**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

**PRESS RELEASE**

***Stunning wins for Junior Women over Liverpool and Under 14 Boys over Cambridge while the Under 11 Tournaments are a huge success***

**Lucie and Dina see Junior Women home**

**Junior Women’s (North Conference)**

**Northants “Lightning” 81 – 77 Liverpool**

The Northants Junior Women claimed an impressive win over a very tall, athletic and determined Liverpool team that hada large crowd on the edge of their seats to the final hooter as “Lightning” pitted speed and mobility against Height and strength. The final results shows that a good ‘big’ one doesn’t always triumph over a good ‘little’ one.

“Lightning’s” win was very firmly based on a 56 point haul from guards Lucie Wilson-Gray and Dina Kosnikoska, a brave defensive effort from Lucie Caulfield who battled manfully against the “Liverpool ‘bigs’ and Coach Emma Salisbury’s aggressive pressure defence. The win will go a long way in giving the team belief and confidence for the rest of the season.

From the outset it was clear that the game would be a contrast between “Lightning’s” up-tempo play perimeter shooting and pressure defence against Liverpool’s reliance on height and power. After the first quarter it was the home team that held a narrow 18-10 thanks in no small part to Liverpool missing six free throws.

The second quarter saw Liverpool take charge of the game as their ‘bid’ players dominated proceeding close to basket as they claimed numerous offensive rebounds which they successfully converted into points. “Lightning” was left to rely on steals from their pressure defence and perimeter shots. Liverpool took the quarter 26-20 to close the gap to just two points at 38-36 at half time.

“Lightning” had employed a three player up-court press with two of their bigger players protecting their basket. For the second half Coach Emma Salisbury cleverly ‘tweeked’ this protection and it had an immediate effect as “Lightning” forced a number of turn-overs. “Lightning” went on a 12-2 run to open up a 12 point gap at 50-38 but Liverpool responded superbly with a 15-5 run of their own so going into the last ten minutes of play “Lightning” held a narrow 55-53 lead.

The final quarter saw the advantage swing between the two teams as first “Lightning” and then Liverpool seized the initiative. For “Lightning” guard Kosnikoska was on fire with a combination of drives to baskets and short range jump shots but Liverpool drew to within one point at 71-72 and with several “Lightning” players looking to be ‘out on their feet’ the visitors looked to be favourites to take the win. They mounted another attack, but Caufield was able to bat away a pass, Lightning’s fast break was stopped and as the ball was circulated Gerda Vienskaite drained a three-pointer which completely took the wind out of Liverpool’s sails and clever game management from Wilson-Gray and Kosnikovska steered “Lightning” home to a 81 points to 77 win.

In the four-point win Wilson-Gray had 30 points including five three-pointers while Kosnikovska scored 26 points including 15 in the final quarter Fernanda Loberto scored 11 points before fouling out while Vienskaite contributed an invaluable 9 points but the efforts of Caulfield should not be overlooked

**Blank weekend for Under 15 Boys**

**Under 15 Boys YBL (Primis Division)**

**Northants “Thunder” *Postponed* Walsall “Wizards**

A Covid outbreak amongst the Walsall coaching staff forced the late postponement of this YBL fixture. On the available court a last minute scrimmage was arranged with a number of under 16 players turning out to give the under 15’s some invaluable practice

**Battling Under 14 Boys claim victory over Cambridge in a defensive battle**

**Under 14 Boys East Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 46 -41 Cambridge “Cats” ‘A’**

A determined defensive effort which involved all ten of the “Thunder” players helped their team to claim victory over the Cambridge “Cats” ‘A’ team who earlier in the season had won by over 30 points.

In the low scoring affair “Thunder” made a good start to the game a rare occurrence so far this season and led 12-5 after the first quarter. “Cats” battled back over the first five minutes of the second quarter and took a

14-13 lead thanks to a 9-one charge. The “Thunder”, ‘second unit re-claimed the lead for “Thunder” before”, Simon scored the last two baskets of the half for “Cats to tie things up at 20 points all.

Once again the “Thunder”, first unit struggled at the start of the third quarter and a 12-zero run gave “Cats” a 32-20 lead which in a low scoring game looked to be decisive. The “Thunder”, ‘second unit however had other thoughts and led by seven points from Logan Ormshaw went on a 10-zero run to get “Thunder” back to 30-32 going into the final ten minutes of play.

