

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

“Thunder” get back to winning ways

Senior Men’s Division Three (South Conference)

Northants “Thunder” 83 – 78 Oxford City “Hoops”

The Northants senior men got back to winning ways at the Basketball Centre last Saturday after a run of seven consecutive defeats. Thunder’s opponents were Oxford City Hoops who sat below Thunder in the table but fielded a number of experienced and talented players who obviously demanded respect. On the other hand the Northants team was missing three of their regular players, which meant a depleted squad of just eight players. The team was seriously lacking height but the small team had Oxford chasing shadows on a number of occasions.

Thunder played an excellent up-tempo game in the first half, with the home team connecting from beyond the arc on no less than six occasions from five different players and led 46-32 at half time

Oxford were always going to stay in the game, when their front-court included two players standing at 6 feet 7 inches plus a 7 feet 4 inch ex NBA player, all of whom were more than capable of taking it to the rim. However, they hadn’t counted on Northants’ Jacob Holt with his 6 feet 4 inch frame, and a 7 feet 4 inch heart. Holt played out of skin throughout the game playing a large number of minutes in foul trouble, but using his speed to his advantage. He ended the game with 20 points and pulled down the same number of rebounds. When Northants did need to rotate, undersized debutant junior team Ollie Thomas did a fantastic job in his five minutes of play while another under 18 player, George Calvey enabled the Northants team to keep running the floor and gradually wear the visiting Oxford Hoops down.

Apart from a three minute spell half way through the third quarter, Northants always looked in control of the game. Holt was well supported by Danny Barrett with 16pts while Curtis Hadley and Jonny Yates both contributed 15pts. The Thunder defensive effort was spearheaded by Adam Thomas and Devon Adams who made a number of crucial ‘steals’.

Nova blown away by Cadet’s first half blitz

Under 16 Boys Midland Conference

Northants “Thunder” 116 – 49 Notts Nova II

Many age group teams would be happy to score 73 points in a whole game but the Northants cadet boys, fresh from their overtime win over table-topping Derby “Trailblazers last week, poured in that total in just one half. Against the Notts Nova second string Thunder seemed to hit every shot they took both from their fast break and from the perimeter. If their free throw shooting had been a little better, they missed no less than twelve in the first two quarters, their total would have been even higher.

In the third period Coach John Collins instructed his players to take off their zone press and without the benefit of steals and easy scores his team managed just 16 points but the intensity of their half court defence restricted Nova to just six points.

Collins was able to rotate his players freely in the final period of play and playing against the relative comfort of a zone defence Nova were able to score 20 points while Thunder added 27 to run out winners by 116 points to 49.

In the 67 point win five Thunder players, Jaz Campbell, David Nieva, Ayo Oluyede, Jacob Round, and Hayden Sayers all scored in double figures, led by Round with a 38 point haul.

The team faces a tough weekend this weekend with games against Worcester Wolves on Saturday and Leicester Warriors on Sunday. The Warriors game is the one abandoned when Thunder’s, Reece Zubal suffered a serious knee injury. Basketball England have ruled that the game must be played with the same players but obviously Zubal will not be available, since that game Soloman Day-Adley has picked up a knee injury and two other players are unavailable.

Late surge seals it for Under 15 Boys

Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 69 – 52 North Herts “Knights”

The Northants Under 15 Boys maintained their unbeaten record with what on the face of it looks to be a comfortable win but with six minutes of the game remaining “Knights” were only trailing 46-55 and were still in contention. Grahame Yates’ boys finished on an impressive 14-6 charge to clinch the 19 points win.

Thunder made the every best of starts with a 13-zero surge with Ed Taylan looking impressive while Ed Wallhead and Zak Kitchen kept the score board ticking over nicely. Thunder dominated the remainder of the period and led 24-6 at the end of the first quarter.

It all went pear-shaped for Thunder in the second quarter with Knights outscoring them 20-11 and at 35-26 the visitors were well and truly back in the game. In that second period of play Thunder had been guilty of some really sloppy play, giving the ball away unnecessarily and missing easy shots.

