

## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Buffalo Gap boys basketball team rallies to survive Fort Defiance

HUBERT F. GRIM III For The News Virginian  
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**BUFFALO GAP** — Buffalo Gap loves flirtin' with disaster and living to tell about it.

The first-place Bison staged a second consecutive fourth-quarter rally Saturday to escape with a 44-39 victory over the hard-luck Fort Defiance Indians in a Shenandoah District boys basketball makeup clash.

Less than 24 hours earlier the Bison had played three quarters of what head coach Chad Ward called the worst basketball he had watched in his career before roaring back to life to knock off Riverheads 43-35. Gap had scored only 20 points through three quarters against the Gladiators, including a single point in the third, before putting up 23 in the final period.

Gap followed the same pattern against the Indians. The Bison trailed 33-22 with 2:59 left in the third quarter and 39-34 with 2:33 remaining the game before holding Fort scoreless the rest of the way.

“I don't like this way of playing one bit,” Ward said. “I don't know what it is that's causing us to come out flat. I know we haven't been able to practice in over a week, so maybe that is playing into it.”

The team couldn't get a light practice Saturday morning because the players help run the school's Little League program, which started at 8 a.m. and ran until the jayvee game tipped at 4 p.m.

Gap (11-2, 4-0) is now riding a four-game victory run, as the Bison get ready to move into the second half of their schedule. Saturday's win pushed the Bison into the No. 1 seed in the Region 1B power ratings ahead of Altavista.

“We have a big 'X' on our back right now being in first place, so we are getting the best shot from every team we play,” Ward said.

Fort (4-7, 1-3) suffered its fourth straight loss after a three-game winning streak. The latest setback came right on the heels of a bitter defeat in its last game on Jan. 14 when Waynesboro surprised the Indians for the Little Giants' first victory.

“I thought we responded great in the first half coming off the Waynesboro game,” Fort head coach Brandon Fulk said. “We were locked in and playing well in all phases. I wish I could bottle up the first half. That was the best we have played in a long time.”

Fort held the Bison to 19 first-half points to lead 26-19 at the break. The Indians used a 7-0 run capped by Drew Smith’s 3-pointer to gain their biggest lead of the game at 33-22 late in the third period.

But Gap finished the quarter strong. Jackson LaPorte converted an old-fashioned three-point play before draining a triple, while Bennett Bowers closed the quarter with a running one-hander from the lane off the break that banked in hard at the buzzer, slicing the deficit to 33-30.

After a prolonged scoring drought to begin the final eight minutes by both teams, Fort’s Bradley Hebb ripped a 3-pointer at the 5:26 mark for a 36-30 advantage. Gap cut the margin to 36-34 before Tyreek Veney’s triple gave the Indians the 39-34 lead with 2:33 left. Unfortunately those were the final points Fort scored. Micah Canterbury finished a three-point play at the 2:20 mark, and Bowers’ bomb from the left wing gave the Bison their first lead of the game, 40-39, with 1:54 showing.

Fort missed on a 3-pointer and Canterbury converted a crucial one-and-one with 15.8 seconds for a 42-39 margin.

The Indians were given new life when Veney was fouled on a 3-point attempt following an offensive rebound with 4.8 seconds, but the junior missed the first two attempts and he purposely missed the third only the ball failed to hit the rim for a violation.

Jackson Ingram nailed two free throws to seal the dramatic come-from-behind victory. The Bison were a perfect 7-of-7 at the line in the fourth quarter.

“We aren’t a very good free-throw shooting team around 60 percent, but in the fourth quarter we are like 91 percent,” Ward said. “Give credit to the kids for pulling it out and hitting their foul shots in crunch time.”

The Bison coach just wants to get in some practice time to work on the problem

areas. “Since Fort was off Friday, it got in one practice,” Ward said. “They did a great job of throwing multiple defenses at us, knowing we hadn’t been in the gym. We played much better than Friday, but our movement just isn’t there. We didn’t get the shots we wanted until the fourth.”

Fulk is left wondering what will it take to get back to the winning side.

“We kicked them on the glass in the first half, but that fizzled in the second,” he said. “We turned the ball over on our first three possessions in the fourth. We are struggling to score right now, so we can’t afford to be giving away possessions. We also struggle when adversity sets in because we haven’t learned how to handle it. We have to learn how to put fourth quarters together.”

Fort’s scoring woes are reflected in the team totals as only two players had more than one field goal. Veney finished with 16 points and Henry Gutshall had two baskets for four points.

Bowers, despite being the focal point of Fort’s multiple defenses, managed 18 points, 10 coming in the second half. Canterbury scored seven of his 11 in the final quarter.

