

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Big weekend for “Thunder” as they go second in the Midlands Conference

Back to back wins last weekend, saw the Northants “Thunder” senior men climb to joint second in the Midlands Conference of the National League 4th Division.

Sharp shooting “Thunder” ‘down’ “Riders”

Men’s National League Division 4 (Midlands Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 87 – 62 Charnwood “Riders”

Against a young student based team the main aim for “Thunder” was to avoid getting involved in a toe-to-toe, run and gun battle as they had done against several other teams. For the most part “Thunder” were successful in this aim and an outstanding third quarter saw them put pay to the Charnwood challenge.

“Thunder” made an excellent start to the game jumping out to a 15-6 lead but “Riders” responded well and kept pace with the home side to trail 17-25 at the end of the first period of play. Nine points from Tom Higgins sparked a 12-zero “Thunder” run in the second quarter but Charnwood bounced back with an 8-zero run of their own to trail 31-47 at half time.

“Thunder” knew that a good start to the third quarter was necessary and this would come from tough defence. Under increased pressure “Riders” began to struggle on offence and began to force up shots. When these shots missed Jake Wyatt was on hand to rip down rebounds and launch “Thunder” fast breaks. These were frequently completed with excellent ball movement and precise shooting perimeter shooting which saw “Thunder” hit four three pointers and outscore their opponents 26-9 to extend their lead to 73-40.

Two more triples from Matt Yates took the Northants team further ahead in the fourth but some defensive confusion led to Charnwood finishing the stronger of the two teams closing out the game with a 14-6 run to put a healthier look to the scoreboard.

In the 25 points win, Matt Yates top scored for “Thunder” with 22 points while Jacob Holt collected a double-double of 13 points and 10 rebounds; Johnny Yates chipped in with 11 points and Jake Wyatt hauled down a massive 12 rebounds. All ten “Thunder” players contributed to the final total with the team connecting with 11 shots from beyond the arc.

“Thunder”, ‘come in from the cold’ to beat “Hawks”

Warwickshire “Hawks” 75 – 80 Northants “Thunder”

After the exertions of the previous evening it was a weary team that got onto the bus to travel to take on Warwickshire “Hawks” a team “Thunder” had beaten in the National Shield earlier in the season. “Thunder” were also missing a couple of players from the previous evening so they knew they were in for a tough game in a modern sports hall resembling a fridge.

Any fears the Northants team had about the quality of their opponents were confirmed in the opening minutes of the game as “Hawks” jumped ahead 12-6 on the back of a number of fast break offences forcing a “Thunder” time out. Defensive adjustments were made but “Thunder” found themselves trailing 15-18 after the first quarter.

“Thunder” were struggling to find the offensive fluency they had displayed the previous evening relying too heavily on their transition offence. Despite this they hauled their way back to 31-32 before being hit by an 8-2 “Hawks” run which included two three pointers from ex-“Thunder” player, Cameron Hadley.

Trailing 33-40 at half time, “Thunder” knew that good defence would be the answer to their problems and during the third period of play they restricted their opponents to 12 points. Helped by the efforts of Jake Wyatt close to basket and the driving play of Matt Yates they scored 22 points themselves to edge ahead 54-52 by the end of the period.

When the “Hawks” two point guards got themselves into foul trouble “Thunder” coach, John Collins switched his team to an alternating defence and this began to cause a lot of confusion in the “Hawks” ranks. “Thunder” extended their lead to six points at 63-57 and five missed free throws by the home side boosted their hopes of a win. These hopes were dashed when “Hawks” scored six unanswered points to tie up the scores with two minutes of the game remaining.

Up until now “Thunder’s” Jacob Holt had been struggling at the offensive end but cometh the hour cometh the man as Holt became a big presence close to basket and back to back scores from him and a three pointer from Jake Barr restored “Thunders” lead. “Hawks” were now forced to send their opponents to the free throw line and despite missing six of the resulting twelve free throws “Thunder” held on for a hard fought comeback win.

Collins used just eight players in the game and once again all eight contributed to the final total led by the Yates brothers Johnny and Matt with 17 and 16 points respectively. Jake Wyatt completed a fine weekend with a 12 point haul a total matched by Jacob Holt (9 of them in the final period) while Jake Barr scored an invaluable 11 points. Collins commented, “Under the circumstances this was a really important win. We were short-handed and tired after Saturday evening’s game and it says a lot about my players’ determination.”

