**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PREE RELEASE**

**On another busy weekend Golden Saturday turns into Nightmare Sunday**

**Junior Men clinch the Midlands 2 Conference title**

**Under 18 Boys Midlands 2 Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 64 – 58 Coventry “Elite”**

The Northants “Thunder” Junior Men duly clinched the Midlands 2 Conference title despite a below par performance against Coventry “Elite”. They will now play in the Promotion Play Offs probably against one of the lower teams from the Premier League or a team from another Conference.

Against “Elite”, “Thunder” made an excellent start to the game with six players helping the team establish a 23-11 lead after the first quarter, but they went to sleep in the second quarter allowing the Coventry team to outscore them by 17 points to 12.

Trailing 28-35 at half time “Elite” made a big push in the third quarter but thanks to three pointers from Ellis Phillips and Gabriel Akande, “Thunder” were able to extend their lead by a further three points despite “Elite” mounting a 10-3 charge at the end of the quarter.

“Thunder’s” ten point lead looked very fragile but back-to-back scores from Fareed Issifu at the start of the final stanza eased their nerves but after a Rapolas Radavicius score “Thunder” totally froze and went four minutes without scoring as their lead was reduced to just four points before a Dylan Dominici basket sealed the victory and the Conference title.

In the six point win Benas Maldutis led the “Thunder” scoring with 13 points well supported by Dominici with 12 and Issifu with 10

**The “Lightning” Under 14 Girls had a busy few days with a midweek trip to Mansfield followed by another trek north on Saturday to Sheffield. The girls ended up with**

**a win and a loss from the two games**

**Under 14 Girls North 2 Conference**

**Mansfield “Giants” 66 – 57 Northants “Lightning”**

The final result of this game was a massive disappointment for the “Lightning” players and coaching staff because the Northants outfit had led the fast paced contest for 35 minutes finally succumbing after a final quarter which saw them outscored by 16 points to six.

**Sheffield “Hatters II” 47 – 98 Northants “Lightning”**

Three days later the team were back on the road for a game against the Sheffield “Hatters” second string. With Campbell Spatcher returning to point guard duties following a sickness bug “Lightning” looked a lot better balanced and got off to a flying start outscoring their opponents 23-10 in the first quarter.

The Northants transition game was too much for the Sheffield outfit with Jennifer Oamen, Queenby Yeboah and Spatcher scoring freely and this continued throughout the game as “lightning” won all four quarters of the game.

In the comfortable win Yeboah finished with 23 points her highest total of the season, Spatcher and Oamen scoring 18 and 17 points respectively.

This weekend the team are on their travels once more as they visit Derby “Trailblazers” in search of completing another ‘double’

**A weekend of mixed fortunes for Under 16 Boys**

After back-to-back games the previous weekend the Northants Under 16 Boys faced another busy couple of days last weekend.

**Angus the hero as “Thunder” beat Coventry “Tornadoes”.**

**Under 16 Boys Midlands 1 Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 61 – 60 Coventry “Tornadoes”**

With this Midlands 1 Conference game coming to an end “Thunder” were trailing by 60 points to 56 and another defeat was staring them in the face. In the dying seconds of the game Danielus Jokulis was fouled and cooled converted the resulting free throws. “Thunder” then regained position and skipper Angus Slater launched a speculative buzzer beating three-pointer which caught nothing but string to give “Thunder” a 61 to 60 win.

Earlier “Thunder” had struggled offensively against “Tornadoes” scoring just 20 points in the first two quarters, falling 20-31 behind by half time. Whatever Coach Brad Hughes said to his team during the half time break certainly worked and they outscored “Tornadoes” 10 to zero at the start of the third quarter. They went on to take the quarter 22-7 to establish a 42-38 lead going into the final ten minutes of play.

Thunder held on to that lead until midway through the fourth quarter as “Elite” mounted an 11-zero run to take a 57-50 lead. Scores from Slater and Jake Muxlow reduced the gap to set up the nail-biting final few seconds.

In the hard-fought win Slater top scored for “Thunder” with 13 points excellent support coming from Jokulis with 11 points and Fran Guei with 10.

**Under 16 Boys come down to earth with a crash.**

**Northants “Thunder” 38 – 99 Milton Keynes “Breakers I”**

Less than twenty-four hours after their last second win against Coventry “Tornadoes” the “thunder” Under 16 Boys were back on court against Conference champions elect Milton Keynes “Breakers” first string. Faced by a well drilled and talented unit “Thunder” played with spirit with big men Henry Brandrick and Fran Guei getting some success close to basket while three triple from Logan Ormshaw in the third quarter kept the scoreboard ticking over for “Thunder”

Despite turning the ball over against the “breakers” press defence “Thunder” had done well in the first three quarters of the game but the wheels came off in a big way in the final quarter managing just three points as Milton Keynes poured in 34. The final score wasn’t a true reflection on a game which had been competitive for 30 minutesas “Breakers” maintained their unbeaten record and take the conference title with a lot of spectators wondering why they hadn’t played in the Premier League

In the heavy loss Ormshaw battled hard for his 14 points while Guei scored 11 and Brandrick eight.

