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POWER in the PAIN

Russellville resident Britnee Phillips is intent on using her cancer fight to inspire others

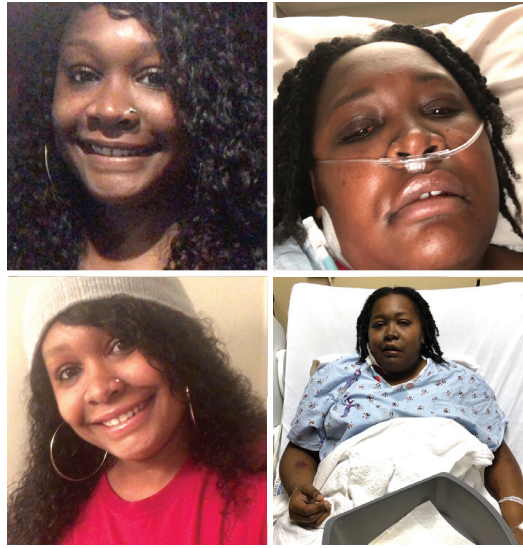
John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As Britnee Phillips gave a live radio interview Saturday afternoon, the editor of the local newspaper stood by waiting for his opportunity to speak with the 31-year-old Russellville resident.

“I want to fight for all those who lost their fight,” Phillips said. “Chemotherapy is tough, but the doctors and nurses tell you to believe in God, keep fighting and see this out to the end, and that it will get better. And it really does get better.”

Phillips didn't ask for the spotlight, though, just as she didn't ask to be diagnosed with Acute promyelocytic leukemia, more commonly

See 'POWER,' Page 9



Clockwise, from top left: Phillips before her diagnosis, during chemotherapy treatment at UAB and after returning home earlier this year.

CB&S becomes Alabama's largest privately held bank

Acquisition of PrimeSouth pushes assets past \$1.9 billion

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

With its latest acquisition of Tallassee-based PrimeSouth Bank, CB&S Bank will surpass \$1.9 billion in assets and will become Alabama's largest privately held bank and fourth-largest bank, private or public.

“When you have a healthy, well-run bank such as PrimeSouth, if you're going to make it work, you have to be ready and able when the opportunity presents itself,” said Mike Ross, CB&S president and CEO. “It's safe to say this deal was largely relationship-driven.”

CB&S president and CEO Mike Ross announced the acquisition April 23. The acquisition, which includes all five PrimeSouth Bank offices and its approximately \$250 million in total assets, remains subject to Prime South customary closing conditions, including PrimeSouth shareholder agreement and approval from banking regulators.

Ross expects the PrimeSouth shareholder meeting to happen in the next couple months and hopes CB&S will be in position to receive regulatory approval sometime in the third quarter of 2019.

CB&S chairman of the board Greg Batchelor, along

See 'BANK,' Page 10

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Teresa Ann Bradford Murray, Russellville, age 74
Died Tuesday, April 23, 2019. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel.
Interment in Tharptown Cemetery.

Julian Almon Rivers, Phil Campbell, age 82
Died Saturday, April 27, 2019. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in
Russellville. Interment in Shady Grove Cemetery.

Joe J. Suddith, Muscle Shoals, age 69
Died Saturday, April 27, 2019. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in
Russellville. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

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'Drug Story' a cautionary tale for local students

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

Over the past 15 years, the Franklin County Tobacco Education Program has hosted a drug and tobacco prevention program to educate Franklin County students about the negative effects of using drug and tobacco products.

The program is called the "Drug Story," and this year the program took place at Red Bay Free Will Baptist Church and took sixth-grade students from different schools in the county through an eight-part story detailing what might happen if they choose to use drugs or tobacco.

The parts of the story, labeled as "scenes," made students walk through different rooms as volunteers from Red Bay High School and the Red Bay community acted out the story of a teen that decided to go down the wrong path. Throughout the story, students witnessed the drastic turn of events the teen went through, including the teen stealing drugs, going to jail and eventually court, overdosing on the drugs and eventually dying from the drug use.

Since the program started, it has been assisted by the Red Bay SADD and HOSA chapters under the direction of Dr. Kay Hargett. Some of the funding for the program came from a Youth Tobacco Grant from the Alabama Department of Public

Health Tobacco Prevention and Control, the Franklin County Tobacco Prevention Education Program, and also donations from the Red Bay community.