Fort travels to Harrisonburg on Monday before both teams continue their district schedules Tuesday with a pair of rematches. The Bison will look to complete the season sweep of Staunton with a trip to the Paul Hatcher Gymnasium, while the Indians will try to do likewise when they travel to Riverheads. Gap had beaten the Storm in the first meeting 59-53 and Fort took down the Gladiators 48-39.

The Indians won the jayvee game 52-27. Carter Fink paced the winners with 23 points, while Jalen Alexander added 13. Cooper Cline topped the Bison with nine and Lance Simmers tallied eight.

**BUFFALO GAP 44, FORT DEFIANCE 39**

**FORT DEFIANCE 15 11 7 6 — 39**  
**BUFFALO GAP 9 10 11 14 — 44**

**FORT DEFIANCE (39) — Smith 1 0-0 3, Johnson 1 0-0 3, Jones 1 0-0 2, Garber 1 0-0 3, Veney 6 2-5 16, Hebb 1 0-2 3, Liskey 1 0-0 3, Gutshall 3 0-0 6, Simmons, Bruce, TOTALS 15 2-5 39.**

**BUFFALO GAP (44) — Bowers 7 2-2 18, J.Hewitt 1 0-0 3, Ingram 1 2-2 4,**

Canterbury 3 5-7 11, LaPorte 3 1-2 8, Lowe, Hohenstein, TOTALS 15 10-13 44.

FDHS Varsity vs Buffalo Gap

January 22, 2022

At Buffalo Gap High School

For the second game in a row, Fort Defiance went into the fourth quarter with a comfortable lead and exited the game with a loss. Fort led the entire game and was up 39 – 34 with two and a half minutes left in the game. Then Buffalo Gap scored the last ten points of the game to take a 44 – 39 stunning victory. Fort's record dropped to 4 – 7 for the season, 1 – 3 in the Skyline District.

As in the Waynesboro game, FDHS started out well. Tyreek Veney missed his first attempt from the floor but Josh Jones was there to get the rebound and cash in two points. Kaden Johnson hit a three pointer to give FDHS a 5 – 0 start. After a three pointer by Buffalo Gap's Bennet Bowers, Tyreek answered with a three pointer. Moments later, Henry Gutshall scored in close to run the Indians' lead to 10 – 3. Gap responded with a run of their own to get the score to 10 – 7 but Tyreek got a steal and layup to give FDHS a 12 – 7 lead. Jack Liskey came in and immediately hit a three pointer. BG ended the quarter's scoring with a field goal leaving it 15 – 9 in favor of Fort after one.

Gap scored twice to open the second quarter to pull within two but Tyreek answered with a jumper to make it 17 – 13. The two teams traded baskets with Sam Garber getting a three pointer to help Fort's cause. Bradley Hebb and Tyreek both scored off drives then Bradley found Henry underneath to push the score to 26 – 19 in favor of Fort Defiance at the end of the second quarter.

Buffalo Gap opened the second half with a three pointer but Fort responded with a run of its own with Tyreek hitting a field goal and two free throws followed by a Drew Smith three pointer to give Fort its biggest lead, 33 – 22. FDHS then made some crucial turnovers and missed shots to end the quarter as Gap closed to 33 – 30 on a Bennet Bowers layup as time expired.

The fourth quarter was another down-the-stretch-disaster for this team. Bradley was able to hit a three pointer to push the Indians' lead to 36 – 30 but then they went cold. Buffalo Gap closed to 36 – 34 but Tyreek hit a three to give the visiting team a 39 – 34 lead with 2:32 to go. From there, FDHS went scoreless while Buffalo Gap made a three point play, a three pointer then hit both ends of two one-and-ones from the free throw line. Fort was down by 3 with 15.8 seconds to go. Drew missed a three pointer but Tyreek got the rebound and attempted a three pointer. Had he hit all three of his free throws the game would have been tied but he missed the first two, then deliberately tried to miss the third but his shot didn't hit the rim so the Bison

got the ball out of bounds. They were fouled and hit the two free throws for a final score of 44 – 39.

Here is Fort's box score for the game:

<b>Name</b>	<b>FG</b>	<b>FT</b>	<b>Total</b>
Landon Simmons	0	0-0	0
Drew Smith	1	0-0	3
Kaden Johnson	1	0-0	3
Josh Jones	1	0-0	2
Conner Patterson	0	0-0	0
Sam Garber	1	0-0	3
Tyreek Veney	6	2-5	16
Bradley Hebb	2	0-2	5
Jack Liskey	1	0-0	3
Alphonso Bruce	0	0-0	0
Henry Gutshall	2	0-0	4
<b>FDHS</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2-7</b>	<b>39</b>