

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Last weekend nine teams from the Northants Basketball Club fulfilled no less than thirteen National League and Cup fixtures. Those games involved travelling as far afield as Bristol and Warrington and of the thirteen games seven were won and six resulted in losses. A massive thank you must go to the eighteen coaches, managers, drivers and helpers who gave so generously of their time to make sure these games took place

Junior Men edged out by Cheshire “Juniors”

Junior Men’s Premier Division North

Cheshire Juniors 72 – 61 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants junior men took on the talented Cheshire Juniors last Saturday and earned praise from Coach Rob Eddon who commented, "This was a fantastic effort by all involved, in a well battled game played in good spirit. The things we got wrong are all things we can improve on. Our attitude today was first class, and our teamwork at both ends got us so close."

After their long journey “Thunder” were ‘fast out of the blocks’ racing out to an 8-1 lead. The home side battled back and despite two scores from Luke Lewis Juniors led 20-17 after the first period of play. In the second quarter Cheshire employed a pressure zone defence but thanks to the cool heads of Lewis and Jack Thomas “Thunder” was able to negotiate it without difficulty and Linas Bajorunas was able to score freely. “Thunder” went on a 12-2 run to take the lead but once again Cheshire responded well and at half time had taken a 37-33 lead.

Cheshire were keen to extend their narrow lead but once again the Northants boys were in no mood to capitulate with Lewis, Thomas and Lewis Mooney all connecting from beyond the three-point arc. “Juniors” edged the period 16-15 and with the score standing at 53-48 going into the last quarter “Thunder” were still well in contention.

Coach Eddon called for a massive effort from his players and they responded magnificently and midway through the final period they had taken a 2 point lead. By now fatigue and players in foul trouble were playing a major part in the contest and Cheshire finished the game with an 18-5 charge to take the win despite the best efforts of the “Thunder” players.

In the very creditable nine point set back captain Luke Lewis led from the front with 16 points while Coach Eddon was full of praise for his whole team making special mention of the defensive efforts of Jack Thomas, the all-round play of Linas Bajorunas and the excellent rebounding of Kamesi Fawehinmi who was playing his first game for the team.

Junior Women’s South-West Conference

Bristol “Storm 36 - 66 Northants “Lightning”

After a long journey to Bristol the Northants junior women completed a routine win over determined Bristol “Storm” team. Throughout the game “Lightning” totally dominated the rebounding department thanks to the efforts of Lois Bain, Karla Pinney and Rion Blessyn. This meant that the home team were for the most part, restricted to just one shot.

Leading 36-16 at half time “Lightning” had to withstand a spirited rally by “Storm” but the final result was never really in doubt as “Lightning” closed out a routine victory as they were able to look forward to their Cup game the following day.

In the 30 point win Izzy Johns led her team’s scoring with 24 points. Lois Bain contributed 14 points to her team’s total while Karla Pinney and Rio Blessyn scored 10 points apiece. Coach Stacey Shakespeare was delighted about her team’s win and paid tribute to the defensive efforts of all her players.

Under 15 Girls lose their way against “Warriors”

Cadette Women’s Midlands South-West Conference

Northants “Lightning” 42 – 85 Herts “Warriors”

This was truly a game of two halves with the Under 15 Girls showing themselves well capable of competing with the very best in the first two periods of play then totally collapsing in the third and fourth quarters.

Some assured offensive play and determined defence meant that at half time “Lightning” were only trailing “Warriors” by 30 points to 38 and they were well in the game. During those first two periods Ruchae Walton, Hari Owens and Lauren Milne had rebounded superbly giving Sarah Round every opportunity to run the show while Caitlin Stewart was looking impressive at both ends of the court.

What happened after half time remains a mystery to Coach Karen Goodrich. Her team, so composed in the first half totally collapsed under the “Warriors” pressure defence. A plethora of turn overs led to a number of easy scores for the visitors and “Lightning” were outscored 49-12 in those final two periods of play to put a rather unrealistic look to final score.

In the disappointing defeat only Round with 12 points scored in double figures and the whole team were left to contemplate the long journey to Bristol for a Cup game the next day.

Team effort sees Under 15 Boys past Derby

Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 75 -30 Derby “Trailblazers”

An excellent all round team effort earned the Northants Under 15 Boys a comfortable 45 point win over a game Derby Trailblazers team. In the early stages of the game it was obvious that the Derby ball handlers were going to struggle against “Thunder’s” full court pressure defence. This pressure forced a number of turn overs leading to easy scores for the Northants boys and by half time they had established a significant 44-18 lead.