According to Franklin County Tobacco Educator Chris Hargett, the programs were designed to educate students above everything else.

"We wanted to prepare these students for the future and educate them on some of the choices that could face them down the road," Hargett said. "We have so much of a drug problem in Franklin County, and if we don't start taking steps to address those problems, the problems are only going to continue to grow for years to come."

"We wanted to prepare these students for the future and educate them on some of the choices that could face them down the road," Hargett said. "We have so much of a drug problem in Franklin County, and if we don't start taking steps to address those problems, the problems are only going to continue to grow for years to come."

In addition to the Drug Story, there was also a "Kick Butts" event taking place at the Free Will Baptist Church that was also hosted by the Franklin County Tobacco Education Program. At the end of the Drug Story, students were able to visit numerous educational booths to learn about the risks of using tobacco products such as snuff,

cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vaping products.

There were also demonstrations to show the students what might happen if they were to use tobacco or similar products.

According to Hargett, while the program is just available for sixth-grade students across Franklin County, he and the other people that make the program possible would love to see it expanded.

"I would love to see the program expanded over the coming years," Hargett said. "We would love to be able to educate middle school and high school students about the same things that we educate these sixth-graders on."

If there was one message that Hargett said he wishes the students who participated in both the Drug Story and the Kick Butts initiative would take home with them, is for them to make the smart and right decision.

"First and foremost we want to push them away from using drugs and tobacco," he said. "That is our main goal for the program. But we also want to help prevent them from engaging in any type of situation that might lead them to being in a position where drugs or tobacco are present or being influenced on them."

Hargett said that as long as they are able to receive funding from the youth tobacco grant and from ADPH, the Drug Story and Kick Butts initiative will continue to be held year after year.

Scholarships available through Modern Woodmen

Taylor Thornton
Franklin Free Press

With graduation season approaching, high school students are more thoroughly seeking financial help that may be available to them as they prepare for their college careers.

The Modern Woodmen of America sponsors annual scholarship opportunities for local member students. Across the entire organization, Modern Woodmen has multiple scholarships available, with a total of 48 scholarships that range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 being awarded based on a combination of volunteer experience and academ-

ic achievement.

The organization also offers up to 150 scholarships of \$1,000 each annually that are granted to students who show exemplary dedication to their volunteer work and community.

In order to apply for these scholarships, students must be insured by their own Modern Woodmen life insurance certificate at least two years prior to January 1 of their senior year of high school. If a student meets this requirement, they can go to the Modern Woodmen website (member.modernwoodmen.org) to apply. The deadline for applications is January 15 of a student's expected graduation year.

For students who may not be preparing for graduation just yet, Modern Woodmen offers many other unique benefits to its members, including the Orphan Benefit. This benefit is offered to the children of members who become orphans before the age of nineteen.

If interested in any scholarship opportunities or addition benefits, such as the Orphan Benefit, please visit the Modern Woodmen of America website for more information at www.modernwoodmen.org, or for more information about Modern Woodmen life insurance, annuities, retirement plans members benefits, contact Amy Hester at (256) 460-9095.

Russellville's Boyd earns NW-SCC President's Award

Submitted to the FFP

Layne Boyd of Russellville received Northwest-Shoals Community College's most prestigious honor on Thursday, April 18 at the annual Phil Campbell Campus Honors and Awards Night. She was awarded the President's Award for the Phil Campbell campus.

Boyd will graduate this year from NW-SCC and has been awarded transfer scholarships that total more than \$38,000. She plans to attend Mississippi State University this fall and major in Biological Sciences. Boyd looks forward to pursuing her lifelong dream of being a doctor.

Boyd has been actively involved at NW-SCC as an officer of the Alpha Zeta Iota chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (International Two-Year College Honor Society). She also served as the 2018-2019 Alabama Region, District Two, Vice President.

Boyd joined other NW-SCC Phi Theta Kappa members to participate in the Alabama Possible Cash for College program. The Cash for College program encourages high school students to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The group was then selected to serve on a student committee with Alabama Possible in Washington, D.C., to discuss how Congress can improve postsecondary access and completion and create equal opportunities for all students, including low-income and first-generation college-going students.

