

Fort Defiance Indians outduel Riverheads Gladiators 86 - 64

The Fort Defiance Indians led the entire way in handing the Riverheads Gladiators their ninth consecutive loss of the season, 86 – 64, at the Riverheads Gym on January 30. The win evens Fort's overall record for the season at 8 – 8, 5 – 1 in the Shenandoah District, and sets up an important Shenandoah District game this Thursday against the 14 – 3 Stuarts Draft Cougars who have won eleven games in a row and are tied with Staunton in the District with a 7 – 0 record.

Fort opened up an early lead thanks to a 3 pointer by Ryland Martin, a put back by Carter Fink, and a triple from Del Ray Jones to run out to a 8 – 2 lead in the first quarter. Riverheads' three pointer made it 8 – 5 then Carter F. again scored in close for the Indians. Sam Garber added two free throws and Jasigh Ransome added a free throw and a driving layup to make it 15 – 7 with 4:09 to go in the quarter. Riverheads scored the next six points until Gio Armendariz Cruz hit a three and added a free throw to make the score 19 – 15 with 2:00 to go. Riverheads got within two at 19 – 17 then Gio scored on a pass from Tripp Hanger to make it 21 – 17. Gus Gutshall then scored on two consecutive possessions in the paint for the Indians. Tripp followed with another three pointer and, as time expired, Gio fired in a trey to give the Indians a comfortable 29 – 17 lead after one quarter.

For the next two quarters, Riverheads stayed within striking distance but never caught up. Rhylan again bombed in a three pointer to open the second quarter. Gio's floater in the lane made it 34 – 19 with 7:06 to go. Gus then grabbed an offensive rebound and scored in close. Both teams then went cold until Tripp's bucket in the lane gave Fort a 38 – 24 lead. Austin Metz got a basket to fall giving the Indians a 40 – 29 lead but Riverheads kept chipping their way back. Fort managed a free throw from Carter F. but meanwhile Riverheads scored six points to make it 41 – 35. Evan Braun then popped in a three pointer and Rhylan made a free throw which left the score at 45 – 36 at the half.

The third quarter was nothing to brag about for either team. Fort managed only 14 points in the quarter while Riverheads scored 11. Fort's scores came on a put back by Carter F., a free throw and layup by Gio, Sam's only field goal of the game, another three pointer by Tripp, free throws by Austin and Gus, and a layup by Rhylan.

Fort finished the game with a 27 point fourth quarter. During this quarter, Gio scored 11 points including two three pointers. Evan and Jalen each scored in the lane, Carter F. made a free throw and a field goal, Jasigh got two on an offensive rebound plus a three pointer, Rhylan made a foul shot, then Carter Berry closed the scoring with a three pointer on a kick out from Gus.

Gio led the FDHS scoring with 23. Carter Fink dropped in 10 as did Rhylan. Jasigh and Tripp each had eight and Gus scored seven. Twelve Indians scored. Sam's scoring slump continued. He made only one field goal and sat out early on with foul trouble. J. Crawford led Riverheads with 17.

Grandfather's note: I hope by the end of the season I'll go home feeling really good about a Fort game. I'm 0 – 16 so far. Tonight, Fort won handily but, in reality, Riverheads was a very weak opponent whose record is now 4 – 15, 0 – 10. The Indians only made 12 of 28 free throws tonight. There were the usual plethora of turnovers and selfish players not seeing open teammates. Plus, I continue to be upset over Gus' lack of playing time. Tonight, for example, he was 3 – 4 from the field, outscored seven of his teammates, had several rebounds, and committed zero turnovers. His reward—he played two 37 second spurts in the fourth quarter. His playing time is the least on the team yet I'll wager he has the highest field goal shooting percentage of anyone, the fewest turnovers, and more than his share of rebounds and assists. He does need to improve his free throw shooting; for the season he's made only 41% of his foul shots but even that statistic is better than four of his teammates'. I know that my words are those of a biased grandfather but the statistics speak for themselves. Is anyone looking at them besides me?

Fort's Box Score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
Gio Armendariz Cruz	4	4	3-6	23
Bradley Hebb	0	0	0-0	0
Jasigh Ransome	2	1	1-6	8
Carter Fink	4	0	2-5	10
Trey Miller	0	0	0-0	0
Sam Garber	1	0	2-2	4
Austin Metz	1	0	1-2	3
Evan Braun	1	1	0-0	5
Rhylan Martin	1	2	2-4	10
Del Ray Jones	0	1	0-0	3
Tripp Hanger	1	2	0-0	8
Jalen Alexander	1	0	0-0	2
Gus Gutshall	3	0	1-3	7
Carter Berry	0	1	0-0	3
TOTAL	19	12	12-28	86