NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

"Thunder" record important win despite third period slump

Men's National League Division 4
(Midlands Conference)

University of Nottingham 82 – 94 Northants "Thunder"

The Northants senior men moved up to 4th equal in the Midlands Conference after recording a 12 point win over high-flying University of Nottingham.

The win came despite "Thunder" trailing 61-66 going into the fourth period of play after losing the third quarter 22-10. During the final ten minutes of play "Thunder" guard, Matt Yates took control of the game with "Thunder" taking the period 33-16 and a win which was far harder then the final score line suggested.

"Thunder" held the initiative 30-25 after the first quarter and this lead was extended by two points to 51-44 by half time. Then came the dramatic collapse with "Thunder" hurt by Nottingham's sharp shooting Yamamoto and Smith as "Thunder" appeared to have snatched defeat from the jaws of victory; but the Northants team was able to mount the final charge and record the win.

For "Thunder", Yates top scored with 27 points, good support coming from Jacob Holt and Richard Higgins with 16 and 11 points respectively while Coach Grahame Yates made special mention of the defensive work of Jake Barr.

Junior Men get back to winning ways against "Tornadoes"

Junior Men's National League
(Midlands West Conference)

Northants "Thunder" 70 – 61 Coventry "Tornadoes"

The Northants junior men got back to winning ways with a nine point win over Coventry "Tornadoes" after a topsy-turvy game in which both teams were able to put together substantial points scoring runs.

"Tornadoes" fielded a much stronger team than when the two teams had met earlier in the season and after three-pointers from Tom Myers and Ed Wallhead they jumped out to a 10-6 lead. "Thunder" responded with a 6-zero run of their own but still trailed 14-15 after the first quarter.

The second period of play was punctuated by numerous sets of free throws with "Thunder" just edging the quarter to tie the scores up at 29 all at half time.

"Tornadoes" seemed to have seized the initiative in the third quarter as they opened up a 44-37 lead but "Thunder" bounced back with an 11-4 surge to tie matters up at 48 all going into the final ten minutes of play.

The two teams exchanged baskets at the start of the fourth quarter but when "Tornadoes", Alfonso missed four free throws "Thunder" were able to make a decisive 12-2 run thanks to the efforts of Chris Amankonah, Cameron Samuels who had been rested by Coach Darijus Maldutis, and Wallhead as "Thunder" saw out the hard fought win.

For "Thunder", Samuels top scored with 20 points Amanakonah, Zac Kitchen and Wallhead all scoring in double figures

Report compiled by Matt Major

Below par Cadet Boys lose to "Warriors"

Under 16 Boys National League
(Midlands West Conference)

Shropshire "Warriors" 57 – 92 Northants "Thunder"

A look at the Conference table before the start of this game would have suggested a close encounter but it turned out to be a one sided embarrassment for the Northants team. After being competitive at the start of the game "Thunder" totally lost their way over the second half of the period and were outscored 13-4 to trail 15-27 at the end of the quarter.

Although they were still finding it difficult to cope with "Warriors" full court press, "Thunder" did manage to close the gap to six points midway through the second period of play thanks in the main to the efforts of skipper Connor White. They then managed just a further three points in the quarter while the home side poured in a 22 against a "Thunder" defence resembling damp blotting paper.

Trailing by 30 points to 52 at half time, "Thunder" were left with the proverbial mountain to climb but after scoring the first four points of the third quarter they then capitulated again and were hit by a 19-2 "Warriors" barrage and at 36-71 it was game over. To their credit the Northants boys kept battling to the end and with the "Warriors" coach giving his bench players a run "Thunder" were able to match their opponent's 21 points over the last 14 minutes of the game.

In the hugely disappointing 35 point loss, only White and Adam Lewandowski with 23 and 15 points respectively made any substantial contribution to "Thunder's" final total and the side will have to perform a lot better this Saturday when they tackle top of the table West Bromwich.

Morale boosting win for Under 16 Girls

Under 16 Girls National League
(North Conference)

Northants "Lightning" 73 - 42 Leicester "Warriors"

Against a Leicester "Warriors" team playing without several key players the Northants under 16 girls recorded an emphatic and well deserved win.

"Lightning" jumped out to an early 13-2 lead and dominated proceedings from then on comfortably outscoring their opponents in all four periods of play. Coach Janis Kosnikovskis was able to give all eleven of his players ample playing time and nine of them responded by contributing to the final total of 73 points with the team moving the ball confidently.

The "Lightning" scoring was led by Lucy Needham with 17 points with excellent support coming from Poppy Barnett and Maia Chinnick.

Heavy defeat for Under 14 Boys

<u>Under 14 Boys National League</u>
(Midlands West Conference)
Bristol "Flyers" 105 – 37 Northants "Thunder"

The Northants Thunder under 14 Boys made the long journey to Bristol for an early tip off with a warning to prepare properly for the game and make sure that their minds were 'not left on the bus'.

