

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Senior Men maintain winning run and Under 13 Girls win again but it's tough elsewhere for teams in the Northants Club

Strong finish sees "Thunder" home against "Flames"

Division Four National League (Midlands Conference)

Coventry "Flames" 60 – 70 Northants "Thunder"

With seven minutes remaining of this Midlands Conference game "Flames" were holding a 52-49 lead. The home side had recovered from a 33-43 deficit at the start of the third quarter and looked set for a shock win against "Thunder". A three pointer from Matt Yates seemed to give "Thunder" the energy they needed and a 21-9 closing charge saw them home by ten points as they extended their winning run to three.

After the long Christmas break "Thunder" went into this game underprepared and under strength and for most of the game struggled against "Flames" zone defence. They edged the first quarter 17-12 but thanks to some good offensive rebounding the home side had closed the deficit to just one point at 31-32 by half time.

Coach John Collins urged his team to play more up-tempo basketball in the second half and his team responded well at the start of the third quarter opening up a 10 point lead but then they were guilty of complacency as the taller Coventry team was able to seize the initiative and the lead early in the final quarter. The way "Thunder" responded over the final seven minutes of play will have given them a great deal of confidence going into a run of games against the top teams in the Conference.

In the battling win, "Thunder" were indebted to Jason Tucker who recorded a double-double with 28 points and 10 rebounds. Richard Higgins also reached double figures with points and rebounds with ten of each, Terrell Salmon battled hard for his 10 points while the perimeter shots from Sam Mennell and Johnny Yates were vital.

Junior Men can't match "Wolves" speed and physicality

Junior Men's (Premier Central League)

Northants "Thunder" 43 – 86 Oaklands "Wolves"

When these two teams met earlier in the season "Wolves" recorded a 70 plus points win so on the face of it this 43 points defeat could be seen as a reasonable result for "Thunder". Having said this, despite their best efforts, for the most part the Northants boys were never really 'in' the game against a taller and more athletic Oaklands team.

The visitors won the first three quarters in a canter but in the fourth quarter "Thunder" showed what they were made of and led their opponents for seven minutes of the period.

For "Thunder", the industrious Chris Amankonah top scored with 17 points. No other Northants player scored significant points although Jamal Jack battled hard

Double loss for Cadet Boys

Under 16 Boys National League
(Midlands West Conference)

Team Birmingham Elite 108 - 37 Northants "Thunder"

The Northants "Thunder" Cadet Boys returned to action after the Christmas break with a trip to Birmingham to face a strong "Elite" side.

"Thunder" struggled to compete from the opening tip as Team Birmingham stormed into a 26-0 lead with their aggressive full court press forcing numerous "Thunder" turnovers. An Ashley Kitchen three pointer put "Thunder" on the scoreboard with three minutes of the first quarter remaining, however too many turnovers saw Thunder concede 38 points in the opening quarter to trail 38-5.

Despite the deficit, "Thunder" demonstrated some good team offence in the second quarter despite the continued "Elite" pressure. "Thunder" went on an 8-zero run, however, they were outworked on the boards and thanks to numerous 'put back' scores Team Birmingham extended their lead to 67-17 at the half.

A competitive opening to the third quarter, saw Ashley Kitchen hit two back to back threes but. Team Birmingham were too fast for "Thunder" in transition and they were able to extend their lead to 87-26. "Thunder" continued to struggle in the final quarter finally going down 37-108.

"Thunder" were led in scoring by Ashley Kitchen with 12 points supported by 7 points from Cameron Leighton.

Northants "Thunder" 55 – 99 City of Birmingham "Rockets II"

After the tough game against Team Birmingham Elite, "Thunder" returned to the floor the next day to take on the City of Birmingham "Rockets" second team who had narrowly beaten "Thunder" earlier in the season.

It was the visitors who made the best start to the game applying a full court trapping defence making it difficult for "Thunder" to advance the ball up the floor. Careless passing and lack of execution on their press break by "Thunder" provided the opportunity for COB to capitalise and they opened up 26-12 lead by the end of the first quarter.

At the start of the second quarter "Thunder" took better care of the basketball but missed numerous long distance shots when they had opportunities to attack the basket. "Rockets" extended their lead to 37-16 with "Thunder" guilty of failing to rotate properly on their helpside defence as the visitors scored a number of points from close to the basket. "Thunder" did respond and reduced the deficit to 15 points but two turnovers saw the visitors extend their lead to 49-30 by half time.

