

NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

“Thunder” slip into relegation zone after loss against Oxford Brookes

Men’s Division Three South

Oxford Brookes University 87 – 64 Northants “Thunder”

For the second week running the Northants senior men imploded in the second half and the 23 point set back against Oxford Brookes plunges them into the relegation zone of the 3rd Division South Conference. “Thunder” and Oxford both have five wins and if that record remains unchanged Oxford can boast two wins against the Northants outfit.

On Saturday ‘Thunder’ trailed 21-23 after the first period of play and then tied the second 17 all. Coach Grahame Yates had employed a five on, five off tactic during the first half but “Thunder” were blitzed 28-14 in the third quarter. Trailing 52-68 going into the last ten minutes of play “Thunder” were up against it and despite some determined defence which restricted Brookes to 19 points a meagre harvest of 12 points saw them slip to defeat.

In the 23 point loss the “Thunder” scoring was led by Tom Higgins, Richard Higgins and Tony Sarrio. The team has just one game remaining with a win over Brunel University “Ducks” this Saturday an absolute must.

Cadet Boys hit a ton against “Thunders” but miss out on the Play Offs

Under 16 Boys East Midlands Conference

Northants “Thunder” 117 – 30 Rutland “Thunders”

The Northants under 16 boys recorded an emphatic win over an inexperienced but gutsy Rutland “Thunders” team only to hear that they would not be featuring in the end of season Play Offs. This was because Nottingham “Hoods” had narrowly beaten Leicester “Warriors” so earning themselves one more win than the Northants team. The key win came after Conference champions elect, Leicester “Dynamite” had conceded a game to the Nottingham team.

“Thunder” coach John Collins commented, “This is very disappointing news. We lost to “Hoods” but then beat them by a larger margin so giving us the edge in any tie situation. For “Dynamite” to ‘give’ them a game is heartbreaking and seems very unfair.”

Against “Thunders”, the Northants boys were made aware of the threat posed by Meade- Bramble but some superb defence from Chris Amankonah allied to clever double teaming tactics kept the Rutland guard scoreless until the fifth minute of the second quarter. By this time “Thunder” had built up a substantial lead and were employing a ‘soft’ press to thwart Meade- Bramble.

By half time the game was as good as over as a contest but Collins insisted that his team continued to respect their opponents by playing tough defence. Collins was also able to give plenty of court time to James Reid and Roman O’Hara and Tom Heron who repaid him with sound performances. He was also pleased with the contributions of Aaron Mutari, Adam Lewandowski and Jamal Jacks the latter recording a season best 10 points.

“Thunder’s” dominance was clearly shown in the final period of play when a tiring Rutland outfit without the services of Meade-Bramble failed to score and the home teams cruised to a massive win in a game which will be the teams last together.

In the big win “Thunder’s” scoring was led by Josh Lloyd, Ed Wallhead and Chris Amankonah, the latter recording more points than the whole of the “Thunders” team put together.

After the game Collins paid tribute to the Rutland team who are new to the National League, “It is great to see a new team but such a pity that the governing body aren’t able to come up with a competition system that saves a teams from suffering heavy losses late in the season. This is a time when the better teams should be going up against each other while the weaker teams match up.”

Under 14 Boys finish season on a high with a win over “Wolves”

Under 14 Boys Midlands II Conference

Worcester “Wolves” 58 – 81 Northants “Thunder”

The last game between these two teams resulted in a disappointing overtime defeat for “Thunder”. With the play offs out of reach for both teams, both teams went into the fixture looking to win the series to conclude their season.

“Thunder” started the game in impressive style, displaying strong rebounding initiating consecutive scores in transition. Guard Patrick Adedeji scored 10 points in the quarter including two 3 pointers which installed a great deal of confidence in the “Thunder” offence. A 9-0 run by the Northants boys late in the quarter helped to extend their lead 23-14 by the end of the quarter.

“Thunder” displayed some excellent offence in the second period of play which saw some efficient execution of their motion offense. This ignited a 13-0 run to extend their lead to 39-21 early in the quarter with 8 points coming from Kalonji Campbell thanks to some strong play around the basket. Campbell continued to show his dominance later in the quarter, with the Wolves being unable to contain the Northants forward who went on to increase his individual scoring to 16 points in the quarter.

