

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Senior Men extend their unbeaten run**

#### **Men's National League (South Conference)**

**Northants "Thunder"                      77 - 69                      Barking Abbey**

Whilst Northants welcomed their visitors on the back of a small three game winning streak, Barking Abbey had not been so fortunate with their opening fixtures. The visitors had started their season with a 1-3 record, but everyone in the Northants Basketball building knew that this was no foregone conclusion. Barking Abbey had travelled with a very young side, with their oldest player only recently turning 18yrs, and one of their guards being just 14yrs old.

Northants were guilty of ignoring their coach's warnings of concentration, and fell to a 10-05 deficit within five minutes, on the back of some good shooting from Abbey guards Griffith-Johnson and Foulds. This spurred "Thunder" into life and they went on a 15-zero run with just 90 seconds to go in the period. The highlight of the game coming from Thunder's Turiccki as he blocked one shot on the glass, sprinted to the offensive end and found the 'alley-oop' pass from guard Curtis Hadley to throw down a thunderous 'And-One' dunk. Again Northants fell asleep, and gave Abbey motivation by giving up open shots, and the Northants team took a slender 22-17 lead into the second quarter.

Northants came out strong for the second period of play with some intensity on defence to get 'stops', and patient offensive on the next play. "Thunder" forward Linas Bajorunas drained a three from the top of the arc, however, "Thunder" then spent the next seven minutes chasing shadows on defence, and forgetting to move the ball on offence. Abbey were able to take full advantage of these lapses and managed to drag the scores back level once again. The game was starting to become very physical, and with very little 'game control' coming from the officials, the style of both teams turned scrappy and not the most pleasing to watch. "Thunder" continued to keep their noses in front and thanks to three back-to-back buckets from the Jacob Holt went into the half time break leading 36-33.

Abbey spent the whole of the half time interval in the locker room, and whatever their Coach Holloway had to say, obviously was remembered as Barking not only refused to go away in the third quarter, but held the lead for long enough to make the Northants coaching staff wonder if it was going to be 'one of those games'. Thankfully the switching of the lead again woke up "Thunder", who still hadn't got out of their slippers. Northants captain Jonny Yates connected with a toughly contested three, and the momentum swung once more.

For anyone that questions Abbey's persistence this season, they can be assured that they NEVER give up, as they came straight into the final quarter and hit a three point shot after some nice ball movement. This time Northants decided to use their heads and attacked Abbeys 'biggs' inside, who had collected a large number of fouls throughout the game thus far. Abbey finished the game with three of their 'inside' players fouled out, and another player on four fouls. This allowed Northants some space on the offence, and with the combined ice cold free throw shooting of Devon Adams, and long range ability of Curtis Hadley, the home team opened up a double digit lead. Again Abbey refused to go away and reduced the scoreline to just single figures, but by this time there were seconds left on the clock as opposed to minutes.

In the scruffy win the "Thunder" scoring was led by Holt with 20 points. Turriccki netted 19 points and Yates 11 with the other six "Thunder" players all getting on the score sheet.

Coach Rob Eddon observed, "We didn't play well. Compared to the fantastic performance of last week's win at Oxford, this was the opposite end of the spectrum. Credit to Barking Abbey, they have a group of young players with hunger, ability and persistence, and will use these experiences well in their EABL (College League). However, for the frustrations I had regarding our performance today, we once again fought throughout the game. We never gave up and ground out a win. They say still getting the win when you play poorly are the characteristics of a 'championship contending team'. We'll find out next week when we play another serious 'contender'... Solent Kestrels."

## **Senior Women beat “Blue Devils” in the ‘battle of the north’.**

### **Senior Women’s (North Conference)**

**Bury “Blue Devils”                      65 -71                      Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants senior women’s team won their second national league game of the season when they edged an attritional battle against Bury “Blue Devils”. With the junior women involved in a national league fixture of their own, “Lightning” travelled to the north-west with just their six senior players plus two under 16’s. A late arrival at the venue meant a less than perfect warm up period and when the game started it was very much a case of “Lightning”, ‘leaving their game on the bus’ as they fell 14-1 behind. The team showed their character and rallied strongly but still trailed 9-20 at the end of the first period of play.

