**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Season resumes for the Northants Basketball Club**

**Junior Men get back to winning ways.**

**Under 18 Boys EBL Midlands 2 Conference**

**Milton Keynes “Breakers II” 32 – 88 OEH Group Northants “Thunder”**

After suffering two close defeats at the end of 2023 the Northants Junior Men opened 2024 with a resounding win over the Milton Keynes “Breakers” second string last Saturday.

“Thunder” dominated the game except for a short period at the start of the third quarter when they were unsettled by the “Breakers” press defence but they were able to re-group and win the final quarter by 24 points to nine.

In the fifty points plus win the “Thunder” scoring was led by Rapolas Radavivicius with 26 points excellent support coming from Benas Maldutis and Elias James but this was a win based on contributions from all the players including the two under age players drafted into the lineup.

*Over the closing weeks of 2023 the team was decimated by injuries and non-availability so in order to strengthen the squad* ***Open Try Outs*** *will be held* *at Northampton School for Girls on*

***Wednesday 11th January*** *from* ***7-30pm until 9-00pm***

*There will be no cost for the session and this is an ideal opportunity for players aspiring to play National League basketball.*

**Under 14 Boys battle back to win ‘ugly’ in flood hit Worcester**

**Under 14 Boys EBL Midlands Conference**

**Worcester “Wolves” 48 – 51 Northants “Thunder”**

The first game back after the Christmas break is notoriously difficult and so it proved for the Under 14 Boys last Saturday against Worcester “Wolves” a team they had comfortably beaten earlier in the season. Having made the journey to the flood hit city the “thunder” coaching staff were informed that the car carrying influential players Jerome Maroodza and Anton Kelly had suffered a blowout and they wouldn’t make the start of the game.

In fact “Thunder” made a good start to the game and jumped out to an 11-six lead thanks to their aggressive pressure defence but fatigue set in and “Wolves” began to gain in confidence winning the second quarter 22-10 to take a 29-26 half time lead.

In the third quarter both teams struggled to score “Thunder” edging it by eight points to seven but going into the final stages of the game they were still trailing, and their cause wasn’t helped when their leading scorer Joelle Skiete-French fouled out of the game. With defeat staring them in the face Anton Kelly hit a crucial three-pointer, Al-Mustafa Yinusa also scored and Osagie Efosa converted one of two free throws to give “Thunder” a win that for a long time had seemed unlikely.

In the three point victory ten “Thunder” players contributed to the scoring led by Skiete-French with 12 points.

**Under 14 Girls beaten by “Mystics|” first string**

**Non-Conference ‘Friendly’**

**Manchester “Mystics” 96 – 58 Northants “Lightning”**

Without a National League game for the next two weeks the “Lightning” Under 14 Girls who are undefeated in the Midlands Conference, made the long journey to Manchester to take on a “Mystics” team generally accepted to be one of the strongest under 14 teams in the country. Earlier this season “Lightning” had been beaten by a “Mystics” team missing their four England internationals so they expected a tough game and so it proved.

In the event, “Lightning” suffered a heavy defeat with the depth and superior fire-power of the “Mystics” team proving to be decisive. “Lightning” were in touch after the first quarter at 20-29 but from then on “Mystics” were able to extend their lead against a battling “Lightning” outfit with Michelle Mackuna and Macie Latimer leading the “Lightning” scoring with 18 and 15 points respectively.

Coach Mark Spatcher felt the exercise and long journey was well worthwhile and had given his players and insight in what is needed to compete at the ‘next level’. He was also pleased by the praise given his team by the Manchester coach and hopefully it will be good preparation for the team’s next Conference game against Nottingham “Wildcats” in a couple of weeks time.

**Under 12 Boys maintain their unbeaten record**

**Under 12 Mixed EBL Region III Conference**

**Stourport “Spartans” 31 – 75 Northants “Thunder”**

Like the Under 14 Boys the “Thunder” Under 12’s were a little ring-rusty after the Christmas break but they eventually produced enough quality basketball to complete a comfortable win over Stourport “Spartans” all eleven “thunder” players contributing to the 75 point total.

With their offence lacking a little in cohesion “Thunder” resorted to some tenacious defence which restricted the home team to just 16 points after the first three quarters of play. It wasn’t until the final quarter that “Spartans” found any kind of fluency on offfence scoring 15 points over the final ten minutes but by then the game was over as a contest.

The win maintains Coach George Adeseko’s team unbeaten record and they sit at the top of the Region III Conference.

In Saturday’s win George Rados led the “Thunder” scoring with 19 points excellent support coming from Ernie Windrum and Kyjah Adams with 13 and ten points respectively

**Under 16 Girls beaten in a nail-biter**

**Under 16 Girls EBL Midland Conference**

**Derby “Trailblazers” 49 – 47 Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants Under 16 Girls suffered a heart-breaking defeat at the hands of Derby “Trailblazers” in a low scoring games which saw debutant Amelia Wesley Maryan score in excess of 20 points.

The defeat was particularly disappointing for Coach Lee Meadows because his team had led for the entire game until the final minute. During that sixty second period “Trailblazers” were able to tie the scores and eventually snatch the win from the battling “Lightning” girls.

No “Lightning” player other than Wesely Maryan was able to score in double figures but Lauren Eighteen put in a great defensive performance blocking 12 shots.

The team is back in action this Saturday when they entertain Leicester “Riders”

at

**Amelia May is selected for the London “Lions” Under 16 Academy team.**

After attending a number of ‘Try Out’ sessions Amelia May Wesley Maryan has been selected to play for the London “Lions” Under 16 Academy team that will play in a number of EYBL tournaments commencing in Slovakia.

Amelia will travel to London for practices leading up to the tournaments but will continue to pay for “Lightning” and the Northampton School for Girls school teams.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 13th January**

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

**10-30am to 11-45am** Junior “Ballers”

**12-15pm** Under 12 Boys II versus Leicester “Dynamite”

Under 14 Boys versus Walsall “Wizards”

**2-30pm** Under 16 Girls versus Leicester “Riders”

**4-15pm** Under 15 Boys versus Tamworth “Tigers”

**The “Ballers” activities and games will take place at The Basketball Centre which is based**

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

EOS GroupUnder 18 Boys travel to Shrewsbury “Storm”

Under 16 Boys travel to West Bromwich

Under 14 Girls II travel to Cambridge “Cats”

**Sunday 14th January**

Under 12 Boys travel to Bromsgrove “Bears”

Under 11 Mixed I and II travel to Oxford to play Oxford “Hoops” and Frankley “Falcons”

For further information on this Press Release contact:

**John Collins** on 07801 533 151