

# NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

## PRESS RELEASE

### VCars Senior Men's Division Four

Leicester "Warriors II"

73 -87

Northants "Thunder"

The Northants senior men opened their VCars Division 4 campaign with a scrappy win over the Leicester Warriors second team. "Thunder" were guilty of rushing their offences in the first quarter and this led to numerous turn-overs but thanks to eight points on the break from Leon Henry they took the period 22-18.

"Warriors" were employing a zone defence in order to stop the Northants players penetrating to basket and again in the second quarter, "Thunder" were guilty of rushing things and turning the ball over too frequently. The two teams exchanged baskets for most of the quarter until a late "Thunder" burst coupled with two three-pointers from Jonny Yates gave them the period 26-18 to establish a 48-34 half time lead.

In the third quarter "Thunder" were guilty of 'taking their foot off the gas' and suddenly "Warriors" began to hit shots from all over the floor. When Leicester did miss Leome Francis and Nick Waller were clearing up the defensive rebounds but "Thunder" were unable to launch their trade mark fast breaks and "Warriors" edged the period 23-15 to get themselves back in the game at 63-57

There was still a six point gap with four minutes of the game remaining but by this time the "Warriors" players were beginning to look fatigued. For their part "Thunder" were still playing without any great focus and the Leicester outfit were kept in the game from the free throw line. Inside the last ninety seconds of the game "Thunder" managed to pick up four quick steals and breakaway buckets, to give them a rather flattering 87-73 win.

In the 15 point win Leon Henry dominated the scoring with 31 points; good support coming from Merson Paul with 13 points while Leome Francis scored 12 points and rebounded superbly.

### **National Award for Karen Goodrich**

Last Sunday at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre, Karen Goodrich was presented with the English Schools Basketball Association's prestigious *Dave Fisher Award for Services to Coaching*. Even more significant is the fact that she was actually proposed by the ESBBA Executive rather than someone from her own school or club.



Karen currently coaches with the Northants Basketball Club and at Northampton School for Girls where she has led teams to two national titles most recently last season with the school's under 15

team. At present she is coaching two teams in the National League as well as fulfilling her duties as Head Coach at N.S.G.

Karen's coaching career started when she was a pupil at Kingsthorpe Upper School when her former teacher, Martin Spencer took her to the National Mini Basketball Festival in 1982. During her playing career with Avon Cosmetics and Northampton 76ers Karen became more and more involved with coaching young players. Her enthusiasm for her chosen sport was illustrated when she gave up her secure job at Nationwide Building Society to job share as a Northamptonshire Basketball Development officer.

Karen's talents have previously been recognised with her appointment as an East Midlands coach and for six years she has served as head coach of the East Midlands Area Performance Centre.

Miranda Marketis the chairman of the Northants Basketball Club commented, "We have always known what a great coach Karen Goodrich is and it is wonderful that her talents have been recognised by the English Schools Basketball Association. We are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated coach in the Club at a time when it is going from strength to strength."

### **Below par Junior Men go down to "Jets"**

#### **Junior Men's Premier Division North Northants "Thunder"                      81 – 99                      Cheshire "Jets"**

After their big Cup win the previous week the Northants "Thunder" went into this Premier Division North game against Cheshire "Jets" in optimistic mood; but in a game of over fifty fouls they came off second best. This despite a 37 point haul from Matt Yates backed up by 19 points from Leiws Mooney a total which included six successful three-point shots.

"Thunder" made the worst of all possible starts quickly slipping behind 3-10. Perimeter hits from Mooney and Kyle Mayes reduced the damage but time and time again they were hurt by "Jets" pick and roll offence. The "Thunder" players were complaining about the over physicality of the 'rolling' aspect of this play but in truth the problems lay with poor defensive technique and by the end of the first quarter the visitors had extended their lead to 30-18.

A large crowd were left in no doubt that Coach Rob Eddon wasn't very pleased with his player's approach to the game as he laid into them during the break between periods. His word were well received as his team inspired by 16 points from Yates, went on a 22-9 run to take the lead. Regrettably, they couldn't maintain their efforts and amidst the confusion of protests, time outs and a technical foul on the Northants bench "Jets" were able to re-group and went into half time leading by 50 points to 46.

"Jets" took the third period of play 22-16 to extend their lead to double figures with "Thunder" not helping their cause by missing no less than eight free throws.

A grandstand finish was expected but the final stanza was punctuated by a plethora of free throws (26 in all) and neither team was able to establish any kind of rythmn. "Jets" were able to maintain their lead and finished the game the stronger of the two teams as a number of "Thunder" heads went down. Cheshire took the quarter 27-19 to earn a rather flattering 99-81 vistory.

For "Thunder" in addition to Mooney and Yates, only Kyle Mayes and Linas Bajorunas with 9 and 8 points respectivley made any significant scoring contributions.



