**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Wonderful weekend for the girls**

Three girls’ teams from the Northants club were in action over the weekend with the Under 16’s playing back to back games and all four games ended in wins for the Lightning teams.

**Junior Women hold on to beat Warriors**

**Under 18 Girls South Conference**

**Northants Lightning 63 – 54 London Warriors**

After at least two re-structures of Under 18 girl’s basketball and one cancellation, Northants Lightning finally got their season underway last Saturday when they entertained London Warriors.

Warriors arrived with eight players and finished the game with just three after five of their players fouled out of the contest.

Lightning took the early initiative and despite missing eight free throws held a 17-12 advantage at the end of the first period of play. Warriors battled back at the start of the second period and thanks to 18 points from the talented Baptista and Lagos won the period 24-14 to lead 36-31 at the interval.

In that second period Lightning had been almost entirely dependent on Dina Kosnikovska and Lucy Needham for their offensive productivity but the third period saw a much better all-round team effort. Lightning won the period 16-10 to edge ahead 47-46.

The Warriors defensive efforts had not been to the liking of the match officials but the Londoners made no adjustment in the way they played and the final period was dominated by Warriors players fouling out of the game including the influential Baptista. For their part Lightning kept the contest close by missing an alarming 14 free throws in the final ten minutes but despite this they were able to hold on for a 63-54 win, Warriors finishing the game with just three players.

In the nine point win the Lightning scoring was led by Kosnikovska with 17 points and Needham with 15, good support coming from Poppy Barnett and Grace Cosford with 10 and nine points respectively

**Under 16 Girls make it a double weekend**

**Under 16 Girls Central Conference**

**Northants Lightning 57 -53 Winchester City Royals**

After a disappointing loss the previous week, Northants Lightning under 16 girls looked to get their first win of the season when they welcomed Winchester City Royals to their home court at Northampton School for Girls.

From an 8-7 lead after three minutes, the home side looked to have established themselves, opening up a 19-11 advantage at the end of the first quarter, captain Dina Kosnikovska scoring 12 of those points.  Indeed, had they not missed six foul shots out of nine attempts, the game could have been settled.  Winchester came back strongly as Lightning's offensive frailties became evident and at half time the lead was just three at 26-23.

A change of defensive formation paid dividends for the hosts as Ruby-Jane Harkins' defensive intensity brought rewards for her team.  An 11-4 run, culminating with a Lucie Wilson Gray three-pointer, took the margin to 42-33 before Royals had the final score of the third quarter to make it a seven point game going into the last stanza.

Baskets from Wilson Gray and Oti Ata took the lead out to 11, but Winchester hit back strongly and suddenly the margin was just just five at 48-43. With Hosanna Ajayi dominating the rebounding at both ends of the court, Lightning held on for a much needed 57-53 win. Kosnikovska led the Lightning scoring with 21 points Wilson Gray contributing 12 points

**Reading Rockets 66 – 78 Northants Lightning**

A depleted Northants Lightning under 16 girls team made the long trip to Berkshire to take on Reading Rockets in their second game of the weekend.  Northants looked to build on their victory of the previous evening, whilst Reading were seeking their first win of the season.

The aggressive defence of Ruby Harkins set the tone for Lightning but with her teammates spurning scoring opportunities, the game was tied at 8 midway through the first quarter.  Then with Fiona Arthur funding her way to the basket, the East Midland side began to take the initiative although they led by just two after the opening 10 minutes.  A 6-2 run should have taken Northants clear but Rockets showed dogged determination as they reduced the deficit and from 25-20 down, they wrestled the initiative away to lead 34-31 at the half time interval.

Whatever was said to the Lightning players during the half time break certainly had the desired effect on the Lightning team and one player in particular.  Whilst Lucie Wilson-Gray controlled the play and Hosanna Ajayi dominated the rebounds, Fiona Arthur produced a remarkable 3rd period, scoring 18 points of her own as her team drew level at 55 all, with the game on the line for both teams.  After conceding the first four points of the final stanza, Northants went on a 13-2 tear that finally put daylight between the teams.  Harkins and Chloe Steven again upped the defensive intensity and with Arthur, Wilson-Gray and Ajayi scoring at will, the team ran out 78-66 winners to conclude an excellent weekend.  Arthur's career-high 44 points will take the plaudits but this was an excellent all-round performance that augurs well for the rest of the season.

**Big win for Under 14 Girls over local rivals**

**Under 14 Girls South Conference**

**Northants Lightning 101 - 62 NEBC Titans**

Wins over local rivals Titans have been pretty rare over the past two seasons so this 39 point triumph was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Lightning parents and supporters.

Both teams looked nervous in the first period which was edged 23-17 by Lightning. The second period scoring was dominated by Athena Thompson as Lightning extended their lead to 45-33 but defensively they were struggling to contain Titan’s Charlie Stalker and Abi Smith.

Lightning started the third period like the proverbial express team pouring in 19 points while their opponents could manage just three. At 62-35 the game was as good as over but Lightning maintained the pressure playing some excellent team basketball and by the end of the period they had extended their lead to 76-45.

