

FDHS Outplays Rockbridge in Season Opener

Fort Defiance High School opened the 2022-23 Boys Varsity Basketball season with a solid 50 – 42 win over Rockbridge on November 29 at FDHS. The tall Wildcats featured a roster with four players 6’3” or taller but Fort held its own led by Tyreek Veney with 15 points and Henry Gutshall with 11. Key to the win was a strong defensive effort in the third quarter when Rockbridge went 6:30 with only three points while Fort broke open a 22 – 22 tie to extend the lead to 35 – 25 going into the fourth quarter.

Starting for the Indians were Kaden Johnson, Sam Garber, Jack Liskey, Tyreek, and Henry. Henry opened the Indians’ season with a jumper from the foul line. The Wildcats then went on a scoring blitz with two three pointers and a foul shot and led 7 – 2 with 4:31 to go in the first quarter. Henry hit one of two free throws then Tyreek scored on a drive off a steal. A few moments later, he hit a three pointer to give the Indians an 8 – 7 lead. Conner Patterson’s jumper increased Fort’s lead to 10 – 7 before Rockbridge closed the quarter with two jumpers to take a 11 – 10 lead after one quarter.

Tyreek hit one of two free throws to tie the score as the second quarter opened and Conner’s field goal made it 13 – 11 with 6:54 to go in the second. After Rockbridge evened the score, Sam gave Fort the lead back at 15 – 13 and Gio Armendariz Cruz extended the lead with a close-in jumper. Bradley Hebb capitalized on a steal to give the Indians a 19 – 13 lead with 5:30 to go. Neither team scored for the next two minutes until Gio’s 3-pointer pushed Fort’s lead to 22 – 13. Rockbridge scored two field goals in the last two minutes to leave the score 22 – 17 at the half.

The third quarter didn’t start well for FDHS. Rockbridge tied the game with 6:30 left before Fort clamped down on defense. Kaden hit both of his free throws and Tyreek’s 3-pointer pushed Fort’s lead back to 27 – 22. Rockbridge closed to 27 – 24 but Henry’s spinning move gave Fort a 29 – 24 edge. He was fouled on the play and hit his free throw to make it 30 – 24. After a mad loose ball scramble, Tyreek grabbed the ball and pumped in a three pointer to give Fort a nine point lead. Sam’s steal and layup gave Fort its biggest lead at 35 – 24. Rockbridge managed only one free throw down the stretch of the quarter making the score Fort 35, Rockbridge 25 after three quarters.

The teams traded baskets to start the fourth. Tyreek’s deuce made it 37 – 27 before Rockbridge hit a three pointer. Sam hit one of two free throws with 4:54 to go to give Fort a 38 – 30 lead. Rockbridge’s attempt to make a comeback was thwarted with two monster blocked shots by Sam on the next two possessions. Fort took a timeout with 4:02 to go before Henry was fouled. He hit both ends of the one-and-one and Sam’s layup gave the Indians some breathing room at 42 – 30 with three minutes to go. Rockbridge hit a three pointer to narrow the lead but the Wildcats were forced to foul on the next several possessions. Unfortunately for them, they fouled Fort’s best free throw shooters in Henry, Jack, and Tyreek. Tyreek made one of two free throws to give Fort a 42 – 35 lead. The Wildcats closed within five but Jack hit both of his foul shots with 1:29 to go. Rockbridge quickly scored but they fouled Henry who hit both of his free throws to give Fort a 47 – 39 lead. They fouled him again and he hit one of two to make the score 48 – 39. Rockbridge’s three pointer brought them within six at 48 – 42 with 8.8 seconds. They quickly

fouled Jack who again buried both of his foul shots to make the final score Fort 50, Rockbridge 42.

Eight Indians got on the scoreboard led by Tyreek and Henry. Rockbridge was led by Henry Lambert with 11 points. Rockbridge hurt itself at the free throw line, making only 7 of 16 shots. Fort had an uncharacteristic number of missed layups and turnovers but rebounded very well against the taller Wildcats. Last year, Fort split its two games with Rockbridge, losing the season opener. The Indians play again on Thursday night against Turner Ashby on the Knight's court. They have a rematch with Rockbridge scheduled on December 9.

Before the game started, Tyreek and Alphonzo Bruce received the Michael Ruckman Courage Award, named in honor of FDHS graduate Mike Ruckman who died in 2021 after an 8-year battle with cancer. Both Tyreek and Alphonzo lost their fathers during 2021.

Fort's Box Score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
Gio Armendariz Cruz	1	1	0-0	5
Bradley Hebb	1	0	0-0	2
Kaden Johnson	0	0	2-2	2
Conner Patterson	2	0	0-0	4
Sam Garber	3	0	1-2	7
Tyreek Veney	2	3	2-4	15
Jack Liskey	0	0	4-4	4
Jalen Alexander	0	0	0-1	0
Henry Gutshall	2	0	7-9	11
TOTAL	11	4	16-22	50

Rockbridge's Box Score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
Brandon Mays	3	1	0-1	9
Lincoln Hundley	0	0	0-0	0
Andreas Poindexter	0	0	0-2	0
Matthew Burkhart	2	1	2-2	9
Henry Lambert	1	3	0-2	11
Keaton Owsley	1	0	3-4	5
Tucker Entsminger	0	0	0-0	0
Davonde Stores	0	0	1-2	1
Milo Mulitalo	3	0	1-3	7
TOTAL	10	5	7-16	42

The Daily News Record had this small article about the game:

Fort Defiance 50, Rockbridge County 42: In Don Landes Gymnasium on Tuesday, Tyreek Veney scored 15 points to guide Fort Defiance to a non-district win over Rockbridge County.

Henry Gutshall added 11 points for the Indians (1-0) while Samuel Garber had seven.

For the Wildcats (0-1), Henry Lambert led the way with 11 points while Brandon Mays and Matthew Burkhart each added nine and Milo Mulitalo finished with seven in the loss.

Rockbridge County 11 6 8 17 — 42

Fort Defiance 6 16 13 15 — 50

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY (42) — Mays 4 0-1 9, Hundley 0 0-0 0, Poindexter 0 0-2 0, Burkhart 3 2-2 9, Lambert 4 0-2 11, Owsley 2 3-4 5, Entsminger 0 0-0 0, Stores 0 1-2 1, Mulitalo 6 1-3 7. Totals 15 7-16 42.

FORT DEFIANCE (50) — Cruz 2 0-0 5, Hebb 1 0-0 2, Johnson 0 2-2 2, Patterson 2 0-0 4, Garber 3 1-2 7, Veney 5 2-4 15, Liskey 0 4-4 4, Gutshall 2 7-9 11. Totals 17 16-22 50.

3-Point Goals — Rockbridge County 5 (Lambert 3, Mays, Burkhart), Fort Defiance 4 (Veney 3, Cruz).