**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Eight games last weekend with a mixed bag of results including back-to-back losses for the Junior Men but wins for the Under 14 Boys and Girls and the Under 12’s**

**that take them to the top of their Conferences.**

**Back-to-back losses for Junior Men**

**Under 18 Boys EBL Midlands 2 Conference**

**OEH Group Northants “Thunder” 55 – 65 Bromsgrove “Bears”**

An appalling third quarter which they lost 19-seven and a plethora of missed lay ups and close to the basket shots were mainly responsible for this disappointing result for the Northants Junior Men. This was a game which the Northants boys lost rather than “Bears” winning it.

Against a competent and well coached Bromsgrove “Thunder” made a tentative start to the game losing the first quarter by 11 points to 14 but they recovered well in the second quarter and thanks to nine points from Benas Maldutis and seven from Rapolas Radavicius they took the quarter 24-17 to lead 35-31 at half time.

“Thunder” opened the third quarter well but over the final five minutes of the quarter they failed to score while the visitors poured in 14 points to open up at 50 to 42 lead.

There was still every possibility of a “Thunder” victory if they could just capitalize on their superiority close to basket and the driving play of Maldutis. The “Thunder” guard did his bit with eight points which Got his team to withing four points of “Bears” but “Thunder” were outscored six, zero over the last two minutes of the game as they slipped to a disappointing defeat.

In the 10 point loss Maldutis scored 24 points and Radavicius contributed 11 but no other “Thunder” player could make any significant points contribution.

**Stockport “Spartans” 50 – 49 OEH Group Northants “Thunder”**

Less than 24 hours after their loss against Bromsgrove the Northants Junior Men were back on court against Stourport “Spartans” who had a similar record to “Thunder”. Once again “Thunder” were short handed and in the end, fatigue was a major factor in the one point loss. Another factor were two buzzer beating three-pointers for “Spartans” at the end of the first and third quarters.

The first half was a close run thing with eight points from Elias James helping “Thunder” to come back from an 11-14 first quarter deficit to tie the scores up at 26 all at half time.

In the third quarter Benas Maldutis and Rapolas Radavicius gave Thunder” the advantage until the buzzer beating ‘three’ reduced their lead to 43-42. As the “Thunder” players tired “Spartans” embarked on an eight, zero run and with just 28 seconds of the game remaining Thunder” were holding a one point lead at 49-48. “Spartans managed to get the ball into the keyway and their talented Chodysz scored and was fouled. He proceeded to miss the bonus shot but “Thunder” were unable to get a shot away in the dying seconds and they slipped to a single point defeat.

In the heart-breaking loss Maldutis top scored for “Thunder” with 21 points good support coming from Radavicius and James with 16 and 14 points respectively

**Under 16 Boys come up short against “Hawks”**

**Under 16 Boys EBL Midlands 2 Conference**

**Warwickshire “Hawks” 60 – 55 Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants Under 16 Boys stay top of the highly competitive Midlands 2 Conference despite this loss against Warwickshire “Hawks” who have only lost one game.

Against “Hawks”, “Thunder” were guilty of moving away from the tactics that have proved to be so successful so far this season and they were made to pay by an efficient “Hawks” team. The home side showed they meant business in the first quarter which they edged 13-12. “Thunder” continued to struggle in the second quarter but closed it with a stunning 14-six charge which gave them a 32-28 half time lead.

“Hawks” came out for the third quarter in determined mood their determined defence restricted “Thunder” to just two baskets in ten minutes five more points coming from the free throw line. “Hawks” took the quarter 16-10 to edge ahead 44-42 going into the last stanza.

Two Logan Ormshaw scores saw “Thunder” take the lead at 49-48 but for the next five minutes they could manage only two free throws as “Hawks” seized back the initiative and despite missing a number of free throws at the end of the game they held on for a five point victory with “Thunder” scoring just one basket in the last six minutes of the game .

**Brave Under 15 Boys are second best against “Ballers Heaven”**

**Under 16 Boys EBL Midlands 2 Conference**

**Ballers Heaven “Warriors” 80 – 75 Northants “Thunder”**

Once again the Northants Under 15 Boys playing a year young in the Under 16 National league showed they were competitive after a narrow loss against Ballers Heaven “Warriors”. Reflecting on the narrow defeat Coach Brad Hughes identified a number of first half turn-overs and missed free throws as keys to the loss.

Turn-overs against the “Warriors” ‘soft’ press gave the home side a20-16 advantage after the first quarter with “Warriors” Stephens scoring 12 points for his team; “Thunder” missing a crucial five free throws. “Thunder’s” offensive effort was much better balanced in the second quarter which was tied at 21 points all a superb defensive effort restricting Stephens to just four points.

Trailing 36-41 at half time “Thunder” were well and truly in the contest but in the crucial third quarter they seemed to lose confidence and were outscored 14-18 as “Warriors” extended their lead to 59-50. Needing a massive effort “Thunder” suddenly ‘upped’ the tempo of their offence and hit “Warriors” with a number of fast breaks. “Thunder” won the final quarter 25-21 just failing to close the gap but certainly giving the home side a scare.

