**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE & NEWSLETTER**

**Another quiet weekend for teams from the Northants Basketball Club because of Half Term but in the games played there was a battling comeback win for the Junior Men,**

**the Under 14 Boys took another step towards the Conference title**

**but the Under 14 Girls will have to wait after losing to C.O.B.**

**Comeback win for Junior Men.**

**Junior Men’s NBL Midlands 2 Conference**

**Oxford “Hoops” 61 63 OEH Northants “Thunder”**

Twenty plus points hauls from Benas Maldutis and Danielius Jokulus helped the Northants Junior Men to a revenge win over Oxford “Hoops” last Saturday.

“Thunder” made a good start to the game jumping out to a 7-zero lead but they then became guilty of turning the ball over gifting Oxford easy scores. This allowed the home side to establish a 22-16 lead after the first quarter but “Thunder” were able to ‘up’ the intensity of their defence in the second quarter and when “Hoops” missed shots they were able launch a number of fast break against the loose Oxford backcourt cover. “Thunder” took the quarter 17-11 to tie the scores up at 33 all at half time.

The third quarter was an attritional affair with both teams struggling to score and the scores were still tied at 45 all going into the final ten minutes of play.

“Thunder” had been rather intimidated by the presence of Oxford’s six feet nine-inch centre close to basket so Coach Darjius Maldutis encouraged his players to shoot from the perimeter. They took his advice on board and connected with four three-pointers in the final quarter to peg back an eight-point deficit. With the scores tied and less than a minute of the game remaining Maldutis hit a short-ranged jumper and then after a loose ball scramble Jokulus was fouled and he coolly converted the resulting two free throws. This put “Thunder” four points in the lead and they kept their composure allowing Oxford to score without scoring as time ran out.

In the narrow victory five players other then Jokulus and Maldutis contributed to the final “Thunder” total but no other player could manage double figures

**Much improved Under 16 Girls edged out by “Slam”**

**Under 16 Girls NBL Midlands Conference**

**Wolverhampton “Slam” 55 -47 Northants “Lightning”**

When these two teams met before Christmas top of the table “Slam” strolled to a victory by a margin just short of fifty points. Last Saturday it was a very different story and at half time the home side only held a

33-30 lead. “Lightning” had defended with great spirit during the first half and shown that they were able to score against the athletic “Slam” team.

With the possibility of a huge upset on the cards “Lightning” could manage only six points in the third quarter and this was to prove to be the deciding factor to the final result. Trailing 36-45 going into the last ten minutes of play “Lightning” showed their true character outscoring “Slam” by 11 points to 10 but they just couldn’t close the deficit finally losing by 47 points to 55.

In the eight point loss Ameilia Wesley-Maryan top scored with 16 points Iviannah Meadows and Jen Oamen both scoring eight points.

**“Tornadoes” too strong for Under 15 Boys**

**Cadet Boys NBL Midland Conference**

**Coventry “Tornadoes” 86 – 60 Northants “Thunder Too”**

Earlier in the season the Northants Inder 15 Boys caused a major upset by beating high-flying Coventry “Tornadoes” but there was to be no repeat when the two teams met for the return fixture last Sunday.

“Thunder Too” made a good start to the game against a physically superior team and only trailed 16-20 after the first quarter. The game was won and lost in the second quarter when they were outscored 15-32 to trail by 52 points to 31 at half time.

Facing a 21 point deficit “Thunder Too” dug deep in the final two quarters of play and only lost the second half 34-29 but never looked capable of closing the gap finally losing by 86 points to 60

The “Thunder Too” scoring was dominated by just three players, Logan Tanner and Oliwer Andrzejczak battling hard for their 18 and 17 point hauls while Anton Kelly supported well with 12 points but no other Northants player could get into double figures

**Under 14 Boys hang on to beat “Tornadoes”**

**Under 14 Boys NBL Midlands Conference**

**Coventry “Tornadoes” 53 - 59 Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants Under 14 Boys took another step towards the Midlands Conference title with a battling win over second placed Coventry “Tornadoes”.

