

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Holt injured as brave “Thunder” lose to “Kestrels”

Senior Men’s Division Three (South Conference)

Solent “Kestrels” 95 – 75 Northants “Thunder”

Northants made the trip to Southampton to take on top of the table Solent Kestrels with just six players after a number of injuries had taken its toll on the visiting team. On the other hand champions elect Kestrels suited up 12.

It was clear from the start that Solent would intend to run the entire game, and see if they could tire out the small rostered Thunder side. What they didn’t expect is how Northants play when they have their backs against the wall. From the opening tip Turiccki found Adam Thomas, who scored Northants first basket after just three seconds; and this was to set the tempo for the whole game.

With the Northants coaching staff having to keep an eye on their rotations to minimise fatigue and foul trouble, things went from bad to worse when forward Jacob Holt dislocated a finger after just six minutes of the game, when Northants held a slender 15-12 lead. Holt was taken to Southampton Hospital by the mother of the Kestrels coach, to have the finger put back into place, and make sure there were no bone breaks. However, whilst his departure was unlucky, the remaining five Northants players knew they would have to play the next 34 minutes with no substitutions. Kestrels smelt blood and raised the tempo once more. Northants tried their best to stay in the game, but Solent finished the quarter on a 20-9 run, to open up a 32-24 gap.

The next three quarters of play were a fantastically close affair, with even the home crowd finding time to applaud an away team that were ‘playing through a storm of bad luck’. The final result was a comfortable 95-75 win for Kestrels, but both teams knew that the tenacity and determination of Northants had kept the score to just single figures for a good portion of the game.

For Thunder, Turiccki top scored with 21 points with excellent support coming from Jonny Yates and Devon Adams with 15 points each while Curtis Hadley and Adam Thomas contributing 12 and 10 points respectively.

Coach Rob Eddon, pronounced himself “Incredibly proud of a group of players that played with their hearts”. The fact that a good number of Solent supporters came to personally congratulate the away team’s players and coaching staff at the end of the game, said more about the visiting team, than any statistics could.

Panthers too strong for under strength Lightning

Senior Women’s Division Two (North Conference)

Kingston “Panthers” 67 -59 Northants “Lightning”

Hopes of the Northants “Lightning” senior women making the end of season Play Offs took a major jolt last Saturday when they lost by 8 points to Kingston Panthers a team they beat by over thirty points earlier in the season. Lightning made the long trip to Hull missing a couple of key players but were still in optimistic mood. Despite spending three hours in the mini bus Lightning made a good start to the game and thanks to points contributions from six players edged ahead 25-24 after the first period of play.

Panthers were fielding a couple of excellent perimeter shooters so Coach Karen Goodrich employed a combination defence in the second quarter and this ploy restricted the home side to just 11 points in the period. Unfortunately, the Lightning offence was spluttering and they were unable to get into their running game and they too were limited to 11 points as well.

Leading by a single point at 36-35 at half time Lightning were hoping their offence would function more efficiently in the third period but they became heavily dependent on the perimeter shooting of Stephanie Ogden. Ogden connected with three three-point shots and another long range two but the rest of her team could only contribute a further five points so Lightning were unable to extend their one point advantage.

If Lightning had struggled offensively in the second and third quarter things got even worse in the final stanza. They restricted Panthers to just 16 points but could only manage seven points all from the free throw line themselves as they slipped to a 59-67 defeat.

In the eight point set back Ogden top scored with Riona Blessyn supporting well with 16 points but no other Lightning player could score in double figures.

Amazing finish brings victory for Cadet Boys

Under 16 Boys Midland Conference

Northants "Thunder" 74 - 59 Leicester "Dynamite"

With six minutes of this crucial Midland Conference game remaining Dynamite mounted a 5-zero surge to tie the scores up at 55 all. Things looked black for the Thunder team missing three of their bigger players and with their influential guard Jacob Round looking exhausted at the end of his second back-to-back games. Coach John Collins brought Ayo Oluyede back into the game even though he was suffering from a sore knee. This meant that Round could revert to his normal guard spot and Collins also gambled with two taller perimeter players. What happened was little short of amazing as the exhausted Thunder players found a 'second wind'. Superb defence was matched to some excellent perimeter shooting as Thunder outscored their opponents 19-4 to close out an important win that could be crucial in their bid to clinch second place in the Conference.

Lightning made a good start to the game jumping out to a 20-11 lead but Dynamite closed the first period of play with a 7-2 run to close the quarter out at 17-22. It was a similar story in the second quarter with Thunder keeping their noses in front thanks to some excellent offensive play from Jaz Campbell. Leading 38-25 Thunder were once again guilty of losing concentration allowing Dynamite to outscore them 6-zero at the end of the quarter which saw the home side leading by 40 points to 31.

Thunder had being rely on their 3-2 match up zone but Collins felt that Dynamite were finding gaps in the defence so he switched his team to man to man at the start of the third period. This proved not to be a successful ploy as the Leicester team outscored Thunder 9-2 to close the gap to 43-40. Thunder switched back to their zone defence with Round filling in as 'big' player but having gained the momentum Dynamite were able to tie the scores up at the end of the quarter thanks to some good play from Alex Callender.

