

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

“Thunder” get back to winning ways with excellent road win.

Men’s National League Division 3

South Conference

Thames Valley II

77 -88

Northants “Thunder”

The Northants senior men picked up their third National League win of the season only to find one those wins had been removed after news that London United have dropped out of the league. Against bottom of the table Thames Valley II, “Thunder” might have been expected to have won more convincingly but they were forced to hang around for fully 45 minutes after the scheduled start time because of a Cadet Boys National Cup match.

No team likes this to happen and not surprisingly “Thunder” made a lethargic start to the game falling 18-23 behind after the first period of play. Coach Grahame Yates demanded that his team raised the intensity of their defence in the second quarter and his players responded superbly taking the period by 28 points to 20 to lead 46-43 at half time.

Spurred on by Matt Yates from the back court “Thunder” were able to maintain their momentum after the interval and despite some good three point shooting from the home side they edged the period 21-16 to extend their lead to 67-59. Jacob Holt was in good from and his efforts kept “Thunder” ahead as the two teams exchanged scores during the fourth quarter.

In the 11 point victory it was Holt who top scored for “Thunder” 22 points, Yates contributing an impressive 21 points while Devon Adams and ‘Tony’ Sarrio both made important points scoring contributions.

Next up for “Thunder” will be another road trip, this time to Cardiff Met “Archers” who a few weeks ago recorded a similar win to “Thunder’s” over the Thames Valley second string.

Nightmare fourth period is fatal for the Junior Men against Notts Nova

Junior Men’s Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder”

52 – 58

Notts Nova

In a low scoring game a short-handed Northants junior men’s team slipped to a disappointing defeat against Notts Nova. After holding a 15-11 lead after the first period of play, “Thunder” produced a sloppy second quarter and were outscored 22-10 by Nova who held a 33-25 half time lead.

“Thunder” came out for the third period of play in determined mood and thanks to the efforts of David Nieva and Jaz Campbell outscored their opponents 24-15 to ease ahead 49-48 going into the final stanza. What happened in that final ten minutes was a pure nightmare with “Thunder” managing just four points while Nova scored 10 to run out unlikely winners.

In the disappointing loss Nieva and Shekina Ntumba led the “Thunder” scoring with 18 and 15 points respectively, good support coming from Campbell with 11 points.

Under 14 Boys hold on to beat City of Birmingham II

Under 14 Boys East Midlands II Conference
City of Birmingham II 57 – 65 Northants “Thunder”

Watched by NBA Legend Hakeem “The Dream” Olajuwon the Northants under 14 boys recorded their second consecutive win when they defeated the City of Birmingham second team by eight points. The only disappointment for “Thunder” was the margin of their win because going into the final period of play they held a healthy 21 point lead only to be outscored 19-6 in that period.

“Thunder” began the game in dominant style applying some strong full court defence and causing C.O.B. to panic on offense. The pressure forced numerous turnovers allowing Thunder to storm into a 24-2 run, with 16 points coming from Jonathan Ntumba. Thunder continued to apply defensive performance especially through Benas Maldutis who was responsible for unsettling the C.O.B. ball handler. Despite a 6-zero run from the home side, “Thunder” led 27-8 at the end of the quarter, 19 of those points coming from Ntumba.

With “Thunder” boasting a strong lead Coach Rob Crump was able to rotate all his players and with C.O.B. applying an aggressive run and jump defence the home side produced an 8-2 run. Ashley Kitchen calmed “Thunder’s” nerves with a three pointer but it couldn’t prevent C.O.B. winning the quarter 18-15, so reducing “Thunder’s” lead to 42-26.

Both teams produced runs in the third quarter the highlight of the period being another ‘trey’ from Kitchen who executed some excellent offensive footwork to break free from his defender. So “Thunder went into the final quarter with a 21 point lead; and the game looking out of reach for the home side. They did produce an impressive 13-zero run over the final three minutes of the game including a three pointer in the dying seconds of the contest to reduce the deficit to single figures but it was too little too late with “Thunder” holding on for the victory.

Jonathan Ntumba produced an excellent performance scoring 31 points and he was well supported by Ashley Kitchen with 18 points, including two 3 pointers.

Coach Crump commented “This was a positive win away from home especially as we were only able to field seven players; and we were predominantly a very young team. The boys did an excellent job in the first quarter producing a strong lead; whilst we did not panic and coped with the full court defensive pressure presented by City of Birmingham”.

“We had a slight mental lapse in the 4th quarter; allowing COB to score 13 consecutive points in the final 3 minutes of the game. However, the boys are showing development and learning from previous performances. Next week will be a much tougher challenge, when we face another trip to Birmingham to face undefeated Team Elite Birmingham”

Under 14 Girls are second best at County Upper

Under 14 Girls East Conference
County Upper “Wolves” 57 - 41 Northants “Lightning”

The Northants under 14 girls travelled to Bury St Edmunds last Saturday to take on County Upper “Wolves” and although they survived the A14 they came out second best against one of the top teams in the Conference.

Bothe teams made a nervous start to the game and the first quarter was a low scoring affair which “Lightning” edged 9-8 with Dina Kosnikovska coming off the bench to score six points but “Lightning” were fortunate that “Wolves” missed a number of very makeable shots.

