**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Under 16 Girls complete local derby double in a thriller**

**Under 16 Girls Central Conference**

**Northants Lightning 77 – 73 N.E.B.C. Titans**

Eight days after meeting in Wellingborough, the Under 16 teams of Lightning and Titans clashed horns again at the Basketball Centre last Sunday, in front of an enthusiastic crowd. That crowd wasn’t disappointed as the two teams produced a nail-biting thriller which was just edged by Lighting.

The first two periods of play were evenly contested until the last three minutes before half time when the impressive Imogene Williams poured in 14 points for Titans to give the visitors a 40-32 interval lead.

Lightning came out for the third period in their zone defensive alignment and thanks to a massive defensive effort, some sharp shooting from Dina Kosnikovska and a number of put backs from Ellouise Gregory they tied the scores up at 45 all. Titans regained their composure and a three-pointer from Zoe Ormshaw gave the visitors a 56-52 advantage going into the final stanza.

Reverting to a man-to-man defence in the fourth period, the Northants girls produced a superb defensive effort inspired by some aggressive rebounding from Hosana Ajayi and an 8-zero run gave them the lead at 60-56. That lead was extended thanks to three back-to-back baskets from Kosnikovska but Williams responded with 11 points of her own to tie the scores at 72 all as the excitement in the hall reached fever pitch.

Stand-in coach Karen Goodrich encouraged her team to relax and not panic in the closing two minutes of the game. Her players responded superbly and two scores and a steal from the unstoppable Kosnikovska saw the advantage return to Lightning. Titans made a single free throw to close the gap before Ajayi made the play of the day pulling down an offensive rebound and recycling it to Fiona Arthur who was fouled. Arthur made one of the resulting two free throws to give her team a four point cushion and this was followed by 20 seconds of disciplined Lightning defence as they held on for the 77-73 triumph which came thanks to the efforts of all ten players all of whom contributed to the win.

In the four point win Kosnikovska led the Lightning scoring, well supported by Gregory who had a double-double and the industrious Lucie Wilson-Gray while for Titans Williams totalled an impressive 44 points.

**Sort handed Junior Women lose to Hounslow**

**Under 18 Girls National Conference**

**Hounslow Hawks 46 – 74 Northants Lightning**

For a number of reasons the Lightning Junior Women travelled to west London short-handed and were well beaten by Conference leaders Hounslow Hawks.

Lightning were competitive for the first two periods of play and only trailed 26-32 at half time but Hawks totally dominated the third period of play which they won 21-7 to put the final result beyond doubt. Lightning battled hard in the fourth period but eventually slipped to a 28-point defeat, their first of the season. Lucy Needham top scored for Lightning, well supported by Poppy Barnett and Grace Cosford. Lightning will be looking to field a full strength team for their next game.

**Super Under 14 Girls ‘top’ the table**

**Under 14 Girls South Conference**

**Northants Lightning 66 - 51 Harris Federation Knights (Croydon)**

Northants Lightning Under 14 girls maintained their top of the South Conference table position with an impressive 15 points win over Harris Federation Knights. The win the teams sixth on the bounce, would have been even more convincing had Knights not closed the game with a six point flourish.

In a game punctuated by 55 fouls and an amazing 49 missed free throws, Lightning shocked Knights with the passion and aggression of their defence but had the visitors converted just 50% of the free throws they were awarded the result might have been very different.

Lightning edged the first two periods of play to take a 31-24 half time lead thanks to some solid defensive work and this lead was extended to 47-34 by the end of the third period during which Knights had been restricted to just ten points. By this time both teams had a number of players in foul trouble and a 6-3 burst from Knights got the nerves of the Lightning supporters jangling but some dynamic play from Athena Thompson eased their fears as she restored Lightning’s advantage to 18 points at 60-42.

The vociferous crowd were now in full voice as they sensed the likelihood of an important win which Lightning achieved despite those six unanswered points for Knights in the final minute of play.

In the excellent win nine Lightning players contributed to the final points total led by Thompson with excellent support coming from Letisha Betsy and Brooke Leo while Mia Gajaga and Keris Ndubisi put in impressive defensive shifts.