Coach Karen Goodrich recognised that the second quarter would be vital and with Angelina Browne, Vicki Hines and Natasha Wesley dominating the rebounds, “Lightning” were able to get into their ‘running game’. They outscored their opponents 25-15 in the quarter but still trailed 34-35 at half time.

“Lightning” took their first lead of the game midway through the third quarter but were unsettled by the physical approach the Bury players had taken. The Northants girls shaded the period 15-12 to take a narrow 49-47 lead going into the final quarter. With everything still to play for in the final ten minutes “Lightning” needed to keep their composure and with Erin Clarke and Sarah Round controlling things from the back court and Naue Cali and Esme Kinghorn keeping the score board moving “Lightning” were able to edge the period by four points to eke out the 71-65 win.

For “Lightning”, Cali top scored with 23 points while Kinghorn contributed 11 points and completed a double-double with the same number of rebounds. Goodrich was quick to point out the importance of the contributions made by rookies Round and Caitlin Stewart.

The team face a tough couple of days this weekend when they take on Kingston-upon-Hull in the Conference on Saturday then face unbeaten Mansfield “Giants” in the National Trophy the next day.

## **Junior Men blow away Notts Nova II**

### **Junior Men’s Midland Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”                      82 - 25                      Notts Nova II**

Northants Thunder faced Notts Nova II at Basketball Centre last Saturday in what proved to be a one-sided encounter.

“Thunder” were dominant right from the tip storming into 18-2 run, influenced by some good perimeter shooting from Josh Round and Carlo Nieva supported with strong inside scoring by George Calvey. Nova were forced to call a time out, but despite their attempt to recuperate Thunder extended their lead further with Brendan Ross and Carlo Nieva combining to produce a 9-0 run to conclude the quarter to lead 27-5.

“Thunder” again produced another dominant quarter in the second period of play with the scoring balanced throughout the team. “Thunder” denied Nova a field goal throughout the quarter, they were only able to score three points in the quarter all from the free throw line. Thunder led 48-8 at the half.

“Thunder” was too strong for Nova, who were unable to contain the speed and quickness of Northants on the fast break resulting in them to fouling. The “Thunder” effort was led by Ollie Thomas whose strong drives to the basket allowed him to score on consecutive occasions as his team’s lead was extended to 65-13.

The final quarter allowed “Thunder” coach Rob Crump to rest key players for their cup fixture the following day but his team were still able to see out the game comfortably, taking the quarter 17-12 to win 82-25.

Four Northants players reached double figure scoring, led by George Calvey who scored 14 points supported by Carlo Nieva who scored 13 points, whilst Brendan Ross and George Paul contributed 12 and 11 points respectively.

Coach Crump was happy with his team’s performance commenting, ‘We were far too strong for Nova II throughout this game; nonetheless I felt the boys displayed a sporting performance and it was good to see balance in scoring from the players.’”

## **Junior Women 'guts it out' to beat "Rockets"**

### **Junior Women's Midland South Conference**

**Northants "Lightning"                      70 – 64                      Reading "Rockets"**

The Northants junior women staged an impressive comeback to record a narrow win over Reading "Rockets" at the Basketball Centre last Saturday. The game which saw, "Lightning" trailing until late in the final period of play, was full of some very strange statistics.

A lethargic "Lightning" trailed 16-20 after the first quarter and made little improvement in the second which they lost by a single point. With a 37-32 half time score line in favour of the visitors the "Lightning" fans expected a big revival in the third quarter but they were disappointed. The team managed just one field goal as they scored 12 points to find themselves 44-54 behind going into the final ten minutes of play.