She has been consistently named to the President's and Dean's List for her academic achievements and served as an Alabama Community College System and NW-SCC Ambassador.

The President's Award is the most prestigious honor awarded by NW-SCC. The faculty submits nominations to the Award Committee for the final selection.

The recipient must have earned a grade point average of 3.7 or higher.

Also, the recipient must have demonstrated leadership and actively participated in community service while attending NW-SCC.



NW-SCC president Dr. Glenda Colagross (left) presents Layne Boyd with the 2019 President's Award for the Phil Campbell campus.

Honey Do: Mosquitoes

There are some things in this world that, it seems to me, have no practical use.

Right at the top of the list are fleas, ticks and MOSQUITOES.

These three critters have one thing in common...they all love ME.

With the abundance of rain over the last few months, mosquitoes are out in record numbers. There are some actions you can take to lower the population or at least keep them away.

Standing water means mosquito nurseries. You should search your yard for any form of standing water. Inspect buckets, old tires, low places in the yard, pet dishes and even children's toys that may be kept outside, including kiddie pools that don't have water filters on them.

Fallen leaves that have collected can hold water and be a breeding ground. Water should be removed, treated or, as in the case of the pet's water bowl, replaced with fresh water every day.

Did you know that mosquitoes hate coffee? Save your coffee grounds and scatter them in any areas with heavy moisture and mosquitoes will go elsewhere.

Treating your yard with liquid or

granular insecticides can be effective for several days. I like the liquid products that fasten to your garden hose and mix automatically as you spray. If you are planning an outdoor activity, an application a couple of days in advance should be effective.

Torches, candles, aerosol sprays and certain plants can deter mosquitoes from your festivities. Most of these contain citronella, lemongrass or spearmint. Many folks put up electronic bug zappers, but these are generally not effective on mosquitoes unless you add a chemical attractant.

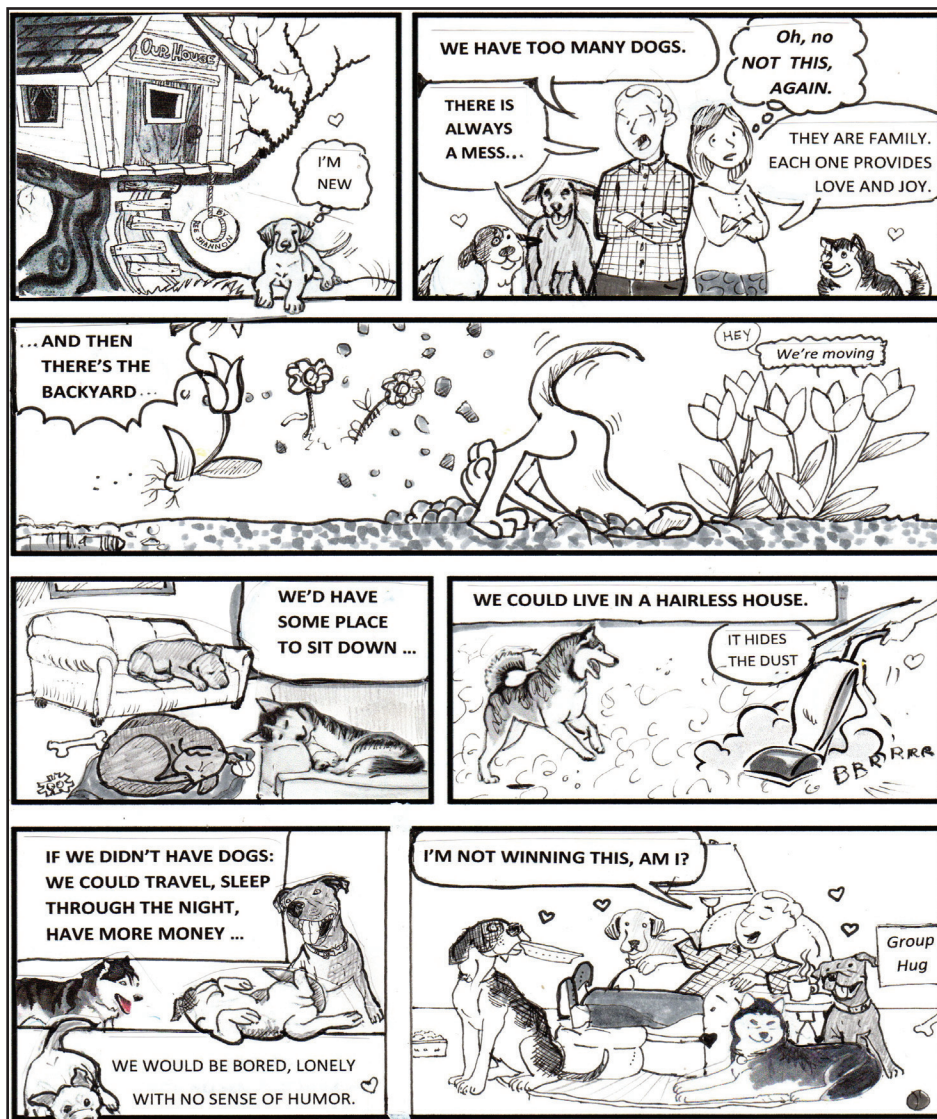
Then there are all kinds of personal mosquito repellents. Sprays, arm bands and belt clips are all generally effective for several hours. These can be good for older children who may be playing all over the yard.

