**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE & NEWSLETTER**

**“Lightning” Under 14 Girls win the Tournament of Champions and two more teams advance to YBL Finals**

**“Lightning” Under 14 Girls are unofficial National Conference Champions**

With Basketball England not staging Play Offs for several age groups including the Under 14 Girls the London Greenhouse organization decided to stage a Conference Champions Tournament. They invited the winners of the five Conferences to take part in a tournament at Uxbridge College last Saturday. In the event only three teams York “Eagles” and “Lightning” joined the hosts

**Northants “Lightning” 54 – 39 York “Eagles”**

First up for “Lightning” in the three team tournament were York “Eagles” who had gone through their regular season unbeaten and narrowly beaten London Greenhouse in the first game of the day.

“Lightning” took a two point lead after the first quarter and this lead was extended to 28-22 by half time. The third quarter proved to be decisive with Danielle Makuna and Campbell Spatcher attacking the “Eagles” basket and either scoring or drawing fouls. The “Lightning” free throw shooting was ‘on point’ and they took the quarter by 14 points to four to establish a 42-26 advantage.

“Eagles” threw everything at “Lightning” in the final quarter which they edged 13-12 but the final result was never in doubt “Lightning” holding on for the 15 point victory on the back of 15 points from Campbell Spatcher and 12 from Grace Eighteen.

**London Greenhouse 39 – 43 Northants “Lightning”**

Playing back-to-back games was always going to be tough ‘ask’ for “Lightning and so it proved. With the scores tied at 19 all at half time after two attritional quarters fatigue set in for “Lightning” and their defensive efforts seemed handicapped by heavy legs. The London side won the third quarter 14-10 and this lead was extended to six points early in the fourth.

“Lightning” battled back but with less than two minutes of the contest remaining they still trailed by a basket. A slick out of bounds lay resulted in a score for Grace Eighteen to tie up the scores before a brace of baskets from Campbell Spatcher sealed the win and the ‘title’ for “Lightning”.

In the nail-biting win Spatcher score 15 points excellent support coming from Queendy Yeboah and Michelle Makuna with eight and seven points respectively.

**Double success in YBL Play Off Semi-Finals**

**Under 15 Boys Primis**

**Northants “Thunder” 87 – 64 Birmingham “Bears”**

On the back of 35 points from Logan Tanner the Northants “Thunder” Under 15 Boys stormed into the Final of the YBL Primis Play Offs with a conclusive win over Birmingham “Bears” who had beaten them in the penultimate game of the regular season.

Once again “Bears” fielded an athletic team with a distinct height advantage and from the outset of the game it was clear that this was going to be a problem for “Thunder” who conceded a number of put back scores while they were guilty of forcing up shots against bigger opponents. This was not the case with “Thunder’s”, Logan Tanner who scored 12 first quarter points from a number of fast break lay ups and pull up jump shots.

Leading 22-15 after the first quarter “Thunder” extended their lead in the second quarter thanks to an 11-zero charge midway through the quarter, a further 15 points from Tanner and some clever change-up defences.

Leading 47-32 at half time “Thunder” knew that “Bears” would come out for the third quarter in determined mood and so they did but “Thunder” were able to match them score for score until midway through the quarter when J.J. Lothian blasted in a a triple of three-pointers, Tanner scored with a long range two and Oliwier converted a put back and that 13-zero run proved to be conclusive.

“Thunder” won the quarter 24-14 to open up a 25 point lead and although “Bears” edged the final quarter 18-16 it was too little too late as “Thunder” advanced to the Primis Final on 2nd June in Bromsgrove.

In the 23 point win Logan Tanner top scored for “Thunder” with an impressive 35 point haul, excellent support coming from Oliwier Andrzejczak, Anton Kelly and J.J. Lothian who all made double figure contribution

**Under 13 Girls**

**Northants “Lightning” 85 – 29 Leicester “Riders**

The “Lightning” Under 13 Girls became the sixth team from the Northants club to reach a YBL Final after an overwhelming win over Leicester “Riders”.

The game was a strange affair with “Riders” initially unable to produce player licences. After desperate searches on ‘phones Leicester were able to field a legal starting five but key players were not permitted to play because no licence had been produced. The “Riders” players who started the game found the going very tough as “Lightning” swamped them by 27 points to two with Freya Tauber-Anderson helping herself to 20 personal points.

With Coach Goodrich ‘running her bench’ in the second quarter the carnage was limited a little but “Lightning” still won it 1-four to establish an unassailable 40-six half time lead.

By the start of the third quarter the licences of some of the more experienced ”“Riders” players had been ‘found’ and the quarter was more competitive but still won 20-16 by “Lightning and they completed their overwhelming win by taking the final quarter 25-seven.

For “Lightning”, Tauber-Anderson scored 27 points, but this total was exceeded by the 32 points from Brooke Foster.

**YBL Semi - Finals and Finals summary**

**Saturday 25th May in Telford**

Under 9 Storm Semi Final versus City of Birmingham Rockets

Under 11 Storm Semi Final versus Rawzone

Under 9 Storm Final (If “Storm” win their semi) versus either Worcester Wolves or Coventry Tornadoes

Under 11 Storm Final (If “Storm” win their semi) versus either Worcester Wolves or Coventry Tornadoes

U11 Lightning Final versus Nuneaton Predators

**Saturday 1st June in Bromsgrove**

U13 Boys Final (If the team qualifies through the Play Offs which are still ongoing)

U13 Lightning Final versus Nuneaton Predators

U17 Lightning Final versus either Bedford Thunder or Abingdon “Eagles”

**Sunday 2nd June in Bromsgrove**

12.15pm U15 Thunder Final versus either Shrewsbury Storm or Leicester Riders

**Northants Club awarded prestigious “Slam Jam” Programme**

Basketball England has launcheda new programme to introduce boys and girls aged seven to eleven to the sport of basketball and the Northants club has been chosen to deliver sessions in Northamptonshire. With so many boys and girls anxious to participate the Club has decided to run two sessions based on school years and each age group programme will comprise six sessions, and the age groups are school years 2 & 3 and 4 & 5.

The sessions will be run two of the club’s qualified coaches supported by Young Leaders and participants will receive a bundle of “Slam Jam” goodies including a tees shirt, a bag a water bottle and their own basketball.

Anyone wishing to sign their child up for this exciting programme can do so on the Basketball England website.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 11th May**

**9-30am to 10-30am** “Budding Ballers” for Reception and Year 1

**10-30am to 11-30am** “**Slam Jam”** for Years 2 & 3

**11-30am to 12-30pm “Slam Jam”** for Years 4 & 5

Under 13 Boys travel to Coventry “Tornadoes” for a YBL Play Off game.

**Sunday 12th May**

**10-30am to 11-45am** Community Session for Years 6 & 7

**The Slam Jam and Community sessions 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**