

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

MEDIA RELEASE

“Thunder” Men get league season underway with a big ‘road’ win

Men’s National League Division 3 (North Conference)

Stockport “Spartan”

66 – 77

Northants “Thunder”

“Thunder” made the long journey up the M6 to Stockport last Sunday for their first Division 3 game of the season and returned with a well earned eleven point victory over a “Spartans side that had recruited heavily over the close season.

“Thunder” made the best possible start with Leon Henry hitting a three point shot within 14 seconds of the tip, and then scoring a lay-up from a Jason Tucker pass at the end of a fast break. “Spartans” ran a number of structured offences, but the intensity and tempo of Thunder’s defence made life difficult for them and “Thunder” jumped out to an 18-8 lead with three minutes left in the first quarter. The “Thunder” coaches were very pleased that, once again, Northants’ ball movement had been very good, and six players had shared the responsibility of scoring from various spots on the floor. “Spartans” called a time-out to settle the home team’s fortunes but “Thunder” kept the pressure on and they extended their lead slightly to finish the quarter leading by 26 points to 15.

In the second quarter, “Thunder” kept control of the game and pushed out on a 7-2 run over a five minute period, but “Spartans” were not finished, and they manage to tighten up their defence and take good percentage shots. The highlight of the half came when Jason Tucker drew no less than three defenders on the drive, and found Leome Francis on a back-door cut with a stunning ‘dump’ pass, which Francis collected and slammed down an unstoppable dunk. The move shook the room and had even the “Spartans” fans applauding and “Thunder” took a 45-30, fifteen point lead into the locker room at half time.

The third quarter was a period 'of two halves'; with Spartans drawing the deficit back to just three points with six minutes gone on the game clock. “Thunder” refused to panic and went on 14-1 run in just two and a half minutes, to re-establish a 16 point lead. This run was lead by Tomas Vladicka who found space on the baseline for two neat lay-ins, and then sealed it with a shot from the arc, adding 7 points to his final tally of 13 personal points.

The final quarter was less all about 'putting the game to bed', before the long journey back down the M6. Jacob Holt entered the game and did a fantastic job of keeping the “Thunder” score ticking over, as well as grabbing a number of athletic rebounds at both ends of the floor. “Thunder” lost the quarter by 11-16, but managed the clock very well, to finish with convincing 77-66 win.

In the 11 point win, four “Thunder” players finished with double-figure personal scores, lead by Leome Francis with 19pts and 23 rebounds. Vladicka 13 points, Tucker 12points and 10 rebounds and Holt 10 points and six rebounds completed the quartet. Coach Rob Eddon made special mention of the defence of Tucker and Asher Kirby who frustrated and challenged Stockport's guards throughout the game. He was also pleased that nine of the “Thunder's” eleven players got onto the score sheet and this should hold them in good stead for the challenging season ahead.

“Thunder” are at home this Saturday when they take on Sheffield “Sabres” at the Northants Basketball Centre. The game tips off at 3.30pm so get along and support the team.

Junior Men get off to a losing start

Junior Men's Premier Division North

Northants "Thunder" 55 – 65 Derby "Trailblazers"

A young "Thunder" team slipped to a disappointing defeat to Derby "Trailblazers" despite a late surge in the final three minutes of the game.

From the outset the Northants players found it very difficult to find their rhythm and were down by five points with just three minutes of the game gone. Derby were rebounding very well and were able to penetrate the "Thunder" defence at will. A change of defensive tactics managed to nullify "Blazers" attacking options and this enabled "Thunder" to rebound and get out on the break. This led to an 8-0 run over a four minute period with guard Luke Lewis scoring six of those points but Derby finished the quarter strongly taking a 15-9 lead.

"Thunder" started the second period of play in much brighter mood and appeared to have grown into the game. They went on a 12-4 run to take the lead at 21-19 with George Paul hitting back-to-back threes, and Karan Virdee hitting two nice mid-range jump shots. The Derby offence wasn't particularly effective but they were dominating the rebounding department with a number of their players scoring with easy put backs and the visitors went into the half time break leading 34-26.

Derby came out of the blocks from the very beginning of the third quarter, and went on an 8-0 run, with "Thunder" not being able to register anything for the initial five minutes of the quarter. Sam Round scored seven points but Derby edged the period 16-10 to take a 50-36 lead going into the final stanza.

Linas Bajournas opened the scoring for "Thunder" but then they went scoreless for another fully six minutes, whilst Derby extended their lead out to 57-38 with four minutes of the game remaining. "Thunder" amassed 14 points in the final three minutes of the game, but it was a case of too little too late as Derby held on for the 64-55 win.

