

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Defensive effort earns “Thunder” first win of 2017

Men’s Division Three North

Northants “Thunder” 74 – 57 Thames Valley “Cavaliers II”

After last week’s disappointing loss at the hands of Greenwich “Titans” the Northants senior men went into their game against the Thames Valley “Cavaliers” second string in nervous mood and after six minutes of play found themselves trailing 12-16. Then, boosted by the efforts of Matt Yates they mounted a 15- zero charge to lead 27-16 after the first period of play.

In the quarter both teams seemed to have lost the art of scoring. “Thunder” went over four minutes without finding the basket but thanks to some determined defence were able to limit the visitors scoring efforts as well. “Cavaliers” took the quarter 15-11 to reduce the deficit to 27-31 at half time with “Thunder” knowing that they would need to sharpen up in the final two periods of play.

They started the third quarter well with scores from Jacob Holt and Richard Higgins but then allowed their opponents to close the gap with a 9-zero run. Holt continued to “Thunder’s” main threat as the quarter progressed and his team had extended their lead by a couple of points at 57-46 going into the final stanza.

At the start of the fourth quarter “Thunder” looked to be in no mood to surrender the lead and a 9-zero run took them 20 points ahead. With the game seemingly won “Thunder” were then guilty of ‘falling asleep’. Thames Valley ended the game in the ascendancy outscoring “Thunder” 11-6 and if they hadn’t missed seven free throws in the last five minutes the final score might well have been closer.

There was a collective sigh of relief from players and supporters alike at the end of the game as “Thunder” recorded their first win of 2017 led by 25 points from Yates and 20 from Holt while Richard Higgins chipped in with 10 points.

Cadets victory overcome ‘junk’ defence to defeat “Warriors”

Under 16 Boys East Midlands Conference

Leicester “Warriors” 57 – 62 Northants “Thunder”

The Northants “Thunder” under 16 boys kept their chances of an end of season Play Off place alive thanks to a five point win over Leicester “Warriors” in an interesting game. “Thunder” top the East Midlands Conference by virtue of having played more games but Nottingham “Hoods” and Leicester “Dynamite” have only lost a single game whereas “Thunder” have lost two. There are some interesting fixtures coming up over the next few weeks.

When “Thunder” entertained “Warriors” before Christmas they beat them by over 30 points so it was no surprise that the Leicester outfit came up with a defensive ploy to stop the scoring power of Josh Lloyd and Ed Wallhead. They employed man to man marking on these two players whilst protecting the basket with a triangular zone. Initially this caused “Thunder” some problems but a time out by Coach John Collins allowed his team to re-organise offensively and with Chris Amankonah finding numerous scoring opportunities “Thunder” were able to tie up the scores at 16 all at the end of the first quarter.

“Warriors” continued to employ their combination defence in the second quarter which was edged 15-11 by “Thunder”. Leading 31-27 at half time “Thunder” knew they were in a tough game and would need to be at their very best if they were to secure a win. During the half time interval Collins urged his players to increase their efforts on defence but during the first two quarters they had encountered problems with the penetrative skills of Warriors’ players Smith and Yusuf so to combat this threat Collins employed a zone defence with an aggressive press after scores.

The tactic worked superbly and a couple of surges earned “Thunder” a 12 point lead at 42-30 at the end of the third quarter. This was extended to 15 points early in fourth but with the game seemingly won “Warriors”, led by Yusuf, mounted a charge to get the lead down to eight points and forcing another “Thunder” defensive adjustment. At the close of the game a “Thunder” interception gave Amankonah an uncontested lay up but the forward unaccountably missed the shot and from the rebound “Warriors” drained a three pointer from down town to give the final score a rather unrealistic look.

In the hard earned win Amankonah led the “Thunder” scoring with an impressive 27 points, good support coming from Josh Lloyd and Adam Lewandowski with 13 and 9 points respectively.

Collins commented, “This was a vey pleasing win against some interesting defensive tactics. We’ve gone 5 and 0 since Christmas, now we have a couple of weeks to prepare for the big game against Dynamite”.

Two teams from the Club in Central Venue action

Northants “Hoopsterz” Central Venue Tournaments

Under 9's

The team coached by Curtis Noel played four games winning both contests against Duston but losing twice to “Rattlers”. Coach Noel was pleased with the improvement his players showed over the course of the tournament.

Under 11's

The team played four games losing to “Titans” and both “Rattlers” teams but getting the better of Duston “Hawks”. Coach Akilah Chambers was particularly pleased with the efforts of Caleb Ntumba and Benas Maldutis.

