

FDHS Late Spurt Gives Indians a 89 – 87 win over Turner Ashby

Fort Defiance rallied from a 79 – 76 deficit with 2:33 to go to take a 89 – 87 win over Turner Ashby on December 12 in the Don Landes Gym. Carter Fink had two big put backs in the final minute and Gio Armendariz Cruz had a drive for two then iced the game with two free throws with 9.3 seconds left to give FDHS its second win of the season. Fort is now 2 – 3 for the year.

Sam Garber led the home team with 22 points. Gio added 12, 11 of which came in the 4th quarter, Bradley Hebb scored 10, Carter Fink 9, and Gus Gutshall 8 as the Indians got revenge on the Knights who beat them 94 – 88 on November 30.

The game started strangely as Fort was assessed a technical foul for dunking in the warm-ups. TAHS hit one of two free throws to take a 1 – 0 lead. Jasigh Ransome scored on a layup to give FD a 2 – 1 lead. After a Turner Ashby bucket, Gus got an offensive rebound and made a nice put back to put the Indians up 4 – 3. Bradley scored on a drive then Trey Miller hit a three pointer to push the lead to 9 – 5. With 3:09 to go, Bradley hit a three pointer giving the Indians a quick 12 – 5 lead. Gio made one of two free throws then the Knights scored to make it 13 – 7. Sam then got a breakaway and slammed down two to give Fort its biggest lead at 15 – 7. TAHS clawed back to 15 – 14 before Sam's putback made it 17 – 14. TAHS then scored the next four points to go up 18 – 17 but Rhylan Martin's three pointer gave Fort a 20 – 18 lead at the end of the first quarter.

TAHS quickly shot ahead 22 – 20 until Sam hit a three pointer and followed it with a drive. Rhylan hit one of two free throws and Bradley did the same which gave the home team a 27 – 22 lead with 5:05 to go in the quarter. The visitors scored thirteen straight points to take a 35 – 27 lead with 2:33 to go. Gus then kicked the ball out to Jasigh who hit a three pointer to break Fort's dry spell. After a TAHS basket, Sam got two and Carter Fink turned an offensive rebound into two points but still TAHS led 39 – 34 with 35.8 seconds left. TAHS scored again but Tripp Hanger fired in a three pointer near the buzzer to leave the score at TAHS 41, FDHS 37 at the half.

During the first half, Fort was plagued with poor ball handling and shooting by its guards who committed numerous turnovers and missed a bunch of shots. Offensive rebounds and defensive steals kept the Indians within striking distance at the break, though.

Del Ray Jones opened the third quarter with a three pointer. After a TAHS score, Carter Berry got a bucket on an assist from Gio. Turner Ashby went up 47 – 42 but Bradley scored on two consecutive drives to get the Indians within a point. They finally got the lead back when Del Ray fed Gus under the basket for two. Sam was fouled shooting a three pointer and he made all three foul shots which gave Fort a 51 – 47 lead. After the visitors scored again, Jalen Alexander made two of two from the free throw line and Fort's lead improved to 53 – 49. Austin Metz made a field goal which put the Indians up by six but TAHS roared back to take a 58 – 55 lead. Gus got an offensive rebound and was fouled on his shot. He buried both free throws to make it 58 – 57 in favor of the visitors. After a TAHS score, Gus again scored in close with a nice feed

from Jasigh. TAHS made two free throws to go up 62 – 59 then Sam stole the ball and pulled up for a two pointer to make it 62 – 61. TAHS jumped out to a 66 – 61 lead but Del Ray’s tip at the buzzer got Fort within three at 66 – 63 at the end of the quarter. Del Ray had a superb quarter, coming up with several defensive steals.

In the fourth quarter, Carter Fink’s trey tied the score. Sam scored on an assist from Del Ray but TA’s three pointer followed by a two pointer gave the lead back to them at 71 – 68. Sam hit one of two free throws making it 71 – 69 with 6:22 to go. Both teams then went ice cold for two minutes. Gio finally scored at the 4:28 mark to knot the score at 71’s. Rhylan got a nice feed from Jalen to give Fort a 73 – 71 lead but the Knights scored six in a row to take a four point lead. Sam’s three pointer got the Indians within one at 77 – 76 before TAHS extended their lead to 79 – 76 with under three minutes left.