It was more of the same in the third and fourth periods of play with “Trailblazers” never giving up but shipping points at an alarming late. “Thunder” took the second half to win the game 75-30 with 22 points coming from the influential Jacob Round and 16 points from Jacob Killeya. Excellent support came from Josh Arimoro, Will Grosvenor and Brendan Ross but Coach Udi Uyduran was quick to emphasise that this had been a win for the whole team thanks to their unselfish work rate.

A weekend of mixed fortunes for Under 14 Boys

Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 72 - 43 Derby “Trailblazers”

Thunder notched up their second victory of the campaign with a good performance against a bigger Derby side. The first quarter was a good one for the home side and they went into a 13-6 lead midway through the quarter. Two quick Derby baskets bought the visitors to within three points but then Justin Trory finished off two fast breaks, Jacob Round scored a further five unanswered points and Thunder too a 23-10 lead into the second quarter.

The next period was a bit of a nightmare for “Thunder” as they repeatedly threw the ball away. Luckily Derby team couldn’t take full advantage of these errors but they still outscored “Thunder” 12-5 reducing the home side’s lead to 28-22 at half time.

For the third quarter Coach Mickey Paul made some slight adjustments to the “Thunder” defence and this proved to be pivotal. “Thunder” managed several steals which were converted with unopposed lay ups. With Emanuel Arimoro and Ayomide Oluyede rebounding well at both ends “Thunder” took control of the game and by the end of the third period they had extended their lead to 51-33.

The fourth period followed the same pattern and Thunder were able to see the game out by a healthy 29 point margin. Jacob Round was immense throughout the game notching 35 points despite being subjected to some strong defensive pressure; David Nieva supported well with 20 points of his own but Coach Paul was pleased with the overall team contribution.

City of Birmingham 85 – 78 Northants “Thunder”

Just 24 hours after their win over Derby, “Thunder” made the short journey up the M6 to Birmingham expecting a tough game against a COB team that had won their first four games. The “Thunder” boys started slowly and at the end of the first period when trailing 35-19 with Coach Paul fearing a heavy defeat. However the Northants boys ‘pulled their socks up’, they started to compete with more intensity and they took care of the ball when they had possession. This increased discipline resulted in “Thunder” taking the second period by 19 points to 13 with the deficit at half time down to ten points at 38-48.

The second half was a gripping contest with “Thunder” getting to within three points of their opponents but going into the final period C.O.B. had extended their lead to 11. The final quarter proved to be low scoring affair, but two three pointers from David Nieva gave Thunder hope of closing the gap but COB did enough to hang on and win the game.

In a fine team performance Jacob Round lead the scoring with a superb 45 point haul, Nieva 23 and Zubal 8 were the other notable contributors.

Under 14 Girls hold off “Warriors” late surge

Under 14 Girls Midlands South Conference

Northants “Lightning” 56 – 47 Herts “Warriors”

The Northants Under 14 Girls picked up their second win of the season with a nine point victory over local rivals Herts “Warriors”. Playing some excellent basketball “Lightning” had established a 20 point lead at half time with Caitlin Stewart, Sarah Round and Ruchae Walton all scoring freely.

“Warriors” rallied in the third period of play which was tied 14 all and as some of the “Lightning” play became sloppy and their attitude a little complacent. The Herts girls mounted a grandstand finish and this resulted in closer final score than the “Lightning” fans would have liked. “Warriors” took the final quarter 19-8 but it proved to be too little too late as “Lightning” held on for the win. Once again the standout personal performance for “Lightning” came from Walton who combined 12 rebounds with 18 points for her third double-double of the season. Round was her usual steady self scoring 12 points whilst dishing out five assists and Stewart had an excellent all-round game with 16 points, nine rebounds and five assists

Under 13 boys ‘stung’ by “Hornets”

Under 13 Boys Midlands South Conference

Bucks “Hornets” 72 - 49 Northants “Thunder”

A depleted Under 13 Boys team travelled to Aylesbury to take on Conference leaders Bucks “Hornets” and returned home on the wrong end of a 72-49 scoreline.

“Thunder” started well and were well in touch at 14-17 after the end of the first period of play but the Northants youngsters were hit by a 17-zero “Hornets” run in the second quarter which gave the home side a commanding 38-22 half time lead.

“Thunder” were very competitive through the third and fourth quarters but despite their best efforts couldn’t close the gap finally losing by 23 points with most of the damage occurring in that second period of play.

For “Thunder”, Laurence Williams led the scoring with 21 points while good support came from Ainsley Reynolds with 10 points.

