**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

**PRESS RELEASE**

***Six teams from the Northants Basketball Club were in action over the weekend with four of those teams picking up wins including the Under 13 Boys who maintained their unbeaten record***

**Junior Men open 2022 with a win over “Riders”**

**Under 18 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Leicester “Riders” 47 -61 Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants junior men made the short journey to Leicester for their first game of 2022 and returned home having secured 14 points win over “Riders” and despite having a player excluded from the game.

After the Christmas break both teams found scoring difficult in the first quarter but there was encouragement for “Thunder” as they recovered from 4-8 down to lead after the first ten minutes of play. The game became more open in the second quarter with the two teams exchanging baskets but “Thunder” finally edged it 21-17 thanks to a three point ‘buzzer-beater’ from Benas Maldutis.

Leading 31-25 at half time “Thunder” managed to extend this by four points to 47-37 by the end of the third thanks to an increase in intensity and aggression which was needed as the game became increasingly physical.

Dylan Dominic, Fareed Issifu and Rapolas Radavicius were dominating the boards and this allowed “Thunder” to keep control of the game in the fourth and final quarter finally closing out the game for a 14 point win which the team were really convinced should have been 16 points but for an error by the scorer.

In the hard-fought win Ellis Phillips top score for “Thunder” with 13 points and he was well supported by Dominici, Issifu and Maldutis who all contributed 11 points.

Coach Darijus Maldutis was delighted to clinch the win and was particularly pleased with his team’s defensive efforts.

Next weekend the team has two games including one against local rivals “Titans”

**Under 16 Boys class too much for “Warriors”**

**Under 16 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 86 – 50 Leicester “Warriors”**

With ten players contributing to the scoring led by Benas Maldutis with a 27 point haul the Northants Under 16 boys cruised to a comfortable win over Leicester “Warriors” last Saturday.

Despite missing a couple of players and having practiced just once since December, “Thunder” went off like steam train rushing out to a 29-11 first quarter lead with Maldutis and Jordan Gbanja scoring 20 of those 29 points. “Thunder” were guilty of easing off in the second quarter and “Warriors” showed their ability by taking the quarter by 13 points to 12.

It was business as usual in the third and fourth quarters which “Thunder” won 45-26 as they cruised to an emphatic victory. Supporting Maldutis’s scoring was Gbanja with 16 points while Rapolas Radivicius and Jack Lemon both made double figure contributions.

**Under 14 Boys ‘A’ team too strong for “Cats”**

**Under 14 Boys East Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 70 – 55 Cambridge “Cats II”**

The Northants “Thunder” Under 4 Boys ‘A’ team duly completed a double over the Cambridge “Cats” second string but who were much changed from the teams’ first encounter.

Throughout the first two quarters “Thunder” looked the better team but couldn’t find their scoring rhythm against a dogged Cambridge defence and were grateful for 17 points from debutant Logan Ormshaw as they edged out to a 41-25 half time lead.

With the game seemingly won, “Thunder” were guilty of missing numerous close to the basket shots and their on ball defence was found to be seriously lacking as “Cats” stayed in the game thanks to a number of scored from simple driving plays. In fact thanks to an 8-zero closing surged “Cats” were able to win the second half by 30 points to 29 to make the final score a lot closer than it should have been.

In the 15 points win Ormshaw led all scorers with 25 points, no other “Thunder” player getting into double figures but Ted Osborne Henry Brandrick and Kamil Jazwinski rebounded superbly while Kane Young turned provider with nine assists.

**Massive improvement for Under 14 Boys ‘B’ team in loss to Kings Lynn**

**Under 14 Boys Regional League**

**Northants “Thunder Too” 48 – 61 Kings Lynn**

When these two teams met just before Christmas the East Anglian outfit triumphed by over 60 points in a game punctuated by some very lenient officiating and some very physical play. Last Saturday under the stewardship of the county’s senior referees it was a very different story with “Thunder Too” giving and excellent account of themselves in the 13 point defeat. In fact had it not been for a sluggish start they might have well got even closer. In fact “Thunder Too” went a full eight minutes before they scored field goal but thanks to determined defence led by Tobi da Costa and Jack Coles only trailed 4-14 at the end of the first quarter.