Mosquito control is not a one-shot process; rather, it is an on-going battle.

Plan ahead for outdoor activities, and hopefully these annoying bugs won't join the party. Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



Doug Green



FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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Correction Policy

The *Franklin Free Press* strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

Letters to the editor

The *Franklin Free Press* is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The *Franklin Free Press* reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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Four tips to take back your time

Being a summer baby, I love the warm weather months. I love cookouts and picnics, vacations, and being outside as much as possible.

Everyone is in a better mood, and it seems like there are endless fun things to do and get into.

During the summer season, many of us have dreams and plans for what we'd like to do. But if we're not careful, it's easy to go from school-year-crazy to summer-crazy, and we end up just shifting from one version of busy to another.

Instead of letting your summer get away from you, try these four tips to take back your time, so that you can make the most of it this summer at home and at work.

•Identify your priorities.

Before each month begins, be proactive and arrange your calendar to reflect what's important to you. If that means visiting your aging parents three states away, then put them at the top of your list—even if your kids have to miss a soccer game or two. When you manage your commitments, they stop managing you.

When you finish everything else, then you'll spend time reading, exercising and playing with your kids, right? But that never happens! Go ahead and schedule some leisure time into your calendar. This will help to ensure these important parts of your life receive plenty of time as well.

•Create space in your schedule.

We often feel guilty into taking on responsibilities that are not our own, like chaperoning field trips or saying yes to extra work projects. Stop raising your hand just because no one else will step up. When you commit to less, you'll free up more time for your own priorities.

•Schedule leisure time.

When you finish everything else, then you'll spend time reading, exercising and playing with your kids, right? But that never happens! Go ahead and schedule some leisure time into your calendar. This will help to ensure these important parts of your life receive plenty of time as well.

•Protect your schedule.

Even if you start off your week with the best of intentions, things will inevitably come up. You'll get requests from work, invitations from friends and distractions from every corner of your life. It's vital that you protect your schedule. Practice saying *no* to last-minute requests and invitations that conflict with your priorities.

If you can remember to do these four things during the summer season, you'll have less stress and more fun. Isn't that what summer is all about?

**Christy Wright is the creator of Business Boutique, a Certified Business Coach and a Ramsey Personality with a passion for equipping women with the knowledge and steps they need to successfully run and grow a business. Since joining Ramsey Solutions in 2009, she has spoken to thousands across the country at women's conferences, national business conferences, Fortune 500 companies and her own sold-out live events. She is the host of the Business Boutique Podcast and her new book, Business Boutique, was released in April of 2017. You can follow Wright on Twitter and Instagram @ChristyBWright and online at christywright.com or facebook.com/OfficialChristyWright.*



Christy Wright



with them!

Dave

Paying extra

Dear Dave,
I'd like to start paying a little extra each month on my car loan so I can get out of debt faster. Would it be a good idea to write a separate check for this extra amount?

Steve

Dear Steve,
I think that's a great idea! You can include the extra check in a separate envelope with the regular payment. In addition, write "principal only" in big, bold letters on the extra envelope *and* on the extra check. Make sure to also include the account number in the notation line at the bottom. Follow these guidelines, and you'll be much less likely to run into problems as a result of someone at the bank not paying attention.