The team is without a game this coming weekend so will have plenty of time to reflect on their achievements which have earned them top spot in the South Conference

**Cadet Boys too strong for Outlaws**

**Under 16 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Ilkeston Outlaws 46 – 98 Northants Thunder**

After games against the Conference’s top two teams, Thunder Cadet boys returned to winning ways with a comfortable win over Ilkeston Outlaws. After a sloppy start to the game which saw them miss their first eleven shots, Thunder or rather Ashley Kitchen took control of the game. Kitchen poured in 19 points in the first period of play including three, three-pointers to help his team to a 25-15 advantage after the first ten minutes of play.

This lead was extended to 54-25 by half time with Dylan Dominici and Tom Greenfield looking impressive at the offensive end while Thunder’s pressure defence was causing Outlaws all sorts of problems.

Thunder were urged to maintain their defensive efforts in the third period, and they did this despite switching to a newly learned zone defence which forced a number of turn-overs leading to fast break scores for Adam Shanahan-Brooks, and the vastly improved Luke Desborough while Kitchen helped himself to another two triples as Thunder extended their lead to 82-37.

The final period saw the Thunder coaching staff place several constraints on their players but despite this they outscored Outlaws 26-10 to clinch a 60 plus points win with Kitchen top scoring with 32 points including six three-pointers. He received excellent support from Kris Dambrauskas while Desborough, Dominici, and Greenfield all made double figure contributions to the final total.

**Under 14 Boys complete and impressive double**

**East Midlands Conference**

Facing two of the weaker teams from the East Midlands Conference, Thunder under 14 boys recorded two comfortable wins in back to back games but realise they will find life a great deal harder this coming weekend when they take on unbeaten Nottingham Hoods and second placed Derby Trailblazers.

**Ilkeston Outlaws 47 – 108 Northants Thunder**

Against Ilkeston Outlaws the Northants boys led 26-16 after the first period of play with Hugo Dutton looking impressive at the end of the break. Thunder totally dominating proceedings at the start of the second period outscoring Outlaws by 22 points to one with Jordan Gabanja proving to be unstoppable.

Despite having a number of restrictions placed on them Thunder continued to dominate the game with Jack Lemon and Brad Yeomans catching the eye on offence. In the fourth period the rules allowed Thunder to field their own choice of players moving away from the stipulated rotations so David Utubor-Irabor was able to show his potential with some impressive rebounding and shot blocking.

Thunder eventually eased to a big win with their scoring led by Gbanja while Fiifi Boateng, Dutton, Lemon and Yeomans all scored in double figures

**Northants Thunder 99 – 19 Mansfield Giants**

Less than 24 hours after their big win over Ilkeston Outlaws, Thunder were back on court against another inexperienced team in the shape of Mansfield Giants.

The game was over as a contest after eight minutes of the first period as Thunder raced out to a 22-2 lead thanks to some excellent pressure defence and scintillating fast break play. For the second time over the weekend Thunder were restricted to half court defence while the coaching staff forbade any fast breaks. Despite these constraints Thunder were still able to score at will while their Scrooge-like defence restricted Giants to precious few scoring opportunities.

Thunder eventually ran out winners by 99 points to 19 with Rapolas Radivicius top scoring for his team while displaying some nice low post moves and Benas Maldutis enjoyed an fine all-round game.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

**Saturday 7th December**

**9-30am until 10-30am** Budding Ballers

**9-30am until 11-00am** Junior Ballers

**11-00am – 12-30pm** Ballers Academy

**12-30pm until 2-00pm** Under 12 and Under 13 Girls Practice

**1-00pm** Under 14 Boys versus Derby Trailblazers

**3-00pm** Under 16 Boys versus Rutland Thunders

These activities and the game will take place at the Northants Basketball Centre

which is based at Northampton School for Girls in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton

Under 16 Girls travel to Taunton to play Exeter.

Under 16 Boys (Regional) travel to Canterbury to play Kent Crusaders

and Bury St Edmunds

Under 14 Boys (Regional) travel to West Herts to play West Herts and Brentwood

**Sunday 8th December**

Under 16 Girls play Winchester Royals in Eastleigh.

Under 14 Boys travel to Nottingham Hoods

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