**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Another very busy weekend for the Northants Basketball Club with seven games resulting in some stand out wins but two heavy defeats.**

**Junior Men complete double over Oxford “Hoops”**

**Junior Men’s Midlands 2 Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 72 – 56 Oxford “Hoops”**

When Oxford scored six points at the start of the fourth quarter to close the gap to 48-54 there was a danger that what had looked to a straight forward victory might slip away from the “Thunder” junior men. At this stage “Thunder” mounted a 16-2 charge inspired by power forward Rapolas Radavicius to seal a comfortable win that keeps them in second place in the Midlands 2 Conference.

When the two teams met earlier in the season “Hoops” fielded a seven feet tall player who demanded a great deal of attention from the “Thunder” defenders. That player was missing last Saturday and “Hoops” probably played better without him and were competitive in the first three quarters of the game.

“Thunder” led 36-25 at half time thanks to their aggressive zone press that forced a number of Oxford turn-overs. That lead was reduced to ten points going into the last ten minutes of play which saw the “Hoops” mini charge followed by “Thunder’s” impressive finish.

In the 16 point win Radvicius top scored for “Thunder” with 13 points, ten of them in the final quarter; good support coming from Dylan Dominic and Fareed Issifu who both scored ten points.

**Sponsorship Announcement**

The Northants Basketball Club is delighted to announce that they have agreed a sponsorship deal for their Junior Men’s team with **M & J Evans Construction Ltd**.

M & J Evans Construction is a national company operating from six regional offices and specialises in civil engineering and groundwork construction and employs over two and a half thousand people.

John Collins the President of the Northants Basketball Club commenting on the sponsorship said, “We are delighted to be involved with such a prestigious company as M & J Evans Construction Ltd. Running a team in the national league is extremely expensive and this sponsorship will be extremely helpful. We are pleased that we will be able to display the M & J Evans Construction logo on the team’s new playing kit.”

The Northants “Thunder” Junior Men play in the Basketball England Midlands 2 Conference and are currently in second place in the league.

**Heavy loss for the Under 16 Boys**

**Under 16 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Leicester “Dynamite” 104 – 37 Northants “Thunder”**

A very young “Thunder” under 16 team made the short journey to Leicester to take high flying “Dynamite”. They made the trip home thinking about a heavy defeat and the fact that they must face the same team this coming weekend.

Against a physically superior “Dynamite” team, “Thunder” were able to control the tempo of the game during the first quarter of play and successfully advanced the ball through “Dynamite’s” press defence. Unfortunately, having done this the Northants boys were unable to put points on the board and trailed 11-25 after the first ten minutes of play.

“Dynamite” dominated play over the next three quarters finally running out convincing winners by 104 points to 37 with youngster Henry Brandrick and Logan Ormshaw top scoring for “Thunder” with eight points apiece.

**When is a ‘tie’ not a tie?**

**Under 16 Girls East Conference**

**Norfolk “Iceni” 48 – 47 Northants “Lightning”**

The answer to this conundrum is, when the scorers haven’t put the correct score on the scoreboard.

With four minutes of this low scoring game remaining Lucie Caufield scored one of two free throws to tie the scores up at 44 all. She then scored a field basket and Jennifer Oamen converted a free throw to give “Lightning” a 47-44 lead.

In the final minute of the game Iceni made a free throw but this wasn’t registered on the scoreboard. As the game drew to a conclusion “Iceni’s”, Donnelly drained a three-pointer with the “Thunder” players thinking they would have to play five minutes of overtime only for the scorers error to be discovered and the home side were awarded the victory.

The loss in such controversial circumstances was even more disappointed because “Lightning had made such a good start to the game and establishing a 13-5 lead after the first quarter. This lead was gradually eroded over the next three quarters but “Lightning” felt they had done enough to take the game into overtime.

In the single point defeat Lucie Caulfield and Jennifer Oamen top scored for “Lightning” with 17 and 14 points respectively; Karly Osgood supporting well with 9 points before fouling out of the game.

**Under 14 Girls record their second win of the season**

**Under 14 Girls North 2 Conference**

**Northants “Lightning” 76 – 36 Sheffield “Hatters II”**

The “Lightning” Under 14 girls picked up their second win of the season with a convincing win over the Sheffield “Hatters” second string.

“Lightning” made a nervous start to the game and despite dominating play were unable to convert that domination into points and subsequently only led 13-9 at the end of the first quarter. It was a different “Lightning” team that came out for the second quarter. Not only did they score 30 points they kept their opponents scoreless over the ten minutes of play.

