

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**“Thunder” just miss out against top of the table “Bears”**

### **Men’s National League Division 3**

#### **South Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”      71 – 78      Sussex “Bears”**

When “Thunder’s” Adam Thomas scored a field goal in the second minute of the final period of play to tie the scores up at 61 all, a remarkable comeback and a potential shock looked to be on the cards. Sussex responded with 12-2 run to regain the lead but scores from Tony Sarrio and Jacob Holt plus a three-pointer from Johnny Yates got the home side to within a single point at 71-73.

Over the next 85 seconds “Thunder” failed to add to their total while “Bears” showed their experience by adding five further points to take the game and retain their unbeaten record.

In the first half a close game seemed unlikely as the visitors opened up a 15 point lead at 48-33. During that 20 minutes of play “Thunder” appeared to be in awe of their opponents and were guilty of poor ball movement and poor shot selection. Coach Grahame Yates used the half time interval to fire up his team and they responded superbly rocking top of the table “Bears” with a12-zero charge at the start of the third quarter.

The seven point loss was “Thunder’s” first Conference loss of the season and they will be anxious to get back to winning ways this Saturday when they take on lowly Southwark “Pride”.

In last Saturday’s loss Jacob Holt once again top scored for “Thunder” with 15 points, good support coming from Matt Yates and Tony Sarrio with 12 points apiece while Richard Higgins battled hard for his 10 point haul.

### **Hard fought win for Junior Men**

#### **Junior Men’s Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”      73 – 59      Coventry “Tornadoes”**

After several recent narrow losses the Northants junior men were very relieved to pick up a home win against a determined Coventry “Tornadoes” team.

“Thunder’s” game plan was simple, ‘make “Tornadoes battle for every point’. This message hadn’t seemed to register because in the first minute of the game the visitors scored with an easy put back but this seemed to spur “Thunder” into action and a 10-zero run put them ahead.

“Tornadoes” made it perfectly clear they weren’t going to capitulate and an 8-zero run of their own got the score back to 21-17 after the first quarter.

“Thunder” coach Darius Malutis recognised that “Tornadoes” were not getting back on defence very quickly so he encouraged his players to run the ball back. This tactic proved to be very successful and the Northants team were able to take the quarter 20-13 opening up a 41-30 half time lead.

The final two periods of play saw the two teams both mounting runs and “Thunder” were frustrated by “Tornadoes” zone defence. Despite this the home side were able to keep their noses in front and went into the last five minutes of play leading 60-53. At this stage the Coventry coach instructed his players to prevent scores by committing fouls in the hope that “Thunder” would miss the resulting free throws. To certain extent this tactic was successful with “Thunder” players connecting with just seven of the fifteen free throws taken. Luckily their defence held firm and “Tornadoes” weren’t able to close the gap, “Thunder” eventually running out winners by 73 points to 59 for a morale boosting win.

In the 14 point win, “Thunder’s” leading scorer was David Nieva with 25 points with good support coming from Jake Nailer, Ayo Oluyede and Ed Taylan.

The team will be hoping to maintain the winning habit on Saturday when they take on West Bromwich Albion who like “Thunder” have won just one game.

### **Cadet Boys hold on to see off “Riders”**

**Under 16 Boys Midlands Conference**  
**Leicester “Riders”                    61 – 72                    Northants “Thunder”**

A few weeks ago “Thunder” narrowly beat “Riders” in a tight National Cup 2<sup>nd</sup> Round game so another close game was expected when the two teams met last Saturday at the Leicester Community Sports Arena. Going into the final period of play nothing could have been further from the truth as “Thunder”, with a combination of hard-nosed defence and some excellent fast break offence, had established a comfortable 59-38 lead. To their credit “Riders” staged a spirited rally in the final quarter reducing the final deficit to just nine points as some of “Thunder’s” key players became tired and a little complacency set in.

The game started 35 minutes late because a score book wasn’t available and this annoying delay seemed to spur the Northants boys into action and “Riders” were rocked by a succession of “Thunder” fast break which saw skipper Chris Amankonah score 10 personal points to help his team into an 18-8 first quarter lead. “Thunder” coach, John Collins switched his team to a zone defence in the second quarter and Amankonah continued his personal scoring festival with a further eight personal points

In the third quarter “Thunder” were forced into more of a half court game and this allowed point guard Josh Lloyd to show off his skills with 11 points as “Thunder” increased their lead by a further two points. Collins was disappointed that his team ended the game so poorly and he remains concerned that his team’s scoring power is based on three players. In this game Amankonah and Lloyd scored 30 and 27 points respectively with Ed Wallhead adding good support with 10 points.