Sureshot National Cup games

Junior Men cruise into 3rd Round of the Cup

Northants “Thunder”	<u>Junior Men</u> 97 – 46	Sporting Club Albion
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With precious little rest after their trip to Cheshire the Northants junior men were back on court for a National Cup game against Sporting Club Albion. Any thoughts that there might be a physical or mental hangover were quickly dispelled as the team combined some aggressive full court defence with some excellent ball movement and perimeter shooting from Lewis Mooney and Jack Thomas. With the arrival of Linas Bajorunas on-court “Thunder’s” dominance became even more evident and by the end of the first period of play they had established a 26-4 lead.

Inspired by the defensive efforts of captain Luke Lewis, “Thunder” maintained their efforts in the second quarter. Defensively George Calvey and Sam Pursey were ripping down rebounds and with Kyle Mayes and Sam Round providing a bucketful of assists “Thunder” went on a 20-4 charge which took the game well beyond the grasp of the visitors.

Leading 51-12 at half time Coach Rob Eddon experimented with some different defences in order to keep is player’s concentration. This allowed “Albion” some perimeter shooting opportunities which they were able to exploit but Pauli Laurinolli and Jack Thomas kept the scoreboard ticking over for “Thunder” who edged the period 24-20.

The final quarter of the game was a scrappy affair which saw ten “Thunder” players getting their name on the scoresheet as “Thunder” took the period 22-14 to close out a 97-46 win and earn themselves a home 3rd Round tie against the unknown non-National League outfit Surrey “Rams”

In the 51 point destruction all 11 “Thunder” players scored led by Bajorunas with 20 points. He was well supported by Thomas, Mooney and George Paul with 17, 15 and 11 points respectively, but Coach Rob Eddon was quick to praise the efforts and inspiration provided by his stand in captain Luke Lewis.

No problems for Junior Women

Northants “Lightning”	<u>Junior Women</u> 86 – 33	Chiltern “Pumas”
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The Northants junior women progressed to the quarter finals of the National Cup with a routine win over Chiltern “Pumas”. The team now face a home tie against Stockport “Lapwings”.

Against a below strength “Pumas” team, “Lightning” dominated the first period of lay which they won 17-7 but became sloppy in the extreme in the second which they only won 16-13. Leading 33-20 at half time “Lightning” was totally ruthless in the second half which they comfortable won 43-13 to record an overwhelming win.

All nine “Lightning” players contributed to the scoring led by Izzy Johns with 20 points excellent support coming from Chelsey Hallam with 14 points and Rio Blessyn with 12 points

Cadet Men exit National Cup

Northants “Thunder”	<u>Cadet Men</u> 59 - 85	Notts Nova
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Two weeks ago the Northants Cadet Men lost heavily to Notts Nova in a league game and last Sunday they exited the Sureshot National Cup after another hefty defeat. For “Thunder” this was their first game without the services of influential guard Andre Arissol. In his absence Carlo Nieva stepped up a year group and did well while other players were forced to fill in the key point guard spot.

“Thunder” made an excellent start to the game jumping out to a 15-14 first quarter lead rocking the visitors with their transition offence and some determined defence. In the second period of play Nova played some excellent basketball scoring freely from close to the basket and from the perimeter. They took the quarter 31-13 to lead 45-28 at half time and “Thunder” knew it was going to be an uphill battle from then on.

Coach John Collins was hoping that his team's height advantage might be critical and he started the third quarter with a big line up in a zone defence but Nova proved to be too mobile for the "Thunder" defence which was opened up on a number of occasions. At the offence end "Thunder", not for the first time this season, over dribbled but they kept battling hard despite losing the period 21-14.

With the tie already decided at 66-42 both teams pretty well went through the motions in the final period of play which Nova took 19-17 to record an emphatic 85-59 win which for "Thunder" was no worse than the league score.

In the 26 point loss Pauli Laurinolli top scored with 25 points with good support coming from Josh Round who scored 13 points and pulled down eight rebounds while rookie Carlo Nieva chipped in with 11 points

Mixed fortunes for Northants girls in National Cup

	<u>Cadette Women</u>	
Northants "Lightning Too"	62 - 69	Southend "Swifts"
Bristol "Storm"	37 - 40	Northants "Lightning"

Both of the Northants Under 16 Girls teams were in Sureshot National Cup action last Sunday and it was the Under 15 team that progressed to the next round. "Lightning" travelled down to Bristol to take on "Storm" with the memories of the previous day's capitulation against Herts "Warriors" in the forefront of their minds. The game turned out to be a dour low scoring affair thanks in the main to some unforgiving rigid rings with both teams struggling to score.