In the five point loss Logan Tanner and Oliwier Andrzesczak led the “thunder” scoring with 20 points apiece Jay Jay Lothian and Will Carr scoring 10 and 12 points respectively while for “Warriors” Stephens scored a massive 37 points.

**Under 14 Boys too strong for “Tigers”**

**Under 14 Boys EBL Midlands Conference**

**Tamworth “Tigers” 36 – 73 Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants Under 14 Boys stay in contention for Midlands Conference honours thanks to a decisive win over second placed Tamworth “Tigers”. The margin of “Thunder’s” win was rather surprising considering the “Tigers” excellent home record, but Coach Peter Dewsnap wasn’t happy with his team’s performance. He cited a large number of turn-overs and energy lacking defence as reasons for his analysis. One player exempted from his criticism was Anton Kelly who had a number of assists to go with his nine points.

“Thunder” comfortably outscored “Tigers” in all four quarters and their scoring was led by Al-Mustafa Yinusa with 18 points, good support coming from Ollie Casey, Luca Garratt and Osagie Ofusa.

**Super Under 14 Girls stay top of the Midlands Conference**

**Under 14 Girls EBL Midlands Conference**

**Milton Keynes “Breakers II” 53 -87 Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants Under 14 Girls sit proudly on top of the Midlands Conference after an emphatic win over the Milton Keynes “Breakers” second string. “Lightning” are the only undefeated team in the Conference and the win was particularly impressive as “Breakers” were coming off back-to-back wins.

“Lightning” made a lethargic start to the game and found themselves trailing 14 - four but they managed to re-group and tie the scores at 18 all by the end of the first quarter. “Lightning” moved into top gear in the second quarter and with Campbell Spatcher and Karina Kaite orchestrating a number of fast breaks they outscored their opponents by 27 points to 12 to take a 45-30 half time lead.

“Lightning” were able to maintain their momentum over the final two quarters of the game eventually running out winners by 87points to 53 lead by 26 points from Maciey Latimer and 17 from Michelle Makuna. Grace Eighteen supported well with 10 points and Campbell Spatcher had in excess of ten assists.

This coming weekend “Lightning” will host Derby “trailblazers” looking to consolidate their lead at the top of the Conference.

**Under 12 Boys stay undefeated in the Region III Conference**

**Under 12 Mixed EBL Region III Conference**

**Northants “Storm” 53 – 50 Tamworth “Tigers”**

With five minutes of this table -topping Region III Conference clash were trailing by 39 points to 46 and a large crowd of parents, friends and supporters were fearing the worst. Then scores from Kyjah Adams, Jude Constable and George Rados allied to some sterling defence turned the game on its head. “Thunder” proceeded to outscore “Tigers” 13 to four over the final minutes. Despite some heart-stopping turn-overs “Storm” were able to hold out for a narrow victory.

“Storm” had trailed 21-27 against a talented “Tigers” team but they opened the third quarter with a 10-zero burst to take a 31-27 lead. The two teams traded scores for the remainder of the quarter but the Tamworth boys were able to take the initiative at the start of the final quarter by outscoring “Storm” 11-three before “Storm’s” storming finish to the game.

“Storm” remain undefeated and were grateful to Constable for his 15 point haul, Max Abraham supporting well with 12 points while the defensive efforts of Arlo Dominici in defending “tigers” talented Thompson were vital.

**“Storm II” edged out by “Titans”**

**Under 12 Mixed EBL Region II**

**Northamptonshire “Titans” 58 – 49 Northants “Storm Too”**

The Northants Under 12 Boys second team put up a determined performance against local rivals Northamptonshire “Titans” finally losing by 49 points to 58.

The decisive quarter in the game, was the second which “Titans” took 18-10 to set up a 33-23 half time advantage. “Storm Too” battled hard in the third quarter which they edged 14-12 but despite their best efforts in the final quarter they weren’t helped by a heavy foul count against them and couldn’t close the gap.

In the nine-point loss Deev Patel with 16 was the only “Storm Too” player able to score in double figures but Coach Mark Spatcher will take a lot of encouragement from the fact that his team won the second half of the contest by 26 points to 25.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

**Saturday 16thj December**

**9-30am to 10-30am** Budding “Ballers”

**10-30am to 11-45am** Junior “Ballers”

**12-15pm** Under 14 Boys versus Shropshire “Warriors”

Under 17 Girls versus Nottingham ‘Oaks”

**2-30pm** Under 15 Boys versus West Bromwich Albion

**4-45pm** Under 14 Girls versus Derby “Trailblazers”

OEH Group Under 18 Boys travel to Hereford “Elite”

Under 9 Mixed travel Coventry to play Coventry “Tornadoes”

and Daventry “Swifts”

**Sunday 17th December**

Under 16 Boys travel to Tamworth “Tigers”

Under 11 Girls I and II play in a Rose of the Shires tournament

**The “Ballers” activities and the Junior Men’s game will take place at the Basketball Centre which is based at Northampton School for Girls, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG**

For further information on this Press Release contact:

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