“Thunder” went into this top of the table clash without the services of influential Jerome Maroodza because of a school trip and without his calming influence the team’s performance was definitely affected. Even so the win keeps “Thunder” on top of the table with two losses ahead of West Brom and “Tornadoes” on three and four losses respectively with three games left in the season.

“Thunder” made a good start to Sunday’s game their pressure defence causing “Tornadoes” a lot of problems and they were able to open up a healthy lead. As “Tornadoes” became accustomed to the pressure they were able to close the gap and at the end of the first quarter the “Thunder” lead had been reduced to 17-12, but as it turned out that five point gap was to prove decisive.

With “Tornadoes” successfully turning to their Pick and Roll offence “Thunder” began to struggle defensively and the Coventry team were able to tie the second quarter 16-16 to trail 28-33 at half time. That narrow “Thunder” lead was stretched to thirteen points in the third quarter but “Tornadoes” responded with a run of their own. “Thunder” edged the quarter 14-13 to increase their lead to 47-41.

The final stanza saw the two teams going ‘head-to-head’ like a pair of welterweights and with both teams struggling to score the quarter was tied 12 all, “Thunder” holding on for the 59 to 53 win which was full of character and determination.

In the narrow win the “Thunder” scoring was dominated by just three players; Jowell Skiete- French scored 18 points with Luca Garrett and Anton Kelly supporting well with 15 points apiece.

**Disappointing loss for Under 14 Girls**

**Under 14 Girls NBL Midlands Conference**

**City of Birmingham “Rockets” 61 – 57 Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants Under 14 Girls went into this game hoping to tie up the Midlands Conference title. In the event they will have to wait for another day although they remain hot favorites to become champions.

In Sunday’s game the first quarter was a scrappy error ridden affair with both teams missing numerous scoring chances. “Lightning” struggled against the “Rockets” pressure defence and C.O.B. were able to build up a substantial lead. To their credit the “Lightning” girls were able to dig deep but still trailed 10-22 at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter saw “Lightning” play with a great deal more composure and on the back of 13 points from Macie Latimer won the quarter 23-12 to trail by a single point at half time. Coach Mark Spatcher’s message to his players during the break was to concentrate while shooting close to the basket and keep their composure against the “Rockets” press. His players responded well and with six players contributing to the scoring won the third quarter 15-10 to take a narrow 48-44 lead.

The start of the fourth quarter saw the two teams exchange scores with “Lightning” getting some success from their Pick and Roll offence as they retained their six point lead. The impetus switched to the home side when the impressive Robinson drained a three-pointer and with Coach Spatcher and his daughter Cambell leaving for an overseas travel commitment the “Lightning” scoring dried up. They managed just nine points in the final quarter as to the delight of a raucous but good-natured crowd “Rockets” cruised to a deserved four-point victory.

In the disappointing loss Latimer and Campbell with 18 and 14 points respectively were the only “Lightning” players able to score in double figures but every “Lightning” player that took to the floor gave of their all for the cause and the title will surely be theirs in the next few weeks.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 2nd March**

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

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

**12-15pm** Under 12 Boys versus Walsall “Wizards”(NBL)

**2-30pm** Under 14 Boys versus City of Birmingham “Rockets” (NBL)

**4-45pm** Under 15 Boys versus Coventry “Elite” (NBL)

Under 9 Mixed travel to Coventry to pay Coventry “Tornadoes” (YBL)

and Daventry “Swifts”

Under 11 Girls travel to Kettering to play Kettering “Phoenix” (YBL)

and Nuneaton “Predators”

**Sunday 3rd March**

Under 17 Girls travel to Solihull “Griffins” (YBL)

Under 13 Girls travel to Wantage to play Abingdon “Eagles” (YBL)

and Nuneaton “Predators”

Under 13 Boys travel to Leicester “Riders” (YBL)

**The “Ballers” activities and home** **games will take place at the Basketball Centre which is based**

**at Northampton School for Girls, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG.**

For further information about this Press Release contact **John Collins** on **+44 7801 533 151**