Some companies use payment booklets that have a box *specifically* for entering any amount you want applied directly to the principal. See if this is available to you, as well. Regardless, make sure you keep an accurate, written record of the monthly and overall amounts you're designating as "principal only."

Great question, Steve!

Dave

**Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 15 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

Before or after?

Dear Dave,
I've started following your plan, and I've got a beginner emergency fund of \$1,000 saved. Now that I'm ready to start paying off debt in Baby Step 2, do you recommend paying off credit card balances before or after closing the accounts?

Maeve

Dear Maeve,
I'm really proud of you. Congratulations on starting the journey toward getting out of debt and gaining control of your money! Honestly, either way is fine. The point is to get rid of them and stop using the stupid things. I like the idea, and the finality, of going ahead and closing the accounts and cutting up the cards. Personal finance is 80 percent behavior. Getting credit cards—and credit card debt—out of your life is a great first step in really learning to behave with your money.

Remember, you don't build wealth or save money by using credit cards. And you're naïve if you think you're going to play around with a multi-billion-dollar industry and beat them at their own game. The only way to win against credit card companies is by refusing to play around

Letters to the Editor

We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.
For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out online at franklinfreepress.net!



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What's Happening

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EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

Russellville Masonic Lodge 317 is selling Boston butts for Memorial Day. Butts are \$30 and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup will be Saturday, May 25 from 8-10 a.m. at the Lodge on Coffee Street.

We are searching for descendants of people buried in Russellville's Old Town Cemetery and Sadler Cemetery to give personal info and stories about their ancestors for a cemetery tour as part of Russellville's Bicentennial Celebration. Contact Doris Hutcheson (256-332-4085 or dorishutcheson@msn.com) or Chris Ozbirn (256-332-8827 or archive@hiwaay.net) for more info.

It's mowing season! Time to remove old flowers from the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on Hwy. 724 in Newburg. If you have relatives buried in this cemetery, please consider making a donation for cemetery upkeep. Donations may be mailed to: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Fund, 941 Hwy. 87, Russellville, AL 35654.

Northwest Alabama MS Warriors, a support group for those dealing with multiple sclerosis and their families, will meet at 5:30 p.m. this Thursday, May 2 at the Muscle Shoals Public Library, 1918 Avalon Avenue, Muscle Shoals. For more information, call 256-356-8548.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris Jr., Camp #1833, will meet this Thursday, May 2 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue. Camp #1833 meets the first Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. For more info, call 256-324-2317. Everyone welcome!

East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department will be serving William Earl Bishop's smoked chicken and pulled barbecue pork plates from 4-7 p.m. this Friday, May 3. Proceeds will go toward the purchase of a backup generator. Plates will be sold at East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department, 10443 Hwy. 81, Phil Campbell, and are \$10 each.

First Free Will Baptist Church, 16140 Hwy. 43 in Russellville, will be giving away bags of toiletries this Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. until they are gone.

Decoration Day at Osborn Hill Cemetery will be on May 4, 2019. The first Saturday of May has been observed as Decoration Day for well over 100 years. All old flowers will need to be removed off the graves. Please make plans for that special day to come to the cemetery. Also, it's time again for annual donations. If you would like to donate to the Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, please send your donations to: Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, c/o Mrs. Lana Duncan, 2330 Colburn Mtn. Road, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Co. Wm. A. Johnson Camp #898, Tuscumbia, will hold its monthly meeting this Sunday, May 5 at 2 p.m. at the Little Ryman Bldg., 18200 US Hwy. 72 West, Tuscumbia. Guest speaker is Carl Jones, SCV, Alabama Division Commander. Refreshments served. For more info, call 256-702-9674 or 256-577-3894.

The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts in Red Bay announces auditions for its upcoming play, *Finders Creepers*, written by Donald Payton and directed by Georgia Jeffreys. The dates of the performances will be June 20-23, 2019. Auditions will be held this Sunday, May 5 at 2 p.m. and Monday, May 6 at 7 p.m. at the Weatherford Centre in Red Bay. Auditions will be cold readings from the script, with the cast consisting of seven males and seven females, with parts for children and adults. For information on group sales, contact Beth Hammock at 256-356-9286.