"Thunder" knew they had would have to work very hard if they were to put pressure on the "Rockets" lead. Coach Crump employed a 2-3 zone to limit "Rockets" scores close to basket but an 8-zero run by COB extended their lead, with "Thunder" once more outworked around the basket as "Rockets" were able to convert third and fourth shots following offensive rebounds. "Thunder" also struggled to execute on offense and could also only convert three of ten throws as "Rockets" extended their lead to 71-38 going into the final quarter.

Thunder's misery continued over the final ten minutes as they eventually went down 55-99 with their scoring led by Tom Peachey with 14 points good support coming from Demantas Cebatorianus 10 points.

"Titans" beat "Thunder" in local derby

Under 14 Boys National League

(Midlands West Conference)

Northants "Thunder" 55 – 62 NEBC "Titans"

A 26 point haul from "Titan's", Khalid helped his team to a seven point win over the Northants Under 14 boys. The game was a close run affair for the first two quarter, but then in the third quarter "Thunder" went scoreless for two periods and this proved to be decisive. "Titans" took the quarter 18-13 to open up an eight point lead and despite winning the final quarter by a single point "Thunder" couldn't close the gap.

The game was a see-saw affair with "Thunder" conceding a massive 32 free throws while being awarded just 12 themselves and they struggled to contain Khalid throughout the contest while Ethan Round controlled the backcourt well for the visitors.

For "Thunder" their offensive threat was limited because of a number of missed shots. Tom Greenfield top scored with 20 points and pulled down an impressive 16 rebounds. Benas Maldutis had an interesting duel with Round and finished with 15 personal points while Jordan Banjana rebounded well and Ben Koolen made a good debut.

Under 14 Girls are blown away by Ipswich

**Under 14 Girls National League
(Midlands East Conference)**

Ipswich Basketball 138 – 27 Northants "Lightning"

The Northants Under 14 girls had a very tough and physical game against an unbeaten Ipswich side last Saturday. Ipswich are runaway leaders in the Midlands East Conference and their approach to games is based on gaining as big an overall points difference as possible to help them in the end of season Play Offs. This involves pressing teams even when they are leading by a considerable margin and playing weaker players for a minimum amount of time. One can question the morality of this philosophy and ask how it is encouraging young girls to travel for almost six hours only to be hammered.

On Saturday the Northants girls struggled to deal with the pace and energy of the talented Ipswich players and "Lightning" only managed to score 14 points to Ipswich's 56 in the first half. The "Lightning" players gave of their very best but Ipswich were unforgiving throughout the second half and ran out winners by a massive margin.

In the heavy loss, Fiona Arther was the only "Lightning" to score in double figures with 11 points and she got good support from Zoe Ormshaw with seven points

Good team performance earns Under 13 Girls win over "Wildcats"

Northants "Lightning Too" 67 – 39 Nottingham "Wildcats"

A pleasing all-round team performance earned the Northants Under 13 girls a well deserved win over Nottingham "Wildcats".

"Lightning Too" made an excellent start to the game and led by some effective scoring from Ashia King jumped out to a 10-2 lead. "Wildcats" responded well and by the end of the first quarter had closed the gap to 12-18.

In the second quarter King again dominated proceedings and with Deyarna Singh and Latesha Betsy displaying some excellent passing skills, "Lightning Too" were able to open up a 35-22 lead by half time.

With the rotation rule not operating in the second half Coach Karen Goodrich was able to field all her strongest players together. Lorraine Zgurean and Athena Thompson put in an excellent defensive shift while Keris Ndubisi kept the scoreboard ticking over.

With the game over as a contest "Lightning Too" produced some excellent team basketball with their defence forcing a number of "Wildcats" turn-overs with some unselfish play resulting in easy

scores. "Lightning Too" won the second half 32-17 to take the game by 67 points to 39 and keep their hopes of a Play Off place well and truly alive.

In the 28 point win all nine Northants players scored led by Ashia King with 24 points who also recorded double figure rebounds while Deyarna Singh supported well with 15 points and gave an excellent defensive performance.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 19th January

9-30 – 11- 00am

11-30am

2.00pm

4pm

6pm

Junior "Ballers"

Under 13 Girls versus NEBC "Titans"

Under 14 Boys versus Oxford "Hoops"

Under 116 Girls versus NEBC "Titans"

Junior Men versus West Bromwich Albion

Senior Men versus City of Birmingham "Rockets"

These five games and the "Ballers" session will be staged at the Basketball Centre which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Sunday 20th January

Under 14 Boys travel to Shropshire "Warriors"

Under 14 Girls travel to Leicester ""Warriors"

For more information on this Press Release contact: John Collins on 07801 533 151