

Indians get revenge against Stuarts Draft, 66 - 61

Fort Defiance built a double digit lead in the first quarter then held off several Stuarts Draft comeback attempts to take a 66 – 61 well-earned victory over the Cougars on February 10 at Stuarts Draft. The win, which gave them a split with SDHS this season, improved their record to 12 – 8, 6 – 4 in the Shenandoah District. Draft's record fell to 13 – 8, 7 – 4 as they duel Fort for third place in the Shenandoah District. The win guarantees Fort will have a winning season with two regular season games left plus Regionals.

Fort came out smoking in the first quarter. Tripp Hanger fired in a three pointer to open the scoring. After a Stuarts Draft foul shot Bradley Hebb scored in the lane. Draft made a three pointer to get them within one at 5 – 4 with 5:35 to go in the quarter before Jasigh Ransome hit two consecutive three pointers to give the visitors a 11 – 4 lead with 3:10 to go. The Cougars got a bucket then Gio Armendariz Cruz swished a three pointer and followed that up with a drive in the lane to give Fort a 16 – 6 lead. Gus Gutshall then picked up an offensive rebound and returned the ball to the hoop to close the quarter with the score FDHS 18, SDHS 6. It was a great defensive quarter for the Indians who also made 4 of their 6 three point shots.

As was the case all night, Stuarts Draft kept coming back as they scored the first seven points of the second quarter to close to 18 – 13 before Connor Batten got two on a putback. Gio drove for two more with 4:38 to go to make it 22 – 13 before Draft scored in the paint. Jasigh got fouled attempting a three point shot but was able to make only one of his three free throws so the score stood at 23 – 15 with 3:42 to go in the quarter. On an out-of-bounds play, Gus was fed the ball and he pumped it in to make it 25 – 15. Draft scored but Tripp got his second three pointer before the quarter expired to give FD a comfortable 28 – 17 lead at the half.

Fort's defense in the first half was very good, not allowing Draft to get good looks at the goal. Holding a good team to only 17 points in the half was monumental.

The third quarter started with another Draft run. They scored the first eight points in the second half to get within three with 6:22 to go. Gio then came up with a steal and his layup gave Fort a 30 – 25 advantage. Draft scored the next four points to tighten the score to 30 – 29 with 4:12 to go. At this point, they had outscored Fort 12 – 2 in the quarter. But, Fort then responded with a deuce by Gio and another three pointer by Jasigh to make it 35 – 29. Two free throws by the home team made it 35 – 31 with 3:18 to go. Evan Braun then made a free throw and Gio followed with an old-fashioned three point play to make it 39 – 31 with 2:36 left. Elijah Pultz made a nice bucket in the lane then Gio's foul shot gave Fort back its 11 point lead at 42 – 31. Tripp banged in his third three pointer of the night, then Jasigh got his third trey to make it 48 – 34. Again Gus came through with a nice jumper after an offensive rebound to give Fort a 50 – 34 lead. Draft hit a three then Jasigh scored on a drive to end the quarter with FDHS hanging on to a 52 – 37 lead.

Fort has never learned how to hold the ball for a good shot, especially when they have the lead late in a game, and it almost caused them to blow the comfortable lead in the fourth quarter. Stuarts Draft opened the quarter with a triple, then Gio got a foul shot and Tripp another three pointer to make it 56 – 42 with 6:51 to go. Draft swished a three pointer but Evan answered with

a nice drive in the lane. Carter Berry then got on the board with a putback to give Fort what should have been an invincible lead at 60 – 45 but Fort’s poor shot selection and Draft’s improved shooting closed the score to 60 – 52. Bradley got two to make it 62 – 52 but the Cougars hit another triple with 56 seconds to go to reduce the lead to seven at 62 – 55. Stuarts Draft was forced to foul at this point and the Indians did OK at the free throw line. Gio made two, Jasigh one of two, and Tripp one of two. Stuarts Draft hit a late three pointer to make the final score Fort Defiance 66, Stuarts Draft 61.

For the game, Fort made 9 of 24 three point attempts which isn’t anything to brag about but is still better than they’ve shot most of the season. Gio again led the Indians with 18 points followed by Jasigh with 16 and Tripp with 13. For Stuarts Draft, Derrick Moore had 21 and Landon Graber 13.

Grandfather’s notes: Gus had a fine game. He scored six, making three of his four attempts from the floor. I believe he had at least four rebounds. What was so strange is that he played a good bit in the first three quarters but not one second in the fourth. He started on the floor in each of the two halves but sat for the last eight minutes. I have no idea what was going through his coaches’ heads. For no more than he played, he was still Fort’s fourth leading scorer. FDHS needed his six points as their final margin of victory was only five.

Fort’s next outing is a home game on Senior Night against Wilson Memorial on Friday, February 14.

Here’s Fort’s box score:

Name	2 Pt Goals	3 Pt Goals	Free Throws	Total
John Whetzel	0	0	0-0	0
Bradley Hebb	2	0	0-0	4
Jasigh Ransome	1	4	2-5	16
Gio Armendariz Cruz	5	1	5-7	18
Miguel Uribe	0	0	0-0	0
Evan Braun	1	0	1-2	3
Carter Berry	1	0	0-0	2
Rhylan Martin	0	0	0-0	0
Elijah Pultz	1	0	0-0	2
Tripp Hanger	0	4	1-1	13
Connor Batten	1	0	0-0	2
Ayden Thornton	0	0	0-0	0
Gus Gutshall	3	0	0-0	6
TOTAL	15	9	9-15	66

The Harrisonburg Daily News Record had this article about the game:

Fort earns big road win over Draft

By CODY ELLIOTT Daily News-Record

Fort Defiance built a double-digit lead in the opening quarter and never looked back en route to a key 66-61 Shenandoah District victory over Stuarts Draft on the road on Monday.

Gio Armendariz Cruz had a big night with 18 points to lead the Indians while Jasigh Ransome scored 16.

Fort guard Tripp Hanger also hit double digits with 13 points while senior forward Gus Gutshall had six.

The Cougars were led by standout junior guard Derrick Moore with a game-high 21 points.

Landon Graber had 13 points for Draft while Ja'Saun Kier-Brown and Donovan scored eight apiece and Denzel Diggs finished with seven.

The Indians (12-8, 6-4 Shenandoah) have won five of their last six and will return to action on Friday against Wilson Memorial at home.

The Cougars (13-8, 7-4 Shenandoah) host the Green Hornets on Monday in a district clash.

Fort Defiance 18 10 24 14 — 66

Stuarts Draft 6 11 20 24 — 61