The two teams traded baskets during the last ten minutes as Lightning pushed towards the one hundred mark, Dyarna Singh-Hurditt finally taking her team into three figures with two seconds of the game remaining.

In the excellent 39 point win all eleven Lightning players scored led by Brooke Leo with 20 points excellent support coming from Mia Gajaga, Ashia King, Amelia Sterling, Singh-Hurditt and Thompson.

The win takes Lightning onto 3 and 1 and this weekend they travel to Southend Rockets who have won two of their four games.

**Cadet Boys are outmuscled By Warriors**

**Under 16 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Northants Thunder 74 - 112 Leicester Warriors**

If there was ever a case of size mattering it was clearly shown in this game with Warriors’ two giants Guildford and Yapo combining for a stunning 77 points showing why their team had an undefeated record coming into this game.

The Thunder players seemed a little intimidated by Warrior’s height advantage in the first half as they fell behind by 28 points to 57 with the game at one time looking like a ‘dunk fest. The second half saw Thunder play with much more confidence and their full court press created a lot of problems for the Leicester ball handlers while the sharp shooting of Ashley Kitchen kept the scoreboard ticking over for the home team.

Warriors eventually ran out comfortable winners, but the Thunder players could be proud of their second half which they only lost 46-55 while sticking to their game plan of defensive pressure and transition offence.

In the 38 point loss Kitchen top scored for Thunder with 30 points good support coming from Tom Greenfield and Kris Dambrauskas with 17 and 10 points respectively.

**Under 14 Boys split games over the weekend**

**Under 14 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Leicester Dynamite 76 – 50 Northants Thunder**

The Northants under 14 boys travelled to Leicester to take on Dynamite expecting a tough game and they certainly got it with the combined height of Dnyia and the bulk of Morton giving the Leicester outfit a decisive advantage. This pair combined for 44 points but their defensive intimidation was just as important.

For their part Thunder battled hard and after falling behind 28-10 after the first quarter won the second and third periods to close the gap to 41-56 going into the final ten minutes of play. By this time though, several of the Thunder players were close to exhaustion and Dynamite were able to cruise to a rather flattering 26 points win with Thunder failing to box out so allowing the Leicester players countless put back scores.

For Thunder Jack Lemon battled hard for his 12 points, Rapolas Radivicius supporting well with 10.

**Northants “Thunder” 72 - 42 Leicester Warriors**

Twenty-four hours after their game against Dynamite, the Thunder players were back on court to face another Leicester team. Once again height was a decisive factor with Thunder holding the advantage on this occasion.

In the 30-point win Rapolas Radivicius used his height advantage to good effect amassing 19 points and a host of rebounds while Thomas Bates and Benas Maldutis both chipped in with a dozen points each.

The 30-point difference was based on a stunning second half performance from Thunder which they won 37-15 and came after a lackluster first half effort which had seen them pass poorly and miss numerous easy shots. Consequently, they went into the locker room at half time only leading by eight points at 35-27. To their credit they looked a lot sharper in the final two periods but Coach John Collins felt his team had performed better the day before in their loss to Dynamite.

**Under 16 Boys Thunder Storm pick up their first win**

**Under 16 Boys Regional Pool 4**

**Brentwood Leopards 46 -47 Northants Thunder Storm**

**(O.T.)**

The Northants under 16 boys regional league team travelled to Brentwood on Saturday and managed to pick up their first win of the season. It came against Brentwood Leopards a team they had narrowly lost to the previous weekend, but only after a period of overtime.

Thunder Storm were trailing 20-26 at half time following a period punctuated by poor decisions and silly mistakes from the Northants boys. The whole team worked extremely hard on defence in the second half and were able to put pressure on the Leopards players. With two minutes of the game remaining Thunder Storm were trailing by four points but thanks to some impressive rebounding from Joseph Leach they were able to mount three fast breaks which put them two points ahead. Brentwood were fouled with two seconds of the game remaining and converted both of the resulting free throws to take the game into overtime.

Thunder Storm were able to maintain their defensive effort in overtime and with seven seconds remaining again led by two points, but once again they were guilty of fouling a Leopard’s player but this time one of the free throws was missed to give the Northants boys a well-deserved victory in a hard fought physical battle.

**Maidstone Warriors 56 – 20 Northants Thunder Storm**

Against a talented Maidstone team Thunder Storm were once again guilty of some undisciplined play and this plus fatigue was a major factor and they found themselves trailing 8-35 at half time. As Warriors relaxed their efforts in the second half the Northants boys became much more competitive without evr threatening the Warriors lead as they slipped to a 36 point defeat.

All in all Coach Darjius Maldutis was pleased with the efforts of his team and feels they are beginning to improve. He made special mention of Will Moss, Joe Leach, and Hamza Ali Gilliani.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

**Saturday 16th November**

**There are no activities at the Basketball Centre because of the entry examination**

**Sunday 10th November**

Under 18 Girls travel to Abingdon Eagles

Under 14 Girls travel to Southend Rockets

Under 13 Girls travel to Manchester to play Mystics I & II

For more information on this Press Release contact: **John Collins** on **07801 533 151**