

Team Army survives, fights off late rally from Team British Armed Forces in Wheelchair Basketball

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MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – Team Army raced to a big lead in wheelchair basketball at the 2015 Department of Defense Warrior Games in an elimination game against Team British Armed Forces, June 21. Team Army then had to withstand bombardments from two late rallies as the British Armed Forces team refused to surrender. Team Army advanced to the medal rounds with a 36-31 win.

The 2015 DoD Warrior Games, held June 19-28, is an adaptive sports competition for wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans. Approximately 250 athletes, representing teams from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations Command, and the British Armed Forces are competing in archery, cycling, track and field, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, and wheelchair basketball.

Before the game, coach Rod Williams said he believed he knew what his opponent's game plan was, and he had a strategy. Part of that strategy was for his team to get an early lead and build on it. Team Army responded and grabbed an early 12-3 lead, and a 16-7 lead at the half.

Team Army continued to build that lead at the start of the second half with two fast break baskets and an eventual 24-7 lead. It looked like a smooth march to victory for Team Army.

That wasn't the case. With 17 minutes to go in the game, Team British Armed Forces called time out and when they returned to the court, they deployed a full court press that they did not call off for the rest of the game.

The British Armed Forces team went on a 14-0 run that turned the game into a tight 24-21 nail biter.

Team Army finally got itself turned right side up when, after finally breaking the press, Sgt. Nicholas Titman, Fort Carson, Colorado, made a fast break layup with nine minutes to play. Titman followed that with three more fast break layups and Team Army's lead seemed secure again.

Cpl. Jasmine Perry, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and Veteran Spc. Dustin Barr, Jamesville, North Carolina, made clutch baskets, and with four minutes to go Team Army began to breathe easy with a 36-21 lead.

The British Armed Forces team wasn't accepting defeat just yet. They mounted another charge at Team Army, and with a three-point shot with under a minute to play, the score was 36-31.

That was as close as they could get, and Team Army ran out the clock.

Team Army's reward for their hard work is a rematch with the team from the Marine Corps on June 22; the Marines went undefeated in their five games during the preliminary round to determine seeding for the tournament.