The third quarter was a bizarre quarter, with “Thunder” returning to the floor full of confidence which saw them an 11-0 run with Adedeji nailing his third 3 pointer of the game. “Thunder” were also playing some tough defence and held their opponents scoreless for the opening five minutes. Holding a 58-27 lead, “Thunder” were on course for a comfortable win but a lapse of concentration saw “Wolves” going on a 14-zero run of their own to conclude the quarter. During this period of play the “Thunder” players failed to defend scores in transition and by the end of the quarter the home side had reduced the deficit to 39-58.

In the interval before the final period of play “Thunder” coach Rob Crump enforced the importance of his players not becoming complacent reminding them of their previous overtime loss against the “Wolves”. Energetic contributions from Adedeji and Ally Solazzo helped to extend “Thunder’s” lead with back to back scores while Cameron Leighton made important contributions with consecutive scores close too the basket scores. “Thunder” also continued to display a threat from the perimeter with Ally Solazzo nailing Northants’ fourth 3 pointer of the game to extend the lead to 72-52. In the closing minutes remaining, Kalonji Campbell scored eight consecutive points to ensure “Thunder” finished the season with a comfortable win.

“Thunder” were led in scoring by Kalonji Cambell with 28 points and he was well supported by Patrick Adedeji and Jonathan Ntumba who scored 17 and 16 pointers respectively.

Coach Crump commented “It was pleasing to finish our final game of the season with a win which we did in dominant fashion for 35 minutes. I was particularly impressed with our performance in the first half; we displayed some good execution on offense especially by Tom Cole and Tom Greenfield who played with a lot of confidence on the floor. However, Kalonji Campbell was excellent today displaying a real presence on the floor. Whilst it disappointing our season has come to an end I am very proud of the development and effort s the boys have shown this season”

Under 14 Girls lose to Oaklands “Wolves” in a ‘war’

Under 14 Girls East Conference

Oaklands College “Wolves” 80 - 54 Northants “Lightning”

After their narrow win over Brentwood “Fire” the previous weekend the Northants under 14 girls travelled to St Albans to take on Oaklands College “Wolves” in optimistic mood. That mood quickly disappeared when they were confronted by some extremely aggressive defensive play from the home team. The two young referees had obviously been watching the Wales versus Ireland rugby game as bodies frequently hit the floor and several “Lightning” players had to leave the game with minor knocks. The “Wolves” full court press forced a number of “Lightning” turn-overs leading to easy scores and the county girls found themselves trailing 8-19 at the end of the first period of play.

“Wolves” extended their lead by a further 7 points in the second quarter to lead 41-23 at half time but there had been signs that the “Lightning” players had to a certain extent, come to terms with the physicality of the game.

With Poppy Barnett and Esther Agendo rebounding well, “Lightning” were able to launch a number of fast break attacks in the third quarter which they took 25-19 to reduce the deficit to 48-60. Any hope of closing that gap in the final period of play quickly disappeared as “Wolves” won the quarter 20-6 to run out comfortable winners by 80 points to 54.

In the 26 point defeat seven “Lightning” players contributed to their team’s points total lead by Lucy Needham and Dina Kosnikovska with 19 and 15 points respectively. Coach Janis Kosnikovskis was pleased with the way his team had come to terms with the physicality of the game and delighted with their 18 from 23 return from the free throw line.

Northants *Hoopsterz* Central Venues Tournaments

Under 9’s

The Northants team coached by Curtis Noel came 3rd of the five teams participating with Gabriel Noel playing particularly well in all the games.

Under 11’s

With Benas Maldutis in good form the Northants team beat N.E.B.C. “Titans and Duston “Hawks” to win the tournament. The team was coached by Hannah Davey.

END OF SEASON PRESENTATION EVENING

This event will be held on the evening of **Friday 31st March** in the Recharge Area at Northampton School for Girls commencing at 6-30pm.

The evening will include a review of the season together with:

- ❖ Most Valuable and Most Improved Player awards for all teams.
- ❖ Presidents Award
 - ❖ Penny Westwood “Fair Play” Award
 - ❖ Raffle
 - ❖ Table Quiz
 - ❖ Hot Buffet

All players including Junior “Ballers” and their parents are most welcome and places should be booked through Karen Goodrich at northantsbasketballclub@hotmail.co.uk

THIS WEEKEND'S ACTION

Saturday 18th March

9-30am to 11.00am

Junior "Ballers"

11.15am to 1.15pm

County Under 13 Boys and Girls Try Outs

2.00pm

Senior Men versus Brunel University "Ducks"

This game will be played at the Northamptonshire Basketball Centre
which is situated at Northampton School for Girls, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is FREE

Junior Men travel to Coventry "Tornadoes"

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