**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**A winning weekend for the Northants Basketball Club**

**On the second weekend of 2024 ten teams from the Northants Club played eleven competitive games losing just two of them, one of those losses coming when two teams from the Club played each other.**

**Huge fourth quarter gets Junior Men ‘home’ against Shrewsbury “Storm”**

**Under 18 Boys EBL Midlands 2 Conference**

**Shrewsbury “Storm” 62 - 65 OEH Group Northants “Thunder”**

Going into the final quarter of this Midlands 2 Conference game “Thunder” were trailing by

39 points to 50. During the first three quarters of the game “Thunder” had played a passive man to man defence which had been exploited by “Storm”. Going into the last ten minutes of play Coach Darjius Maldutis urged his team to raise their efforts and they responded superbly going on a 16-zero run to drag themselves back into the game lead 55-50.

“Storm” raised their hopes of clinching victory with a ‘Hail Mary’ thee pointer but scores from Benas Maldutis and Jake Muxlow plus a Rapolas Radavicius free throw saw “Thunder” home to an unlikely win.

In the three point win Maldutis top scored for “Thunder” with 22 points, excellent support coming from Radavicius and Danielius Jokulis with 16 and 11 points respectively

**Under 16 Boys ease past West Bromwich**

**Under 16 Boys EBL Midlands 1 Conference**

**West Bromwich 53 – 70 Northants “Thunder”**

For their first game of 2024 the Northants Under 16 Boys travelled to West Bromwich a team “Thunder” had conclusively beaten earlier in the season but always a difficult place to visit.

“Thunder” made an excellent start to the game jumping out to a 22-12 lead after the first quarter but they were then guilty of ‘going to sleep’ losing the second quarter 16-19. Holding a 38-31 lead at half time “Thunder” were looking to dominate the third quarter but the hosts weren’t to be shaken off “Thunder” edging the quarter 15-13 and at 53-44 going into the final ten minutes of play West Bromwich sensed the opportunity of snatching victory. In the event “Thunder” led by Fran Guei dominated the fourth quarter winning it 17-nine to take the game by 70 points to 53 which looked a lot more conclusive than it actually was.

For “Thunder”, Guei top scored with 23 points, James Kennlett-Maughan, Logan Ormshaw and

Ted Osborne all scoring in double figures.

This weekend the team travel to Coventry “Tornadoes” a team that beat them in overtime earlier in the season

**Jen and Amelia help Under 16 Girls to win over “Riders”**

**Under 16 Girls EBL Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Lightning” 57 – 40 Leicester “Riders”**

A sparkling first half was sufficient to earn the Northants Under 16 Girls their second win of the season. In that first half “Lightning” outscored “Riders” 38 to 21; 30 of those points coming from Jennifer Oamen and Amelia Wesley-Maryan.

“Lightning” seemed to go to sleep in the final two quarters of play which was tied 19 points each with “Riders” presenting more of a threat as they sat in their zone defence but they never really looked as if they were going to overturn the lead.

In the 17 points win Oamen dominated the scoring with 30 personal points while Wesley-Maryan contributed an important 19 points.

**Under 15 Boys win a nail-biter**

**Under 16 Boys EBL Midlands 1 Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 63 – 62 Tamworth “Tigers”**

Trailing 26-37 at half time the Northants Under 15 Boys hauled themselves back into this Under 16 National League game thanks to a 13-zero charge at the start of the third quarter to take a 39-37 lead. For the remainder of the game the two teams traded baskets before “Wizards” mounted a 9-2 surge to take a 60-57 lead. The “Thunder” cause was looking grim because they had lost the services of both Will Carr and their leading rebounder and scorer Oliwier Andrzejczak, with five fouls.

With three minutes of the game remaining Logan Tanner scored two crucial baskets to keep “Thunder” in contention before Al-Mustafa Yinusa scored his only basket of the game to give “Thunder” the lead at 63-62. Needing to prevent a “Tigers” score “Thunder” encouraged by a raucous crowd “Thunder” were guilty of fouling a speculative shot send the impressive Underwood to the free throw line. The young “Wizard” forward capitulated to the pressure and the noise and missed both free throws; “Thunder” secured the rebound and held possession for the one-point win.

Before fouling out of the game Andrzejczak had kept his team in contention with 27 points; while Logan Tanner supported superbly with 20 points

**Gutsy Under 14 Boys beat “Wizards”**

**Under 14 Boys EBL Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 71 – 62 Walsall “Wizards”**

Winning in style is obviously the aim of all teams but sometimes pure bravery becomes a key factor and so it was for the Northants Under 14 Boys last Saturday against a talented Walsall “Wizards team”. Throughout the game the “Wizards” guard Morrison had used his strength and athleticism to torment the “Thunder” defence with a number of coast-to-coast drives.

Going into the final ten minutes of play Morrison had scored 28 points to keep his team in contention at 48-51. With the “Thunder” coaching staff struggling to match up defensively with him they allocated the job to Jowell Skiete-French and before fouling out the “Thunder” forward did a great job restricting the Walsall player to just four more points. “Thunder” opened the final quarter with a

10-zero run and with “Wizards” missing eight free throws they were able to hold out for victory over the previously unbeaten West Midlands team.

