

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Fort Defiance boys basketball team falls on road to Turner Ashby

News Virginian Staff Reports

Dec 2, 2021



Fort Defiance's Samuel Garber prepares to shoot Thursday against the Turner Ashby Knights in Bridgewater.

Logan Bogert, For The News Virginian

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BRIDGEWATER — Turner Ashby jumped out to a 15-1 lead after one quarter Thursday evening and the Knights went on to defeat Fort Defiance, 68-50, in nondistrict boys basketball action.

By the time Fort scored its first field goal with 6:07 left in the second quarter, the Indians were in a huge hole, trailing 19-3. At the end of the first half, TA was in control 33-16.

The Knights pushed the margin to 20 points, 37-17, early in the third quarter, but Fort ran off 10 unanswered points to trim the margin to single digits. Trailing 43-24, Tyreek Veney sandwiched a pair of 3-pointers around two free throws by Kaden Johnson to pull the Indians to within 43-32. Samuel Garber capped the 10-0 spurt by kissing a driving layup off the glass to cut the TA lead to nine 43-34.

Jacob Keplinger ended the Fort run with a short jumper and 1-of-2 at the foul line to put the Knights up 46-34. Fort's Henry Gutshall worked inside to score in traffic, slicing the Knights' lead down to 10 points, 46-36, after three quarters of action.

TA outscored Fort 11-4 to start the fourth quarter, pushing its lead out to 57-40. After a 3-pointer by the Indians' Johnson, the Knights knocked down three 3-pointers during an 11-0 spurt to open up their biggest lead of the night, 68-43.

Turner Ashby torched the Indians from long range, hitting 10 shots from beyond the 3-point arc. Knights' guard Keplinger led all scorers with 22 points. Veney scored 16 points, all in the second half, and Johnson added 13 to pace the Indians' effort.

Here's Fort's Box Score:

| Name | FG | FT | Total |
|------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Landon Simmons | 1 | 1-2 | 3 |
| Kaden Johnson | 4 | 5-8 | 14 |
| Conner Patterson | 0 | 0-0 | 0 |
| Tyreek Veney | 6 | 0-0 | 15 |
| Jack Liskey | 0 | 2-2 | 2 |
| Alphonso Bruce | 0 | 0-0 | 0 |
| Henry Gutshall | 4 | 1-2 | 9 |
| FDHS | 18 | 9-14 | 50 |

FROM THE DNR:

Boys Basketball

Keplinger Helps Guide TA To Convincing Win

By CODY ELLIOTT Daily News-Record

Dec 2, 2021



Daniel Lin / DN-R

Turner Ashby's Owen Lyons drives around Fort Defiance's Henry Gutshall.

BRIDGEWATER — With Fort Defiance lingering around and trying to make it a close game, Jacob Keplinger released a 3 from the right wing that banked off the backboard and into the rim.

At that moment, the Turner Ashby senior guard said he knew that it was just his night.

"I was in a rhythm," Keplinger said. "Everything was just falling for me."

Keplinger, a versatile 5-foot-10 guard, finished with a career-high 22 points and the Knights led from start to finish in a 68-50 non-district win over the Indians in boys basketball action at home.

Turner Ashby jumped out to a 12-0 lead with the Indians not scoring until a free throw from Landon Simmons with 2:47 left in the opening frame. The Knights led 15-1 by the end of the first quarter.

"We came out ready to play today," Turner Ashby first-year coach Clay Harris, a Fort Defiance alum, said. "I was really proud of how we came out on the defensive end. We really got after it, got really active in our zone. We really looked to push the ball and got off to a good start there."

The Indians couldn't recover from their slow start as leading scorer Tyreek Veney was held scoreless until the second half. Fort cut the deficit to 10 in the fourth, but TA responded with an 18-3 run that gave the Knights their biggest lead of the night at 25 and set off a raucous celebration at home.

"One of the things I was worried about coming into the season, especially starting on the road for two games, is getting back to

playing games with people in the gym,” said Indians coach Brandon Fulk, whose team has now lost back-to-back games. “That’s definitely impacted us a bit. TA was really sharp. They had shots fall early and we didn’t. It took us a long time to get a rhythm.”

