

# NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB

## PRESS RELEASE

### **“Thunder” hold on for first Conference win**

#### **Men’s Division 3 South Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”                      77 – 69                      London United**

After two cancellations the Northants senior men finally got their Southern Conference season going with a hard fought win over London United.

“Thunder” looked impressive in the first period, jumping out to a 21-9 lead with no less than six players contributing to the scoring. The initiative stayed with “Thunder” at the start of the second quarter and an 11-2 run took them out to a 37-16 lead with two minutes of the period remaining. With the game seemingly lost United suddenly sprang into life and they rattled in 11 unanswered points to get themselves back into the game at 37-27 in favour of the home team at half time.

The third quarter saw both teams embarking on small runs but five, three-pointers from United saw them take the period 26-19 to close the gap to 56-53 going into the final ten minutes of play.

Midway through the final stanza a long range ‘two’ from United’s player-coach Szqivlaski brought the two teams level at 65 all. In the final quarter “Thunder” could only manage three, field goals but they did convert 12 of the 17 free throws they were awarded as they were able to hold out for the eight point win.

In the 77-69 victory “Thunder’s” scoring was led by Matt Yates with 18 points, good support coming from Antonio Sarrio and Devon Adams with 17 and 14 points respectively.

### **CORRECTION**

The scorers given Last week, for the Northants senior men’s team from their Cup game against Nottingham “Hoods” were take from the governing body website but were in fact **incorrect**.

The correct scorers were: Matt Yates 13 points, Omar Arellano 9, Antonio Sarrio and Johnny Yates 8 points each

### **Weekend of mixed fortunes for Junior Men**

#### **Junior Men’s National Cup (Round 2)**

**Northants “Thunder”                      47 – 39                      Milton Keynes “Trojans”**

Twenty-one points from David Nieva earned the Northants junior men a place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of the National Cup and a tie against Oaklands College “Wolves”. Nieva’s efforts were the highlight of an attritional game between two teams who were guilty of missing numerous easy scoring opportunities.

“Thunder” took the early initiative and led 18-12 after the first quarter but “Trojans” had battled back to 26-22 by half time. The third period of play was a dire affair with the two teams managing just three baskets between them. Milton Keynes got to within two points of the Northants team early in the fourth quarter but an eight point flurry from Nieva took his team back into a 10 point lead and a three-pointer from Jaz Campbell finally settled matters when the visitors threatened at the end of the game.

Other than Nieva no other “Thunder” player could get into double figures although Matt Major, Shekina Ntumba and Ayo Oluyede all rebounded well.

#### **Junior Men’s Midland Conference**

**Derby “Trailblazers II”                      82 – 71                      Northants “Thunder”**

Twenty four hours after their battling Cup win the Northants junior men were back on court against the Derby “Trailblazers” second string and they made their way home contemplating an 11 point defeat. Once again David Nieva was their main source of points with a 26 point haul but on this occasion he received good support from Shekina Ntumba with 22 points while Ayo Oluyede chipped in with 10 points.

The game started badly for “Thunder”, who allowed their opponents to score seven unanswered points. They recovered and thanks to some aggressive offence were able to get the score back to 16-19 with Ntumba scoring 8 points close to the basket.

The second quarter was an even affair with the home side still holding the edge as “Thunder” seemed to lose concentration at key moments, gifting Derby points just when they were gaining ascendancy. Just as in the game the previous day “Thunder” were once again guilty of missing easy scoring opportunities and they trailed 37-31 at half time.

During the half time break, Coach Darjius Maldutis, reminded the boys to just calm down and not force the issue but to make it count when required. Nieva was obviously listening as went on a 20 point rampage in the third period of play. His efforts helped “Thunder” to 30 points in the period and a 61-54 lead.

Going into the final quarter with a seven point lead after trailing by six at half time, “Thunder” appeared to have turned the corner. However, with only seven players at their disposal it soon became apparent that they were tiring. With 5 minutes to go Thunder ran out of steam and Derby were able to embark on a 17-2 charge to take the game.

Despite losing the game there were many positives for the “Thunder” players. In the game they worked much better as a unit with ‘plays’ being executed. With more players being available for the rest of the season, it is hoped that performances will improve but the team needs point scoring contributions from more than just three players.

### **Good weekend for Cadets with a brace of wins**

#### **Under 16 Boy’s East Conference**

**Northants “Thunder”                      98 – 36                      Leicester “Warriors II”**

The Northants cadet man opened their double-header weekend with a conclusive win over the Leicester “Warriors” second team.

“Thunder” put in an impressive aggressive defensive performance in the first two quarters of the game restricting their opponents to just 18 points whilst pouring in 54 themselves led by 20 points from skipper Chris Amankonah and 17 from Ed Wallhead.

In the second half Coach John Collins dragged his players back into a more passive half court defence which gave the “Warriors” players more time but the Northants boys still took the half 44-18 to run out winners by 98 points to 36. Collins was able to play 12 players and nine of them obliged by scoring, led by Amankonah and Wallehead with 28 and 27 points respectively while Josh Lloyd chipped in with 19.

