 13 and 10 points respectively.

### **Huge back-to-back wins for Cadette Women**

#### **Under 16 Women’s Midlands South West Conference**

**Northants “Lightning”                      81 – 28                      Gloster “Jets”**

All seven “Lightning” players” had played in the junior women’s game so not surprisingly they initially struggled against “Jets”. They led throughout the first two periods of play but at half time were only ten points ahead at 34-24.

In the half time break Coach Stacey Shakespeare demanded more defensive intensity from her players and they responded superbly. “Jets”, restricted by the loss of their best players could manage only four points while “Lightning” poured in 47 to take the game 81-28.

In the 53 point win Rion Blessyn (23 points and double figure rebounds) and Steph Ogden (22 points and double figure steals) both recorded double-doubles.

### National Cup Round 1

**Northants "Lightning"                      107 – 22                      Reading "Rockets"**

Against a keen and enthusiastic but very inexperienced Reading team the Northants "Lightning" cadette women cruised in to the second round of the National Cup.

The game was virtually one way traffic throughout although to their credit the "Rockets" players never gave in. For the most part the visitors were limited to shooting under pressure with Rio Blessyn and Christa Maphosa ripping down rebounds and Amy Boot and Steph Ogden launching fast break attacks. The person on the end of a large number of these breaks was Lauren Brookes who finished superbly and amassed an impressive 40 point haul. She was well supported by Ogden and Boot with 27 and 16 points respectively while Hannah Nola chipped in with 10 points.

### **Too little too Late for Thunder**

#### Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

**City of Birmingham                      85 – 64                      Northants "Thunder"**

The Northants under 15 boys travelled to the West Midlands for a Midlands Conference game against City of Birmingham and returned home on the wrong end of a 85-64 score line. Initially "Thunder" were rocked by a full court press from the athletic C.O.B. team which saw the home side jumping out to a 20-12 lead after the first period of play.

The Northants boys regrouped in the second quarter which saw them gain more control over the game tempo but nevertheless they lost it 16-13 to trail 25-36 at the interval. "Thunder" were unable to maintain this improvement in the third period during which they scored 21 points but leaked 33 to give C.O.B. an unassailable 69-46 lead.

With Ed Hall, Jacob Killeya and Brendan Ross working hard and getting excellent support from Carlo Nieva, Jacob Round and Ollie Thomas in the back court "Thunder" were very competitive in the final quarter which they lost 18-16 finally going down by 21 points. The team return to Birmingham this weekend to take on the "Bulls".

### **Under 15 Girls find the gong tough against relentless "Wildcats"**

#### Under 16 Women's Midlands South West Conference

**Nottingham "Wildcats"                      81 – 39                      Northants "Lightning"**

The Northants "Lightning" under 15 girls team playing a year young in the Cadette Women's League made the trip to Nottingham last Saturday and found out exactly what is needed to compete at the 'next level'.

In the first quarter which "Wildcats" edged 17-15, "Lightning" played excellent defence and coped with Nottingham's pressure defence well. Charlotte Berridge scored six points and Lauren Milne showed some excellent skills close to the basket. "Wildcats" dominated the second period of play outscoring "Lightning" 21-9 but with the half time score at 38-24 the Northants girls were still in the game.

Coach Karen Goodrich was playing all twelve of her players and one or two of them found it difficult to cope with the "Wildcats" pressure and with guard Sarah Round injured "Lightning" struggled to run any kind of structured offence. The whole second half was little less than carnage as "Lightning" were outscored 15-43 finally losing 60-35 to a team who are likely to be one of the toughest in the Conference.

In the heavy defeat Lauren Milne top scored with 14 points while Charlotte Berridge totalled eight.

## **Under 14 Boys go down to “Titans” again**

### **Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference**

**NEBC “Titans”**

**106 – 82**

**Northants “Thunder”**

Just a week after going down to “Titans” on their own court the Northants under 14 boys made the short trip to Wellingborough to take on their local rivals again. Both teams were boosted by the addition of players who had been playing for the East Midlands the previous weekend but the result once more was a convincing win for “Titans.

Coach Mickey Paul felt that his team had made some improvement from the previous week’s defeat but was still concerned that his team’s scoring was dominated by just two players with Jacob Round scoring 36 points and David Nieva with 28 points

“Thunder” were guilty of making a slow start and found themselves trailing 22-2 after just six minutes of play. “Thunder” did recover in the rest of the first period of play and after a free scoring second quarter trailed 42-66

By now “Thunder” were up for the challenge but despite their best efforts couldn’t close the gap eventually losing the second half 40-38 to go down by 106 points to 82.

### **Other Games**

The Midlands Conference Under 14 Girls game against NASSA was postponed because NASSA couldn’t raise a team while a mixed Under 12’s team went unbeaten in their pool in the Northants Central Venue League. Coach Mike Round was full of praise for all of his players.

## **COLLEGE BASKETBALL**

### **Moulton Men hammered by Gateway**

#### **British Colleges Men’s Midlands Elite League**

**Gateway College**

**115 – 30**

**Moulton College ‘A’**

The Moulton College ‘A’ team made the short journey to Leicester for this BCS Elite League fixture against Gateway College last Wednesday without three of their leading players. They knew it was going to be a tough game against a team fielding seven of last season’s team, and so it proved. Gateway went off like an express team pouring in 15 unanswered points in the first five minutes of play. Most of these scores came because the Moulton players were put under so much defensive pressure that they turned the ball over leading to easy Gateway baskets.

Moulton eventually got on the scoreboard thanks to an inside move from Linas Bajournas but from then until the end of the quarter it was a question of one for us three for them. Gateway had recognised the threat of Matt Yates were he was being closely man-to-man marked. This forced other Moulton players into ball handling duties and on the day it proved too much for them and by the end of the first period of play Gateway had opened up a 27-9 lead.

The second quarter was to prove to be Moulton’s best with Yates escaping his marker to score a couple of baskets while Derice McLeod twice scored with drives to basket. Gateway took the period 28-16 to take the score to 55-25 at half time.

During the half time interval Coach John Collins tried to emphasise the importance of personal performance rather than the game score but his advice seemed to fall on deaf ears. Far too many of the Moulton players were playing as if they were in a pick-up game in the local park and when Yates picked up a calf injury things looked bleak for the Moulton cause. So it proved with the third quarter turning into an absolute nightmare. Gateway poured in 34 points while Moulton could manage not a single score. The avalanche continued in the fourth quarter during which time Moulton were outscored 26-5 to make the second half scored 60 to five and an afternoon the Moulton players will want to forget.

In the 115 to 30 beating Lina Bojournas top scored with nine points and Derice McLeod managed eight.

## THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

### Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October

12-30pm  
2-30pm

Cadet Men versus Cheshire "Jets"  
Junior Men versus Cheshire "Jets"

Both these games will be played at the **Kingsthorpe Community College** which is situated in Boughton Green Road, Northampton NN2 7HR

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 13 Boys travel to Reading "Rockets"  
Under 15 Boys travel to Birmingham "Bulls"  
Under 15 Girls travel to Solent "Suns"  
Junior Women travel to Buck "Hornets"

### Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October

Senior Men travel to Leicester "Warriors II"  
Cadet Men travel to Notts Nova