Under 14 Boys battle hard in losing to talented “Wolves”

Under 14 Boys East Midlands II Conference

Northants “Thunder” 56 – 68 Worcester “Bears”

Northants Thunder faced undefeated Conference leaders Worcester “Bears” at the Basketball Centre last Saturday and were competitive for three of the four periods of play. Unfortunately in the second quarter they were blown away 28-11 and they never looked like making up the deficit.

Despite the 21 points defeat Coach Crump was positive commenting “We knew today was going to be a tough game against the “Bears”. I was very happy with the response and energy levels of the team in the first quarter, unfortunately, we made things very difficult for ourselves in the second quarter when as a team we did not execute on offense forcing poor shoot selection.”

The “Bears” stormed into an 8-4 run displaying some confident perimeter shooting to open the first quarter. This set the tone for “Thunder”, in order to beat the “Bears” they were going to have to limit their scoring in transition but also contest shots from long range. “Thunder’s” confidence was boosted with a three pointer from Ally Solazzo but “Bears” extended their lead to six points midway through the quarter forcing a “Thunder” timeout.

A more determined “Thunder” returned to the court and led by some strong inside scoring by Kalonji Campbell and Cameron Leighton they were able to reduce the deficit to 17-18. “Thunder” had the opportunity to tie the game from the free throw line in the final minute but a basket by “Bears” gave them a three point cushion at 21-18 at the end of the quarter.

“Thunder” knew that to defeat the Bears would require them to display strong performance in each quarter. Scores again from inside duo Cameron Leighton and Kalonji Campbell helped to put pressure on the Bears lead at 22-25, however, a 7-0 run by the visitors executing quick scores in transition saw them extend their lead to 32-22 forcing a Thunder timeout. Unfortunately for “Thunder” poor execution on offense resulted in multiple turnovers which “Bears” capitalised on to extend their lead further to 49-29 at the half.

During the half time interval “Thunder” were reminded of the importance of execution on offense promoting good ball movement and ‘cutting to basket with a purpose’. An Ashley Kitchen 3 pointer and another basket by Campbell helped to reduce the deficit, but the “Bears” continued to show their dominance midway through the quarter with a 9-0 run extending their lead 64-36 and this 28 point lead was maintained to the end of the quarter.

Coach Crump urged his team to play with pride in the final period and not to allow the “Bears” a dominant quarter. With Leighton and Campbell combining well around the basket “Thunder” were able to finish the game with pride taking the quarter 16-10.

In the 21 point setback “Thunder” were led in scoring by Kalonji Campbell with a season high of 29 points while Cameron Leighton supported his team mate with a respectable 12 points.

Under 14 Girls almost snatch defeat from the jaws of victory against “Swifts”

Under 14 Girls East Conference

Northants “Lightning” 66 -61 Southend “Swifts”

The Northants under 14 Girls recorded their fourth win of the season after beating Southend “Swifts” by five points. The win came thanks to an 8-zero run at the end of the game after “Swifts” had taken a 61-58 lead thanks to an 13-2 charge of their own at the start of the fourth quarter.

“Lightning” made an excellent start to the game and a 16-2 run at the end of the first period of play earned them a 23-9 lead at the end of the quarter.

Thanks to the efforts of their talented guard Trett, and some determined defence, “Swifts” battled back into the game during the second quarter which they took 21-14 reducing “Lightning’s” half time lead to 37-30.

“Lightning” started the third quarter in positive style outscoring the visitors 10-1 to re-establish a double digit lead at 47-31 with Lucy Needham scoring six points. With key “Lightning” players on the bench because of foul trouble “Swifts” mounted another run once again led by the efforts of Trett. They outscored the Northants girls by 17 points to 2 to close the gap to a single point at the end of the quarter.

“Lightning” made a good start to the final period of play but with the loss of Sade Chambers on five fouls, they fell apart and “Swifts” mounted that 13-2 run to give them the lead. In that run Trett had contributed 11 points so “Lightning” coach Janis allocated Grace Cosford to mark the talented Southend guard. Her efforts and a couple of scores from Poppy Barnett helped “Lightning” home and calm the nerves of their supporters.

In the hard earned win which saw eight players contributing to the final total; Needham top scored for “Lightning” with 20 points while Chambers and Barnett scored 12 and 10 points respectively.

THIS WEEKENDS ACTION

Saturday 11th February

11-00am

1-00pm

No Junior "Ballers"

Junior Men versus Ilkeston "Outlaws"

Senior Men versus Cardiff Met "Archers"

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

Under 14 Boys travel to Ilkeston "Outlaws"

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