Junior Men almost snatch defeat from the jaws of Victory

Junior Men’s National League (Midlands West Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 68 - 64 Worcester “Wolves”

On a number of occasions in this Midlands West contest the Northants junior men looked to be totally dominant but on each occasion they allowed their opponents to get back into the game. Leading 10-5 after four minutes of the game “Thunder” were guilty of some selfish individual based play and they found themselves trailing 13-15 at the end of the first quarter.

The home side dominated the second period of play and by using Ed Wallhead who responded with 10 points in the quarter they took the period 17-11 to lead 30-26 at half time. The two teams exchanged scores in the third quarter with Cameron Samuels looking sharp for “Thunder” and at the end of the period “Thunder” had extended their lead to 51-44.

Having seen that team play was the key to victory, “Thunder” once again resorted to individual play forcing up shots early in their offences and them watching as “Wolves” mounted a number of fast breaks from the missed shots. The visitors mounted a 15-7 charge to re-take the lead at 59-58 and an unlikely win looked possible for them.

Coach Darius Malutis took a time out to steady his troops and on the next offence “Thunder” got the ball to their ‘go to man’ Wallhead who scored with a nice move close to basket and Samuels extended the team’s lead with a lay up. A “Wolves”, three-pointer got the nerves jangling again but another Wallhead score and back to back free throws from Ed Taylan saw “Thunder” home.

In the four point win Samuels and Wallhead led the “Thunder” scoring with 18 points apiece, Zac Kitchen scored 13 points and Chris Amankonah 11 but the rest of the team could only contribute 8 points between them.

Cadet Boys overwhelmed by Albion

Under 16 Boys National League (Midlands West Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 47 -73 West Bromwich Albion

The Northants under 16 boys came a distant second best when they took on unbeaten West Bromwich Albion at the Basketball Centre last Saturday. Not only were Albion leading the Midlands West Conference they could also claim the scalps of two Premier league team in the National Cup.

Against such exalted opposition “Thunder” made a positive start to the game taking a 7-zero lead and forcing an Albion time out. Thanks to a massive defensive effort “Thunder” were able to restrict their opponents to just 13 first quarter points but against a much taller and physically stronger team they struggled to score and trailed 9-13 after the first period of play.

Albion came out for the second quarter with mean intent and a 16-2 charge gave them the upper hand. For “Thunder”, skipper Connor White battled hard and Jacob Barlow- Hurdeman gave a good account of himself on the defensive boards but their efforts couldn’t prevent the visitors from establishing a match winning 43-23 lead by half time.

Unlike the previous week, “Thunder” worked hard defensively during the final two periods of play but continued to struggle on offence. They could however, be pleased that they only lost the second half 30-24 as Albion rested some of their front line players but the visitors ran out comfortable 26 point winners.

For “Thunder” only Adam Lewandowski with 10 points could score in double figures although rookie Ashley Kitchen, Cameron Leighton, Connor White all made decent contributions.

Under 14 Boys see of City of Birmingham

Under 14 Boys National League (Midlands West Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 73 – 65 City of Birmingham “Rockets II”

The Northants “Thunder” secured their third win of the season with an eight point win over City of Birmingham “Rockets II”.

“Thunder” made a strong start to the game with a 12-4 surge with eight points coming from guard Ashley Kitchen. Despite trailing C.O.B. employed a full court press igniting a 6-0 run to put pressure on Northants’ lead but “Thunder” were ahead 21-14 at the conclusion of the quarter through back to back scores from Thomas Bates.

Coach Rob Crump was freely rotating his players in the second quarter with youngsters Jaffrey Haider, Dylan Dominici and Jacob Milcencius all making positive contributions at both ends of the floor. “Thunder” displayed good scoring balance with five players contributing to the 17 second quarter points as “Thunder” secured a comfortable 38-23 lead half time lead.

“Rockets” continued to employ a full court press in the third quarter; and this resulted in a certain amount of panic in the “Thunder” offence with the visitors going on a 6-0 run as they visibly gained confidence. “Thunder” responded with a 13-2 response of their own the third quarter ending with a three pointer Benas Maldutis as the lead was extended to 57-36 going into the final quarter.