C For anyone with the courage to be honest about life's hurts, habits and hang-ups, First United Methodist Church of Russellville will host *Celebrate Recovery!* on Tuesday nights with supper at 6 p.m., large group at 6:30 and small groups at 7:30. Free childcare provided. Church is located at 311 North Jackson Avenue. Come and join us!

Spruce Pine Historical Society meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Spruce Pine Community Center in Spruce Pine. Next meeting will be May 7. All members and friends are urged to attend.

Attention all young ladies of Colbert, Franklin and Lauderdale counties entering 10th, 11th and 12th grades in the Fall of 2019!!! The Distinguished Young Women Scholarship Program will be held Saturday, August 3, 2019 at Norton Auditorium on the campus of The University of North Alabama. Young ladies entering the 12th grade will have the opportunity to compete for cash scholarships as well as many other scholarships to colleges and universities. Also, each county winner will have the opportunity to represent her county at the state program in Montgomery in January of 2020. Information and registration meetings will be held Wednesday, May 8, Wednesday, May 15 and Wednesday, June 5 from 4-5 p.m. at First Metro Bank, Muscle Shoals. Young ladies entering the 10th and 11th grades have the opportunity to be "DYW Little Sisters." For more information, contact Susan Hargett at 256-710-9239 or Katernia Cole-Coffey at 256-332-8880, or check information on our Facebook page at Distinguished Young Women of Northwest Alabama, or email dshargett@aol.com. Other information and sign up is available at www.DistinguishedYW.org. Please contact us no later than June 23.

American Legion Post 64 will meet Thursday, May 9 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Email your event information to us at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

What's Happening

256.332.0255

EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

The Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert with special guests Andrew and Avery Guinn at the Roxy Theatre in Russellville on Saturday, May 11 at 7 p.m. General admission seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6. Call 256-335-4356. The KGB will be the featured act at a show sponsored by the Franklin County Arts Council at the Roxy on the second Saturday of each month. Proceeds will benefit the renovation and restoration of the Roxy Theatre.

The Church of God of Phil Campbell will host a singing on Sunday, May 12, featuring the Sparks Family. The singing begins at 5 p.m. Covered dish supper will follow the singing. The church is located on Highway 13 South in Phil Campbell. For more info, call 256-324-5288. Everyone is invited!

The book *One Taste Too Many* by Debra H. Goldstein of Birmingham will be discussed at the May 15 10 a.m. meeting of the Readers of the Lost Ark Book Club. The club meets at Coldwater Books, 105 West Sixth Street, Tusculmbia. For more info, email nancy537481@yahoo.com.

Dempsey Cemetery Decoration Day is May 19, 2019. Please have flowers removed from grave sites by Saturday, May 4 to prepare for Decoration Day. For more information, please call Hal Bray at 256-710-1120.

The NACOLG SenioRx Medication Assistance Program supplies free and low-cost medications for anyone in Alabama with a disability or a chronic illness, regardless of age, that requires daily medication. Medicare recipients may also be eligible. For more information, contact NACOLG SenioRx today. There is no charge for this service. Call 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) or 256-389-0529 and ask for Paula Pardue. This program is in partnership with the state of Alabama and Alabama Department of Senior Services.

Mountain Valley Hee Haw features live music every Saturday night. Show time is 6 p.m. Free admission. No alcohol or drugs. From Russellville, take 243 to Hwy. 79, turn right, go 1/4 mile, third building on left. For more information, please call 256-332-5479 or 256-810-4840.

New Life Ministries invites you to join them for Sunday School at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a fellowship lunch after morning services. You and your family are invited to come worship and fellowship with the Lord of Hosts and his children. New Life Ministries is located on Hwy. 24 west toward Red Bay, behind Tompkins Feed.