There was one glint of hope for the Northants team because Reading's aggressive play had seen them pick a lot of fouls. Rather than moderate their approach the visitors continued with their physicality which wasn't to the liking of the game officials. For "Lightning", Stephanie Ogden suddenly came to life and "Lightning" were able to reduce the deficit to just four points at 57-61. Reading continued with their physical play resulting in "Lightning" shooting no less than 22 free throws in the final quarter which saw a 13-3 charge and an unlikely win.

For "Lightning" Ogden top scored with 25 points, 13 of them coming in the final quarter while Rio Blessyn and Lauren Brookes provided good support with 15 and 12 points respectively.

## **Second quarter charge helps Cadet Men to victory**

### **Cadet Men's Midland Conference**

**Leicester "Dynamite"                      62 – 80                      Northants "Thunder"**

The Northants cadet men travelled to Leicester Dynamite on the back of three wins but when they found themselves trailing 18-20 after the first period of play they knew they were in for a tough game. Midway through the second quarter "Thunder's" press defence increased in its intensity forcing a number of turn overs and easy scores leading to a 14-zero run. However, the charge came at a cost with two "Thunder" 'big's' Ayo Oluyede and Rob Clarke picking up their fourth fouls.

Coach John Collins was forced to make some rapid adjustments in his defensive alignments and he was delighted with the way Julian Abeam, Solomon Day-Adley and Emmanuel Arimoro 'stepped up to the plate' and played their hearts out. With David Nieva unstoppable on the end of the break "Thunder" took the period 28-20 to extend their lead to 67-46.

The final quarter was an attritional affair just shaded by "Dynamite" but it wasn't enough to stop the Northants team running out winners by 80 points to 62.

In the 18 point win the "Thunder" scoring was led by Nieva and Jacob Round who both totalled 22 points with good support coming from Hayden Sayers and Oluyede with 14 and 9 points respectively.

## **Lloyd spurs Under 14 Boys to comeback win**

### **Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Leicester "Dynamite"                      76 - 91                      Northants "Thunder"**

When "Thunder" travelled up to Leicester to play "Dynamite" on Saturday, they were not only missing three players but also seemed to be missing the 'get at 'em' attitude that Coach Round was looking for. Despite the encouragement he gave in the pre-game team talk, the players looked lack-lustre in the warm-up and they carried this forward into the first quarter of the game. A combination of Thunder's reluctance to break at speed and Leicester's sagging defence meant that the score stayed fairly even through the first period, which "Thunder" edged 23-19.

The Northants boys couldn't manage to 'up' their game in the run up to half-time, whereas Leicester's ripped down rebounds, ran the floor, and benefitted from their talented guard, Ethan Morrell, as he developing a hot hand. At the mid-game break, the home team had sneaked into a four point lead at 44-40 and looked like the better team.

“Dynamite’s” good form continued at the start of the third quarter and they continued to pull ahead. Having established a 12 point lead it was looking like “Thunder” were heading towards an unexpected league defeat, but Josh Lloyd was having none of that. He suddenly woke up and spearheaded a 14-0 run which put “Thunder” two points ahead going into the final period. “Thunder’s” guards had contained Morrell to the extent that he was unable to add to his personal total in the second half and they started breaking at every opportunity. In the final period, Noah Wilborn, Ed Wallhead and Chris Amankonah all followed Lloyd’s lead and contributed to a 21-2 run that helped to secure the 91-76 victory.

In what can best be described as an ugly win, it was encouraging to see four Northants players reach double-figures with Wallhead amassing 32 points and Amankonah, Lloyd and Wilborn scoring 20, 18 and 10 respectively. Thunder’s next match will be away to bottom-of-the-league Ilkeston where Coach Round will be expecting to see much higher levels of effort and energy.

**Under 14 Girls Midlands South-West Conference**  
**N.E.B.C. “Titans”                      54 – 74                      Northants “Lightning”**

With the scores tied at 29 all at half time the Northants under 14 girls unbeaten record looked to be in serious jeopardy. In the first two quarters, “Lightning” had been frustrated by some “Titans” defence that didn’t exactly comply with the man to man principles which are laid down by Basketball England.