Keplinger led the Knights (2-0) with 22 points while Garret Spruhan had 14 and Trent Kiser added 10. Freshman Beau Baylor finished with 10 for TA in the victory while Adam Bass had six points.

“One of the things I like about them is they have two really confident ball handlers,” Fulk said. “They can shoot from all five positions on the floor. That’s not an ideal thing for us. I like they’re depth.”

Veney had 15 second-half points for Fort (0-2) while Kaden Johnson finished with 14 in the loss.

“Physically, I couldn’t ask for much more,” Fulk said. “Mentally, we’re just not a real smart basketball team. There are things easy to fix. Our issues are between the ears.”

The Indians, who are the reigning Shenandoah District champions, will still be a playoff contender.

But on Thursday, in front of his home crowd, it was Keplinger’s night to shine.

“We’ve got a bunch of playmakers,” Keplinger said. “We all push the ball, all play together.”

Fort Defiance 1 15 20 14 — 50

Turner Ashby 15 18 13 22 —68

FORT DEFIANCE (50) — Simmons 1 1-2 3, Johnson 4 5-8 14, Patterson 0 0-0 0, Garber 3 0-0 7, Veney 6 0-0 15, Liskey 0 2-2 2, Bruce 0 0-0 0, Gutshall 4 1-2 9. Totals 18 9-14 50.

TURNER ASHBY (68) — Quintanilla 0 0-0 0, Hoover 0 0-0 0, Gerber 1 2-2 4, Keplinger 8 3-5 22, Bass 2 0-0 6, Baylor 4, 1-2 10, Lyons 0 0-0 0, Kiser 4 2-3 12, Spruhan 6 0-0 14, Miller 0 0-0 0, Bravo 0-0 0, Bailey 0 0-0 0. Totals 25 8-14 68.

3-Point Goals — Fort Defiance 7 (Johnson 3, Veney 3, Garber), Turner Ashby 10 (Keplinger 3, Bass 2, Kiser 2, Spruhan 2, Baylor)

FDHS vs Turner Ashby High School

December 2, 2021

At Turner Ashby High School

The Indians fell to 0 – 2 as Turner Ashby handed Fort Defiance a 68 – 50 defeat at Turner Ashby High School. This game was oddly similar to Fort’s opener against Rockbridge County in which they fell far behind in the first quarter, battled back hard to get in contention in the next two quarters, only to have the home team pull away in the fourth quarter. This time, the Indians really dug themselves in a hole as Turner Ashby rolled to a 15 – 1 lead in the first quarter and then extended this lead to 19 – 1 before Henry Gutshall hit Fort’s first field goal.

The first quarter saw Turner Ashby hot from outside the three point line while FDHS could not buy a basket. Turner Ashby’s lineup featured a frontcourt with 6’5” and 6’3” players but it was the shooting of their guards, especially Jacob Keplinger, which plagued Fort all night. Keplinger ended up with 22 points.

Fort finally got started mid-quarter in the second but the hole was deep at that point. The halftime score was 33 – 16 in favor of the Knights.

The third quarter was a bright spot for FDHS. At one point they closed within nine at 43 – 34. Tyreek Veney finally was able to get his game going. After going scoreless in the first half, he poured in 15 in the second half. Henry had a good third quarter including a nice drive and bucket as time expired in the quarter. For the quarter, they outscored TAHS 20 – 13 making it 46 – 36 after three.

Turner Ashby hit a plethora of three pointers in the fourth quarter to break Fort's momentum. They extended their lead to 68 – 43 until Fort closed the game with a seven point run to make the final 68 – 50.

Henry had another solid game: lots of rebounds, one really good assist, no turnovers, and nine points. His picture was on the front sports page of the Daily News Record the following day. Besides Tyreek's 15 points, Kaden Johnson pitched in 14 including a couple of three pointers.

Fort again showed how much the loss of Josh Jones has meant. Besides the starters, Henry, Tyreek, Kaden, Sam Garber, and Jack Liskey, only Landon Simmons played much.

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