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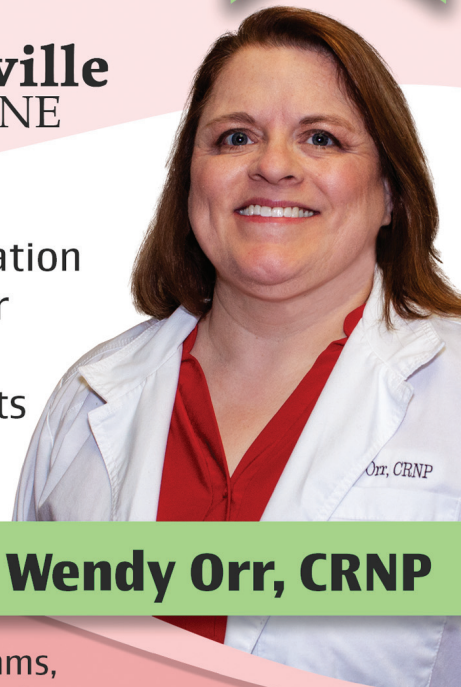
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Oliver writes foreword for new book detailing deadly Vietnam War battle

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A new book that chronicles a particularly bloody and deadly battle of the Vietnam War, and the men who were there, includes some local flavor with a foreword by Major General Troy Oliver (Ret.).

Oliver, the former mayor of Russellville, served as a 1st Lieutenant with the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division's Black Lions when the Battle of Xom Bo II broke out on June 17, 1967. Oliver wrote the foreword to a new book, *June 17, 1967*, that was recently published.

Oliver served as the S-1 infantry officer at battalion headquarters, and the book's author, David Hearne, was a 1st Lieutenant who served as an artillery officer in the field that day.

Hearne's book recounts the battle the afternoon of June 17, including the reality of its violence as well as paying honor to the men who bravely served their country that day. Thirty-nine American soldiers were killed that day, along with another 150 who were seriously wounded.

Oliver has previously been honored as a Distinguished Member of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, in a 2015 ceremony. He earned a Bronze Star with V Device, a Purple Heart and numerous other awards for his service to country. Oliver also had a distinguished career in the Alabama National Guard. Oliver hosted a reunion for veterans of the 28th

Infantry Regiment in 2015 at his home in Russellville.

When he was asked to write a foreword for Hearne's book, Oliver said he agreed almost immediately.

"The battle of Xom Bo II holds a special significance to me, just as it does for David, because we both were intimately involved in it," Oliver said. "We both lost comrades that day when the Black Lions and the Rufe's Rangers clashed with the PAVN 271st Regiment on that afternoon of June 17, 1967."

"The battle of Xom Bo II holds a special significance to me, just as it does for David, because we both were intimately involved in it," Oliver said. "We both lost comrades that day when the Black Lions and the Rufe's Rangers clashed with the PAVN 271st Regiment on that afternoon of June 17, 1967."

One thing Oliver found compelling about Hearne's book is the way the author portrayed the stories of the battle of Xom Bo II from the perspective of the soldiers who fought in it, embodying their personal experiences and profiling the men and their stories.

"He gives a minute-by-minute narrative of the action, the horrifying experiences, the chaos the men lived through, the loved ones they left behind and their dreams and hopes of their future—if they

A VIETNAM WAR STORY OF THE DEADLY XOM BO II BATTLE.

June 17,

Battle of Xom Bo II

Foreword by: Major General Troy Oliver USA (RET.)

DAVID HEARNE

The Author of *The Christmas Special* and *Hulagu's Web*

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'BATTLE,' from page 8

survived to that magic DEROS day," Oliver said. Although Hearne focuses on the stories of the soldiers, *June 17, 1967*, doesn't want for history and detail of the hellish battle that went on that day, with that detail starting in the book's opening paragraph: "When the killing started, it was slow and deliberate. They were killing us...and we did-

n't even know it. A single shot would ring out, and the life of one of our men would cease. Seconds later another crack of an AK-47 would echo over LZ X-Ray, and somewhere in the tree line, another soldier would fall dead." (June 17, 1967, pg. 1). Hearne is an award-winning author who has written multiple works. He is the son of a career Army

officer. Hearne loves traveling and discovering new places and cultures. Hearne and his wife own and operate a bed and breakfast in their home in the golden triangle in Southeast Texas. The book was published by Subterfuge Publishing and is available through amazon.com or Hearne's website, www.david-hearne.com.

'POWER,' from page 1

referred to as leukemia APL. But her six-month battle with cancer is something Phillips believes she can use to inspire others whose cancer journeys may just be starting. And if that means doing a few interviews, Phillips is just fine with that.

It was November 19, 2018, when Phillips went to Helen Keller Hospital after 11 consecutive days with a headache. She had also been experiencing shortness of breath, blurred vision and bruising. Keller physicians transferred her to ECM Hospital's Intensive Care Unit, and it wasn't long until she was moved to the oncology floor at ECM.

