

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Senior Men go down to “Kestrels”**

#### **Men’s National League (South Conference)**

**Northants “Thunder”                      73 - 78                      Solent “Kestrels”**

After their encouraging win against Barking Abbey the previous week the Northants senior men went into Saturday’s game against unbeaten Solent “Kestrels” in optimistic mood. They made an explosive start with Jacob Holt and Dan Turiccki attacking the rim well. Curtis Hadley backed them up with some fine shooting from beyond the arc, but Kestrels refused to go away with some strong interior play of their own; so after the first period of play “Thunder” held a narrow five point lead at 25-20.

At the start of the second quarter “Thunder” were able to extend their lead with guards Adam Thomas, Jonny Yates and forward Danny Barrett all connecting from the perimeter. However, it was Holt’s third personal foul which proved a turning point, as he had been a major influence on both the offensive and defensive boards. “Kestrels” were able to take control of the paint, and won the quarter to trail 44-40 at the break.

Coach Eddon’s half-time words of ‘control’ and ‘not giving “Kestrels” any motivation’ seem to fall on deaf ears, as the south coast team shot out on a 6-zero run in just 90 seconds. Even with a time-out, “Kestrels” added to their tally in the simplest of ways, and “Thunder” were left trailing 48-44 with just three minutes gone in the third quarter. By now “Thunder” were struggling with their tempo, whereas Kestrels thrived. By the end of the period “Kestrels” still held the lead, albeit a very slender one, at 65-62.

Needing a big push to win the final quarter “Thunder” were further handicapped by the dismissal of their captain Jonny Yates with his fifth personal foul. Meanwhile “Kestrels” captain Kirkman was showing a great deal of tenacity leaving “Thunder” players with the feeling of ‘skating up hill’. After a physical fourth quarter which saw a total of five players fouling out of the game, “Kestrels” held on to win 78-73 despite a spirited finish from the Northants team.

So “Kestrels” left the Basketball Centre with their unbeaten record preserved while “Thunder” are still in third position in the Conference table.

In the narrow defeat Turiccki top scored with 17 points and he was well supported by Holt and Hadley with 15 and 13 points respectively while Yates contributed 10 points. For the south coast outfit Kikman had an impressive 27 point haul.

### **Senior Women too strong for “Panthers”**

#### **Senior Women’s (North Conference)**

**Northants “Lightning”                      85 – 55                      Kingston “Panthers”**

The Northants senior women maintained their unbeaten record and retained top spot in the North Conference table with a comfortable win over the “Panthers” from Kingston upon Hull. The northern side were totally blown away by “Lightning’s” full court pressure defence, in the first quarter as the home side raced into a 26-7 lead.

In the second and third periods “Panthers” were able to come to terms with “Lightning’s” pressure defence causing them a great deal of problems with their ‘penetrate and kick’ tactics. Going into the final period of play “Lightning” had only managed to extend their lead by a further three points to 64-42 with their younger players all making contributions.

For the final quarter the “Lightning” coaching staff switched the team to a man to man defence and this was successful in containing the “Panthers” threat. The Northants team took the period 21-13 to run out comfortable winners by 85 points to 55.

In the 30 point win Angelina Browne recorded a double-double with 19 points and 11 rebounds while Vikki Hinds contributed 15 points and Stephanie Ogden 14

## **“Lightning” fall to “Giants” despite late surge**

### **National Trophy (Round 1)**

**Northants “Lightning”                      49 – 54                      Mansfield “Giants”**

After their encouraging performance the previous day the Northants senior women went into this Trophy game against Mansfield “Giants” in optimistic mood. Against a team with a big front line the game plan was simple, “Play aggressive defence and up-tempo offence.” This may have been the plan but the team seemed lethargic after the efforts of the previous day and struggled to achieve this aim.

Throughout the first period of play, “Lightning” struggled to get into their transition game and confronted by “Giants” zone defence were guilty of taking poor options. The team managed just two baskets throughout the quarter and found themselves trailing 8-18 at the end of the period.

“Lightning” managed to win the remaining three periods and despite a late rally which saw them outscore their opponents 9-zero it was a case of too little too late as Mansfield scored a late basket to take the game by 54 points to 49.

In the disappointing loss only Stephanie Ogden and Angelina Browne with 17 and 11 points could score in double figures. Browne also pulled down 17 rebounds while Natasha Wesley was at the heart of the late rally and finished with 7 points.

## **Junior Men keep up their winning habit**

### **Junior Men’s Midland Conference**

**Derby “Trailblazers II”                      66 - 92                      Northants “Thunder”**

Northants travelled to Derby looking to build upon on their double triumph the previous weekend.