In the nine point win the “Thunder” scoring was led by Al-Mustafa Yinusa with 13 points, Skiete-French, Osagie Efosa, Luca Garrett and Jerome Maroodza all scoring in double figures

**Under 14 Girls “Too” breeze past “Cats”**

**East of England League**

**Cambridge “Cats” 10 – 65 Northants “Lightning “Too”**

The Northants Under 14 Girls second team started 2024 in style with an overwhelming win over an enthusiastic but inexperienced Cambridge “Cats” team and in so doing maintained their 100% record in the East of England League.

“Lightning Too” dominated all four quarters playing some excellent defence and running basketball to the delight of Coach Adam Latimer.

In the big win all ten “Lightning Too” players scored led by Macie Latimer with 21 points.

**Under 12 Boys stay unbeaten**

**Under 12 Mixed EBL Region 2 Conference**

**Bromsgrove “Bears” 42 – 59 Northants “Storm”**

Earlier in the current season the Northants Under 12 Boys beat “Bears” by over sixty points but last Sunday’s contest was a much closer affair possibly caused by complacency, possibly by ‘rust’ after the Christmas break but more likely because the Bromsgrove players were allowed to play in a ver physical manner.

“Thunder” opened the game in fine style taking the first quarter by 20 points to nine. They consolidated their lead in the second quarter to open up a 33-16 half time lead and the comfort of that lead may have led to a little complacency and “Bears” closed the gap in the third quarter winning it 17-12.

By now the game had become very physical with at least one incident resembling a wrestling match. “Thunder” coach George Adeseko appealed to his players to stay calm, and cope with the increasing physicality. His players responded well winning the final quarter 14-nine to take a hard won victory by 59 points to 42.

In the 17 point win the “Thunder” points were well distributed with only Daniel Kovalevskis getting into double figures

**Dynamite too strong for Under 12 Boys second string**

**Under 12 Mixed EBL Region 2 Conference**

**Northants “Storm Too” 49 – 111 Leicester “Dynamite”**

The Northants Under 12 Boys second string took on Conference leaders Leicester “Dynamite” missing a number of key players. A ‘tough day at the office’ was expected and so it proved with the game as good as over as a contest after the first quarter which “Dynamite” won 29-six. They maintained the pressure in the second quarter to open up a 59-20 half time lead.

To their credit “Storm Too” battled back in the third quarter and playing their best basketball of the game only lost it 20-28. “Dynamite” were back to dominant best in the final quarter winning it 24-eight to take the game by 111 points to 49 against a “Storm Too” that never gave in.

For the Northants team Deev Patel scored 18 points, Henry Daly and Theo Burditt both contributing ten points.

**Under 11 Mixed teams do well in Oxford**

**YBL Under 11 Mixed Tournament**

**Oxford “Hoops” 19 – 46 Northants “Storm”**

**Oxford “Hoops” 18 – 35 Northants “Storm Too”**

**Northants “Storm” 51 – 19 Northants “Storm Too”**

A combination of a freezing cold sports hall, poor organisation and dubious officiating made this a less than enjoyable experience for the two Northants teams but at the close of the tournament “Storm” remained undefeated and “Storm Too” picked up a hard-fought win over the hosts.

From the outset of the first game, it was clear that the trainee referees weren’t going to keep close control of proceedings but anchored by Liam McIlhiney and Urte Maldutyte “Storm” were too strong for “Hoops”.

The Oxford coach obviously thought his team would be too strong for the “Storm” second string and fielded a weaker team but thanks to some excellent defensive play “Storm Too” were able to run out winners with the highlight of the game being two lay ups under pressure by rookie Neveah Cox.

By the time the two “Storm” teams took to the court the trainee referees had clearly lost interest and allowed the game to become over physical which favoured the older “Storm” first string who thanks to some impressive defence kept “Storm Too” to just two points in the final quarter.

With Frankley dropping out of the Conference “Storm” look red-hot favourites to qualify for the Play Offs

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 20thh January**

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

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

**12-15pm** Under 17 Girls versus Abingdon Eagles” (YBL)

Under 14 Girls II versus Cambridge “Cats” (ERL)

**1-30pm** Cambridge “Cats” versus Norfolk Iceni (ERL)

**2-45pm** Under 14 Girls II versus Norfolk Iceni (ERL)

**2-30pm** Under 13 Boys versus NEBC “Titans” (YBL)

**The “Ballers” activities and the above games** **will take place at The Basketball Centre which is based at Northampton School for Girls, Spinney Hill Road, Northampton NN3 6DG**

**1-50pm** Under 9 Mixed versus Coventry “Tornadoes” (YBL

**2-40pm** Under 9 Mixed II versus Coventry “Tornadoes (Friendly)

**3-30pm** Under 9 Mixed versus Under 9 Mixed II (Friendly)

**These games will be played at Moulton College**

Under 15 Boys travel to West Bromwich (EBL)

Under 14 Girls travel to London “Thunder” (Friendly)

**Sunday 21st January**

**10-00am to 1-30pm** Rose of the Shires Under 11 and Under 13 Girls Tournament

involving Northants, Kettering and Bedford

**This tournament will take place at The Basketball Centre**

Under 16 Boys travel to Coventry “Tornadoes”

Under 14 Boys travel to Shrewsbury “Storm” (EBL)