**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Great double win for Under 12 Girls**

**Under 12 Girls Regional Conference**

For their first games of the season yes, in February, Northants Lightning under 12 girls had to brave Storm Dennis as well as two of the strongest female clubs in the country; Ipswich Bobcats and Reading Rockets.  Indeed, these were the two clubs that had contested the National Under 18 Cup the previous week, so this would be a real baptism of fire.  The competition rules dictate that all players must get equal playing time to ensure development across the whole squad.

**Ipswich Basket 39 – 55 Northants Lightning**

First up were Ipswich, who had played four games earlier in the season and had already beaten Reading on the day, so this was going to be a very tough encounter.  Neither team could establish an advantage and after the opening quarter, Northants led by just 12-10, but the start of the second period gave an indication of the abilities of the Midland side.  They reeled off 13 straight points in four minutes as tenacious defence was turned into very rapid attack.  Ipswich hit back with 10 of the next 12 points and at half time Northants led 27-20.

When Ipswich reduced the deficit to six, it looked like being a real nail-biter, but the young Northants ladies showed remarkable resilience.  A 12-2 run made it 43-25 and suddenly there was daylight between the teams with Lightning leading 49-31 going into the final quarter.  As to be expected, Ipswich made a determined effort to reduce the deficit but Northants held firm to record, an excellent 55-39 win against very good opposition.

**JMA Reading Rockets 30 – 68   Northants Lightning 68**

Immediately after their initial victory, Northants found themselves back on court to play the hometown Reading Rockets.  Reading were still smarting from their earlier defeat so were looking to even up proceedings across all three competing teams.

The first period was close as Lightning tried to control the adrenaline rush from their opening victory, with the score just 16-10 in their favour.  When Rockets had the first four points of the second quarter, again this looked likely to be a tight affair, but another unblemished spell, this time of 14 points, took Northants clear and at half time it was 38-20.

The second half was largely one-way traffic even with Northants having to adopt a much more passive defensive formation.  It was 50-26 at the end of the third period and 68-30 at the full time buzzer as the team announced their entry into National League basketball.

Across the two games, Athena Thompson and Jessica Jesu showed their outstanding maturity.  Alannah Major displayed her rapid progression at both ends of the court, whilst the other players started to believe in their own abilities; and when the team combined to ensure that primary school pupil Campbell Spatcher had her first club basket, this was a true sign of the squad’s cohesion.

**Under 16 Girls are beaten by table-topping Bristol**

**Under 16 Girls Central Conference**

**Bristol Flyers 62 – 40 Northants Lightning**

Northants Lightning under 16 girls braved both the stormy weather and a 7.30 am start to travel to Bristol to take on league leaders Flyers.  Both teams had suffered two losses so far this season, with Bristol ahead by virtue of playing more games.

From the outset, the long journey seemed to have taken its’ toll.  Open scoring opportunities were spurned as Northants managed just eight first quarter points to trail by seven at the first break.  The second period was only marginally better as Lightning managed 12 points, but the hosts had 19 of their own, to lead 34-20 at the midway interval.

The third quarter saw a much better performance, particularly at the defensive end, restricting Flyers to just 10 points, but Lightning failed to capitalize, reducing the deficit by just two to trail 44-32 going into the final stanza.  However, that was as close as it got, with Bristol running out comfortable winners by 62 points to 40 to keep themselves firmly at the top of the table.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

**Saturday 22nd February**

 9.30am until 10.30am Budding Ballers

 9.30am until 11.00am Junior Ballers

 11.00am until 12.30pm Boys Ballers Academy

 12-30pm until 2.00pm Under 12/13 Girls Practice

 1.00pm Junior Women versus Haringey Angels

 2.00pm Under 12 Boys versus Shenley Scorpions 3.00pm Under 16 Girls versus Exeter Spartans

 5.00pm Under 16 Boys versus Leicester Riders II

All these activities and games will take place at The Basketball Centre which is situated at

Northampton School for Girls, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG

Spectators are most welcome and admission is FREE

 Under 14 Girls travel to NEBC Titans

 Under 14 Boys Regional team travel to Kings Lynn to play Kings Lynn and Herts Warriors II

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