

Argylls record impressive win in Cherry's debut

By Sean Douglas

Despite a new head coach and a new system to learn and master, the Madison-Grant Argylls diligently put in the work during the offseason and preseason, readying themselves for the upcoming campaign. And in their home opener against Wabash, it paid off, as Kevin Cherry's first game at the helm of the Madison-Grant boys basketball program was a rousing success.

Kaden Howell and Grant Brown shined on the offensive side of the floor, and the Argylls' defense held the Wabash offense in check in a 65-31 triumph on Saturday night in Fairmount.

"I loved the way we competed," Cherry said. "Wabash has a program [whose] DNA is strong and physical. They make things tough on you. I'm really proud of the way the kids executed. I've seen them work so hard every day since July, and they just keep coming in, and they do exactly what we ask them to do. Tonight, I think they saw the fruits of their labor."

Howell found his shooting stroke early and continued to shoot the ball well throughout the evening, leading the Argylls with 18 points. Brown finished with 16 points to go along with eight rebounds and six assists.

"We have some pieces," Cherry said. "Grant Brown is a load to get in front of, and if you're a shooter like Kaden, [it opens everything up.] Those two compliment each other really well."

Additionally, Madison-Grant's defense, an area of weakness at times last year, was excellent. After giving up 11 points in the first quarter of play, the Argylls gave up just 20 points the rest of the way. For the game, Madison-Grant held Wabash to just 12-of-60 (20 percent) from the field and a woeful two-of-22 (nine percent) from beyond the arc.

After Justin Moore opened the scoring with a strong look in the post, Howell knocked down his first three of the night off a high-post screen. The basket seemed to settle the Argylls down into their offensive rhythm, and from that moment, they controlled the contest. Howell finished the quarter with 11 points, including three triples, as the Argylls took a 22-11 lead.

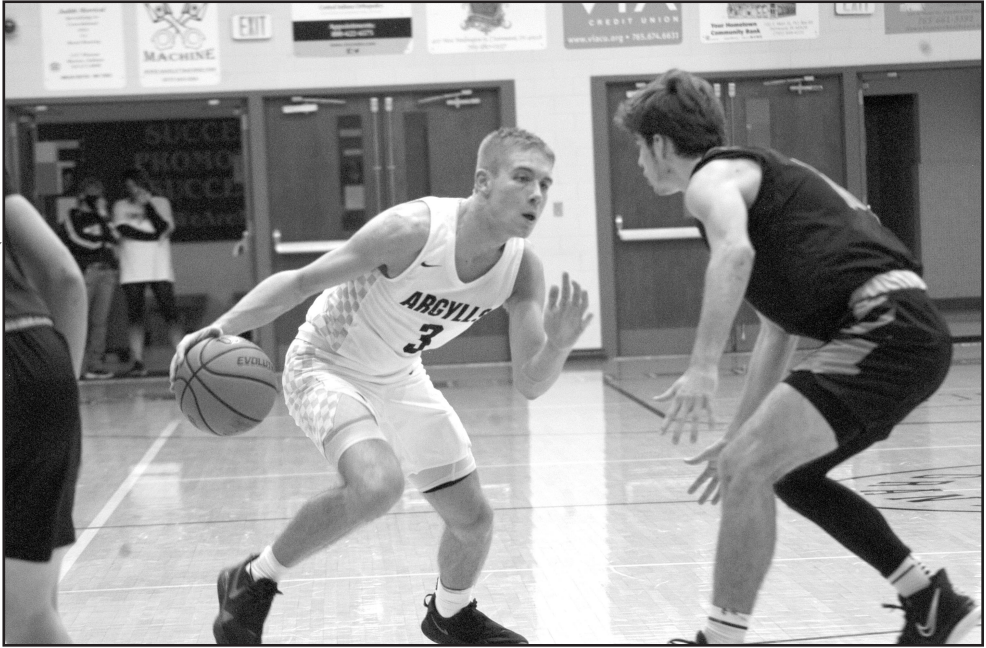
"He made his first shot, and then it just snowballed from there," Cherry said. "Everybody else fed off of that energy, and we did shoot it really well tonight."

In the second quarter, it was the Argylls' defense that made the difference. Madison-Grant held the Apaches to zero-of-eight shooting from the floor, giving up just two points on a pair of free throws.

"We have put a tremendous amount of emphasis on defensively being great since I got here in July," Cherry said. "There isn't a practice or workout that doesn't go by where we don't spend time trying to be great defensively. To accomplish the goals that we want to accomplish, we are going to have to be great defensively. Defensively, our effort was really good. We really locked in on them."

Brown scored his first six points on a pair of threes late in the second quarter, while Howell and Jackson Manwell also hit triples to increase the Argylls' lead to 34-13 at the halftime break.

Armed with a double-digit advantage, Madison-Grant kept the pedal down in the second half. They shot 50 percent in the final two quarters, while holding Wabash to just seven more field goals. Brown led the Argylls in the second half, scoring 10 points to help Madison-Grant put the game



Grant Brown collected 16 points, eight rebounds, and six assists against Wabash.
Photo by Sean Douglas

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Indians

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Hayden Ulerick scored six of his 11 to put the Indians up 36-33 at halftime. Mississinewa looked to be in control in the first half of the third quarter, building their lead to as many as nine points at the 4:30 mark, but gradually, the momentum began to shift. Little by little, the Legends continued to cut into the Indians' advantage, answering each Mississinewa basket with one of their own. At the third quarter buzzer, Fort Wayne North's Ryan Collins, who did not see much playing time until the second half, knocked down a three, making it a 54-50 Mississinewa lead heading into the final frame. That shot ended up changing the course of the contest, as Collins went on to knock down four more shots in the fourth quarter, three in the first three minutes. His third make of the quarter put the Legends up 64-59 – giving them a lead they would not relinquish.

"I didn't think they had anybody that could shoot, and then he came in the second half," Reed said. "I just adjusted late. We were in a zone, and we probably should have been in man in that situation. We lost him a few times, and after he hit, we didn't focus on him, and we should have. Again, we let them be in the game and have momentum."

The Indians came roaring back, cutting the Legends' lead to 71-70 with just under two minutes to go, but Fort Wayne answered with six straight points to put the game away. Along with Swanner's 34 points and McClung's and Ulerick's 11, Colin Yoder scored nine points, Lucas Asbury scored five, and Donovan Betts finished with three.

For the Legends, Brauntae Johnson finished the game with 26 points, while Rodney Woods scored 12 and Jordan Green 11. Mississinewa shot 25-of-50 from the field in the contest, good for 50 percent, but shot only four-of-15 in the final quarter. "Every little part of the game matters," Reed said. "Even though we had a lot of things covered in the first half, those little mistakes let them stay in the game. Then, when they got a run, and saw a chance to win, they were out for blood. That's exactly what you do not want with an athletic

team." While not the way that Reed envisioned the season would start, he and the Indians plan to use this game as a benchmark.

"Moving forward, we will learn from it," Reed said. "We have lost nothing. We are going to learn from today, and we are going to move forward."



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