With Arissol back in the game in the third quarter “Thunder” were more competitive despite going through the first six minutes without scoring. Too often they resorted to speculative long range shots which rebounded from the unforgiving rings while at the other end Nova scored freely from close to the basket.

Leading 63-32 going into the fourth quarter Nova gave their bench players considerable court time. This allowed “Thunder” to stage a late recovery winning the period 15-14 but still ending up on the wrong end of a 77-47 score line.

For “Thunder” Arissol battled to the end and finished with 15 points; Pauli Laurinolli contributed 11 points but no other “Thunder” player could score in double figures

### **No problems for Under 15 Boys**

#### **Under 15 Boys Midland Conference**

**Birmingham “Bulldogs”                      40 - 90                      Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants Thunder Under 15’s travelled to Birmingham for the second consecutive weekend to take on the City of Birmingham Bulldogs who are the City of Birmingham second string.

After Bulldogs” had opened the scoring “Thunder” replied with three successive scores in transition to take a lead they wouldn’t sacrifice for the remainder of the game. The Northants boys maintained a narrow lead until the final three minutes of the quarter when thanks to some great rebounding from Jacob Killeya they went on a 9-0 run to take a 22-11 lead after the first quarter.

Despite the fact that the Birmingham team had a height advantage and were extremely athletic, “Thunder” produced an excellent defensive performance in the second period of play. Their full court defensive pressure intimidated “Bulldogs” into numerous turn overs leading to early scores. The home side were restricted to just five points in the second quarter while “Thunder” poured in 21 to take a 43-16 half time lead.

Despite this big lead Coach Rob Crump’s message to his team was to maintain their efforts in the second half. “Bulldogs” resorted into a 2-3 zone defence. Initially this caused some problems for “Thunder” not helped by missing four consecutive lay ups. Coach Crump took a time out to settle his troops and take more time on offence and thanks to 11 points from Ed Hall they re-grouped to take the period 23-7 and extend their lead to 66-23.

With the game as good as won “Thunder” were able to field a very mobile five and thanks to their tireless defensive efforts Will Grosvenor and Ollie Thomas were able to make steals while the Nieva brothers Carlo and David scored freely as “Thunder” closed out a conclusive 90-40 win.

In the 50 point victory Ed Hall Carlo Nieva and led the “Thunder” scoring with 30 and 23 points respectively while good support came from Jacob Killeya with 17 points

### **Berridge stars as Under 15 Girls triumph**

#### **Under 16 Girls Midlands South Conference**

**Solent “Suns”                      40 - 71                      Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants “Thunder” under 15 girls playing a year young in the Cadette League made the long journey to Southampton to take on Solent “Suns” and returned having recorded a convincing 71-40 win.

The win was based on “Lightning’s” ability to capitalise on their opponent’s poor defensive transition and their inability to shoot from the perimeter. After a close first quarter which “Lightning” edged 20-17 they totally dominated proceedings. Time and time again “Suns” shot and missed, Ruchae Walton hauled down the rebound and out-letted to Sarah Round who fed Charlotte Berridge for lay up scores.

Coach Karen Goodrich was delighted that nine of her players were able to make scoring contributions but it was Berridge with 23 points who dominated her team’s scoring. Round contributed 11 points while Walton had a massive 22 rebounds to go with her eight points.

## **Traffic one, Basketball nil**

### **Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference** **Under 13 Boys travel to Reading “Rockets”**

Unfortunately, severe traffic problems robbed the U13 Boys of their first league win of the season. Although they left in good time for their game, the team eventually arrived in Reading after 20'clock. Officials of the Reading “Rockets” were extremely understanding and the league fixture will now be played later in the season.

A decision was taken to play a shortened friendly and it was clear from the off that Northants were going to be too strong for the “Rockets”. “Thunder” eased off defensively and took the opportunity to run through its rotation offence with some success. Coach Mike Round was pleased with the ball movement and the fact that there was a good spread of scoring across the team as “Thunder” cruised to a 56-24 win. However, the game highlighted that the Thunder players will need to concentrate on finishing better if they are to compete with the stronger teams in the division. Notable performances came from Laurence Williams, who played well at both ends of the floor, and debutant Ed Wallhead.

### **THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION**

Next weekend no less than seven of the Club's team are in action but all of them are 'on the road' so regrettably there are no games for fans of the club to watch

#### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November**

Senior Men travel to Bromsgrove “Bears”  
Under 14 Girls travel to “Youngbloods”  
Under 15 Boys travel to Coventry “Trojans”  
Cadet Men travel to Leeds Carnegie  
Cadette Women travel to Solent

#### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November**

Senior Men travel to Sporting Club Albion  
Junior Men travel to Leeds Carnegie  
Under 14 Boys travel to Notts Nova  
Under 13 Boys travel to NEBC “Titans”