Led by Gio and Carter Fink, the Indians outscored the Knights 13 – 8 in the last 2:33. Gio got two straight drives to drop, tying the score at 80 – 80. He made one of two free throws to give FD a 81 – 80 lead but TA scored again to retake the lead at 82 – 81. Carter then made a nice tip in and Gio again scored on a drive making the score 85 – 82 with 38 seconds left. Carter again scored in close to give the home team a commanding 87 – 82 lead with 23 seconds to go. Gio’s two free throws with 9.3 seconds left gave Fort a 89 – 85 lead. The final score was 89 – 87.

Grandfather’s note: Gus had his best game of the season, scoring eight points and getting numerous offensive rebounds. It was good to see him playing more and doing well.

Fort’s Box Score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
Gio Armendariz Cruz	4	0	4-6	12
Bradley Hebb	3	1	1-3	10
Jasigh Ransome	1	1	0-0	5
Carter Fink	3	1	0-0	9
Trey Miller	0	1	0-0	3
Sam Garber	6	2	4-5	22
Austin Metz	1	0	0-0	2
Evan Braun	0	0	0-0	0
Rhylan Martin	1	1	1-2	6
Del Ray Jones	1	1	0-0	5
Tripp Hanger	0	1	0-0	3
Jalen Alexander	0	0	2-2	2
Gus Gutshall	3	0	2-4	8
Carter Berry	1	0	0-0	2
TOTAL	24	9	14-24	89

The article below is from the Daily News Record:

High School Boys Basketball

Indians Light It Up In Close Win Over TA

By CODY ELLIOTT Daily News-Record

Dec 13, 2023

After battling in a down-to-the-wire thriller less than two weeks ago, Fort Defiance and Turner Ashby did the same.

Sam Garber, a 6-foot-5 standout senior forward, scored a team-high 22 points as the Indians earned a hard-fought 89-87 victory over the Knights in non-district boys basketball action at Don Landes Gymnasium on Tuesday.

There were 13 players that reached the scoring column for Fort, which rallied in the fourth quarter for the win.

FDHS sophomore guard Gio Armendariz Cruz continued his strong early-season play, finishing with 12 points, including 11 in that final frame, while junior guard Bradley Hebb also hit double digits with 10 points in the victory.

Carter Fink, a 6-foot-3 senior forward, scored seven of his nine points in the fourth quarter for the Indians.

Junior forward Gus Gutshall added eight points for Fort, while junior forward Rhylan Martin finished with six.

The Knights were led by sophomore guard Solomon Shifflett, who exploded for a career-high 23 points, including 17 in the second half, while senior wing Jack Fox continued to play well with 18 points of his own in the loss.

Jayden Lacey, a 6-foot standout freshman guard, also hit double figures with 12 points for Turner Ashby.

Sophomore forward Jackson Jeffrey finished with 10 points for TA, while senior forward Brad Moseley had nine.

The Indians (2-3) are back in action Thursday with a non-district home game against Alleghany, while the Knights (3-2) will open up their Valley District schedule with a home game against William Monroe on Thursday.

Turner Ashby 18 23 25 21 — 87

Fort Defiance 20 17 26 26 — 89

TURNER ASHBY (3-2) — O. Laver 2 1-2 5, J. Lacey 5 1-2 12, S. Shifflett 10 2-2 23, J. Riner 1 0-2 3, J. Fox 7 3-6 18, C. Simmers 0 1-1, J. Jeffrey 5 0-0 10, B. Moseley 3 2-3 9, A. Perez 2 2-2 6, B. Laver 0 0-0 0. Totals 35 12-20 87.

FORT DEFIANCE (2-3) — G. Armendariz Cruz 4 4-6 12, B. Hebb 4 1-2 10, J. Ransome 2 0-2 5, C. Fink 4 0-0 9, T. Miller 1 0-0 3, S. Garber 8 4-5 22, A. Metz 1 0-0 2, E. Braun 0 0-0 0, R. Martin 2 1-2 6, D. Jones 2 0-0 5, T. Hanger 1 0-0 3, J. Alexander 0 2-2 2, G. Gutshall 3 2-4 8, C. Berry 1 0-0 2. Totals 33 14-23 89.

3-Point Goals — Fort Defiance 9 (S. Garber 2, B. Hebb, J. Ransome, C. Fink, T. Miller, R. Martin, D. Jones, T. Hanger), Turner Ashby 5 (J. Lacey, S. Shifflett, J. Riner, J. Fox, B. Moseley).

Cody Elliott

Sports Editor