**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Five games for teams from the Northants Basketball Club last weekend with the Junior Men retaining top spot in their Conference while the Under 14 Boys got back to winning ways and the Under 13 Boys put in a stunning performance in beating Coventry “Tornadoes”.**

**Fareed sees Juniors home for a comeback win**

**Junior Men’s Midlands 2 Conference**

**Warwickshire “Hawks” 67 – 74 Northants “Thunder”**

A 28 point haul from power forward Fareed Issufi was a big factor in securing this win for a short handed Northants Junior Men’s team against Warwickshire “Hawks” who are always tricky opponents on their home court.

“Thunder” took the initiative in a low scoring first quarter which they edged 15-11. They made an appalling start to the second quarter being outscore 10-4 and despite their best efforts trailed 30-32 at half time.

For the second week running Coach Darius Maldutis’s half time team talk did the trick and “Thunder” came out for the second half in a totally different and inspired by 2 points from Issufi they went on an 18-zero run to seize the initiative. Leading 56-47 going into the final ten minutes of play, “Thunder” had to withstand a big push from “Hawks” but they were able to hold out for the 74 points to 67 victory.

In addition to Issufi’s massive haul Rapolas Radavicius and Ellis Phillips both scored 14 points, Benas Maldutis contributing eight points.

The win keeps “Thunder” on top of the Midlands 2 Conference table with the big clash against unbeaten “Titans” rapidly approaching.

**Much improved Cadets go down to Milton Keynes**

**Under 16 Boys Midlands 1 Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 69 – 79 Milton Keynes “Breakers II”**

After two heavy defeats at the hands of Leicester “Dynamite” over the previous two weeks the Northants Under 16 Boys turned in a much better performance against Milton Keynes “Breakers II” despite losing by ten points.

“Thunder” made an excellent start to the game jumping out to 10-2 lead with Fran Guei looking prominent. “Breakers” battled back to close the gap to 17-15 by the end of the quarter and were the better team in the second quarter which they won 23-11 to establish a 38-28 half time lead; Thunder” not helping their cause by missing ten free throws.

A “Thunder” capitulation” was a real possibility especially as they were without the services of influential point guard Jake Muxlow who suffered a badly cut lip. In the event “Thunder” employing a trapping half-court defence seized the initiative outscoring their opponents 26-14 to take a 54-52 lead.

Any hope of a shock win for “Thunder” disappeared early in the final quarter as they repeatedly turned the ball over as they tried to inbound the ball. “Breakers” went on a 17-zero scoring blitz and no matter how hard they tried “Thunder” were unable to close the gap eventually slipping to a ten point defeat.

In the 69-79 loss Guei led the “Thunder” scoring with 22 points Danielius Jokulis supporting well with 17 points while Logan Tanner scored 10 points

**Under 14 Boys get back to winning ways**

**Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Warwickshire “Hawks” 40 – 54 Northants “Thunder”**

After their disappointing loss against Milton Keynes “Breakers” the previous weekthe Northants Under 14 Boys returned to winning ways with a comfortable win over Warwickshire “Hawks” with Cameron Iviengabor and Logan Tanner turning in impressive performances.

Coach Brad Hughes impressed the importance of turning in a solid performance to his team and based on some excellent defence “Thunder” dominated the first two quarters of play establishing a 30-13 half time lead. This was extended to 46-25 by the end of the third quarter and during the last ten minutes of play Hughes imposed some conditions on his team. The “Thunder” players struggled with the restrictions imposed on them and “Hawks” were able to take the quarter 15-8 to close the final gap to 14 points.

In the 54 points to 40 win Iviengabor top scored with 23 points Tanner supporting well with 14 points, Lewis Spacey dishing out a bagful of assists during the course of the game.

**Scintillating Under 13 Boys see of “Tornadoes”**

**YBL East Zonal League**

**Northants “Thunder” 103 – 44 Coventry “Tornadoes”**

“On some days everything goes right, and this was one of those days”. So commented Coach Peter Dewsnap after his team had produced a stunning performance to beat Coventry “Tornadoes”.

When the two teams had met earlier in the season “Tornadoes” had earned respect with their well organised half court offence and the “Thunder” players had been carefully prepared to counter this threat and this preparation proved to be decisive.

“Thunder totally dominated all four quarters of play with their press defence led by Freddie Schryver forcing a number of “Tornadoes” turn-overs. On offence Jerome Maroodza controlled play for “Thunder” as well as helping himself to 14 personal points. The “Thunder” scoring was dominated by Jowell Stiete-French with a 30 point haul which included scores from fast breaks and perimeter shots as well as put backs. In addition to Stiete-Franch,

Luca Garrett scored 16 points and Oliver Casey 15.

**Disappointing “Storm” lose to “Trailblazers thanks to a nightmare third quarter**

**Under 12 Regional 1 Mixed League**

**Derby “Trailblazers” 73 – 39 Northants “Storm”**

The Northants “Storm” Under 12 Mixed team travelled to second placed Derby “Trailblazers” last Saturday and for three quarters of the game matched their high-flying opponents. Unfortunately “Storm” were completely overwhelmed in the third quarter which they lost by 28 points to four. During that nightmare ten minutes several “Storm” players were guilty of trying to attack the well organised “Trailblazers” defence singled handed. This invariably ended up with a forced shot or a turn-over and an easy score for the home side.

For long periods “Storm” were competitive but the team will need to work hard on their half court offence if they are to compete against the top teams in their Conference.

In the heavy loss Sam Dominici battle hard for his 17 points but no other “Storm” player could make any significant scoring contribution.

**Boys (and two girls) rule OK**

**Friendly Challenge game**

**Northants “Lightning” Under 13 Girls 45 -69 Northants “Strom” Under 12 Mixed**

With so many young players anxious to play organised basketball the Northants Club staged this Challenge game resulting in a win for the Under 12 Mixed team. In all 23 boys and girls took part in the game.

**ANOTHER SPONSORSHIP DEAL FOR THE NORTHANTS CLUB**

The Northants Basketball Club is delighted to announce that they have accepted the offer of travel sponsorship from Corby based sheet metal firm **H. B. Humphries**.

The agreement which is valued at around £1500 will pay for the hire of mini buses for the Under15 and Under 16 Boys teams for the remainder of the season.

John Collins the President of the Northants Basketball Club commented, *“The Club is extremely grateful to H.B. Humphries for this generous sponsorship. Travelling together to away games is excellent for team spirit, and I know all the players in the two teams will be extremely pleased to be benefitting from this for the rest of the season.”*

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 4th February**

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

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

**12.00 noon** Under 14 Girls versus Bromsgrove “Bears”

**2-15pm** Under 14 Boys versus Shrewsbury “Storm”

**4-30pm** Under 16 Boys versus Coventry Elite

**Sunday 5th February**

**11.00am** Under 12 Mixed versus Derby “Trailblazers”

**1-00pm** Under 12 Girls versus Leicester “Warriros”

These home 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