A three pointer by Ashley Kitchen extended Thunder’s lead to 71-46 with five minutes remaining with the game seemingly out of reach for “Rockets”. The visitors had other ideas however, and as “Thunder” relaxed their efforts and over a five minute period the Birmingham boys scored 16 unanswered points and suddenly a shock comeback win seemed to be on the cards for them. A “Rockets” three pointer educed “Thunders” lead even further but two free throws by Ashley Kitchen saw his team home.

“Thunder’s” scoring was led by Ashley Kitchen 22 points Benas Maldutis supporting well with 13 points.

Coach Crump commented “It is pleasing to secure another victory which will hopefully generate more confidence into our performances. Today was a good team performance; however there are still basic fundamentals which we need to rectify to avoid lapses in our performance. This was obvious in the last quarter when “Rockets” were able to reduce our 25 point lead to just 8 by the end of the game. We cannot afford to become complacent regardless of the dominant scoreline.”

Another weekend of mixed fortunes for Under 14 Girls but they secure local bragging rights

Under 14 Girls National League (Midland Conference)

Northants “Lightning” 77 – 49 Northamptonshire “Titans”

With both teams having won just one game in the season so far a close encounter was expected but when “Titans” jumped out to a 21-6 lead it looked as if they would cruise to a comfortable victory. A Karen Goodrich time out seemed to instil more confidence in the players and by the end of the first quarter the deficit had been reduced to 14-21.

The increased “Lightning” confidence was clear to see at the start of the second period of play with a 10-2 charge and in the seventh minute a lay up from influential guard Dina Kosnikovski gave her team a lead they would hold for the remainder of the game. Further scores from Kosnikovskis saw “Lightning” extend their lead to 40-32 by the end of the quarter.

The “Lightning” game plan was to try and cut off the supply route to “Titans” talented Ella McCahill-Brown by pressurising their guards while Hosana Ajayi and Isobella Rinon did a close marking job. Not only was this tactic successful it also forced a number of turn-overs leading to easy “Lightning” scores. This pressure however, came at a price with “Lightning” in the penalty midway through the third quarter so after a 10-0 surge by the home side, “Titans” had an opportunity to cut the gap from the free throw line but they could convert only one of ten free throws award and the home side went into the final period of play leading 54-41.

Any thoughts of a “Titans” comeback in the final quarter were quickly dispelled as “Lightning” poured in 14 unanswered points at the start of the period and Coach Goodrich was able to give her younger players an experience of playing in a local derby as “Lightning” ran out winners by 77 points to 49 led by 41 points from Kosnikovskis with good support coming from Chloe Stevens and Fiona Arthur with 12 and 10 points respectively.

The “Lightning” girls were naturally delighted with their win and amazingly had outscored their opponents 61-26 over the last 32 minutes of the game

Luton Basketball Club**66 – 34****Northants “Lightning”**

The “Lightning” players were very much brought back down to earth the next day when they travelled to Luton to take on the joint leaders of the Midlands Conference. Coach Goodrich set her team the target of improving on 66-99 loss earlier in the season. This proved to be a difficult proposition with Luton fielding three players taller than anyone on the “Lightning” team.

“Lightning” found the going very tough in the first two periods of play as they struggled against the intense defensive pressure and combating Luton’s height advantage and they found themselves trailing 15-45 at half time.

Goodrich was giving all her players lots of playing time and as the Luton coach played his bench players the “Lightning” players began to perform with more confidence. They actually won the third period of play 12-10 and only lost the fourth 10-7 with Chloe Stevens shooting well from the perimeter and Ashia King showing a lot of potential as she battled the boards with girls much taller and older than her.

All in all this was a pleasing weekend for the team with a win over “Titans” and their coach’s target achieved against Luton.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION**Saturday 9th December**

9-30am to 11-00am

11-30am

2-00pm

4-00pm

Junior “Ballers” session.

Under 14 Girls versus Shenley

Under 14 Boys versus Worcester “Wolves”

Under 16 Boys versus Coventry “Tornadoes”

Senior Men versus Birmingham “Mets II”

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

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Junior Men travel to Frankley “Falcons”

Sunday 10th December

9-30am to 3-30pm

East Midlands Regional Performance Centre
session at the Basketball Centre.

For more information contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151