

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Double defeat for Junior Men

Junior Men's Midlands Conference

Northants "Thunder" 73 – 84 N.E.B.C. "Titans"

The Northants junior men closed 2016 in the worst possible way with a brace of defeats.

In a re-arranged midweek game they threw away an eight point lead midway through the third quarter in losing to local rivals Northamptonshire "Titans" and this loss was followed by a 61-68 setback at Ilkeston "Outlaws".

Against "Titans", "Thunder" found themselves trailing 18-19 after the first period of play but a 12-zero run towards the end of the second quarter saw them ahead 35-30 at the interval. When Ayo Oluyede converted a put back midway through the third quarter to take his team into a 47-39 lead it looked as if "Thunder" might record back-to-back wins but it wasn't to be. David Nieva missed two free throws and "Titans" mounted a 13-4 charge to lead 52-51 going into the final stanza.

"Thunder" rallied once again in the fourth quarter and scores from Jaz Campbell and Oluyede took their team 63-62 ahead, but once again they fell apart. "Titans" scored 10 unanswered points and from then on "Thunder" were on an unsuccessful 'catch up' errand. Marshalled by the impressive Hayden Alcindor, "Titans" matched every score "Thunder" made to record an unlikely but well deserved 84-73 victory.

In the disappointing defeat the "Thunder" scoring was led by Oluyede with 17 points while David Nieva and 'Shaq' Ntumba scored 14 and 10 points respectively

Ilkeston "Outlaws" 68 – 61 Northants "Thunder"

Following a tough midweek loss to local rivals "Titans", a short-handed "Thunder" travelled to Ilkeston "Outlaws" looking to get back to winning ways. "Thunder" stormed off to a strong 11-4 run led by Ayo Oluyede. This was matched by quick fast break replies from "Outlaws" who managed to keep up the pace of the quarter, which finish 24 apiece as a late jump shot from Ilkeston guard Shepherd tied the game.

The second quarter followed the same pattern with David Nieva leading the "Thunder" effort. Meanwhile the home side displayed some excellent and intricate team play but the period was still edged 13-12 by "Thunder" who led 37-36 at the interval.

The second half saw a sustained effort by "Thunder" but they were mystified by a number of interesting refereeing decisions. "Thunder's" efforts were spoiled by a number turnovers, allowing "Outlaws" to pounce on the counter attack. They took the period 15-12 but at 49-51 "Thunder" were still well in the game.

"Outlaws" controlled the fourth quarter but with the end of the game looming "Thunder" made a late charge led by Jazz Campbell but it was not enough to salvage the game; the contest ending at 68-61 in favour of the home team.

In what again was a winnable game for "Thunder", their scoring was led by David Nieva with 24 points, supported by Ayo Oluyede and Jazz Campbell with 15 and 11 points respectively.

Cadets continue on their winning ways

Under 16 Boys Midlands Conference

Leicester “Warriors II” 43 - 107 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants Under 16 boys closed 2016 with a comfortable win over the Leicester “Warriors” second string.

“Thunder” made a slow start to the game forcing Coach John Collins to take a time out and remind his players the importance of performing basic skills properly. With their team defence improving “Thunder” were able to force a number of turn overs leading to easy scores for Josh Lloyd and Chris Amankonah as they established a 22-11 lead after the first period of play.

The second quarter saw “Thunder” play some sparkling fast break basketball with Lloyd dishing out numerous assists to Amankonah and Ed Wallhead while Jamal Jack was on hand to convert put backs when the first shot missed. “Thunder” outscored their opponents 32-8 during the second quarter and with a half time score of 54-19 the game was as good as over as a contest.

“Thunder” had been employing an aggressive full court press during the first half but for the remainder of the game Collins brought them back into a zone defence with the aim of perfecting angles of defence and match-up principles. Despite one or two lapses his players put in a solid defensive performance limiting “Warriors” to 16 points whilst scoring 32 themselves, led once again by Amankonah and Lloyd.

Collins persisted with his zone defence in the fourth quarter using various combinations on the floor and the period was won 21-8 to give a final score line of 107-43 the “Thunder” scoring led by Amankonah with 32 points. Wallhead and Lloyd contributed 22 and 20 points respectively while nine of “Thunder’s” ten players contributed to the final total. Collins was particularly pleased that his team had hit a number of perimeter shots thanks to Lloyd, Adam Lewandowski, Roman O’Hara and Tom McLeod

Under 14 Girls make it back-to-back wins

Under 14 Girls East Conference

Northants “Lightning” 73 -45 Norfolk “Inceni”

The hard work put in by the “Lightning” players since September certainly seems to have paid off as they comfortably beat an under strength Norfolk “Inceni” team to record back-to-back wins.