For "Thunder" only Luke Lewis with 16 points scored in double figures although stand-in coach Rob Eddon was full of praise for Karan Virdee who did well at both ends of the court.

Junior Women exit Cup at the hands of Herts "Warriors"

Junior Women's Sureshot National Cup 1st Rund

Herts "Warriors" 85 – 31 Northants "Lightning"

The Northants junior women exited the National Cup at the very first hurdle after suffering a heavy defeat at the hands of Herts "Warriors". The team knew their task was going to be tough against one of the best junior women's teams in the country but they arrived at the game venue to find that "Warriors" had recruited heavily during the summer and were boosted by a number of high quality players.

"Lightning" struggled from the beginning of the game and found themselves trailing 7-29 after the first period of play. They improved massively in the second quarter which finished at 14 all but it was 'business as normal' in the third which "Warriors" took 24-4 to extend their lead to 67-25 finally running out winners by a massive 54 points.

For "Lightning" Steph Ogden and Lauren Brookes battled hard to the end scoring 14 and 12 points respectively.

Cadet Men make a winning start

Cadet Men's Midland Conference

Northants Thunder 89 – 48 Shropshire Warriors 48

The Northants under 16 boys got their season underway in positively fashion with a solid home win against Shropshire "Warriors" who had a distinct height advantage over the Northants boys. "Thunder" jumped out to a 13-2 lead with a their scoring opening with a Carlo Nieva three-pointer and backed up by six points from Jacob Killeya.

The pressure exerted on the “Warriors” ball carriers throughout the game forced a number of turn-overs and this kept the scoreboard ticking over as “Thunder” scored over 20 points in all four quarters. They lead 2-13 after the first period of lay and this lead was extended to 44-25 by half time even after the visitors had tried to ‘shut up shop’ with a zone defence and despite the fact that “Thunder” were guilty of missing nine free throws.



Carlo Nieva takes the ball to the basket in the Cadet Men’s win over Shropshire “Warriors”

“Thunder” continued their dominance at the start of third quarter with Shropshire struggling to stop a deluge of fast break offences. Their frustration was clearly illustrated when Jacob Round was stopped in his drive to basket with an unsportsmanlike foul. By now Coach Rob Crump was also employing a zone defence but despite enjoying a considerable height advantage Shropshire could not gain rebounding dominance thanks to some solid work from Jacob Killeya and Rhys Hill as “Thunder” took the quarter 24-12 to extend their lead to 68-37.

With the final result no longer in doubt Coach Crump was able to rotate his bench more freely, and David Nieva, Kaan Uyduran and debutant TJ Nyamatore all made good contributions as Northants ran out winners by 89 points to 48.

In the 41 point win Jacob Killeya lead the “Thunder” scoring with 24 points while Jacob Round and Carlo Nieva supported well with 21 and 17 points respectively.

No joy for Under 13 Boys in Sheffield

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Sheffield Saints	64 – 45	Northants Thunder
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It was ‘in at the deep end’ for the Under 13 Boys with their first game of the season away to Sheffield, always difficult opposition. The game was made even more difficult with several members of Coach Mike Round’s squad unavailable for the game. Even so the Northants players had no intention of handing an easy win to their hosts and “Thunder” matched “Saints” in the first half of the opening period, but then an 11-0 run opened up a 17-7 lead for the home team.

Thunder fought back in the second period and cut Sheffield's lead to just four points, but a late "Saints charge just before the half-time break gave Sheffield a 12 point lead at 29-17. Only two points separated the two teams in the third quarter and the game remained competitive to the final buzzer Sheffield winning the final period of play 17-12 to take the game at 64-45.

"Thunder's" Ed Wallhead was the game-high scorer with 26 points and Tom Berry also managed double figures scoring 10 points. Coach Round was very satisfied with how his team played at both ends of the floor and was pleased to see how the players applied what they had learned in training to a competitive league match. He was particularly impressed by Ed Wallhead's contributions all over the floor from running the point to dominating under the boards.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 5th October

11.30am Under 13 Boys versus Leicester "Warriors"
1.30am Under 14 Boys versus Leicester "Warriors"
Junior Women versus Sporting Club Albion
3.30pm Senior Men versus Sheffield "Sabres"

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

Spectators are most welcome for the games and admission is **FREE**

Under 11's and Under 12 Girl's Central Venue League
Junior Men travel to Leicester "Warriors"
Cadette Women travel to City of Birmingham
Under 15 Boys travel to Northamptonshire "Titans"

Sunday 6th October

Senior Men travel to Killamarsh "Arrows" in the 2nd Round of the National Cup
Cadet Men travel to Derby "Trailblazers"

For further information contact:

John Collins (Coaching Co-ordinator) on **07801 533 151**