**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Below par Cadet Boys see off Thunders**

**Under 16 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Northants Thunder 100 – 58 Rutland Thunders**

For 20 minute**s** Thunder puton a clinic of running basketball and intense defence which saw them leading by 63 points to 31 at half time with Ashley Kitchen scoring 22 of Thunder’s points while Tom Cole had drained three, three-pointers. At half time the team was urged to maintain their intensity but after three back-to-back scores for Tom Greenfield, Thunder allowed their opponents to go on an 11-2 run as the home team’s play became strewed with errors.

They regrouped for the last three minutes of the third period but then started the fourth in casual fashion as Thunders mounted an 8-3 mini charge which incited the wrath of Coach John Collins. His time out got the team back on track as they closed the game with a 17-4 charge with a Kitchen three pointer taking his team to the hundred Mark.

Kitchen had a fine all-round game as he totalled 35 points; excellent support coming from Cole, Kris Dambruskas and Greenfield.

This weekend Thunder travel to Leicester to take on unbeaten Warriors at team they lost to by over 30 points earlier in the season.

**Impressive Under 14 Boys split games against top two Conference teams**

**East Midlands Conference**

**Northants Thunder 80 – 74 Derby Trailblazers**

Midway through the third period of this top of the table clash Trailblazers were holding a ten-point advantage at 49-39. Under the competition rules both teams had to change their line ups and the new Thunder quintet were urged to mount a massive effort in order to get their team back into the game. The boys responded superbly outscoring Derby 13-10 to give Thunder just a hope of victory.

In the fourth period, both teams were allowed to field their strongest fives but three of Derby’s players were in foul trouble, so their coach elected not to put them on court. Trailing by seven points Thunder led by Benas Maldutis and Jordan Gbamaja mounted a superb 16-2 charge to take a six point lead. This prompted Trailblazers to re-introduce their leading scorers to the game but it was to no avail and Thunder were able to hold out for the six point victory Maldutis and Gbamaja receiving excellent support from Fiifi Boakye

**Nottingham Hoods 64 – 63 Northants Thunder**

Early the following the day Thunder were on the road to Conference leaders Nottingham Hoods. Needing a good start to the game it appeared that the Northants boys had ‘left their game on the bus’ as Hoods charged out to a 20-10 lead after the first period of play. Several of the Thunder players were struggling with the pace and intensity of the game but they were able to mount a good second quarter which they took 17-12 to reduce the deficit to 27-37 at half time.

The third period was a closely contested affair with the home side extending their lead by just two points to 48-41. Thunder had been troubling Hoods with their pressure defence and fast break basketball and in the fourth period these factors became decisive as Thunder closed the gap to a single point with less than a minute to play and Thunder having possessions of the basketball at the side line. They failed to score from the out of bounds play drawn up for them but responded with some superb defence which saw Rapolas Radivicius snapping up a loose ball but his attempted outlet pass went out of bounds and Hoods were able to hold out for the 64-63 win.

Thunder were left to ruminate about the lack of support for their leading scorers, Benas Maldutis and Jordan Gbamaja; two strange ‘calls’ from the time keeper that robbed them of a three point score and an uncontested fast break opportunity. They should also consider the huge total of free throws they missed when just a 50% success rate would have earned them a comfortable victory but over the course of the weekend they showed they could compete with the best teams in the Conference.

**Thunder Storm Under 16 and Under 14 Boys win one and lose one in latest tournaments**

**Under 16 Boys Regional League**

**(Pool 4)**

**Northants Thunder Storm 41 -40 Bury St Edmunds Bulldogs**

After the long journey to Canterbury, it wasn’t surprising the both Northants and Bury St Edmunds put on a lack lustre first half performance which was edged 19-12 by Bulldogs. During that first half the Thunder Storm players looked lethargic on defence and too passive on offence.