“Lightning” coach Stacey Shakespeare had also been frustrated by the very physical nature of the game so her instructions to her team during the half time break were very simple. Play tough defence, don’t get frustrated by decisions and stay focussed. Her team responded superbly exploding into the third quarter by outscoring “Titans” 28-7 which as good as ‘put the game to bed’.

With the match officials penalising “Titans” for over-physical play “Lightning” could well have won by more than the eventual 20 point margin but they were guilty of missing no less than 21 of the 39 free throws they were awarded.

In the hard fought win Holly Winterburn top scored for “Lightning” with 32 points, with good support coming from Lucy Amena and Bahira Barakat who scored 8 and 10 points respectively. Coach Shakespeare was pleased with the efforts of all her players but made mention of the excellent rebounding of Akilah Chambers and Odera Onwunmechili but

**NATIONAL CUP GAMES**

*Four Northants teams were involved in National Cup 2<sup>nd</sup> Round games and two of them advanced to the next round.*

**“Thunder” earns local bragging rights after comeback Cup win**

**Junior Men’s National Cup Round 2**  
**Northants “Thunder”                      85 - 69                      N.E.B.C. “Titans”**

Both teams had been in league action the previous day with very different fortunes with “Thunder” picking up an easy win in the Midland Conference while “Titans” had come off second best against Sheffield “Junior Sharks” in the Premier Division North.

There was a very real possibility that fatigue might play an important part in the game and this might account for the collapse of Coach Brian Johnson’s, “Titans” team in the third period of play. “Titans” held a narrow half time lead at 37-35 but there had been signs in the second quarter that “Thunder” were not going to be intimidated by their neighbour’s athleticism. In that quarter George Calvey had proved to be a force close to basket with eight points but they had still been exposed by the dynamic driving play of the “Titans” players.

Coach Rob Crump’s message to his players during the half time break was simple, “Force them onto their weaker hand.” His players responded well and with some outstanding perimeter shooting from Carlo Nieva, George Paul and Ollie Thomas his side won the third quarter 28-10 to take a 63-47 lead.

“Titans” tried their utmost to close the gap in the final stanza but thanks to two more long range bombs from Nieva and an excellent shooting touch from Josh Round saw “Thunder” home by the surprisingly large margin of 16 points and a win that earns them a 3<sup>rd</sup> Round tie against Milton Keynes “Lions”.

In that 16 point win Paul totalled 25 points including five three-pointers while Calvey, Nieva, Round and Thomas all scored in double figures.

Coach Rob Crump was very happy with his team performance, "The Junior Men displayed some good character during the game today. We did not drop our heads despite trailing for the majority of the second quarter and made a good run to reduce the deficit at the half. We had to be very patient on offense against "Titans" zone and displayed some excellent shooting from the perimeter in the third period. This is a performance all they players should be proud of."

### **Junior Women exit Cup after poor third quarter**

#### **Junior Women's National Cup (Round 2)**

**Oaklands College "Wolves"                      73 – 61                      Northants "Lightning"**

After their battling win over Reading "Rockets" the previous day the Northants junior women travelled to Oaklands College to take on "Wolves" in a rather nervous mood based on the college's reputation. The team made a decision not to be intimidated and adopt an up beat attitude. Although exiting the National Cup after finishing on the wrong end of a 73-61 score line there were a lot of positives to take from the game.

Living up to their reputation Oaklands started with an 11-3 run which forced Coach Stacey Shakespeare to switch from a zone defence to man to man. Despite these adjustments Oaklands established a 16-11 lead after the first quarter, a lead they wouldn't relinquish for the rest of the game.

The second quarter was a close run thing just edged 11-10 by the home team but "Lightning" showed they could cope with pressure and they caused Oaklands all sorts of problems with their up tempo play. With a half time score of 27-21 "Lightning" were still well in contention but they were swept away 28-17 in the third period to trail 55-38 going into the final quarter.

