

# Minford's

# pressure sets the pace

## Lady Falcons force 17 turnovers in 56-43 victory

1-20-06

By **JEFF TAEPKKE**  
*PDT Sports Writer*

LUCASVILLE — Heading down the final stretch of the season, games are going to get more competitive, and the battles are going to get tougher.

Minford found that out Thursday against Valley, but the Lady Falcons had enough resiliency, particularly defensively, to get past the improved Lady Indians 56-43.

The contest was tight throughout the first half, a stark contrast from the last time the two teams met, a 27-point Minford win. Using their size in the post — Whitney McManus for Minford and Amy Nordrum for Valley — the two teams could not break free from each other through the first 10 minutes.

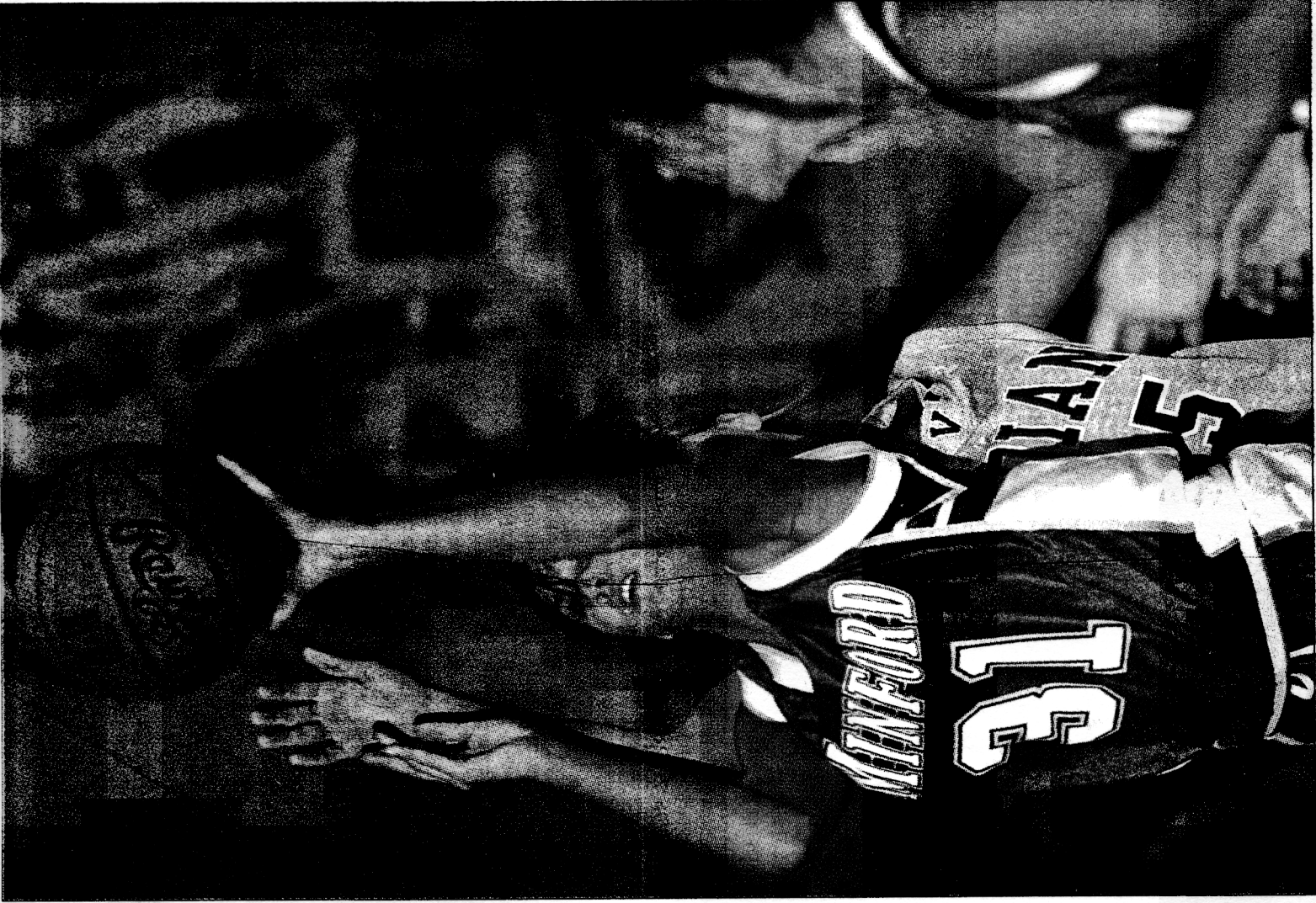
But after a 3-pointer by Kelli Martin put the Lady Falcons up 17-14, the Minford press kicked into gear. Up against a full-court press, Valley had difficulty getting past half-court, sometimes even turning the ball over right on the inbounds pass. Breslyn Harris swiped two passes straight off the inbounds, and converted them into layups during an 11-0 run, putting Minford up 25-14 late in the half. Minford forced 17 turnovers in the game.

