

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Impressive win for “Thunder”**

#### **Men’s National League Division 4 (Midlands Conference)**

**Nottingham Trent “Hoods 54 – 99 Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants senior men retained top spot in the Division 4 Midlands Conference with a convincing win over Nottingham Trent “Hoods”. All the top teams won last weekend with Derby “Trailblazers” remaining unbeaten so the pressure is still on “Thunder” if they are to make a top two finish.

Against “Hoods”, “Thunder” made a sluggish start to the game slipping 16-6 down but they recovered to lead 24-22 after the first period of play.

The second quarter was to prove decisive with the Nottingham team struggling to cope with “Thunder’s” pressure defence which forced numerous turn-overs leading to easy scores. “Thunder” took the second period 27-4 to lead 51-26 at half time but they went off the boil in the third only winning it 18-16 but with a 27 point lead the result was not really in doubt.

Stand in coach Grahame Yates was giving all his players plenty of court time and they responded with a sparkling performance in the final ten minutes of play outscoring their opponents 28-11 and securing a 99 points to 54 win, the team’s biggest of the season.

In the 45 point win Matt Yates top scored with 22 points well supported by Richard Higgins and Jacob Holt with 16 and 15 points respectively while Jake Barr, James Barden and Tom Higgins all score in double figures

### **Wallhead leads Junior Men to overtime win over Birmingham “Elite”**

#### **Junior Men’s National League (Midlands West Conference)**

**Team Birmingham “Elite II” 80 - 78 Northants “Thunder”  
(70 – 70)**

The Northants junior men stay top of the Midlands West Conference after a nail biting overtime win over Team Birmingham “Elite II”. West Bromwich remain unbeaten but have played fewer games than “Thunder”, so a Play Off place is still a realistic goal for the Northants boys.

“Thunder” made a poor start to the game and after seven minutes of play only had two free throws to show for their efforts while Birmingham had scored 13. “Thunder” had been frustrated when a number of seemingly scoring shots ‘rimmed out’ but when shots began to drop they were able to close the deficit to 11-16 by the end of the first quarter.

The second period of play was a productive one for “Thunder” as they exploited their superiority close to the basket and thanks to this they were able to take the period 27-19 to take a 38-35 half time lead.

“Thunder” showed good energy in the third quarter but were confused by a number of decisions made by the match officials. This affected their offensive play and “Elite” were able to win the quarter 17-14 to tie the scores up at 52 all with everything to play for in the final ten minutes.

Coach Dariaus Maldutis instructed his team to concentrate on the tactics employed in the second quarter namely, get the ball to the ‘big’ players close to basket. His team responded well and a 12-4 run gave “Thunder” a six points advantage with less than two minutes of the game remaining. They then contrived to turn the ball over on three consecutive occasions and to their horror saw the home side score on all three occasions to tie the game up at 70 points all at the closing buzzer.

“Thunder” had become concerned about playing tough defence because so many decisions had gone against them and they began overtime in nervous mood allowing Team Birmingham to open up a 76-71 lead. Coach Maldutis encouraged his team to stay calm and a 9-2 run over the final two and a half minutes saw “Thunder” home to a battling 80-78 win.

In the impressive win Ed Wallhead scored 34 points and he was well supported by Cameron Samuels and Zac Kitchen with 22 and 18 points respectively while Coach Maldutis made special mention of the efforts of Tom Myers. The win was particularly impressive because Team Birmingham had been awarded 35 free throws to “Thunder’s” 20.

## **Wallace-Steele and Gaunt too big for Cadet Boys**

### **Under 16 Boys National League (Midlands West Conference)**

**Stoke-on-Trent “Knights      74 – 39      Northants “Thunder”**

Last Saturday the Northants cadet boys made the long trip to Stoke-on-Trent and ended up on the wrong end of a 74-39 scoreline. “Thunder” had been warned to expect a zone defence something they hadn’t encountered very much in previous games and they were also confronted by two “Knights” players much taller than anyone in the “Thunder” team.