After tying the first quarter seven all "Lightning" edged the second 14-7 and that lead was to prove conclusive. The Northants girls increased their lead to 33-25 by the end of the third quarter but then froze during the final stanza scoring just 7 points. "Storm" sensed victory and closed the gap to just three points but "Lightning" held on for a nervy win and a tie against competition favourites Haringey "Angels" in the quarter final.

In the narrow win no "Lightning" player was able to score in double figures. Sarah Round led the way with 9 points while Ruchae Walton, Charlotte Berridge and Lauren Milne all chipped in with small contributions while Caitlin Stewart rebounded well along with Milne and Walton.

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Meanwhile at Kingsthorpe Community College the Northants Under 16 Girls were left to reflect on a poor final quarter that was responsible for their exit from the Cup. Until the last eleven minutes of the game they had held a narrow lead over "Swifts" in an enjoyable up-tempo game.

Throughout the first three periods of play "Lightning" had defended with determination with Rio Blessyn and Tara Hinds rebounding strongly. This allowed Amy Boot the opportunity to orchestrate a number of fast break offences repeatedly completed by Steph Ogden while Hannah Nolan was scoring freely from the perimeter.

A break away score late in the third period of play for "Swifts" levelled the scores at 46 all going into the final stanza and from then on it was the visitors who looked the most likely winners. They mounted a 13-4 surge with "Lightning" guilty of throwing the ball away and taking shots under pressure. "Lightning" mounted a spirited late rally but were unable to close the gap "Swifts" advancing to the quarter finals by a nine point margin.

In the disappointing defeat Ogden top scored with 20 points, Nolan slotted home 16 while Boot contributed 10 points.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

After a three week closure the floor at the Northants Basketball Centre has been replaced so all this weekend's home games will be played at The Centre.

Saturday 17th November

11-45am	Under 13 Girls versus Herts "Warriors"	
12-45pm	Junior Women versus Solent "Suns"	
3-00pm	Senior Men versus Derby "Trailblazers II"	National Shield

All these games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre.
Spectators are most welcome and admission is FREE

Cadette Women travel to Herts "Warriors"
Under 15 Boys travel to Notts Nova

Sunday 18th November

Senior Men travel to Loughborough "Riders II"
Junior Men and Cadet Men travel to Stockport "Spartans"
Under 15 Girls travel to Bristol "Storm"
Under 14 Boys and Under 13 Boys travel to Milton Keynes "Lions"

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Excellent double for Moulton College teams

British Colleges Women's Midlands League

Moulton College	55 – 21	Telford College of Art & Technology
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The Moulton College girl's team played their first game of the season and came up with a convincing win over TCAT. After a nervous start Moulton totally dominated proceedings restricting their opponents to single figures in all four periods of play.

Moulton took the first quarter 18-8 and then over the last six minutes of the third blitzed TCAT with a 12-zero run to put the final result beyond doubt. During this spell Amelia Hindle poured in nine personal points.

With the score at 42-17 at the end of the third quarter TCAT requested that the fourth quarter should be played with a 'running' clock with Moulton running out comfortable winners by 55 points to 21.

In the 34 point win Shanique Alexander top scored with 19 points, Hindle supported well with 13 points while Livvie Lambe scored 12 points but Coach Karen Goodrich made special mention of the defensive efforts of Charlotte Walker

British Colleges Men's Midlands Elite League

Moulton College 'A'	58 -52	T.C.A.T.
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The college 'A' team won their first game of the season with a six point triumph over TCAT but they almost snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. Midway through the third quarter Moulton were leading 45-19 but then seemed to doubt their ability to close out the game. Their defence so secure until then began to look porous while on offence easy shots were missed and many shots forced up under pressure. TCAT went on a 24-4 run on either side of the quarter break and suddenly the visitors were back in the game. A time out by Coach John Collins calmed proceedings down and Moulton picked up a well deserved win.

For twenty-five minutes of the game Moulton were totally in control coping well with TCAT's press defence then coolly demolishing their zone. For Moulton Byron Wing and Linas Bajorunas were operating well close to the basket while Kyle Mayes converted six, three-point shots.

Coach Collins was full of praise for all nine of his players who will be boosted by the win despite TCAT's big comeback

Moulton's leading scorers were Mayes and Wing with 19 points while Bajorunas supported well with 13 points and like Wing he recorded a double-double pulling down a dozen rebounds.