

# **NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Play Off News**

#### **Britton and MacKay too much for “Thunder”**

##### **Under 15 Boys Play Off Quarter Final**

**Northants “Thunder”                      57 - 87                      Cheshire “Wire”**

The dream of the Northants under 15 Boys reaching the Final Four was shattered last Saturday when they were beaten by 30 points by a well drilled Cheshire “Wire” team. The 30 point margin was not a true reflection of the game because the Northants boys went into the final quarter only trailing by 12 points. Then needing a good start to the quarter they were blitzed 15-2 and it was game and dream over.

From the start of the game it was clear that it was going to be a battle between Thunder’s Jacob Round and Britton and MacKay from the opposition. Thunder seemed nervous at the start of the game but became more confident as the first quarter developed. At the end of the first period of play Thunder trailed 17-23 with five other players supporting Round while swing man MacKay and inside player Britton had scored all but two of Wire’s total.

In the second quarter Thunder were able to keep in touch with the visitors thanks to the efforts of Round but they were unable to prevent Britton scoring freely from the low post block. Wire took the period 19-16 to establish a 42-33 half time lead but Thunder were still in the game.

The Thunder coaching staff had noticed that most of Wire’s points had come from inside the paint and their perimeter shooting hadn’t been very impressive. For this reason they switched their defensive formation to a zone while Wire, recognising the scoring power of Round adopted a Box and One defence. This restricted the Thunder guard to six points in the third quarter but a brace of three pointers from Laurence Williams kept the score board moving for Thunder. Meanwhile Britton and MacKay continued to be productive for Wire as the Cheshire team took the period 21-18 to lead 63-51 going into the last stanza.

With Round harassed wherever he went on court no other Thunder player could step up and hurt the protective Wire zone and the 2-15 Wire run saw the game over as a competition. With the final result not in doubt both coaches ran their benches with a couple of the Wire under 14 players catching the eye.

In the 30 point defeat, Round had 33 points for Thunder. No other player could get into double figures although Williams and Ed Taylan battle hard for their eight and six point hauls. For Wire Britton scored 30 points while MacKay contributed 26.

This was Thunder’s first and only defeat of the season but unless you win a title your last game inevitably ends in a loss. The boys in the team and the coaching staff of Grahame and Jonny Yates have worked hard all season and shown tremendous commitment.

#### **Cadet Men advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Play Offs**

##### **Under 16 Boys Play Off 1<sup>st</sup> Round**

**Northants “Thunder”                      99 – 68                      Doncaster Danum “Eagles”**

The Northants Cadet Boys advanced to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Play Offs with a 30 plus points win over Doncaster Eagles. The win came thanks to an impressive second half defensive performance which saw Eagles restricted to 26 points and a superb individual performance from under 15 guard Jacob Round.

Thunder coach John Collins was aware that Eagles carried an impressive perimeter shooter so his pre-game instructions to his players were to make sure they matched up to Bell whenever he ‘spotted up’ on the perimeter. Unfortunately his advice fell on deaf ears and the Doncaster forward had three, three-pointers in an 11 point first quarter haul which saw his team leading 26-22 after the first quarter.

For the second quarter Collins switched his team to man to man which had the effect of subduing Bell's scoring power but the left handed guard Singh and centre Green were causing problems. The two teams exchanged baskets until David Nieva sprang into life with a trio of dazzling drives to basket. Close to the hoop Ayo Oluyede showed his skills as Thunder went on a 10-2 run to close the period and take a narrow 48-42 lead into the half time interval.

The previous week Thunder had successfully employed a Triangle and Two defence and Collins decided to use this tactic at the start of the third quarter. This restricted Bell to a single score but the Thunder triangle zone was guilty of conceding a number of put backs. At the offensive end Round was unstoppable and as Eagles extended their defence up the court the Thunder guard poured in 17 personal points. Thunder took the quarter 24-15 to extend their lead to 72-57 and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Play Off berth was within their grasps.

Collins had used ten players in order to play an up tempo game in the hope that Doncaster would tire. This is exactly what happened in the final period of play as Thunder mounted fast break after fast break to outscore their opponents 27-11 and win by 99 points to 68 a score line which was rather flattering to the Northants boys.

For Thunder, Round had an impressive 46 points haul while eight other players got on the score sheet led by Nieva and Oluyede with 16 points apiece. For Eagles, Bell had six three pointers in his 21 point total while the hard working Green had 15 points and Bell's younger brother 13.

Thunder now face the daunting task of an away 2<sup>nd</sup> Round game against Cheshire "Wire" who won the North Premier League

### Play Off Programme

**Please note these dates are subject to change**

<u>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April</u>	Under 16 Girls versus Hounslow "Hawks" At the Northants Basketball Centre	Play Off 1 <sup>st</sup> Round
	Under 14 Boys travel to Bradford "Dragons"	Play Off 1 <sup>st</sup> Round
<u>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April</u>	Under 14 Girls versus Stockport "Lapwings" At the Northants Basketball Centre	Play Off 1 <sup>st</sup> Round
	Under 16 Boys travel to Cheshire "Wire"	Play Off 2 <sup>nd</sup> Round
<u>To be confirmed and arranged</u>	Junior Women's Play Off 1 <sup>st</sup> Round	

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