



Madison-Grant's Daya Greene past Marion's Ashanti Cardine in the Argylls' victory. **Photo by Sean Douglas**

# Offensive burst pushes M-G past Marion for 2nd victory

By Sean Douglas

Heading into Tuesday night's matchup against Marion, the Madison-Grant Argylls were averaging 38.5 points a game.

But against the Giants, the Argylls nearly doubled their scoring output and that, combined with their always stout defensive play, resulted in a resounding win over their Grant County rival.

Azmae Turner continued her strong start to her junior campaign with a double-double performance, two other Argylls finished in double figures, and Madison-Grant, as a team, shot 54 percent from the field in a 65-26 victory over the Giants at the Bill Green Athletic Arena.

After a sluggish first quarter in which they shot just three-of-11 from the field, the Argylls shot 22-of-35, good for 62 percent, in the final three quarters.

Turner led the way, scoring 17 points and securing 10 boards, while Daya Greene scored 10 points, including Madison-Grant only two three-pointers of the contest. Katie Duncan was excellent in the post when she was on the floor, scoring 10 points on five-of-six shooting.

"I was proud of the effort," Madison-Grant Head Coach Brandon Bradley said. "I felt like the first four, six, maybe eight minutes, we needed to feel out speed and length. There was a feeling out period, and once they settled in and knew how strong they were going to have to be with the ball, they adjusted really well."

Leading 9-5 after the first quarter, the Argylls made several key adjustments, focusing on getting the ball into the post, utilizing more high-ball screens, and creating easy scoring opportunities underneath the basket. The changes worked to perfection, and the Argylls quickly took control of the contest, beginning the quarter on a 16-2 run and leading by double-digits the rest of the way.

"We just started making basketball plays," Bradley said. "It wasn't, 'Let's run our offense, let's run this offense, let's run that offense,' it was more, 'Let's just make a play.'"

While their offense seemingly scored points at will, the Argylls' defense made life tough for the Giants, forcing 22 turnovers over the course of the contest.

After outscoring the Giants 28-10 in the second quarter, the Argylls kept the pedal down after halftime, continuing to run the offense through the post and while keeping Marion's offense off-balance. Madison-Grant's lead continued to grow throughout the final two quarters, topping off at 39 before collecting the eventual 38-point triumph.

Everybody who touched the floor for the Argylls made a positive impact, with all but one player securing at least one field goal. Maddy Moore finished with eight points and nine rebounds, while Sarah Duncan also collected eight points. Nancy Chapel added six, Chelsea Bowland four, and freshman Katie Stowers scored a basket on her lone offensive touch.

"Azmae had a whale of a game in the first half. I thought Maddy Moore did a nice job in the second half," Bradley said. "Bowland was good, as she always is, defensively. She was as aggressive as I've ever seen her. And Daya was Daya. She took care of the ball and she managed the team."

For Marion, Olivia Aguilar led the way with eight points to go along with six rebounds. Alayah Guerrero finished with seven points, including a pair of triples.

# Giants provide glimpse of 2020-21 team

By Sean Douglas

Wednesday marked the unofficial start of the 2020-2021 boys basketball season, as the Marion Giants held their annual "Turn Back The Clock" scrimmage against Indianapolis Tindley at the Bill Green Athletic Arena.

The contest is usually held at the Grant County Family YMCA downtown, but due to the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in Grant County, the event was moved to Marion High School.

Despite losing by a final score of 95-85, and despite the change in venue, the goal of the scrimmage remained the same: to identify strengths, strengthen deficiencies, and provide players an opportunity to showcase their skills, their growth, and their development.

"For us, we wanted to give guys an equal amount of time," Marion Head Coach James Blackmon said. "We wanted to come out and try to see what our guys could do and give guys opportunities. We saw certain guys step up, and we saw certain guys that we feel need a little more work at the varsity level. That's what this scrimmage is all about."

All eyes were on senior point guard Jalen Blackmon, playing on the Arena floor for the first time in nearly a year after tearing his ACL in last season's Marion Classic, and he did not disappoint. The Grand Canyon University commit, and the fifth all-time leading scorer in school history, scored 17 points, and looked fluid and spry on his surgically repaired knee.

Additionally, Blackmon spent time

in the weight room during the offseason, packing on about 15 pounds of muscle, particularly in his upper body. Over the course of his high school career, Blackmon has gotten more comfortable driving to the hoop and playing underneath the rim, and his added mass will make him even more difficult to defend.

"When you look at his body, upper-body wise and strength-wise, he's gotten a lot stronger," Coach Blackmon said. "There were a lot of positives. He's strong and he's physical."

Fellow senior Matthew Goolsby, who came on strong in his junior campaign before the season was halted, showcased his impressive athleticism and aggression underneath the rim, finishing with 16 points. While there are still areas where Blackmon is looking for him to improve, he believes that Goolsby will play a key role for the Giants in the coming campaign.

"Matthew, if he continues to stay around the rim and play strong like he did tonight, that's going to be a positive for us," Blackmon said. "But there were a couple of plays where he didn't show his athleticism. We want to work on that as far as not making the spectacular play but gaining possession and going back up and finishing the play. That's what practice is for."

Marion's second unit, which played exclusively in the second and fourth quarters, certainly had their share of struggles, but several players did stand out, particularly freshman guard Taden Metzger. Metzger made the most of his opportunity, scoring 17 points and showcasing an impressive shot with a great release and fluid motion.

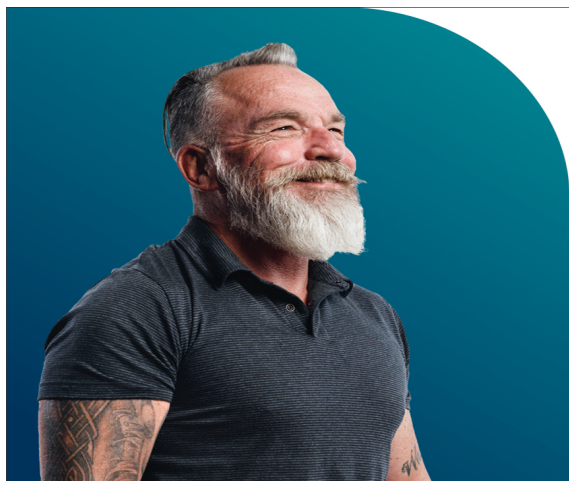
With the departure of players like JK Thomas and Rasheed Jones, both of whom were excellent shooters, Metzger could see a regular role in the Giants' rotation with his performance on Wednesday.

"One of our things in approaching this game is taking advantage of an opportunity," Blackmon said. "I felt like we had three guys who were varsity players with that second group. He showed that he was definitely one of them, and he deserved to be out there and play. I'm glad he was able to play like that."

Two other Giants finished in double figures, as Omari Small and Rodney Gipson each finished with 10 points. Jermaine Woods added seven, while K'Veonne Jackson rounded out the scoring with six points.

While Blackmon was pleased overall with his team's performance, there is still plenty of work to be done between now and their season opener against longtime rival the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

"We need to work on contested shots," Blackmon said. "I felt like a lot of times, they caught the ball and just shot it. We have to close out and really make guys put the ball on the floor, especially if they are knocking it down. [Also,] I felt like transition defense [needs work]. We gave up a lot of layups in transition, and we can't play that way. And as far as us protecting the rim, guys came through there and laid it up without us moving over and putting a body on them. Those are the things that we are going to improve on."



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