The second period of play saw “Lightning” alternate between periods of excellent hustle and failure to mark players effectively. The home side won the quarter 14-10 but trailing by just three points at 19-22 “Lightning” could be proud of their efforts in the first half.

Coach Janis Kosnikovska opened the third quarter with a strong ‘five’ in the hope of seizing the initiative but he was badly let down by his players who were guilty of multiple errors. On numerous occasions they made passing errors or dribbled into trouble. “Wolves” took the quarter 18-9 to leave the Northants girls with an uphill task in the final period.

“Lightning” ended the game in a much more positive fashion only losing the last period of play 13-17 to go down by 41 points to 57 but there were a lot of positives to take from the game not least of all the fact that five players contributed to the final points tally. The scoring was led by Lucy Needham with 16 points while Sade Chambers and Poppy Barnett enjoyed their best games of the season.

National Cup 3rd Round Action

Huge win for Cadet Boys as they see off Premier League Mansfield

Northants “Thunder” 72 – 61 Mansfield “Giants”

Premier League outfit Mansfield “Giants” arrived at the Basketball Centre with no less than five regional league players in their line up. Not surprisingly they were hot favourites to advance to the 4th Round of the National Cup and with a 54-46 score line after the end of the third period of play that is what looked likely to happen.

Up until that time “Thunder” had played with great enthusiasm and caused their illustrious rivals a lot of problems with their full court pressure defence and actually led 19-14 after the first quarter. Both teams had good runs in the second quarter but “Giants” were scoring freely from put backs and stand in coach Rob Crump switched his team to a zone; a defence they had never previously practiced. “Thunder” were still leading as half time approached but a ‘circus’ shot from England guard Amari Williams drew the two teams level.

It was during the third quarter that “Giants” began to show their class with only Josh Lloyd keeping his team in contact. Things looked even harder for “Thunder” when the influential Chris Amankonah picked up his fourth foul. A 7-zero Mansfield run gave the visitors that 54-46 lead and what looked to be an easy cruise to victory.

“Thunder” however, had other ideas. Crump urged his players to increase their defensive efforts and for six minutes those players produced their very best basketball of the season. They held the Premier League side scoreless for those six minutes while scoring 18 themselves 12 of them from the classy Lloyd. A panic time out from the “Giants” coach came too late as “Thunder” kept their composure and ran out impressive 72-61 winners so recording an impressive act of ‘giant killing’ and well deserving the standing ovation they received.

For a brief period of time a tasty 4th Round local derby against “Titans” looked to be on the cards but the other county team were beaten by City of Birmingham.

The “Thunder” scoring was led by Lloyd with 39 points including six 3 pointers. Excellent support came from Ed Wallhead and Amankonah who contributed 13 and 11 points respectively.

Stand in Coach, Coach Crump commented “This was a BIG win for the boys; they showed excellent determination and composure throughout the game. Despite being down 8; to produce an 18-0 run in the final and leave one of the best teams in the Northern Premier Division scoreless for 6 minutes displayed a lot of character. They should be very proud and look to build upon this performance”

Double overtime heartbreak for Junior Men

Northants “Thunder” 80 - 84 Oakland College “Wolves”
(57-57 / 68 -68)

After two periods of overtime the Northants junior men were knocked out of the National Cup and were left to contemplate a loss that will without doubt make or break a number of players.

From the outset it was obvious that the two teams were evenly balanced with the advantage seeing over an epic contest lasting well over two hours. “Thunder” led 20-18 after the first quarter with six players contributing to the scoring. In a low scoring second period of play “Wolves” were able to draw level at 28 all by half time.

The two teams both managed 18 points in the third quarter but the visitors held the advantage at 57-55 going into the closing minutes of regular time before two free throws from an ice cool David Nieva took the game into overtime.

When Nieva converted another two free throws late in the first period of overtime to give his team a 68-65 lead it looked as if the Juniors would emulate the Cadets by advancing to the 4th Round of the Cup. However, there was still more drama to follow as the Oakland’s captain was fouled. He made the first of the ensuing two free throws but “Thunder” lost possession and the same player was able to score with a ‘prayer’ as time expired, to tie things up at 68 all.

A score from Ayo Oluyede and a free throw from Chris Amankonah gave “Thunder” the initiative at the start of the second period of overtime but they were then hit by a 10-3 “Wolves” charge. This left “Thunder” with a huge task and despite their very best efforts including a three pointer from Josh Lloyd they were unable to close the gap and slipped to a heartbreaking four point loss.

Not for the first time this season, “Thunder’s” scoring was led by guard David Nieva who scored 29 points. Oluyede and cadet player Amankonah supported well with 13 points apiece while Shekina Ntumba contributed 8 points.

THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 5th November

9-30am – 11.00am Junior Ballers Session

There are no home games at the Basketball Centre this weekend

Junior Men travel to Ilkeston “Outlaws”

Sunday 6th November

Senior Men travel to Cardiff Met “Archers”
Under 14 Boys travel to Team Birmingham Elite

For further information contact:

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