#### **Under 16 Boys National Cup (Round 2)**

**Leicester “Riders”                      45 – 49                      Northants “Thunder”**

After their comfortable win the previous day “Thunder” travelled to the Leicester Sports Arena for a National Cup game against Leicester “Riders”. With a couple of players unavailable Coach John Collins drafted in under 14 players Jonathan Ntumba and Ashley Kitchen to give his line up better balance. The game also saw Adam Lewandowski making his first appearance for the team having recovered from an ankle injury.

Collins warned his players to expect a great deal more defensive pressure from “Riders”, than they experienced in their previous two Conference games. As it was “Thunder” were able to jump out to an early lead only to be ‘pegged back by the home side who led 15-13 at the end of the quarter. Before the second quarter Collins was able to make a couple of defensive adjustments including the introduction of Lewandowski and the effect was immediate. During the next ten minutes of play “Riders” were restricted to just one basket and two free throw points while “Thunder” score 13 points to lead 26-19 at half time.

Thunder extended their lead by just 2 points to 42-33 during a cagey third period of play but there was concern as guard Josh Lloyd picked up his third foul. Collins started the final quarter without his influential guard but “Thunder” were able to extend their lead but then lost their composure as “Riders” mounted a late run but their nerves were calmed thanks to a Lloyd three-pointer and they held out for the four point win and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Round tie against Premier League outfit Mansfield “Giants”.

In the battling win Lloyd top scored with 19 points with Chris Amankonah and Ed Wallhead supporting well with 10 and 9 points respectively while Ntumba contributed an invaluable 8 points.

### **“Titans” Under 14 Boys earn local bragging rights**

**Under 14 Boys Midlands II Conference**  
**NEBC “Titans”                      58 -57                      Northants “Thunder”**

When Jonathan Ntumba scored with less than a minute of playing time remaining to give the Northants under 14 boys a 57-56 lead it looked as if “Thunder” would clinch the win in this local derby. “Titans” however, weren’t finished and an inside score gave them the lead and despite a desperate shot from an out of bounds play by “Thunder” they were able to hold on for the one point win.

“Thunder” went into the game full of confidence after their convincing win against Shropshire the previous week, but it was the home team that made the more impressive start converting with a number of fast break offences and disrupting “Thunder’s” offence with some determined defence. “Thunder” coach, Rob Crump introduced Jonathan Ntumba to the game and he had an immediate effect and “Thunder” became a more potent attacking force. Ntumba scored three back-to-back baskets but it was “Titans” who held a 16-13 lead after the first period of play..

“Thunder” were the dominant team in the second quarter, restricting the home side to just seven points while scoring 17 themselves. Once again it was Ntumba who dominated the scoring although it was Kalonji Campbell who closed the quarter with a brace of baskets to give “Thunder” a 30-17 half time lead.

The third quarter was a low scoring affair with the home side putting up a determined defensive performance but “Thunder” just edged the period extending their lead by a further two points to 41-32. With that nine point lead “Thunder” looked favourites to take the game however, they began to demonstrate some poor defensive technique with players failing to locate players. This resulted in “Titans” scoring consecutive baskets and reducing the deficit to a point. Despite a time out the “Thunder” players were guilty of panicking on offence and relying too much on Ntumba to rescue them. Despite his last minute score “Thunder” slipped to defeat.

Ntumba’s domination of the scoring was indicated by his 29 point haul with no other “Thunder” player scoring in double figures.

Coach Crump commented, “After the strong performance the previous week, it was very disappointing to lose the game in the fashion we did. As a team we must learn that our team offence does not depend on one or two players. We must generate confidence in applying the concepts and principles implemented in practice.”

“In the fourth quarter, we had a meltdown defensively with players not communicating and taking responsibility for defending their assigned players. When competing at National League teams will take advantage and that’s exactly what the opposition did today. We will use this game as an important learning curve in our season.”

### **Disappointing loss for Under 14 Girls in Norfolk**

**Under 14 Girls East Conference**  
**Norfolk “Inceni”                      44 – 41                      Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants under 14 girls made the long journey to Norwich and suffered a disappointing four point defeat at the hands of Norfolk “Inceni”.

The defeat was doubly disappointing because by half time “Lightning had established a convincing 11 point lead at 30-19. On the negative side influential guard Dina Kosnikovska had picked up five personal fouls so would play no further part in the game.

During the third quarter a number of “Lightning” players had scoring opportunities but failed to score. The home side took the quarter 14-5 and at 35-33 were back in the game. The final quarter saw “Lightning continuing to struggle to put the ball in the basket. They were also guilty of converting just two of ten free throws they were awarded as they managed just six points to slip to a 41 points to 44 defeat

For "Lightning", Lucy Needham top scored with 25 personal points. Kim Dube and Kosnikovska both scored five points while Sade Chambers contributed four points and blocked a number of shots.

Coach Janis Kosnikovska was philosophical in defeat feeling that his team are improving but he wasn't particularly happy with the 28 to 16 foul count against his team.

### THIS WEEKEND'S ACTIVITIES

#### Saturday 8th October

9.30am-11.00am

Junior Ballers Session

11-30am

Under 14 Girls versus Bucks "Hornets"

Under 14 Boys versus Worcester "Bears"

2-00pm

Junior Men versus Team Birmingham Elite

4-00pm

Senior Men versus Middlesex LTBC

These games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre which is situated at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Spectators are welcome and admission is **FREE**

Under 16 Boys travel to Nottingham "Hoods"

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