**Nightmare fourth quarter costs “Storm” Under 12’s dear**

**Under 12 Mixed Region 1 League**

**Northants “Storm” 49 – 60 Leicester “Riders”**

Playing some attractive running basketball combined with determined full court defence the “Thunder” Under 12 Mixed team had bounced back from a 12-20 first quarter deficit to establish a 49-40 lead going into the final ten minutes of play. The “Riders” coaching staff made a big effort to contain “Storm’s” offensive transition making sure they had two players getting back to protect their basket. The ploy worked extremely well and confronted by five defensive players protecting the basket “Thunder” resorted to induvial play rather than team play. The result was number of forced shots and with a distinct height advantage “Riders” were able to secure rebounds and run back successful fast breaks.

During the fourth quarter “Storm” failed to score single point while “Riders” scored 20 to take a 60-49 win.

In the disappointing performance Arlo Dominici and Dominykas Jokulis both scored 11 points

**Under 14 Boys get close to champions “Tigers” after seeing off “Wizards”**

**Under 14 Boys Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 77 – 66 Walsall “Wizards”**

In the first game of their double header weekend the Northants “Thunder” Under 14 Boys opened with an 11 point win over lowly Walsall “Wizards”.

On the back of ten points from Oliwer Andrzejczak, “Thunder” jumped out to an 18-11 first quarter lead. The second quarter was tied at 18 all with “Wizards” Ojeyu scoring ten points of his own.

Leading 36-29 at half time “Thunder” produced a stunning third quarter outscoring their opponents by 27 points to 13 with Logan Tanner scoring 12 of those 27 points. With the game seemingly won at 63-42 “Thunder” were guilty of some sloppy play in the final quarter and were outscored 14-24 with Ojeyu causing the “Thunder” defence a lot of problems.

In the eleven-point win Andrzejczak top scored with 23 points Tanner and Cameron Ivienagbor supporting well with 16 and 15 points respectively while Ojeyu scored an impressive 33 points for “Wizards”

**Northants “Thunder” 65 – 68 Tamworth “Tigers”**

The entourage of Midlands Conference leaders Tamworth “Tigers” arrived at the Northants Basketball Centre last Sunday armed with drums, hooters and clappers and they were treated to a game of very high quality. “Tigers” won an enthralling game which was a great credit to everyone involved.

The first quarter was a see-saw affair with “Thunder”, inspired by Cameron Ivienagbor going 19-9 up only for “Tigers” to respond with a 16-4 quarter closing run to take a 25-23 lead.

Showing a good offensive balance “Tigers” dominated the second quarter taking it by 23 points to 13 to take a 48-36 half time lead. Showing a great deal of character “Thunder” came out for the third quarter firing on all cylinders. They outscored “Tigers” 20-10 to close the gap to just two points as the noise level in the sports hall reached a deafening level.

Both sides were showing their nerves along with the spellbound supporters and in the final quarter scoring was a at a premium for both teams. After exchanging baskets a three-pointer from Ivienagbor gave “Thunder” a 63-62 lead but guided by the impressive Irving “Tigers” proceeded to outscore “Thunder” 6-2 over the closing minutes to take the game by 68 points to 65 and with it the Conference title to the delight of their raucous supporters.

In the three point loss three players, Ivienagbor, Logan Tanner and Oliwer Andrzejczak scored all but ten of “Thunder’s” total; Ivienagbor leading the way with 22 personal points; but the real winner on the day was undoubtedly basketball. Two talented teams had gone ‘toe to toe’ and given their ‘all’ in a contest that was well coached and extremely well refereed while the supporters of both teams were respectful of each other and of the game officials.

Northants President John Collins commented after the game, “This is what basketball should be like at every level. It was an honour to be present and all credit to everyone involved for making it a very special occasion.”

**Excellent day for “Storm” and “Storm Too”**

**YBL Under 11 Mixed Tournament**

**Northants “Storm” 65 – 57 Northants “Storm Too”**

**Northants “Storm” 76 - 34 Coventry “Tornadoes White”**

**Northants “Storm Too” 62 - 30 Coventry “Tornadoes White”**

**Northants “Storm” 65 – 44 Coventry “Tornadoes Blue”**

**Northants “Storm Too” 63 – 40 Coventry “Tornadoes Blue”**

After this latest tournament both “Storm” and “Storm II” have qualified for the End of Season Play Offs. “Storm” will compete in the Championship Play Offs, while “Storm Too” will play in the Plate Competition.

Last Saturday both “Storm” teams comfortably beat the Coventry “Tornadoes” teams and at one stage “Storm Too” looked as if they might beat their senior team, but Max Abraham and Arlo Dominici made sure there wasn’t going be a shock.

**THIS WEEK’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 25th March**

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

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

12.00pm Under 16 Boys versus Gloucester “Saxons”

Under 13 Girls travel to Telford to play Shropshire and Leicester “Riders”

Under 12 “Storm” travel to Birmingham “Bears”

**Sunday 26th March**

Under 15 Boys travel to Leicester “Riders”

Under 14 Boys travel to Birmingham “Bears”

Under 14 Girls travel to Derby “Trailblazers”

The home game 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