"That's real plus defensively," said Minford coach Kim Conley. "I would prefer we turn it up (defensively) all the time. But it's one of those things where you have to pick your battles to try and throw teams off."

Two free throws by Valley ended the drought, but Kara Cayton picked off one more inbounds pass, and layed it in, right before halftime.

"She's going to get the stops," Conley said of Cayton. "She's going to hit the open person. She's going to contribute whether it's scoring, whether it's passing, whether it's defense. It shows what type of player she is."

Minford's pressure gave the Lady Indians fits, which sported a good shooting duo in Nordrum and Jaime Montgomery. Through three quarters, the two combined for all but three of Valley's 26 points. Nordrum finished with 22



Robert Lyons ■ Daily Times  
Minford's Leah Butcher makes a basket in the first half of her team's game against Valley on Thursday. The Lady

# Minford

## From Page B1

points and 10 rebounds and Montgomery had six. When the Lady Falcons' defense clamped down in the second, Valley struggled to find openings, not getting open looks until the fourth quarter. Valley coach Mark Merritt was pleased with the improvement of his squad from the last time the two teams met, but there is still room for improvement.

"We made some mental mistakes and threw out weak passes. We knew that if you throw weak passes out against Minford they were going to take them," Merritt said. "They also

got second shot after second shot.

"But we're going to take some positives out of this. The last time they beat us by 27. We're getting better, but not where we need to be right now. We have more work to do."

Valley made a run in the fourth to get within 11 points, but Cayton helped Minford distance itself comfortably again. Using her driving ability, the point guard found open players in the post, like McManus and Brittany Brigner, for easy shots. McManus finished with a team-high 12 points and Brigner contributed 10.

"Our dish and drive was definitely a little better this evening," Conley said. "We

were stepping into the open spots instead of waiting for the ball to come to us."

With the tournament looming, Conley said a victory now, by any means, is critical to her team's success in the postseason.

"Every win is crucial with the draw coming," she said. "We have to stay focused."

**JEFF TAEPEKE** can be reached at (740) 353-3101 ext. 242.

Minford	12	15	13	16	—	58
Valley	11	5	10	17	—	43

Minford — McManus 5 2 12, Brigner 3 4 10, K. Martin 2 0 5, Berry 1 0 2, Cayton 3 1 8, Moore 1 0 2, Harris 4 1 9, Butcher 1 0 2. Totals 20 8 56.

Valley — Martin 2 0 4, Montgomery 1 4 6, Nor-drum 9 4 22, C. Merritt 4 1 10, M. Merritt 0 1 1. Totals 16 10 43.

3-pointers — Minford 2 (K. Martin, Cayton) Valley 1 (C. Merritt)

Records — Minford 10-4 (6-2 SOC) Valley 9-6 (5-5 SOC)