The win was particularly pleasing because it was achieved without the services of the tonsillitis struck Lucy Needham. In her absence Coach Janis Kosnikovskis asked the rest of his players to ‘step up’ and they certainly did that with four of them recording their highest points total of the season while two others scored their first ever points. The team has developed into a cohesive unit with the players understanding their roles and all playing with good defensive intensity.

Against “Inceni”, “Lightning” started the game at a high pace both defensively and offensively scoring 11 points before their opponents had opened their account. By the end of the first quarter “Lightning” had opened up a 16-5 lead with their defensive intensity providing a lot of problems for the “Inceni” ball handlers.

“Lightning” started the second period of play in the same hungry mood as they’d finished the first and a 15-2 charge put them 31-7 ahead. The Northants girls were playing with a great deal of aggression and this resulted in “Inceni” making six trips to the free throw line but fortunately for “Lightning” they could only connect with two of the 12 free throws they were awarded. “Lightning” took the quarter 27-6 to open up a 43-11 half time lead.

With the game out of their grasp the Norfolk girls played with a great deal more confidence in the final two periods of play. With eight players scoring “Lightning took the third quarter 19-11 to extend their lead to 62-22 but with a several less inexperienced players on the court together they lost the fourth 11-23 to give the Incenci” players a big boost before their long journey back to Norfolk.

In the 38 point win Dina Kosnikovska top scored with 24 points; Poppy Barnet and Sade Chambers both scored 12 points while no less than ten players contributed to final point’s total.

Under 14 Boys see off City of Birmingham second string

Under 14 Boys East Midlands II Conference

Northants “Thunder” 86 - 45 City of Birmingham II

The Northants Thunder Under 14 boys finished the year with a solid team performance over City of Birmingham II, despite missing their influential leading scorer, forward Jonathan Ntumba.

“Thunder” stormed into a 16-3 lead with Patrick Adedeji and Cameron Leighton scoring six points while forward Leighton was causing problems for C.O.B. dominating the offensive and defensive glass. Some strong “Lightning” full court defence had caused the opposition ball carriers to panic and this resulted in their coach taking a time out. Despite “Thunder’s” dominant start C.O.B. concluded the quarter with a 12-3 run to reduce the deficit to four points, 19-15 at the end of the quarter.

“Thunder” were urged not to ‘take their foot of the gas’ regardless of the score and they opened the second period of play with a sparking a 16-0 run earning a 20 point lead, 35-15. Despite trailing C.O.B. displayed a spirited performance and they successfully ‘double teamed’ the Northants guards, Ashley Kitchen and Patrick Adedeji. Coach Rob Crump freely rotated his bench and one of his substitutes 10 year old Benas Maldutis, made an impact scoring six consecutive points as “Thunder won the second quarter 30-8 to lead 49-25 at half time.

The third quarter opened with another impressive “Thunder” run as they outscored their opponents 16-3, again led by Patrick Adedeji. Despite trailing by a substantial margin C.O.B. conjured up a 10-zero run of their own over the final two minutes which reinforced the importance of “Thunder” maintaining their levels of concentration.

Trailing 38-65 the final quarter saw C.O.B.’s resistance collapse as “Thunder’s” Ashley Kitchen orchestrated a number of fast breaks while Kalonji Campbell looked very dominant on offence with nine points in the quarter. “Thunder” limited their opponents to five points in the period as they extended their lead to 41 points in a solid overall team performance.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by Patrick Adedeji with 27 points, and he was well supported by Kalonji Campbell and Cameron Leighton who both scored 18 points.

Coach Crump commented “This was a solid team performance to finish the year. We made a dominant start and remained composed despite C.O.B. reducing the lead in the first quarter. It is important we transfer and apply this attitude when facing tougher opposition after the Christmas break. It was pleasing to see several strong individual performances today; however I was particularly impressed with confident scoring and rebounding performance displayed by Cameron Leighton.”

CHRISTMAS BREAK

The teams of the Northants Basketball Club have completed their fixtures for 2016 and will be taking a two week break; games will resume on **Saturday 7th January 2017**.

Saturday 7th January

11-30am Under 14 Boys versus Birmingham "Elite"
1-30pm Under 16 Boys versus Notts Nova

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

Junior Men travel to Birmingham "Mets"



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