**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

**PRESS RELEASE**

***It was another busy weekend for the Northants Basketball Club with the highlights being the Under 15 Girls winning the Your Basketball League “All Girls” Tournament and the Under 11 Intra Squad Tournament***

**Under 15 Girls are Champions!!**

**Your Basketball League “All Girls” Tournament**

The Northants club assembled an under 15 team for this tournament consisting of girls who are playing in either the Under 18 or Under 14 teams. They travelled to Birmingham without ever practicing together and not knowing anything about the opposition they would face.

The team returned to Northampton with a trophy having won the tournament by going undefeated through the day. There was an additional honour for the team with Lucie Caufield being given the Tournament Most Valuable Player award by the organisers.

Coach Emma Salisbury was full of praise for all her players particularly Caufield and Karly Osgood and winning this tournament is reward for the players who stayed loyal to the Northants Club when several others decided to seek glory elsewhere.

“Lightning” opened the tournament with an 11-four win over Leicester “Riders” and followed this up with an easy 10-one victory over Frankley “Falcons. They then beat Bromsgrove “Bears” and Arden “Griffins” 18-six to reach the Final where they faced a re-match with Bromsgrove. That Final was a close-run game throughout “Lightning” finally triumphing by 11 points to nine.

**Junior Men go one and one over a busy weekend**

**Under 18 Boys East Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 50 – 57 Northamptonshire “Titans”**

Earlier in the season “Titans” beat the “Thunder” Junior Men’s team by a 24 point margin so on the face of it this result represented a massive improvement but in fact it was a game “Thunder” could easily have won. The reasons they didn’t are very simple. Firstly an appalling first quarter which saw them trailing by 17 points nine and secondly their failure to attack the “Titans” defence once they had advanced the ball through an aggressive press.

In fact, it wasn’t until the third minute of the fourth quarter when they were trailing by sixteen points that they began to adopt a more positive attitude. Over the final eight minutes of the game they outscored their opponents by 20 points to nine with a mixture of fast break basketball and fine permitter shooting from Ellis Phillips and Benas Maldutis.

Up until then “Thunder” had been happy to advance the ball through the “Titans’” press then wait for defenders to get back before attacking the basket. This lack of confidence and a number of turn-overs saw “Thunder” losing the first three quarters but excellent defence kept the “Titans” scoring in check until the late rally. In the seven-point defeat Maldutis and Phillips led the “Thunder” scoring with 18 and 13 points respectively, but it was a disappointing afternoon for the “Thunder” ‘big’ men who could only manage 11 points between them.

**Northants “Thunder” 68 – 48 Leicester “Riders II”**

Less than twenty-four hours after the narrow loss to their local rivals “Thunder” were back on court to take on the Leicester “Riders” second string a team they had beaten 14 points the previous week. They duly completed the double over their east midlands rivals with a 20 point victory which should have been greater.

Unlike the previous day the “Thunder” big players were very productive scoring 36 points between them with a collection of low post moves, trail plays, and offensive put backs. “Thunder” charged out into a 19-seven first quarter lead showing no adverse effects from the previous day’s game. They were guilty of ‘taking their foot off the gas’ in the second quarter and a 12-zero surge by the visitors got them back into contention at

27-22 and the half time score of 26-25 had “Riders” not missed a number of free throws.

“Thunder” edged the third quarter 21-15 to extend their lead to 57-40 before closing out the game in the fourth.

The “Thunder” scoring was led by Rapolas Radavicius with 16 points, Fareed Issifu and Benas Maldutis both contributing 13 points.

**Under 15 Boys are second best to impressive West Bromwich Albion**

**Under 15 Boys Your Basketball League (Primis)**

**Northants “Thunder” 50 – 76 West Bromwich Albion**

The Northants under 15 boys were beaten by 29 points when they travelled to West Bromwich early in the season and last weekend’s game produced a similar result with the “Thunder” boys under pressure to contain the athletic west midlanders.

They were in fact very competitive in the first quarter and thanks to a eight points from Thomas Bates only lost the quarter by 16 points to 19. The second quarter saw “Thunder” working hard to run their half court offences but when they missed W.B.A. were happy to go ‘coast-to-coast’ for easy scores. The visitors took the second quarter 17-six and this was followed up by winning the third 26-15 to establish a 62-37 lead and there was no way back for “Thunder”

To their credit the “Thunder” players” refused to lie down and die and a spirited effort meant that W.B.A. only just shaded the fourth quarter 14-13 to ease to a 76-50 victory.

Bates led the “Thunder” scoring with 16 personal points Jude Derby-Johnson and Jake Muxlow contributing 9 and 7 points respectively

**Under 14 Boys ‘A’ team get so close to beating “Rebels” in a see-saw game**

**Under 14 Boys East Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 46 – 51 Essex “Rebels”**

The Northants Under 14 Boys went into this game confident of overturning the ten point loss they had suffered in Essex earlier in the season. They will reflect on a chance lost as they were guilty of missing numerous close to the basket scoring opportunities, they were also guilty of giving their opponents a 19-eight first quarter lead when they were guilty of countless turn-overs.

Coach David Young’s players were much better in the second quarter which they won 12-four to close the gap at half time to 20-23.

Needing a good start to the third quarter, “Thunder” returned to all the bad habits of the first quarter as “Rebels” poured in 11 points without reply. Trailing 20-34 it looked like game over for “Thunder”, but they responded in the best possible way with tenacious defence keeping their opponents scoreless for six minutes while they accumulated 20 themselves to lead 40-34 going into the final ten minutes of play.

Needing a solid start to the final quarter “Thunder” conceded 11 points without reply over the first five minutes as “Rebels” eased ahead by 45 points to 42. For three minutes both teams struggled to score the “Rebels” players being guilty of missing five of six free throws and when Kane Young and Ted Osborne scored “Thunder” were back to within two points at 46-48. The home team had numerous scoring opportunities in the final minute but were unable to convert and any of them as “Rebels” scored a free throw and a field goal to close out the win leaving “Thunder” to contemplate what might have been.

In the disappointing defeat Logan Ormshaw top scored for the second week running with 17 points Young and Alex Bot supporting well with 19 and seven points respectively while Kamil Jazwinski rebounded superbly in that third quarter comeback.

This coming weekend the team face Cambridge “Cats” a team that comfortably beat them earlier in the season

**Under 11 Intra Group Tournament a huge success**

With so many under 11 players the Northants Club ran another Intra Group tournament last weekend, and it was not only a great success it also produced some excellent basketball clearly indicating the progress the boys and girls have made since the start of the programme.

For this tournament the twenty players were placed in four teams each named after Spanish ACB League teams. All but one of the games were competitive with *Barcelona* coached by trainee coach Danielas Jokulis beatin*g* *Real Madid* 29-16, *Valencia* 22-20 and *Unicaja* 16-12 to win the tournament.

This Sunday the club will host the third Your Basketball League’s Under 11 Central Venue League with Abingdon “Eagles” and Coventry “Tornadoes” the visitors. The Club will also be running an additional Development Team tournament for the three clubs

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

 **Saturday 22nd January**

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

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

 **11-30pm** Under 14 Boys ‘A’ versus Cambridge “Cats 1”

  **2-00pm** Under 15 Boys versus Walsall “Wizards”

 **4-30pm** Under 14 Girls versus Milton Keynes

 **Sunday 23rd January**

 **10-45am** Your Basketball League Under 11 Central Venue Tournament

 “Storm” versus Abingdon “Eagles“ and Coventry “Tornadoes”

 “Strom B” Central Venue Development Team Tournament

 **2-00pm** Junior Women versus Liverpool

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**