Thunder opened the final stanza with two free throws from Round and a triple from Campbell before Dynamite tied the scores up at 55 all, then came that splendid Thunder finish to delight of the players' parents.

In the 14 point win Round was superb and led the Thunder scoring with 29 points but significant contributions came from Campbell, Hayden Sayers and David Nieva while Oluyede and Julian Abeam rebounded like men possessed.

Under 15 Boys stay undefeated and top of the Conference

Under 15 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants "Thunder" 99 - 44 Herts "Warriors"

Following a lengthy delay, because some of the Herts players had been delayed because of a serious motor accident on the M.1. the Northants under 15 boys went on to complete a routine victory.

Thunder broke the game open after the 2nd minute with the score level at 4 all. Zak Kitchen made some good decisions, leading to assists while Shekina Ntumba was making a number of steals. Thunder were dominating play and by the end of the first period of play had opened up a 31-6 lead.

It was very much the same story in the second quarter which Thunder took 31-9 to open up an unassailable 62-15 half time lead. During this period of play Laurence Williams had controlled the tempo of the game well while Josh Blase chipped in with a useful six points.

With such a comfortable lead Coach Grahame Yates was able to give all his players plenty of court time and although his team were able to keep up their scoring momentum with 21 points; defensively they conceded the same number. The fourth quarter was a mere formality with Yates using it to work on plays which might be useful in the Play Offs, in a real game environment.

Thunder won the final period 16-8 to close out the game at 99-44 led by 29 points from Jacob Round. Tyler Mutemasango contributed 14 points and Ed Wallhead and Ntumba 10 points each the latter two also rebounding well.

Under 14 Boys demolish “Outlaws”

Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 114 - 25 Ilkeston “Outlaws”

With the Play Offs looming the Northants under 14 boys are now focussing on fine tuning their play and despite playing without the guidance of their coach, Mike Round. Stand in coach John Collins emphasised to the team the importance of good defence for the whole of the game and the players responded magnificently restricting Outlaws to just 25 points. This excellent performance was initially achieved through aggressive full court pressure and then through half court ‘Help and Recovery’ half court defence which kept Ilkeston scoreless for long periods of the game.

On offence Thunder executed some excellent fast break attacks orchestrated by Josh Lloyd and when initial shots were missed Chris Amankonah was on hand to score with put backs. Thunder comfortably won all four periods of play but to their credit the Ilkeston boys kept battling to the end and their 11 point fourth quarter tally was the best of the game.

In the comfortable win which keeps Thunder in contention for second place in the Conference, Lloyd and Amankonah led their scoring with 27 and 25 points respectively. Good support came from Tom Berry, Gio Prati and Noah Wilborn and the other five players also got their names on the scoresheet.

City of Birmingham no match for Under 14 Girls

Under 14 Girls Midlands Conference

Northants “Lightning” 111 – 18 City of Birmingham

City of Birmingham playing with just six players were just no match for the unbeaten Northants under girls. The game was over as a contest even before the first period was concluded with the West Midlanders managing just two points while Lightning poured in 24.

C.O.B. did slightly better in the second quarter with 8 points but they conceded 31 to give Lightning a 55-10 half time lead. The Birmingham girls were unable to score a single point in period number three and if this had been a boxing match it would surely have been stopped. C.O.B. battled to the end but could do nothing to stop the carnage as Lightning strolled to a win by 90 plus points.

In the crushing win Holly Winterburn scored a stunning 55 points while Lucy Amena, Hannah Davy and Odera Onwumechili all scored in double figures

Brave Under 13 Boys go down to “Bears”

Under 13 Boys Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 54 – 76 Worcester “Bears”

For the second week running the Northants under 13 boys faced a team with a significant standing height advantage. Initially this proved to be a massive problem as the visitors scored from a number of put backs to take a 12-2 lead. This lead was extended to 22-10 by the end of the first quarter but Thunder could have been a lot closer if they hadn’t missed 12 free throws.

The Bears physical play in the first quarter had not been to the liking of the match officials and as the intensity of their play decreased Thunder were able to become a lot more competitive. Thanks to some excellent team play they only lost the second quarter 18-20 and with a half time score of 30-40 were well and truly still in the game.

Needing a good start to the third period Thunder’s play became totally based on players driving to the basket or taking early perimeter shots. Bears went on a 14-3 scoring surge to open up a 21 point lead and leaving Thunder with the proverbial mountain to climb.

In the final quarter Thunder got back to some better team play but were guilty of missing a number of easy shots close to basket as they slipped to a 54-76 defeat.

For Thunder Ben Nailer top scored with 16 points while Matteo Baja, Jude Carmichael, Isaac Round and Connor White all scored 10 points

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

Saturday 21st February

9.30am-11am

Ballers Academy Session

10am-11am

Junior Ballers Session

11.30am

Under 13 Boys versus City of Birmingham

1.30pm

Senior Men versus Thames Valley "Cavaliers"

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

Cadet Boys travel to Bromsgrove "Bears".

Cadette Girls travel to Nottingham "Wildcats"

Under 15 Boys travel to Reading "Rockets"

Sunday 22nd February

Junior Women travel to Wiltshire "Demons"

Under 14 Boys travel to Notts Nova

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