Leading 43-9 at half time “Lightning” extended their lead over the next two quarters finally running out winners by an impressive 40 points a win that will boost their confidence going into this weekend’s game against the powerful Derbyshire “Arrows”.

For “Lightning” Campbell Spatcher notched an impressive 29 points a season’s best while Michelle Makuna also had her best points total of the season with 18.

There was one downside in the “Lightning” win with their guard, Karina Kaikauskaite breaking her arm as she collided with the sports hall wall while hustling for a loose ball.

**Under 15 Boys gain revenge against “Bears”**

**YBL Under 15 Boys Primis**

**Northants “Thunder” 77 – 72 Birmingham “Bears”**

Earlier in the season the “Thunder” Under 15 Boys narrowly lost to Birmingham “Bears” but after their morale boosting win over Leicester “Riders” they went into last Saturday’s return fixture against “Bears” in confident mood.

This optimism was certainly justified when the game got underway as “Thunder” charged into 26-6 first quarter lead. The remainder of the game saw the Brummies’ gradually eating into the “Thunder” lead commencing with an impressive 15-1 charge at the start of the second quarter. “Thunder” were able to regroup and led 35-23 at half time but were making life difficult for themselves by missing innumerable free throws. “Bears” further reduced “Thunder’s” lead in the third quarter and at 54-46 there was everything to play for in the final ten minutes of the game.

“Thunder” were indebted to the efforts of Fran Guel during the final quarter as he contributed an impressive 13 points to keep “Bears” at bay as “Thunder” held on for the five point win which takes the team to the top of the YBL Under 15 Primis League.

In the hard-fought win Guel top scored for “Thunder” with a 26 point haul and he received good support from George Clipson and James Kennett-Maughan who both scored 13 points but “Thunder” coach, Whitney Bain won’t be pleased with the fact that her team missed an alarming 26 free throws.

**Under 12’s hammered by impressive “Breakers”**

**NBL Region 1 Conference**

**Northants “Storm” 38 -137 Milton Keynes “Breakers”**

After their impressive win over City of Birmingham “Bears” the Northants “Storm” Under 12’s were brought well and truly back to earth when they took on table-topping Milton Keynes “Breakers”. The game “Storm” team were simply overwhelmed by the impressive “Breakers” and it was six minutes before they were able to score their first basket.

Despite leading 41-6 after the first quarter “Breakers” didn’t take their “foot off the gas” frequently scoring on coast-to-coast drives their pure physicality proving too much for the young “Storm” team. “Storm” coach, John Collins was philosophical in defeat, “I was pleased that for the most part my team tried to play as we normally do and we pressed a very talented team rather than sit back in our own keyway to restrict their scoring.

**Under 12 Girls too strong for Cambridge “Cats”**

**Under 12 Girls Friendly game**

**Northants “Lightning” 50 – 37 Cambridge “Cats”**

The largely inexperienced “Lightning” Under 14 Girls entertained Cambridge “Cats” last Sunday in an attempt to give the girls competitive experience and came out of the game winners by 13 points.

“Lightning” made a very nervous start to the game missing numerous easy scoring opportunities and “Cats” were able to establish a 9-4 lead after the first quarter. Scores from Emilie Milsome and Brooke Foster early in the second quarter gave “Lightning” the lead and from that point they didn’t look back. Urte Maldutyte was able to control the game but the ‘star’ of the show proved to be Freya Tauber-Anderson who combined hustling defence with some excellent drives to basket.

Leading 33-19 going into the final quarter “Lightning” finished the game in sloppy fashion allowing “Cats” to score the last six points of the game but by then the final result was never in doubt.

In the 50-37 victory Tauber-Anderson top scored for “Lightning” with 17 points, good support coming from Milsome and Maldutyte with 11 and 10 points respectively

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 21st January**

**9-15am to 10-15am** Budding “Ballers” session

**10-15am to 11-30am** Junior “Ballers” session

**12.00 noon** Under 13 Boys versus Oxford “Hoops”

**2-15pm** Under 15 Boys versus Oxford “Hoops”

**4-30pm**  Under 14 Boys versus Milton Keynes “Breakers II”

**Sunday 22nd January**

**11-00am** Under 16 Boys versus Leicester “Dynamite”

**1-00pm** Junior Men versus Gloucester “Saxons”

**3-00pm** Under 14 Girls versus Derbyshire “Arrows”

These six games will be played at the **Northants Basketball Centre** which is based at

**Northampton School for Girls,** Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG

Spectators are welcome, admission is **FREE** and refreshments are available

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