**NORTHANTS BASKETBALL CLUB**

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**PRESS RELEASE & NEWSLETTER**

**Just one defeat from the eleven games played by team from the Northants Basketball Club,**

**as four teams clinch Conference titles.**

**Under 17 Girls overwhelm Arden.**

**Under 17 Girls YBL “All Girls” Conference**

**Solihull “Griffins” 14 -113 Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants Under 17 Girls completed their YBL regular season programme with an emphatic win over and enthusiastic but inexperienced Solihull “Griffins” team. They will now look likely move on to the Play Offs with an unbeaten record with “Griffins” conceding the return fixture 20-zero.

Despite being sent to the wrong venue “Lightning” made an excellent start to the game on Sunday with Peace Okum going on a scoring spree well supported by Jenny Oamen, Allanah Major and Iviannah Meadows they dominated all four quarters.

With Amelia Maryan-Wesley dishing out assists like confetti at a wedding and Rya Barnes, Lucie Caulfield and Cameron Keuberg putting in excellent defensive shifts “Lightning” cruised to a comprehensive win, Coach Lee Meadows able to put into practice some new offensive strategies.

**Under 15 Boys complete the ‘double’ over Coventry “Elite”**

**Cadet Boys NBL Midland Conference**

**Northants “Thunder Too” 66 – 45 Coventry “Elite”**

The Northants “Thunder” Under 15 Boys completed a double over bottom of the table Coventry “Elite” without ever being at their best with the game punctuated by scoring runs from both teams and a plethora of missed free throws. The “Thunder Too” win was due in no small part to 22 points from J.J. Lothian who was the only “Thunder” player to shoot with any consistency from the perimeter.

After jumping out to a 4-2 lead at the start of the game “Thunder” preverbally ‘went to sleep’ allowing “Elite” to go on a 9-zero run. “thunder” responded with a 14-2 run of their own on the back of three, three-pointers to take an 18 to 12 lead after the first quarter. “Thunder” edged the second quarter thanks in no small part the efforts of Oliwer Andrzejczako but both teams were guilty of missing scoring opportunities from the free throw line.

During the first two quarters of play “Thunder” had been guilty of allowing “Elite” to set up their zone defence and relying too heavily on perimeter shots. At the start of the third quarter “Thunder” were able to execute their transition game much more effectively and a 6-zero spurt saw them extend their lead to 41-28 before they completely went to sleep allowing the Coventry team to score eight unanswered points and at 41- 36 it was ‘a game on.

A time out by Coach Brad Hughes restored order and “Thunder” closed the quarter with a 10-zero run with J.J. Lothian hitting a brace of three-pointers.

Leading 51-36 and facing a Coventry team looking decidedly fatigued “Thunder” opened the final stanza well outscoring their opponents 13-2 Lothian again looking impressive on offence. That surge had taken “Thunder” into a 64-38 lead but they closed the game scoring just a further two points in the remaining five minutes. “Elite” finished the stronger of the two teams but missed six attempts from the ‘charity stripe’ so never looked like closing the gap, “Thunder” running out winners by 66 points to 45.

In the comfortable win Logan Tanner and Andrzejczako were the only “Thunder” players able to give Lothian any substantial points scoring support with 13 and 12 points respectively.

**Under 14 Boys one step away from title after win over City of Birmingham II**

**Under 14 Boys NBL Midlands Conference**

**Northants “Thunder” 80 – 63 City of Birmingham “Rockets II”**

After this win over the City of Birmingham second string, the Northants “Thunder” Under 14 Boys are one victory away from the Midlands Conference title with just two games to play.

On Saturday both teams did their best to play attractive up-tempo basketball allied to tough aggressive defence but this defence didn’t get the approval of the game officials who ‘called’ a total of 52 fouls, four players fouling out of the game.

“Thunder” had the edge in the first quarter taking a 21-15 lead but “Rockets” were the better team in the second which they won 21-14 to take a 36-35 half time lead. “Thunder” hit the court for the third quarter in determined mood and the flair of Anton Kelly and the rebounding power of Al Mustafa Yinusu helped them embark on a 17-two run. “Rockets” responded with 12-two run of their own with both sets of supporters on the edge of their seats.

Leading 54-50 and urged on by their fans “Thunder” closed the quarter with an 8-2 run to lead by ten points going into the final ten minutes of play. The final quarter saw the two teams trading scores as the noise in the Basketball Centre reached a deafening level. “Thunder” were able to edge the final quarter 18-11 to secure the 80 points to 63 win which was a lot closer than the final score suggested.

The exciting game was played in excellent spirit with both sets of supporters, supporting in the correct way and the whole event was a credit to youth basketball.

In the 17 point win Kelly and Yinusu top scored for “Thunder” with 23 and 15 points respectively Luca Garrett supporting well with 13 points eight of them coming in the fourth quarter.

**Under 13 Boys claim YBL Title**

**Under 13 Boys YBL Group ‘D’**

**Leicester “Riders” 42 – 68 Northants “Thunder”**

The Northants “Thunder” Under 13 Boys clinched the YBL Group ‘D’ title with this win over a much-improved Leicester “Riders” team.

“Thunder” made a typical Sunday morning start to the game and found themselves trailing 3-11 midway through the first quarter and despite a brace of baskets from Sam Dominici were still 9-12 behind at the end of the quarter, and with a distinct height advantage “Riders” looked on course to gain revenge for their heavy early season defeat.