The Northants boys gained in confidence in the second quarter and bravely matched the bigger Kings Lynn boys who edged the quarter 16-11 to lead 30-15 at half time.

There was every possibility that the effort put in by the “Thunder” players during the first 20 minutes might result in fatigue but in the third quarter they continued to battle and again held their opponents to 16-11 over the ten minutes of play.

Leading by 20 points it looked as if Kings Lynn would run away with the game but after the two teams had exchanged baskets “Thunder Too” went on an 11-zero charge led by Samuel Ortenga and the Northants boys went on to take the quarter by 22 points to 15 to close the final deficit to 13 points.

Brody Garrett led the scoring for “Thunder Too” with a personal haul of 16 and he was well supported by Ortega with 10 points and Seth Wilborn with nine points. Coach David Young was full of praise for all his players and he’s hoping that the confidence they gained from this game will be carried forward to the trip to Braintree in a few weeks’ time.

**“Trailblazers” too big for Under 14 Girls**

**Under 14 Girls Midlands Conference**

**Derby Trailblazers” 100 -47 Northants “Lightning”**

Derby “Trailblazers” proved to be too big and too good for a game “Lightning” under 14 girls team in this Midlands Conference contest. The “Lightning” girls were guilty of committing a number of errors under pressure from the aggressive Derby defence and were heavily outscored in all for quarters but despite this they showed a great deal of determination and never gave up

**Under 13 Boys keep unbeaten record in a ‘nailbiter’**

**Youth Basketball League (Under 13 Boys South)**

**Northants “Thunder” 51 – 42 Frankley “Falcons”**

With four minutes of this Youth Basketball League remaining the two teams were all square at 42 points each. A lack-lustre “Thunder” team had struggled against a Frankley team containing a number of very athletic over-aged girls who were allowed to play under YBL rules.

Coach Steven Matthews team were well below par following the Christmas break and trailed 7-10 after the first quarter. “Thunder” looked a lot sharper in the second quarter which they edged 15-12 to tie the scores up at 22 all at half time but they knew they were in for a big battle during the final two quarters.

“Thunder” came out for the third quarter in determined mood and a 13-7 run gave them a 35-29 lead but in the eighth minute of the quarter influential Logan Tanner picked up his fourth foul and had to leave the game. “Falcons” capitalised on the situation and by end of the quarter had closed the gap to 39-35 and it was well and truly ‘game on’.

By now the large crowd were on the edge of their seats and the “Thunder” supporters were becoming more and more nervous. “Thunder” were struggling defensively and “Falcons” were sent to the free throw line on 11 occasions during the final seven minutes of play but were only able to convert three of those free throws and this let “Thunder” out of jail. Tanner returned to the fray and “Thunder” scored the last nine points of the game to secure victory by 51 points to 42.

The significant detail in that fourth quarter was the fact that “Thunder” prevented their opponents from scoring from the field for over seven minutes, but they can be thanking their lucky stars that the Birmingham team had missed those critical free throws.

In the nail-biting win Logan Tanner led the “Thunder” scoring with 13 points and he was well supported by Wilson Carr and Tyrese Dumbaya. In all ten “Thunder” players contributed to the 51-point total whereas Frankley were heavily reliant on their talented female players but the defensive efforts of the “Thunder” players backed up by great spirit and determination were responsible for the win which made Coach Matthews a very proud man.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

 **Saturday 15th January**

 **9-30 am to 10-30am** “Budding “Ballers”

 **9-30am to 11-00am** “Junior Ballers”

 **11-30pm** Under 11 Intra Squad Tournament

  **2-00pm** Under 14 Boys ‘A’ versus Essex “Rebels”

 **4-30pm** Junior Men versus “Titans II”

 **Sunday 16th January**

 **11-00am** Junior Men versus Leicester “Riders II”

 **1-30pm** Under 15 Boys versus West Bromwich Albion

 Under 15 Girls travel to Birmingham for an “All Girls” Tournament

The home games will be played at the Northants Basketball Centre at Northampton School for Girls

in Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG

Spectators are welcome but in are respectfully reminded that in view of the increased number of Covid cases in local schools the wearing of a face covering is mandatory.

This is in accordance with Government and Basketball England advice

For further information about this Press Release contact ***John Collins*** on **+44 7801 533151**