

Fort Defiance batters Buffalo Gap 94 - 70

The Fort Defiance Indians jumped out to a comfortable 23 point lead at the half and held off a late Buffalo Gap rally to beat the Bison 94 – 70 in the Buffalo Gap gym on February 6. The win improved the Indians' record to 10 – 9, 7 – 2 in the Shenandoah District. Gap fell to 8 – 12, 2 – 9.

The Indians made 15 three point baskets in the game and it was four fourth quarter threes that repelled the home team after BGHS had narrowed Fort's lead to just eleven with 6:05 to go in the game. Fort made four consecutive three pointers at that point to put the game out of reach. Shooting from beyond the arc was inconsistent for the Indians; they made 15 but took 49 attempts in the game. They were 0 – 12 in the third quarter.

Sam Garber opened the game with a triple from the top of the key. Gap responded with two jumpers to take their only lead of the game at 4 – 3. Rhylan Martin made a three for FDHS then Sam got two in the lane to put Fort back on top 8 – 4 with 6:08 left in the quarter. After a Buffalo Gap score, Gio Armendariz Cruz scored in the lane then Austin Metz drilled home a three pointer to make it 13 – 6. After two BGHS free throws, Sam scored on a drive then Carter Fink got two on a put back. Gap scored the next three points. Gus Gutshall then got on the scoring board with a nice jumper in the lane after he had snared an offensive rebound. Sam's second three of the game gave Fort a double digit lead at 22 – 11 with 2:00 left. Tripp Hanger's two improved the lead to 24 – 11 but Gap scored the final five points of the quarter which ended at 24 – 16 in favor of the visitors.

The second quarter saw a 33 point outburst by Fort Defiance. Carter Fink scored, was fouled, and made his free throw to open the quarter. Rhylan hit another trey to make it 30 – 18. Carter F. then took a nice pass from Austin and, on the next possession, made one of two free throws to extend the lead to 33 – 18. Again Carter was in the right place with an offensive rebound and score to make it 35 – 18 with 5:26 to go in the quarter. Three point baskets were then scored by Del Ray Jones, Sam, and Tripp to give the Indians a 46 – 22 lead with 3:05 to go. Gio got another basket in the lane then Del Ray made his second three pointer of the quarter to give FDHS a 51 – 23 lead, their largest of the night. Gus made one of two free throws before Sam scored five more, one on a three pointer and one on a drive. Gap scored the final four points of the half which ended at 57 – 34 in favor of the Indians.

Fort's third quarter was very unproductive. The team had shot well in the first half but couldn't get a three pointer to drop the entire quarter, going 0 – 12. After a BGHS basket to open the half, Sam got two on a put back. Carter Fink got another old-fashioned three point play so Fort held a 62 – 39 lead with 4:34 to go. Sam and Carter each got field goals to push the lead to 66 – 42. After Gap scored, Gio scored again in the lane to make it 68 – 44. Fort went cold for the next couple of minutes while Gap narrowed the lead to 68 – 51 before Sam's field goal gave Fort a 70 – 51 lead at the end of the third quarter.

You would think that a nineteen point lead would be safe going into the fourth quarter, but the way Fort's frenetic offense and sometimes inept defense is, no lead is secure. Sure enough, after Gus' free throw gave Fort a 71 – 53 lead with 7:22 left in the game, Buffalo Gap started its

comeback. They scored the next seven points to pull with eleven at 71 – 60 with just over six minutes left. Gio’s two pushed the lead back to thirteen but only momentarily as Gap scored on its next possession, making it 73 – 62 with 6:05 to go. Fort’s three point shooters then got hot again, with triples by Tripp, Del Ray, Carter Berry, and Tripp again gave Fort a commanding 85 – 66 lead. Sam’s two free throws made it 87 – 68 with 2:38 to go. Down the stretch, Jasigh Ransome had two jumpers in the paint and Rhylan hit his third trey to make the final score 94 – 70.

Fort played without Bradley Hebb and Trey Miller, both nursing injuries. Fort has three tough games remaining: Staunton, Stuarts Draft, and Wilson. The Staunton game this coming Friday will be Senior Night for the Indians as the last two games are both away games.

Sam led Fort’s scoring with 28. Carter F. had 15 and Tripp 11. K. Fitzgerald had 20 for the Bison.

Grandfather’s note: Gus played sparingly, as always, but at least he did see action in all quarters tonight. He had a bunch of rebounds, zero turnovers, and four points. With the way Fort rotates five players at a time every minute or so of action, there are many times when he is on the court but doesn’t touch the ball. As I’ve said way too many times this year, in order for him to touch the ball on offense he has to get a rebound from a teammate’s missed shot. His teammates give him plenty of opportunities for offensive rebounds since their shot making ability is quite subpar. He seemed to be happy after the game tonight and that is what is most important.

Fort’s Box Score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
Gio Armendariz Cruz	4	0	0-0	8
Bradley Hebb	0	0	0-0	0
Jasigh Ransome	2	0	0-2	4
Carter Fink	6	0	3-4	15
Trey Miller	0	0	0-0	0
Sam Garber	7	4	2-2	28
Austin Metz	0	1	0-0	3
Evan Braun	0	0	0-0	0
Rhylan Martin	0	3	0-0	9
Del Ray Jones	0	3	0-0	9
Tripp Hanger	1	3	0-0	11
Jalen Alexander	0	0	0-0	0
Gus Gutshall	1	0	2-4	4
Carter Berry	0	1	0-0	3
TOTAL	21	15	7-12	94