

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **Northants Men lose to Division 1 opposition in National Cup**

### **Senior Men's National Cup Round 1**

**Northants "Thunder"                      60 – 88                      Leicester "Warriors"**

Last season "Thunder" cause a minor shock when they knocked 1<sup>st</sup> Division "Warriors" out of the National Cup. There was to be repeat of that result at the Basketball Centre last Sunday as "Warriors" with four of last season's "Thunder" team in their line up, cruised to a 28 points victory.

The new look "Thunder" looked nervous in the first period of play which the Leicester team took 15-8 with 11 of their points coming from their centre Knutty. "Warriors" continued to dominate in the second quarter and by half time had opened up a 42-20 lead.

A 17-2 charge at the start of the third quarter put the final result beyond doubt but when the "Warriors" coach rested his main players "Thunder" mounted a 9-zero run of their own to trail 39-65 going into the last ten minutes of play. By now "Thunder" were playing with more confidence led by the close to basket and perimeter play of Dan Turiccki. "Thunder" lost the final period by just 2 points 23-21 but if they re-produce that form in their first league fixture this weekend they should be a force to be reckoned with.

In the 28 points defeat eight of the nine "Thunder" players contributed to the scoring led by Turiccki with 24 points with good support coming from Jonny Yates. For the record the Northants contingent scored 38 of "Warriors" points!!

## **Poor second quarter costs Junior Women dear**

### **Junior Women's National Cup Round 1**

**Northants "Lightning"                      51 – 52                      Herts "Warriors"**

The Northants junior women exited the National Cup after suffering a one point defeat at the hands of Herts Warriors" in an extremely scrappy game. "Lightning" struggled to find their rhythm for most of the game and can look back on an appalling second period of play as the main reason for their defeat.

Going into that second quarter "Lightning" held a narrow 20-15 lead but were outscored 19-7 over the next ten minutes to trail 27-34 at half time. Try as the might "Lightning" just couldn't close the gap despite a spirited last minute which saw them score six unanswered points to give their fans some hope of a victory.

"Lightning" went into the game without the services of three point guards because of injury and unavailability and this undoubtedly had an adverse affect on their performance which saw rookie Ruchae Walton top score with 20 points. Lauren Brookes, Rio Blessyn and Lauren Milne made vital contributions but six other players could only total 4 points between them something the coaching staff will need to address.

## **Under 14 and 15 Boys in friendly action against Leicester "Warriors"**

### **Under 15 Boys**

**Leicester "Warriors"                      54 – 52                      Northants "Thunder"**

The Northants under 15 boys slipped to a two point defeat against Leicester "Warriors" in this pre-season friendly game. Under national regulations younger teams can only play men to man defence but at the age of 15 teams are allowed to utilise zone defences. "Warriors" did just so presenting the Northants boys with a challenge they had never seen before. In the event the defensive tactic proved successful as the home side recorded a narrow two point defeat.

Northants coach Grahame Yates was able to give all his player ample court time and he was quite pleased with the way they performed.

## Under 14 Boys

Leicester “Warriors”

63 – 63

Northants “Thunder”

The unusual scoreline for the friendly between Northants Thunder and Leicester Warriors U14 teams highlighted the good relationship that exists between the two clubs.

The preparations for the match could not have been more different as the “Warriors” had been training twice a week through the summer and had played a friendly against Sheffield the week before, whilst “Thunder” had enjoyed a 7 week break and had only trained once three days before the match. However, “Thunder” showed no signs of a lack of practice as they were ahead after the first five minutes. It became clear very early in the game that priority number one was to try and stop the extremely talented Kareem Queely, who finished the match with an incredible 45 points. He scored 11 of Leicester's 13 first quarter points and led them to a slender 1 point lead.

When Queely spent some time on the bench in the second quarter, Thunder seized their opportunity and charged to a 35-27 half-time lead. On their home court, the “Warriors” came out fighting in the third period and limited Thunder to just 9 points and, having recognised “Thunder's” attempts to clog the driving lanes, Queely switched to nailing three pointers.

Going into the final quarter, Leicester had established a 49-44 lead but now it was “Thunder's” turn to up their game. Coach Round went strong in the last four minutes of the match and the Northants boys closed the gap to just two points with 5 seconds to go. A time-out followed by a well-executed endline play resulted in Tom Berry free under the basket with the ball in his hands, and he didn't disappoint. With the game tied, the time ran out and the two coaches decided that they had seen enough of their players so the well-contested, good spirited game ended in a draw.

Whilst Thunder will need to work out how to stop Queely in future, Coach Round was pleased with the scoring spread of his team. Thunder ended the game with three players in double figures. Ed Wallhead was the leading scorer with 21 points, Amankohah scored 12 of his 15 points in the second half and Josh Lloyd showed that he has strengthened the team significantly by finishing his first game for the club with 16 points. Coach Round concluded that, after completing its pre-season phase, his team has the potential do very well this year.

### **THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES**

#### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September**

9.30 am until 11am

Under 10 and Under 12 “Ballers” Academy

10 am until 11 am

Junior “Ballers”

Senior Men travel to Cardiff

Under 13 Boys play in the Northants Central Venue League.

#### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September**

Under 13 Boys travel to Notts Nova

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