To their credit the Northants girls refused to give up, with the whole team making massive contributions on both ends of the floor and showing their determination and heart not to give up. Such was the "Lightning" effort that they took the final quarter 23-18 but it was too little too late as "Wolves" progressed to the quarter final.

In the 12 point defeat Sarah Round led the "Lightning" scoring with 28 points despite missing the whole of the third quarter after aggravating her foot injury. She was well supported by Lauren Brookes, Lauren Milne and Steph Ogden who each had 11 points

### **Birmingham dump Cadet Men out of the Cup**

#### **Under 16 Women's Cadet Men's National Cup (Round 2)**

**Northants "Thunder"                      50 – 83                      City of Birmingham**

After their morale boosting win over Leicester "Dynamite" the previous day and with news that C.O.B. had been beaten by N.E.B.C. "Titans", the Northants cadet men went into this 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Cup game full of optimism. That optimism seemed well founded when "Thunder" took the lead thanks to a Jacob Round three-pointer but that was the end of their optimism. Faced by the Northants zone defence C.O.B. shot superbly from the deep perimeter to take the first quarter 25-13 with their guard Coles bagging 16 of those points.

Like "Thunder", Birmingham were also playing a zone defence but it was much bigger and much more aggressive than the Northants effort. "Thunder" failed to execute their zone offence and were outscored 24-12 in the second quarter to trail 24-49 at half time.

Coach John Collins switched his team to a man-to-man defence after half time and this proved to be far more successful and the final two periods of play were far more competitive before a late C.O.B. surge gave the final score line a rather unrealistic look. "Thunder" had been well beaten by a better team but Collins was annoyed that he hadn't changed defences earlier in the contest.

In the 33 point defeat only Jacob Round and Hayden Sayers were able to score in double figures with 20 and 10 points respectively while David Nieva battled hard for his nine points.

## Walton the key as “Lightning” advance in the Cup

### National Cup (2<sup>nd</sup> Round)

Northants “Lightning”      54 - 70      Team Birmingham

Just a week before this Cup game “Lightning” had beaten Team Birmingham by 13 points so on Birmingham’s own turf another close game was expected and so it proved as the Northants girls prevailed by 16 points to advance to the quarter final of the Cup.

The first quarter saw scoring at a premium with superb “Lightning” defence restricting Birmingham to just five points but they could manage only 10 themselves. The final result was really decided in the second period of play as “Lightning”, inspired by Ruchae Walton’s 11 personal points, outscored their opponents 25-14 to take a 35-19 half time lead.

With coach Karen Goodrich rotating her bench the final two quarters were much closer run affairs but “Lightning’s” lead and the final result never looked to be in danger despite a closing 11-zero Birmingham run.

In the 16 point win Walton top scored with 28 points but Goodrich was delighted by the efforts of the other nine players. She made special mention of the rebounding of Kat Askham, Abbi Hobbs and Caitlin Stewart.

In the quarter finals, “Lightning” face a journey to Manchester “Mystics”

### THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES

#### Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November

Central Venue League versus N.E.B.C. “Titans” at Northampton Academy

#### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November

9.30 am until 11am      Under 10 and Under 12 “Ballers” Academy  
10.00 am until 11am      Junior “Ballers”  
11.30am                      Cadet Men versus Bromsgrove “Bears”  
1.30pm                        Senior Women versus Kingston “Panthers”  
3.30pm                        Senior Men versus Solent “Kestrels”

All these games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre which is based at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Under 11 Central Venue League at Northampton School for Boys  
Under 14 Boys travel to Ilkeston “Outlaws”  
Under 15 Boys travel to Herts “Warriors”

#### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November

11.30am                      Under 13 Boys versus N.E.B.C. “Titans”  
   Under 16 Girls versus Nottingham “Wildcats”  
1.30pm                        Senior Women versus Mansfield “Giants”      (National Trophy)

These three games will be played at the Basketball Centre.

For further information contact **John Collins on 07801 533 151**