Both teams played with more urgency in the second half and with a 32 seconds of the game remaining Bulldogs were holding a slender 40-39 lead. The Northants boys failed to score from an out of bounds play but were able to win back possession thanks to some spirited defence and with the last shot of the game Jack Gill was able to secure victory for Thunder Storm.

**Kent Crusaders II 80 – 28 Northants Thunder Storm**

The win over Bury St Edmunds had come at a cost with both the last shot hero Gill and Kyle Haynes injured in that game. Reduced to just seven players the Northants boys really struggled against a talented Kent Crusdaers second string who cruised to a comfortable win

**Under 14 Boys Regional League**

**(Pool 4)**

**West Herts Warriors 60 – 12 Northants Thunder Storm**

As the season approaches the midway mark it is very apparent that a number of teams are competing at the wrong level. West Herts Warriors are on such team and their results so far indicate they would be well capable of coping with Conference play. Despite their best efforts the Northants boys were unable to match the physical superiority of Warriors who cruised to a comfortable win.

**Brentwood Leopards 12 – 33 Northants Thunder Storm**

It was a different story when Thunder Storm took the court against Brentwood Leopards and thanks to a great defensive effort led by Angus Slater they were able to restrict their opponents to very few scoring opportunities. At the offensive end Jake Muxlow caught the eye as Thunder Storm were able to secure a comfortable win.

**Under 16 Girls go one and one on road trip to the South**

**Under 16 Girls Central Conference**

**Exeter Spartans 75 – 43 Northants Lightning**

A four and a half hour journey to the South West was the start of a long weekend for Northants Lightning under 16 girls as they looked to continue their five game unbeaten run.  Opponents Exeter Spartans lowly position belied their ability as they had played just two league fixtures this season.

From the start, Lightning struggled against the home team's aggressive defence.  They soon found themselves trailing with only captain Dina Kosnikovska finding the target and were 27-14 down at the end of the first quarter.  The second period was little better as the Northants girls side managed just seven points to trail 45-21 at the half way interval.

The second half, however, saw a much more determined display.  Despite Kosnikovska being singled out for some close attention that was surprisingly deemed legal by the match officials, the side played with great resolve before going down by 75 points to 43; Kosnikovska the leading scorer with 23 points.

**Winchester Royals 37 – 81 Northants Lightning**

After a disappointing result the previous day, Northants Lightning under 16 girls looked to bounce back having made an overnight stop on the South Coast.  This time the opposition was Winchester Royals, against whom they had recorded a very narrow four point home win earlier in the season.

From the outset, Northants were determined to get back on the winning trail.  Lucie Wilson Gray was in irrepressible form with 14 first quarter lead as her team opened a 24-4 lead that set the scene for the game.  With all of the players getting court time, there was understandably a drop in the flow of the attack, but the team remained in control to lead 37-20 at the midway point.

## The second half was a totally powerful display.  With Ruby Harkins and Chloe Stevens leading the defensive intensity and Ellouise Gregory, Hosana Ajayi and Oti Ata dominating the rebounds, Winchester found scoring opportunities at a premium. Dina Kosnikovska and Fiona Arthur scored at will as the margin went over 30.

## The final stanza was even better with 13 year old Brooke Leo showing her potential at both ends of the court.  When Kosnikovska left the game with four minutes to play, she had amassed 37 points and with Wilson Gray on 20 and Arthur with 12, this was a fine all-round performance as the team goes into the Christmas break.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

**Saturday 14th December**

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

 10**-30am until 12-00am** Junior Ballers

 **12-00am – 1-30pm** Ballers Academy (Boys and Girls session)

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

  **2-00pm** Under 14 Girls versus Norwich Demons

 **3-00pm** Under 14 Boys versus Ilkeston Outlaws

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 18 Girls travel to London Thunder

 Under 14 Girls (Regional) travel to Cambridge

 Under 12 Boys travel to Derby to play Trailblazers and Leicester Warriors

**Sunday 15th December**

 **11-00am** Under 18 Girls play Abingdon Eagles

Under 16 Boys travel to Leicester Warriors