“Thunder” opened the first quarter with an impressive 17-6 surge, led by George Paul who scored nine first quarter points. Despite their dominance “Thunder” they were guilty of turning the ball over the ball against Derby’s aggressive full court trapping defence. This gave “Trailblazers” some momentum to reduce the “Thunder’s” lead to single figures at the end of the quarter at 23-15.

Derby continued to employ their full court defence and it was still bothering Northants who failed to execute their press break offense. With “Trailblazers” fielding a small, fast team, “Thunder” switched to a zone defence midway through the second quarter. This limited scoring opportunities close to basket and forced the home side to shoot from long range. With a large number of these shots missing and “Thunder” dominating in the rebounding department they were able to mount a number of fast break offence; and by half time they had managed to restore their double figure lead at 45-30.

Coach Rob Crump started the second half with a small line up in the hope of keeping pace with the Derby guards. This tactic proved to be effective when Carlo Nieva and Ollie Thomas combined to intercept passes leading to a series of successful scores from fast breaks; then George Paul and Elliott Strausa combined to score the last ten points of the quarter to extend the “Thunder” lead to 66-45.

The start of the fourth quarter saw some confident shooting from David Radford who successful nailed a three point shot and a layup. The “Thunder” offence was being controlled by Ollie Thomas who scored consecutively on the fast break as well as delivering passes to team mates for easy scores as “Thunder” strolled to a 92-66 victory after winning all four quarters.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by George Paul with 23 points supported by Elliott Strausa and Ollie Thomas who both scored 12 points.

Coach Crump commented “Despite being the better team on the court, we were made to work hard for the win. Derby continuously disrupted our offensive structure with their full court defence which we must learn to combat and take care of the ball. Despite this it was good to see all players contribute to the scoring and a fair distribution of minutes.”

## **“Thunder” Cadet Men far too strong for “Bears”**

### **Cadet Men’s Midland Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”                      115 – 25                      Bromsgrove “Bears”**

The Northants cadet men maintained their recent good form with an overwhelming win over an inexperienced Bromsgrove “Bears” team. The Worcestershire outfit were completely blown away by “Thunder’s” pressure defence which forced a number of turn-overs and saw them race into a 29-2 lead.

The Northants boys continued to dominate the remaining three periods of play restricting their enthusiastic opponents to single figures in all three. Coach John Collins was able to give eleven of his players ample playing time and experiment with varying defensive tactics. All eleven of his players contributed to the final total led by Jacob Round with 26 points despite playing restricted minutes. Ayo Oluyede powered in 24 points while David Nieva kept the crowd entertained with some spectacular drives to basket in his 15 point haul.

The team now has a week off before travelling to top of the table Leicester “Warriors”.

## **Sarah and Ruchae lead Under 16 Girls to crucial Conference win.**

### **Under 16 Girls Midlands South West conference**

**Northants “Lightning”                      72 – 56                      Nottingham “Wildcats”**

The Northants under 16 girls took a major step towards the Midlands South West Conference title after this win over their nearest rivals Nottingham “Wildcats”. There was also the satisfaction beating “Wildcats” for the second time this season after their National Cup triumph a few weeks ago.

“Lightning” knew they were in for a tough contest as “Wildcats” raced out to a 10-3 lead and this earned them stern words from Coach Karen Goodrich. “Lightning” switched to their favoured 3-2 zone defence and this proved to be the turning point of the game as they went on a stunning 15-zero run to lead 18-16 at the end of the first period of play.

With rookie Holly Winterburn doing sterling work at the top of the zone “Lightning” maintained their dominance with an 14-2 charge at the start of the second quarter to establish what looked to be an unassailable 32-18 lead. With Sarah Round in sparkling form and Caitlin Stewart working tirelessly on defence “Lightning” were able to extend their lead to 42-29 by half time, leaving “Wildcats” everything to do in the second half.

With Goodrich rotating her players freely “Lightning” continued to dominate play, as Ruchae Walton displayed her range of offensive skills knocking down 10 points in the third quarter. “Lightning” outscored their opponents by 20 points to seven in the period to take a 62-36 lead going into the final stanza.

To their credit Wildcats” continued to battle hard in the fourth quarter while the Northants girls were rather guilty of ‘taking their foot off the pedal’. The visitors took the period 20-10 but the final result was never in doubt as “Lightning” cruised to a well deserved 72-36 win.

