

**PRESS RELEASE**

**The Northants Basketball Club achieves an amazing YBL Quadruple**

**Four teams from the Northants Basketball Club travelled to the University of Worcester for the YBL Finals Day and all four won their games.**

**Big third quarter sees “Storm” home.**

**YBL Under 11 Mixed Final**

**Northants “Storm” 60 – 56 Nuneaton “Predators”**

“Storm” went into this Final in confident mood having navigated their regular season tournaments and the Play Off semi-final unbeaten, but they knew that they would be playing on an unfamiliar small court and against a team that in accordance with the rules could field over-aged girls and both these factors proved to be significant in Saturday’s game.

Inspired by the play of Kyjah Adams, “Storm made a good start to the game and managed to establish a 20 points to 16 lead at the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter the “Predators” height advantage proved to be decisive and the Nuneaton team were able to score from a number of ‘put backs’. “Predators” won the quarter 14-10 and with the scores all tied up at 30 points all there was everything to play for in the second half.

Coach John Collins’s message to his team at half time was simple and he urged them to increase the intensity of their defence. His players responded superbly and in the third quarter their pressure defence forced a number of turn-overs leading to easy scores. “Storm” took the quarter 18-6 and hopes of taking the title began to look like a real possibility.

Under the competition rules “Storm” had to take off their press because they were leading by more than ten points and this played into the hands of the taller “Predators”. “Storm” were very grateful to Arlo Dominici in the final quarter as his ten personal points kept the Northants team in front. Leading by twelve points with less than a minute to play suddenly “Storm’s” composure disappeared and they were guilty of turning the ball over on three occasions ‘gifting’ “Predators” six points to give a rather unrealistic final scoreline.

In the four point win all ten “Storm” players contributed to the final score led by Adams and Dominici with 14 points apiece.

*The game marked a significant milestone for Coach John Collins. It saw the completion of his sixtieth year of coaching. It was also significant because six of the “Storm” team were the sons of players coached by Collins at Northampton School for Boys.*

**Amelia May steers Under 13 Girls to a comfortable win**

**YBL Under 13 Girls Final**

**Leicester “Riders” 36 – 71 Northants “Lightning”**

“Lightning” had played “Riders” on two occasions already this season comfortably defeating them on both occasions, but this was a Final and “Riders” had shown improvement every time the two teams had met.

The big occasion obviously got to the players on both teams and in the first quarter scoring was at a premium. It was obvious that “Lightning’s” Amelia May Wesley-Maryan was going to be the dominant player in the game and in the first quarter she made every effort to provide team mates with scoring opportunities but these team mates were guilty of missing a number of easy shots and at the end of the first quarter “lightning” only led 15-7 despite having dominated play.

“Lightning” had played some excellent defence in the first quarter, and this continued in the second as they restricted “Riders” to just six points while scoring 19 themselves, eight of those points coming from Brianna Ngwa.

Leading by 34 points to 13 the game was a good as won for “Lightning” unless they became complacent and that is exactly what they did in the third quarter and thanks to 12 points from their talented guard Baig, “Riders” were able to take the quarter by 16 points to 11.

With their advantage down to 16 points “Lightning” needed to be careful but they came out for the final stanza in determined mood and regular scores from Urte Maldutyte, Freya Tauber-Anderson, Brooke Foster and Wesley-Maryan they outscored their opponents 26-7 to take the game by a convincing 71 points to 36 with Ameila-May Wesley-Maryan scoring 22 of those points.

**Superb teamwork earns the title for Under 13 Boys**

**YBL Under 13 Boys Final**

**Northants “Thunder” 62 – 40 West Bromwich Basketball**

The peace and quiet of the foyer of the University of Worcester sports centre was rudely disturbed last Saturday with the arrival of the West Bromwich team bus. Ghetto Blasters ‘blasted, raucous West Midlands accents were to the fore and then the swaggering confident West Bromwich players arrived all of which provided a quite intimidating atmosphere for the Northants boys to cope with. They quietly made their way to the locker room and Coach Peter Dewsnap unveiled his master plan; against the taller West Bromwich team he asked his team to press and run which against an athletic team was taking a big risk.

To say that his plan worked would be the understatement of all time. In the first quarter the intensity of “Thunder’s” full court press was breath taking and West Bromwich were limited to just two baskets. Offensively “Thunder” were also struggling with some big bodies protecting the West Bromwich basket, but they were able to take the first quarter 14-4.

“Thunder’s” defensive effort continued in the second quarter until they were forced to go back to half court having established a twenty points plus lead. Offensively “Thunder” played with a lot more freedom and no less than seven players contributed to the 25 points scored in the quarter Jowell Stiete-French looking particularly impressive as he took on and got the better of players much taller than himself.

Leading 39-15 at half time a West Bromwich push was expected in the third quarter and the West Midlanders hit the court in determined mood, but “Thunder’s” defence remained sound. No matter which player Coach Dewsnap put on court they responded with total commitment. West Brom edged the quarter 12-8 thanks to “Thunder” missing a number of close to the basket scoring opportunities but going into the final ten minutes “Thunder” held a comfortable 47-27 lead. This gap was extended by just two points during the final quarter with Sam Eakins providing an eight point cameo.

Coach Dewsnap was full of praise for the efforts of all ten of his players making special mention of the efforts of Anton Kelly and Ollie Casey whose nine point contribution contained a stunning three-pointer. Against bigger players the defensive rebounding of Luca Garrett, Osagie Efosa and Stiete-French who also scored 18 points was decisive but the key factor in the victory was the successful execution of the “Thunder” game plan and the triumph of sound individual fundamentals over superior athleticism.

**Under 15 Boys win attritional battle against “Bears”**

**YBL Under 15 Boys Primis Final**

**Birmingham “Bears” 47 – 58 Northants “Thunder”**

The two teams in contention for the Under 15 Boys Primis title came from the same Conference and the two regular season games had been shared each team picking up a close win on their own court. A close Final was expected and so it proved, “Thunder” eventually prevailing thanks to dogged determination against a bigger “Bears” team.

“Thunder” edged all four quarters but only by the narrowest of margins and they struggled to score against the physical “Bears”. The Northants boys made up for their scoring limitations by defending with spirit and bravery with their ‘bigs’ Henry Brandrick Fran Guel, Kamil Jazwinski and Rio Stephenson putting their bodies on the line for the cause. For most of the game “Thunder” employed a 3-2 zone defence and this was largely responsible for limiting the scoring opportunities of the Birmingham outfit.

On offence “Thunder” also struggled to score but 10, and seven point contributions from James Kennet-Maughan and George Clipson from the backcourt were important; but it was the driving play of Guel that was to prove decisive. The “Thunder” power forward mixed coast-to-coast drives, low post moves and put backs as he amassed 18 points a major achievement in a low scoring game.

Coach Whitney Bain in her first season as a head coach did a good job in rotating her players and keeping fresh legs on the floor and the in the final analysis the spirit, she has instilled in the team was probably an important factor in the team’s triumph. Bain expressed the delight of both herself and the whole team in winning the Final

**THIS WEEK’S ACTIVITIES**

The YBL Finals saw the conclusion of the 2022 / ’22 season but now preparation starts for the next season with the commencement of the **Summer Preparation Programme.**

The Try Outs for the 2023 / ’24 squads attracted a large number of players and initial selections have been made but if any boy or girl missed the Try Outs, they can still be seen, and they should contact Karen Goodrich at northantsbasketballclub@hotmail.co.uk

For further information about this Press Release contact **John Collins** on 07801 533 151