The “Thunder” coaching staff emphasized to the team the need to get into their passing game and the team responded superbly in the second quarter which they won 24-nine to take a 33-21 half time lead. The second quarter had seen seven “Thunder” players contributing to the scoring while every player contributed to a superb defensive effort.

“Thunder” made a lackluster offensive start to the third quarter but their defence kept them ahead before an Arlo Dominici three pointer sparked the team into life. They won the quarter 18-four and at 51-25 looked well set for the win.

“Riders” continued to be a major threat in the final stanza but thanks to nine points from Sam Dominici “Thunder” were able to tie the quarter and take the 68 points to 42 win led by 21 points from Dominici good support coming from Jensen McCauley and Dominykas Jokulus.

**Under 12 Boys recover to beat “Wizards” thanks to Abraham**

**Under 12 Mixed NBL Region III**

**Northants “Storm” 74 – 39 Walsall “Wizards”**

With close rivals Tamworth “Tigers” losing to City of Birmingham “Storm” are now hot favourites to take the Region III title. The Northants boys travel to Tamworth on 17th March but the West Midlanders have already lost two games and “Strom” would expect to beat Warwickshire “Hawks” in their other remaining game.

Against “Wizards” last Saturday, “Storm” found themselves trailing 2-11 but a flurry of points from Max Abraham help them find their momentum and they lead 22-14 after the first quarter. Eight “Storm” players scored in the second quarter won 22-eight by the home team and with a 44-22 half time advantage the game was as good as won.

“Storm” extended their lead to 61-26 going into the final quarter then the two teams exchanged baskets during the final stanza the Northants boys cruising to the 74-39 victory led by 24 points from Abraham and eleven “Storm” players contributing to the final total.

**First defeat of the season for below par Under 13 Girls**

**Under 13 Girls YBL “All Girls” Conference**

**Northants “Lightning” 38 – 47 Nuneaton “Predators”**

**Abingdon “Eagles” 20 – 60 Northants “Lightning”**

The Northants “lightning” Under 13 Girls suffered their first defeat of the season but still clinched the Conference title because earlier in the season they had beaten Nuneaton by more than the nine points they lost to “Predators” last Sunday.

In the game against “Predators”, “Lightning” were well below their best and with only Brooke Foster and Freya Tauber-Anderson able to cope with the physicality of the game “Lightning” found themselves trailing 18-32 at half time. The team rallied well in the third quarter which they won 14-6 to close the gap to just six points but they weren’t able to maintain their effort in the final quarter “Predators” holding on for the nine point win.

In the disappointing defeat Foster and Tauber-Anderson scored 32 of “Lightning’s” 38 points although Batia Egbegi pulled down numerous rebounds and played with commendable determination.

Against an inexperienced Abingdon team, “Lightning” totally dominated proceedings restricting their opponents to single figures in all four quarters and Coach Karen Goodrich was able to give some of her less experienced players substantial playing time.

In the comfortable win ten “Lightning” players contributed to the team’s 60 point total with Emilie Milsome and Naimah Jones giving good points scoring support to Tauber-Anderson.

**Under 11 Girls dominant in Kettering**

**Under 11 Girls YBL “All Girls” Conference**

**Kettering “Phoenix” 13 – 41 Northants “Lightning”**

**Nuneaton “Predators” 0 – 20 Northants “Lightning”**

Champions elect Northants “Lightning” Under 11 Girls maintained their unbeaten record following their latest YBL Tournament at Tresham College, Kettering.

Once again “Lightning” were too strong for Kettering “Phoenix” with their tough defence and running game proving to be too much for the home team. In the comfortable win Myla Riley top scored with 17 points well supported by Gracie Barrett and Urte Maldutyte who also put in her usual shift of determined defence.

The Tresham venue did not allow the games to be played on the requisite smaller court and with only five players the Nuneaton “Predators” coach didn’t feel her players could cope with another game so conceded the game to “Lightning”. The group will now look forward to the Final in May.

**Classy Under 9’s take the title**

**Under 9 Mixed YBL Group ‘B’**

**Coventry “Tornadoes” 8 – 40 Northants “Storm”**

**Daventry “Swifts” 22 – 43 Northants “Storm”**

The Northants Under 9 Mixed team produced two more impressive performances to retain their unbeaten record and secure the Group ‘B’ Conference title.

Against the Coventry “Tornadoes” the team made an excellent start to the game with Everley Burton and Kobe Staron looking particularly impressive as the team built up a comfortable half time lead. “Storm” continued to dominate the contest in the second half Isaac Marcano scoring 16 points.

The game against Daventry was much more competitive but thanks to Nevaeh Cox and Charlie Lowe, ”Storm” were able to establish a 23-8 half time lead. “Swifts” mounted a major charge in the second half but “Storm” were able to hold on for the win with the defensive effort of Ezra Kuranchie being particularly impressive.

**THIS WEEKEND’S ACTIVITIES**

**Saturday 9th March**

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

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

**12-15pm** Under 12 Boys II versus Northamptonshire “Titans” (NBL)

Under 16 Girls versus Bromsgrove “Bears” (NBL)

**2-30pm** Under 14 Boys versus Birmingham “Bears” (NBL)

Under 14 Girls versus Milton Keynes “Breakers II” (NBL)

**4-45pm** Under 18 Possible Friendly game

Under 16 Boys travel to West Bromwich Albion (NBL)

Under 13 Boys travel to Abingdon “Eagles” (YBL)

**Sunday 10th March**

Under 14 Girls II travel to Cambridge to play Cambridge “Cats”

and Oaklands ”Wolves” (ERL)

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

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

For further information about this Press Release contact **John Collins** on **+44 7801 533 151**