The Bristol boys showed massive intensity from the opening tip storming into a 20-0 run. "Thunder" struggled and panicked against "Flyers" physicality and aggressive full court press resulting in numerous turnovers. It took "Thunder" over six minutes into the quarter to score their first points of the game and the home side held a 30-7 end of the first quarter.

"Thunder" were unsettled for the whole of the game; with "Flyers" doing a good job of disrupting their offence which became static and predictable. Ashley Kitchen scored nine consecutive second quarter points and tried his best to spark some energy into "Thunder's" offence but this was not enough to reduce the big deficit with "Thunder" trailing 19-57 at half time.

With the game already out of reach, "Thunder" continued to struggle to compete with the physicality of the "Flyers" who dominated the offensive boards as well as applying some strong defensive pressure on the ball allowing them to continue build their lead and see out a convincing 105-37 win.

Ashley Kitchen proved to be Thunder's only offensive threat in the game scoring 23 of "Thunder's" 37 points.

Coach Crump commented "To travel to Bristol for an early tipoff was always going to be a tough ask; unfortunately for us, we were completely outplayed from the opening tip. "Flyers" were much more physical and hungrier than us so we were made to work on every possession for all four periods. I'm sure the team will learn many lessons from this game."

Weekend of mixed fortunes for Under 14 Girls

<u>Under 14 Girls National League</u>
(Midland Conference)
Northants "Lightning" 67 – 55 Leicester "Warriors"

The Northants under 14 girls started their weekend of back-to-back games with a fixture against Leicester "Warriors" a team they had lost to narrowly at the start of the season. A close game was expected and so it proved although "Lightning" were guilty of seeing a twenty point lead disappear at the start of the third period of play.

In a low scoring first quarter "Lightning" held the initiative to establish a 12-7 lead. Thanks to the efforts of Dina Kosnikovska and Chloe Stevens this lead was extended to 35-17 by half time and the team sensed the chance of recording their first win of the season.

This thought was possibly on their minds at the start of the third quarter as they allowed "Warriors" to go on a 10-zero charge so reducing their lead to ten points. Coach Karen Goodrich took a time out to remind her team that the game wasn't over and they responded with a 15-4 charge of their own at the end of the period to lead 57-35.

Despite missing one of their better players, "Warriors" showed a great deal of spirit in the final quarter which they won 20-10 to reduce the final deficit to 12 points but the Northants girls were naturally delighted with their win.

Goodrich had played all 12 of her players with Hosana Ajayi, Ashia King and Isabella Rinon all making important contributions although the points scoring of Kosnikovska with 27 points and Stevens with 15 were key factors in the victory.

Bucks "Hornets" 54 – 37 Northants "Lightning"

The following day "Lightning" travelled to Aylesbury to take on Bucks "Hornets" expecting a tough game and they certainly got it. Their cause wasn't helped when the influential Dina Kosnikovsak picked up three fouls in as many minutes at the start of the game but Chloe Stevens stepped up and thanks to her efforts "Lightning" found themselves level with their opponents at 12 points all at the end of the first quarter.

"Lightning" were having trouble containing "Hornets'" Okoye close to the basket and thanks to her efforts the home team were able to stretch out to a 32-19 half time lead. Okoye continued to dominate the game finishing on 23 personal points but Ashia King battled hard on the boards for "Lightning" helping her team to be far more competitive in the third and fourth periods of play.

Coach Goodrich was pleased with her team's defensive effort and was particularly leased with the efforts of Chloe Stevens who top score for her team with 17 points to go with the 15 she had scored the previous day. Kosnikovska contributed 10 points but points scoring remains a problem for the rest of the young Northants players.

Gutsy "Thunder" lose all three Central Venue games

Northants *"Hoopsterz" Under 15* Central Venue League

"Condos" 12 – 11 "Thunder" "Phoenix" 14 – 13 "Thunder"

"Titans" 11 – 10 "Thunder"

"Thunder" played three games in the latest "*Hoopsterz"* Central Venue League losing all three games by a single point. "Thunder" led for most of the game against "Condos" but relaxed their efforts towards the end of the game. They battled hard against a tough "Phoenix" outfit but were guilty of far too much selfish individual pay against "Titans".

Manager / Coach Barend Oosthuizen was pleased with the effort given by his players and was particularly pleased with the way Nicholas Kusion controlled the team's offence

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 2nd December

9-30am to 11-00am	Junior "Ballers" session.
11-30am	Under 14 Girls versus Northamptonshire "Titans"
	Under 14 Boys versus City of Birmingham
2-00pm	Under 16 Boys versus West Bromwich Albion
4-00pm	Junior Men versus Worcester "Wolves"
6-00pm	Senior Men versus Charnwood

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

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Sunday 3rd December Senior Men travel to Warwickshire "Hawks"
Under 14 Girls travel to Luton

For more information contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151