This Sunday “Thunder” take on City of Birmingham in the 4<sup>th</sup> Round of the National Cup and Collins will need some of his other players to make contributions.

### **Under 14 Boys back to winning ways with victory over “Wolves”**

**Under 14 Boys East Midlands II Conference**  
**Northants “Thunder”                    62 – 52                    Worcester “Wolves”**

Northants Thunder Under 14 Boys returned to Northants Basketball Centre after playing three consecutive road games. “Thunder” were without the services of top scorer Jonathan Ntumba along with guard Henri Berry who was unable to play due to injury.

Returning to their home court should have been an advantage to “Thunder”; however initially it was “Wolves” who were the hungrier team and they stormed into an 8-3 lead. “Thunder” were guilty of recovering too slow in transition allowing the visitors to score high percentage shots. “Thunder” continued to trail throughout the quarter but the introduction of Ally Solazzo offered some much needed energy and his hustle off the bench inspired his team to reduce the score to 19-21 to conclude the quarter.

Coach Rob Crump urged the importance of recovering against the Wolves transition offence and the importance of sharing the ball on offense. The home side made an instant impact displaying some good ball movement and finding players open for jump shots and they made an 11-0 run to open up a 30-21 lead. “Thunder” also displayed some good defence rushing the visitor’s offence and forcing turnovers and the team ended the quarter with a 9-2 run including a deep ‘three’ ‘buzzer-beater’ off the backboard from Ashley Kitchen giving “Thunder” a 39-27 half time lead..

“Thunder” entered the third quarter looking to reduce “Wolves” offensive options by ‘double teaming’ their point guard by on the inbound situations. This had a significant effect that saw “Thunder” extend their lead further to 50-28. However the visitors refused to lay down and produced a 8-0 run instilling confidence on their offence but “Thunder” still boasted a respectable 54-38 lead at the end of the quarter.

Coach Crump looked to freely rotate his players in the final quarter integrating the younger players at every opportunity. This saw scores from youngsters Tom Cole and Tom Greenfield the result of some good team play by “Thunder”. Despite “Wolves” being able to reduce the lead to 10 within the last 2 minutes Thunder displayed good composure to close the game out with a young line up.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by Ashley Kitchen and Ally Solazzo scoring 23 and 17 points respectively good support coming from Patrick Adedeji with 16 points.

Coach Crump commented “Despite a sluggish start, the boys displayed a good team performance. The boys were asked to step up today and fill the shoes of those who were absent and the players rose to the challenge. A special mention should go to Ally Solazzo not only did he score well he also brought a great amount of energy to the floor influencing confidence into his team”

<b><u>Northants “Hoopsterz” Central Venue Leagues</u></b>			
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>NEBC “Titans I”</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Northants “Lightning I”</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Northants “Lightning II”</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>NEBC “Titans II”</b>

The Northants Under 14 Girls Coach, Janis Kosnikovskis was able to give all the girls in his squad and opportunity to play in this tournament and several of them gave a good account of themselves in the shortened game format. The big downside was an injury to Dina Kosnikovskis who was poked in the eye whilst making a lay up in her team’s first game.

The games were played at a fast pace and Chloe Stevens showed she was able to get free ahead of the ball on the fast break while defensively Sade Chambers was impressive. Nine year old Athena Thompson hustled well and Lucy Needham showed her class with some strong drives to basket. Kosnikovskis was pleased to see his team playing good team basketball on the break and he was also impressed with his teams’ efforts on defence but he was less pleased about their spacing on offence

The Club also participated in the Under 11 and Under 9 tournaments.

## THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

### **Saturday 19th November**

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 9-30am – 11.00am | Junior Ballers Session                     |
| 11-30am          | Under 14 Boys versus Shropshire "Warriors" |
| 1-30pm           | Junior Men versus West Bromwich Albion     |
| 3-30pm           | Senior Men versus Southwark "Pride"        |

**These games will be played at the Basketball Centre which is situated at  
Northampton School for Girls | Spinney Hill Road, Northampton**

10am – 1pm Boys Central Venue League at Northampton School for Boys

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Novemebr**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 11-30pm | Cadet Boys versus City Of Birmingham (National Cup Round 4) |
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**This game will also be played at the Basketball Centre**

For further information contact:

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