

## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Giant victory: Waynesboro boys basketball team stuns Fort Defiance for first win of the season

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FORT DEFIANCE — Let the celebration begin. Waynesboro's boys basketball team has its first victory of the season.

The Little Giants staged an epic fourth-quarter comeback Friday night, rallying from an 11-point deficit to shock the Fort Defiance Indians 56-51 in a Shenandoah District stunner.

The odds were stacked heavily against Waynesboro breaking its 12-game losing streak. The Giants were without first-year head coach Jacobie Napier, who was sidelined for the second straight game in health and safety protocols, and they only dressed seven players, six of whom played.

And those long odds increased when the Giants entered the fourth quarter trailing 46-35, but out of nowhere Waynesboro (1-12, 1-2) outscored the Indians 21-5 to snatch its first victory. It was one of those quarters where everything the Giants tossed at the basket fell, while it was the exact opposite for the besieged Indians. Close games in the fourth quarter have been almost nonexistent for Waynesboro, which gave it little to draw upon for staging a game-winning rally.

Waynesboro jayvee boys head coach Jermiel Haliburton took over for Napier and never lost confidence in the team.

"I don't believe in quit," Haliburton said. "We played hard to the end, and the game rewards those who play hard. We got our reward."

Fort's meltdown came on the heels of an ugly rock fight with boulders 24 hours earlier in a loss to former Valley District rival Broadway where the Indians scored only 24 points in a 33-24 final that set back the game of basketball. It turned into a lost week for Fort (4-6, 1-3) with three setbacks, which followed a three-game winning streak.

Fort junior Tyreek Veney had the Indians rolling with 26 points through three quarters before Waynesboro stole the show in the fourth.

The Giants started the final eight minutes on a 10-2 run, capped by 3-pointers

from Charles Haynes and Evan Sites, to suddenly pull within 48-45 with 5:26 remaining.

Another triple from Haynes tied the game at 48. Then Sites had the play of the game. With the ball out-of-bounds and nearing a 5-second violation, Sites threw the ball off the back of a Fort defender, stepped in and grabbed it for an easy layup to give the Giants with first lead since 5-3.

“Nothing was open so I had to do something,” Sites said. “They weren’t guarding me, which made it easier to throw the ball off the Fort player. It was a bit risky, but it paid off.”

After Fort closed to 50-49 on a Samuel Garber free throw, the Sites-Haynes combo struck again for baskets and a 54-49 advantage with 1:45 left.

Garber kept the Indians in touch with a miracle shot. He drove the baseline and was pinned behind the backboard after leaving the floor. He tossed up a shot over the backboard and it fell through with 46.5 seconds on the clock.

After a Waynesboro turnover, the Indians had a chance for the tie, but Veney missed a 3-pointer from the top of the key. Christian Williams then sealed the victory with a pair of free throws.

“Emotion and trust took over our play in the fourth quarter,” said Haliburton, who found out Tuesday morning after his third shift at Hershey that he was coaching both games that night against Buffalo Gap. “The guys trusted each other out there. We worked hard in our two days of practice since Tuesday to prepare for any scenario. The kids have accepted me and it all paid off tonight.”

Sites, a senior, said since Tuesday he has been telling his teammates this is a reset. “The energy all week has been different,” he said. “What happened tonight means so much. Usually we are down 20 or 30 in the second half, but tonight it all clicked. We all trusted each other and the coach, and it all paid off.”

Fort head coach Brandon Fulk admired Waynesboro for even playing the game without its head coach and only seven players.

“They played inspired and together,” he said. “They had a lot more will to win than we did. They had the best three players on the court in Haynes, Sites and (Adam) Groves. Their shot selection was better and their decision-making was better. They were just better in every phase of the game.”

The lost week has left Fulk in search of answers.

“Our competitive spirit isn’t very high right now,” he said. “The team is too worried about irrelevant things pertaining to basketball than what needs to be happening on the court to win games. What’s needed can’t be purchased at Walmart or ordered from Amazon.”

The Indians used seven Waynesboro seven turnovers in the first quarter to score 10 points for a 17-13 lead, which grew to 33-21 by halftime as Veney tallied 17 first half points. Veney’s 3-pointer to begin the second half gave the Indians their biggest lead of the night at 36-21.

Haynes led the Giants with 21 points, while Sites tallied 12, seven coming in the final quarter. Grove contributed nine.