“Thunder” were up against it from the first minute and were guilty of shooting too early from the perimeter and when those shots missed they were punished as “Knights” mounted effective fast breaks to score at will. Coach John Collins took a time out and pleaded for more patience on offence but by the end of the first quarter the home team had built up a 23-7 lead.

In the second period of play “Thunder” showed more patience on offence while Jacob Barlow-Hurdeman and Emeka Ayuanya battled hard against the “Knights” giants on the defensive boards. Even with this improvement “Knights” won the quarter 19-16 to lead 42-23 at half time.

Realising that taking the first shot available was not a good tactic, “Thunder” enjoyed a good third quarter with Connor White scoring twice off the break and Ali Solazzo hitting a sweet three pointer after a patient offence. The period was tied 12 points all and “Thunder” went into the final period of play full of confidence but with their guards ‘blitzing’ down on “Knights”, Wallace-Steele this opened up the perimeter for their guard Williams who hit a number of outside shots. At the other end of the floor a fatigued “Thunder” team struggled to score losing the quarter 20-4 to slump to a heavy defeat.

Williams, and the “Knights” ‘biggs’, Gaunt and Wallace-Steele scored 62 of their teams 74 points while no “Thunder” player could get into double figures. It is to be hoped that the Northants players learnt a little bit about playing against a team with big players and employing a zone defence. They face another severe test this weekend when they take on table topping Worcester “Bears”.

### **Two poor quarters cost Under 16 Girls dear**

#### **Under 16 Girls National League**

**(North Conference)**

**Northants “Lightning”                      46 -76                      Derby “Trailblazers”**

There were times in this North Conference game when the Northants girls managed to put together some effective basketball against table topping Derby “Trailblazers”. Unfortunately, they weren’t able to do this over all four periods of play which resulted in them slipping to a heavy defeat.

Having won the first quarter 13-11, “Lightning” were then outscored 44-18 over the next two quarters going into the last ten minutes of play trailing 31-55. With the final result virtually decided the “Lightning” players seemed to relax and were only outscored 15-21 in the last quarter with Sade Chambers scoring 8 personal points including an impressive six of six from the free throw line.

If the team can reproduce the form shown in the first and fourth quarters there is no reason why they couldn’t record a win when they travel to Leicester “Warriors” this Sunday.

In the loss against Derby, Chambers top scored with a 15 points, Lucy Needham and Dina Kosnikovska supporting with 10 and 9 points respectively.

### **Blank day for Under 14 Boys**

#### **Under 14 Boys National League**

**(Midlands West Conference)**

**Northants “Thunder” versus Shropshire “Warriors”**

With “Warriors” unable to raise a team this game was postponed. The two clubs will be looking for a date when the fixture can be played

### **Januszevska and “Trailblazers” too strong for Under 14 Girls**

#### **Under 14 Girls National League**

**(Midlands Conference)**

**Northants Lightning”                      48 -82                      Derby “Trailblazers”**

The Northants under 14 girls slipped to their third defeat against high flying Derby “Trailblazers” at the Basketball Centre last Saturday.

Boosted by their win over Bucks “Hornets” the previous week, “Lightning” went into the game confident they could improve on their previous two performances against the Derby outfit. Although they were competitive in all four periods of play “Lightning” were second best and slipped to a 34 point defeat struggling throughout the game to contain Derby’s, Januszevska who finished the game with 29 personal points.

“Lightning” coach, Karen Goodrich could be pleased that nine of her players scored led by Dina Kosnikovska and Ashia King with 10 and 9 points respectively. She was also pleased with the defensive efforts of Keris Ndubisi but less pleased that her team missed no less than 23 free throws.

## THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

### Saturday 27th January

9-30 am to 11-00 am

11-30am

2.00pm

4.00pm

Junior "Ballers"

Under 14 Girls versus N.E.B.C. "Titans"

Under 14 Boys versus Worcester "Bears"

Under 16 Boys versus Worcester "Bears"

Senior Men versus Nottingham "Hoods II"

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

**Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE**

Under 18 Boys travel to Coventry "Tornadoes"

Under 11 and Under 15 Boys C.V.L. at Northampton School for Boys

### Sunday 28th January

Under 14 and Under 16 Girls travel to Leicester "Warriors"

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