In the 16 point victory Round top scored with 26 points while Walton scored 18 points and hauled down a massive 15 rebounds. Winterburn contributed 11 points and Stewart 8 but Goodrich was quick to point out the hard work of the other eight players in the team.

## **“Warriors” no match for Under 15 Boys**

### **Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Herts “Warriors”                      60 - 92                      Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants Under 15 boys travelled to Bushey to take on Herts “Warriors” last Saturday and returned with their unbeaten record intact after a 32 point win in a very physical game.

“Thunder” made a poor start to the game and were guilty of missing lay ups and turning the ball over too frequently. After just a few minutes of play “Warriors” had jumped out to a 6-2 lead, leading to Tyler Muntemasango marshalling his troops. Helped by Muntemasango, “Thunder” took control of the game and by the end of the quarter they had taken a 21-16 lead.

The second period saw "Thunder" reverting to their bad habits once more and frustrated by the number of missed lay-ups and turn-overs, Coach Grahame Yates called a time out. Whatever he said appeared to work as Shekina Mtumba started scoring and also worked hard in defence. Tough defence by the whole time saw "Warriors" being restricted to only eight points while "Thunder" piled in 33 to take a 54-24 half time lead.

The start of the third quarter was the Ed Taylan show as the guard made a number of steals leading to easy scores. By now the team was combining well with several players were making useful contributions to the scoring. Mtumba was once again getting the defensive rebounds, as were Zak Kitchen and Zinzan Oosthuizen and this rebounding dominance saw "Thunder" take the period 25-18 to extend their lead.

With the game as good as won at 79-42 "Thunder" were guilty of relaxing their efforts and "Warriors" were able to edge the final period of play 18-13 as "Thunder" cruised to a 92-60 win with Jacob Round top scoring with 41 points. Mtumba and Ed Wallhead scored 12 and 11 points respectively while useful contributions came from Taylan and Laurence Williams.

### **Ilkeston no match for Under 14 Boys**

#### **Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Ilkeston "Outlaws"                      27 – 90                      Northants "Thunder"**

Even without Ed Wallhead who was released for the important Under 15 game against Herts "Warriors", "Thunder" travelled to Ilkeston confident that they could return with a win. The newly formed "Outlaws" may have struggled in games so far this season, but there was no sign of this at the start of the match when they took a 4-0 lead. However, once the in-form Noah Wilborn had levelled the score, the class between the two teams began to emerge. "Thunder's" up-court defence spearheaded by Tom Berry forced a number of errors and easy scores. Whereas Ilkeston could only add three more points to their first quarter total, Thunder amassed 26.

It was a similar story in second period which Thunder won 24-10 on their way to a 50-17 half-time lead.

Through the second half, "Thunder" were able to focus on their half-court set offences and in-bounds plays with some success. "Thunder's" defence limited Ilkeston to single figure totals in the two remaining quarters and their well-organised offence resulted in them scoring 20 points in each period and at the end of the game the score was 90-27 in "Thunder's" favour.

For the Northants team the stand-out performance came from Noah Wilborn who displayed an impressive range of skills at both ends of the court. He worked hard defensively, was often first down the floor on the break, and shot well on his way to a game-high 22 points. He was well-supported by Chris Amankonah who scored 20 points and Josh Lloyd who netted 18 points. Northants scoring spread was a very encouraging feature of their performance as Tom Berry and Elliot Atherton also reached double-figures scoring 12 and 10 respectively. To Ilkeston's credit, they kept battling to the end of the game and will no doubt improve through the season, but on this occasion, the Northants boys looked impressive and thoroughly deserved their win. "Thunder's" next match will be a much more challenging one against Notts Nova in two weeks time.

### **Under 13 Boys are second best to "Titans"**

#### **Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Northants "Thunder"                      42 – 112                      N.E.B.C. "Titans"**

Local "Titans" arrived at the Basketball Centre last Sunday with an impressive record with just one loss while "Thunder" were still looking for their first win of the season. "Titans" left having recorded a seventy point win but there had been some encouraging signs for the vey young "Thunder" team.

Throughout the game "Thunder" struggled" with the standing height of "Titans" who could almost guarantee scores from put backs whenever they missed shots. For their part the Northants boys struggled to score losing all four quarters by large margins although they could be proud of a 9-1 run at the end of the second and throughout the game they refused to give up.

For "Thunder" Oliver Dominique battled hard for his 15 points while Ashley Kitchen contributed 8 points.

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

**This weekend is a National Teams training weekend so there are no fixtures for the Club's under-aged teams. The only game involves the senior men who travel to second in the table Thames Valley "Cavaliers"**

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