Veney was the lone Indian in double figures with his 26. Landon Simmons added nine.

Waynesboro hosts Riverheads on Tuesday, while Fort welcomes Buffalo Gap. No boys jayvee game was played, but the girls played since the varsity teams were in Lexington competing at the Rock The Ribbon Roundball Classic. Fort’s jayvees won 41-15. Jayden Hostetter and Calleigh Wilkerson each had 14 points for the Indians. Aaliyah Diggs had six for the Giants.

WAYNESBORO 56, FORT DEFIANCE 51

WAYNESBORO 13 8 14 21 — 56  
FORT DEFIANCE 17 16 13 5 — 51

WAYNESBORO (56) — Haynes 8 1-2 21, Groves 4 1-3 9, Sites 5 0-0 12, Clark 3 0-0 6, Williams 3 2-2 8, Aleshire, TOTALS 23 4-7 56.

FORT DEFIANCE (51) — Simmons 4 0-0 9, Johnson 0 2-2 2, Jones 0 0-2 0, Garber 1 1-2 3, Veney 9 3-5 26, Hebb 2 1-2 6, Gutshall 2 0-2 5, Smith, Patterson, 1-0 Liskey, TOTALS 18 7-15 51.

FDHS Varsity vs Waynesboro  
January 14, 2022  
At Fort Defiance High School

Waynesboro came into this game with an 0 – 12 record, fell behind by thirteen in the first half, and were behind 46 – 35 going into the fourth quarter. Then the bottom dropped out for Fort Defiance . Waynesboro began hitting everything they threw up and Fort went ice cold. Waynesboro ended up winning 56 – 51. Fort’s record dropped to 4 – 6 for the season, 1 – 2 in the Skyline District.

FDHS started out well. After a couple of misses by Tyreek Veney and Bradley Hebb, Henry Gutshall drained a three pointer. Waynesboro then scored five in a row to go ahead 5 – 3. Two free throws by Kaden Johnson, a three pointer and steal/score by Bradley, and a three pointer from Tyreek, FDHS had built up a quick 13 – 5 lead. Henry then deflected a pass and fed Tyreek who scored on a break pushing the lead to 15 – 5. At that point, Henry was taken out and Waynesboro scored the next seven points. Tyreek made two free throws to make the score 17 – 12 with 28 seconds to go. Conner Patterson then fouled a Waynesboro player as time expired who made one of two free throws making the score 17 – 13 after one quarter.

Tyreek then scored the next six points for FDHS. A three pointer by Landon helped push Fort’s lead to 28 – 17. After a Waynesboro score, Landon got a nice feed from Henry pushing the score to 30 – 19. Tyreek made a three pointer which made the score 33 – 19. The half ended 33 – 21 in favor of the Indians.

Turnovers hurt the Indians in the third quarter. Tyreek had two three pointers, though, and another high point was Henry took his 16<sup>th</sup> charging foul of the season. He also hit a nice jumper in the lane. The quarter ended up 46 – 35 in favor of the Indians.

The fourth quarter is one Fort Defiance would like to forget forever. Henry missed a couple of jumpers and two free throws and went out with 4:16 to go. But his replacement, Sam Garber, put up six shots and only made one. Tyreek went ice cold. After scoring 26 in the first three quarters, he went scoreless in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Fort’s only baskets were one by Landon, one by Sam, and a free throw by Sam. In the meantime, Waynesboro hit everything they literally threw at the goal. They hit a three pointer to tie the game at 48. Then, one of their players smartly threw the ball off the back of a FDHS defender on an inbounds play, giving him an easy basket. Waynesboro closed the scoring with two field goals and two free throws for a 56 – 51 win. It was a stunning defeat for Fort Defiance.

Here is Fort’s box score for the game:

<b>Name</b>	<b>FG</b>	<b>FT</b>	<b>Total</b>
Landon Simmons	4	0-0	9
Drew Smith	0	0-0	0
Kaden Johnson	0	2-2	2

Josh Jones	0	0-2	0
Conner Patterson	0	0-0	0
Sam Garber	1	1-2	3
Tyreek Veney	9	3-5	26
Bradley Hebb	2	1-2	6
Jack Liskey	0	0-0	0
Alphonso Bruce	0	0-0	0
Henry Gutshall	2	0-2	5
<b>FDHS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7-15</b>	<b>51</b>