

Fort Defiance opens Shenandoah District play with a 108 – 82 drubbing of Riverheads

The Fort Defiance Indians, aided by a remarkable 20 – 0 run in the second quarter, overwhelmed a tired Riverheads team 108 – 82 in the Don Landes Gym on January 5. Fort roared back from a 40 – 23 deficit at the 6:21 mark in the second quarter to take a 43 – 40 lead with 2:23 left in the period. From there it was all FDHS as they improved their season record to 4 – 6, 1 – 0 in the Shenandoah District. Riverheads fell to 4 – 8, 0 – 3.

The first quarter had the visiting Gladiators dominating FDHS. After Gio Armendariz Cruz tied the score 2 – 2 with a drive, Riverheads scored the next five points to go up 7 – 2 before Sam Garber scored in close. Riverheads hit a trey then Tripp Hanger hit the first of his four three pointers to make it 10 – 7 in favor of the visitors. Riverheads got an easy snowbird after a missed free throw by the Indians, then added a field goal and a three pointer to go up 17 – 7 before Jasigh Ransome banged home a three pointer. Jasigh then made two free throws to pull the Indians within five at 17 – 12. Riverheads extended their lead to 22 – 12 before Gio hit two free throws. Their lead went to 24 – 15 after Evan Braun made one of two free throws. Jasigh made another three pointer and Sam added two on a drive but Riverheads, aided by good free throw shooting, jumped out to a 32 – 20 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter started poorly for the Indians as Riverheads scored the first five points to go up 37 – 20. After Del Ray Jones made a three pointer for FDHS, Riverheads answered with a three of their own to take a 40 – 23 lead with 6:21 to go in the quarter. This is when the script took an abrupt change. Over the next four minutes, Fort got hot both shooting and on defense with numerous steals. Rhylan Martin hit a field goal then a three pointer. Jasigh made two points on a drive. Carter Fink got two points on an offensive rebound. Gio made two free throws with 3:32 to go getting the home team within six at 40 – 34. Trey hit two free throws then Del Ray bombed in another three pointer to make it 40 – 39. Then, Trey was fouled shooting a three pointer and made two of his three shots to give FDHS their first lead at 41 – 40 with 2:23 to go. Fort would not give up the lead the rest of the night. Gio scored two on a nice pass from Carter Fink then he made two consecutive drives to send the home team into the locker room at half with a 47 – 42 lead. Fort had outscored Riverheads 27 – 10 in the quarter.

The Indians poured it on in the third quarter as Riverheads started to wilt under the intense pressure from Fort. Jasigh scored on a drive, Trey made another three, then Sam hit a three to give Fort a 55 – 48 lead. Sam's field goal and Evan's triple extended the lead to 60 – 48. Gio scored again in the paint to increase the lead to 62 – 50. After two Riverheads free throws, Gus Gutshall took a nice pass from Jasigh and scored to make it 64 – 52. Tripp scored on a layup with 2:21 to go and Sam's deuce made it 68 – 53 with 1:10 left in the quarter. Tripp hit another three pointer and Gio's two foul shots ended the third quarter for FDHS with the Indians enjoying a 73 – 57 lead.

The fourth quarter saw Fort score 35 points as Riverheads tired. Gio drove for two, Sam bombed in another three pointer, as did both Trey and Tripp as FDHS ran up a 84 – 63 lead with 5:20 to go. Gio and Carter Fink each scored in the paint then Jalen Anderson made one of two free

throws to make it 89 – 70. Sam took a nice feed from Jalen for an easy two points to make it 91 – 70. Riverheads closed the score to 91 – 76 before Gio made two more free throws and Sam banged in another three to make it 96 – 76. Tripp’s fourth three pointer ran the Indian score to 99 and Sam broke the century mark on a drive with 1:07 to go. He was fouled on the shot and his free throw made the score 102 – 82. Fort’s scoring ended with three pointers from Rhylan and Trey.

Just glancing at the score, one would think Fort Defiance had a great game. It was certainly a fine comeback after a slow start, but the Indians left plenty of room for improvement. For example, they missed 19 of 36 free throws and had plenty of turnovers though Riverheads had many more. Three point shooting was better than it has been; Fort made 17 treys in the contest. Fort played without Bradley Hebb who appeared to be injured and was not in uniform.

Sam and Gio each had 22 points. Tripp had 14 and Trey had his best game of the season with 13 points. Jasigh was the 5th Indian scoring in double figures with 12. Eleven players scored for FDHS. Fort continues its Shenandoah District play next week with games against Waynesboro and Buffalo Gap.

Grandfather’s note: Despite the win, I was not smiling at the end of this game. Gus did not play one second in the fourth quarter despite the insurmountable lead. When he did play in the first three quarters, he had zero turnovers, scored a field goal, and got a couple of offensive rebounds. He had zero fouls. I cannot fathom the coaches’ reasoning of keeping him and Austin Metz on the bench for the entire quarter while they rotated five players at a time throughout the quarter. Gus did play some in the first three quarters and did well. There were twelve family members who attended this game to see him play and we all left with an empty feeling. Ugh!

Fort’s Box Score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
Gio Armendariz Cruz	7	0	8-8	22
Bradley Hebb	0	0	0-0	0
Jasigh Ransome	2	2	2-2	12
Carter Fink	2	0	0-6	4
Trey Miller	0	3	4-5	13
Sam Garber	6	3	1-3	22
Austin Metz	0	0	0-0	0
Evan Braun	0	1	1-6	4
Rhylan Martin	1	2	0-2	8
Del Ray Jones	0	2	0-0	6
Tripp Hanger	1	4	0-0	14
Jalen Alexander	0	0	1-2	1
Gus Gutshall	1	0	0-0	2
Carter Berry	0	0	0-0	0
TOTAL	20	17	17-36	108

The following article appeared in the Staunton NewsLeader:

Shenandoah District boys basketball

Fort Defiance topped the 100-point mark for the first time this year behind 22 points from both Gio Armendariz Cruz and Sam Garber. Fort beat **Riverheads** 108-82.

Riverheads jumped out to a 32-20 lead after the first quarter, getting 12 points from JP Crawford, but Fort rallied in the second quarter for a five-point lead and continued to stretch the lead throughout the second half.

In addition to Armendariz Cruz and Garber, three other Fort players finished in double figures in the win. Tripp Hanger had 14 points, Trey Miller finished with 13 and Jasigh Ransome had 12 points in the win.

Crawford led all scorers with 23 points for Riverheads while Jackson Brammer added 14 for the Gladiators. Riverheads dropped to 4-8 on the season.