Their efforts earned them a bit of the ‘hair drier’ treatment for their coach during the half time interval but their third quarter performance still left a lot to be desired. Thunder edged the period 15-14 thanks to a 7-zero finish which extended their lead to double digits at 50-40. The two teams exchanged scores throughout the final stanza before that late Thunder charge which saw no less than six players contributing to the scoring.

In the 17 points win Wallhead led his teams’ scoring with an 18 point haul; good points scoring support coming from Kitchen, Shequina Nyumba, Laurence Williams and Taylan while Tyler Mutemasango put in his usual good ‘shift’ at both ends of the court.

Queeley is too much for super Under 14 Boys

Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference

Leicester “Warriors” 81 – 80 Northants “Thunder”

In most circumstances in team sports a good team will beat a good individual. If that individual is extremely talented that may not be the case and on Saturday the Northants under 14 boys ran into such an individual in the shape of Warriors’ Kareem Queeley. Queeley scored 62 of his teams 81 points but his imposing presence on defence was also a major factor. In view of this Thunder’s performance was little less than outstanding and they had three shots in the closing seconds of the contest to win the game.

In the absence of their coach stand-in coach John Collins asked his players to play up-tempo basketball allied to a full court press. Three players were allocated the unenviable task of marking Queeley with the hope that the speed of the game would eventually tire him out. Collins’s strategy worked to a certain degree with the Warriors player limited to just 11 fourth quarter points.

Thunder made a great start to the game and thanks to the efforts of Josh Lloyd and Tom Berry led 24-19 after the first period of play. The second quarter was edged 16-14 by Warriors with the Thunder ‘biggs’, Chris Amankonah and Ed Wallhead keeping their team in contention.

Leading 38-35 at half time Collins asked the team to continue to play with the same commitment and intensity but a couple of defensive errors gave Warriors easy scores. As the Leicester team drew level Queeley became almost unstoppable pouring in a massive 21 points in the third quarter. The Thunder effort was further handicapped when the live wire Amankonah picked up his fourth foul and had to sit down.

Trailing 59-63 going into the last quarter it looked as if Warriors would run away with the game but the determined Thunder group had other ideas. Collins allocated Berry to mark Queeley and his full court attention immediately had an effect while at the offensive end Lloyd and Wallhead were causing the Warriors defence all sorts of problems. When the Northants boys drew to within one point of Warriors and then made a steal an unlikely victory seemed possible but those three missed shots proved to be their downfall as Warriors held on for the single point win.

In the disappointing defeat Wallhead led his teams scoring with 30 points with excellent support coming from Lloyd and Amankonah with 22 and 14 points respectively.

Collins was full of praise for the efforts of the team and the support from their parents, "It was a great pleasure to coach this group of boys; they gave absolutely everything. Coach Round has done a great job with them and I'm sure they'll do well in the Play Offs.

Another heavy loss for Under 13 Boys

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Mansfield "Giants 104 – 56 Northants "Thunder"

Not for the first time this season the Northants under 13 boys made a lethargic start to a game and found themselves trailing 11-31 after the first period of play. The carnage continued in the second quarter which Giants won 30-9 to take an unassailable 61-20 lead.

During the first half Thunder had been guilty of failing to mark the players they were allocated to. For their part Giants scored from a number of well executed fast breaks and they also shot well from the perimeter. A real rout looked to be on the cards but it was a different Thunder that took the floor for the second half. The team played excellent defence and looked far more confident on offence. Giants won the second half 43-36 to run out comfortable winners but Thunder's second half effort showed what they were really capable of

For Thunder Ben Nailer top scored with 19 points while Jude Carmichael, Oliver Dominique and Isaac Round made valuable contributions.

The game must have been one of the cleanest ever played with the game officials calling only eight fouls in the whole game.

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 7th February

9.30am-11am

10am-11am

11.30am

1.30pm

Ballers Academy Session

Junior Ballers Session

Under 14 Boys versus Leicester "Dynamite"

Cadet Boys versus Worcester "Wolves"

Senior Women versus Bury "Blue Devils"

These games will take place at the Northants Centre for Basketball which is based at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Senior Men travel to Barking Abbey

Sunday 8th February

Under 13 Boys travel to N.E.B.C. "Titans"

Cadette Girls travel to Team Birmingham

Cadet Boys travel to Leicester "Warriors"

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