At the start of the final quarter the two teams traded baskets but midway through the quarter a 12-2 charge by “Thunder” lead by Ormshaw and Kamil Jazwinski eased their team ahead and thanks to several “Cats” misses from the free throw line “Thunder” were able to hold on for a morale-boosting win.

In the hard fought win the “Thunder” scoring was led by Ormshaw and Jazwinski with 15 and 14 points respectively, Jazwinski also rebounding superbly while Kane Young dished out a hatful of assists.

**Under 14 Girls well beaten by ruthless Milton Keynes**

**Under 14 Girls (Midlands Conference)**

**Northants “Lightning” 23 – 100 Milton Keynes**

The Northants “Lightning” under 14 girls suffered another heavy defeat last Saturday this time at the hands of Milton Keynes for whom two payers scored a massive 66 points.

The game was as good as over after the first quarter with the visitors leading by 30 points to six. During that first quarter the talented Tsang had scored 18 points and when leading by 50 points the Milton Keynes’ coach

re-introduced her to the game and she proceeded to go ‘coast to coast’ against the tiring “Lightning” players as M.K. went in search of the magic ton.

For their part the “Lightning” girls gave of their very best, but they found scoring difficult against some aggressive defence. The Milton Keynes coach defended his approach to the game by saying it was all about points difference at the end of the season. “Sad!!” goes nowhere close to describing such an attitude.

In the heavy defeat Iviannah Meadows and Jennifer Oamen with eight and seven points respectively led the “Lightning” scoring while Tsang had 39 points for Milton Keynes

**“Storm” Under 11’s go one and one ……..again**

**YBL Under 11 Central Venue Tournament**

 **Northants “Storm” 40 – 10 Abingdon “Eagles”**

 **Abingdon “Eagles” 4 – 49 Coventry “Tornadoes”**

 **Northants “Storm” 15 – 39 Coventry “Tornadoes”**

For the third time this season the Northants “Storm under 11’s beat Abingdon “Eagles” but lost to Coventry “Tornadoes” so will go into the inter-regional tournaments as runners up.

After comfortably defeating Abingdon, “Storm” went into their game against Coventry in confident mood but they found scoring very difficult against Coventry’s sagging defence and found stopping “Tornadoes” tall Remero almost impossible. They are also hampered by the YBL rule which prohibits full court pressure defence which would have helped their cause.

“Storm” Coach John Collins was disappointed that his team hadn’t got closer to Coventry but was pleased they had kept a talented team to below 40 points. He was also delighted that 15 boys and girls have been given the opportunity to play in the three Central Venue Tournaments.

**Under 11 “Friendly” Central Venue Tournament**

**Northants “Storm Maroon” 19 – 15 Coventry “Tornadoes” ‘B’**

**Northants “Storm White” 18 – 6 Coventry “Tornadoes” ‘B’**

**Northants “Storm “White” 18 – 7 Northants “Maroon”**

**Abingdon “Eagles” ‘A’ 18 -14 Coventry “Tornadoes” ‘A’**

**Abingdon “Eagles” ‘A’ 22 – 14 Northants “Maroon & White”**

In the continued attempt to give their large squad as much competitive experience as possible the Northants club fielded two teams in this friendly tournament. Both “Storm” teams beat the Coventry “Tornadoes” ‘B’ team before “Storm White” beat “Maroon”.

Having lost both games in the YBL Tournament the Abingdon “Eagles” ‘A’ team beat “Tornadoes” and a combined “Storm” team which fielded all fifteen of their players. Coaches from Abingdon and Coventry and officers of the YBL were full of praise for this Karen Goodrich inspired initiative.

During the course of the two tournaments over **50** boys and girls had given their all helped by qualified coaches, controlled by empathetic referees and supported by enthusiastic parents.

All in all, a great advert for basketball!!

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTION**

 **Saturday 29th January**

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

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

 **Times to be** {Under 16 Boys versus Leicester “Dynamite”

 **confirmed** {Under 18 Boys versus Sheffield Elite II

 Under 14 Boys ‘B’ team travel to Braintree

 **Sunday 30th January**

 **11-00am** Under 14 Boys ‘A’ versus East Herts “Warriors”

  **1-30pm** Under 14 Girls versus Mansfield “Giants”

All 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 and admission is FREE

Covid restrictions have now been eased but spectators are respectfully requested to respect other people’s health by abiding to social spacing and sanitising whenever possible

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