It was Thanksgiving Day when doctors gave Phillips her diagnosis—leukemia APL—and instead of hitting the stores early on Black Friday, Phillips was transferred to UAB Hospital to begin her cancer treatment.

In the first days of her chemotherapy, Phillips wasn't the optimistic beacon of light she has become. As many cancer patients do, she first went through a period of depression.

"The first time I was helped to the restroom, I glanced at myself in the mirror and began to cry," Phillips recalled. "My face was swollen, my stomach was swollen and my arms were swollen. I was having trouble breathing and was on oxygen, and my hair started to recede. As time went on, I started loving myself, because if you don't love yourself, no one else will. I want to help people realize you can go through this and no matter what it looks like at the beginning, it will all be okay at the end."

The daughter of Alfred Phillips and Youlander Elliott, Britnee is a 2005 graduate of Russellville High School. She has been on leave from her job with the Alabama Department of Transportation since November.

Many of Britnee's family and friends spent Saturday at the Reedtown Pavilion holding a benefit fish fry to help offset her medical and prescription costs and expenses.

Phillips gets emotional when she reflects on the outpouring of support she's received from her hometown the last few months.

"People I didn't even know have stepped up and helped me out so much," she said. "All the cards, messages and encouragement helped me get through some difficult days when I was at UAB Hospital. So many people sent flowers, cards, money or gifts. When it was time for me to come home, my uncle's SUV was packed down with things people sent me. I'll always appreciate all the love shown to me and my family."

As most cancer patients do, Phillips went through the 'why me' stage early on in her treatment. Whether it was through family, friends, doctors or nurses, she was constantly reminded to pray, and prayer showed her the way out of that depression.

"I felt so many emotions after my diagnosis," Phillips said. "I questioned, 'Why did this happen to me?' When I started to think like that, I started to pray. The doctors encouraged me to pray and lean on God and ask Him to lead me through this situation."

Her six-week chemotherapy treatment ended in early January, and Phillips returned home January 2. She will continue chemotherapy every other month through August, when she will undergo another bone marrow biopsy to learn whether her body still contains cancerous cells. Phillips has learned to deal with the daily pain from neuropathy and the insomnia (she gets one to two hours sleep most nights). But she's feeling better than she did in November.

"I'm glad to be out of a hospital bed and not be out of breath just walking to the shower or feeding the dog," Phillips said.

Before she became a cancer fighter, Phillips told her family she'd never take chemotherapy treatments, but her perspective changed when she was actually put in that situation.

"I want to fight for all those who lost their fight," she said. "Chemotherapy is tough, but the doctors and nurses tell you to believe in God, keep fighting and see this out to the end, and that it will get better. And it really does get better."

The *Team Britnee* shirts worn by Phillips' family and friends last Saturday contain a Bible verse from Proverbs 17:22, one that she uses for daily inspiration.

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

Phillips recorded an inspirational nine-minute video describing her cancer journey, and she's posted it on her Facebook page as yet another way to inspire others who are beginning their journeys.

"I never imagined I'd share my story like this," she said. "I wanted to, but when I started feeling really bad I didn't think I wanted to tell it. But people going through this need to be inspired. There are more sunny days than cloudy days, and I'm blessed to be here.

"My prayer is to spread positivity to other people."

Phillips also encourages other cancer fighters to surround themselves with a good support system and allow others to help them through this fight.

"People need someone there for them," she said. "You don't need to go through this by yourself, because when you get discouraged you need people to lift you up and you need to be around positive people. Love yourself, lean on God and lean on somebody. There will be somebody there for you."

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YARD SALES

Yard Sale and Moving Sale: Wednesday, May 1-Sunday, May 5. 301 Montgomery St. SE, Russellville. Boys/girls clothing, adult clothing, wall décor, etc. All priced to go!

Estate Sale this Friday, May 3 from 11 am-until and Saturday, May 4 from 7 am-until at 311 Olive Street. Dishes, glassware, sofa, chairs, table & chair sets, King & Queen BR sets, desk, bookshelves, antiques, lamps, vanity, decor, fridge, microwave, Christmas decor, DVD players, garden tiller, push weedeater, RV sway bars, flower arrangements, pictures, men's and women's clothes & shoes. Rain or shine!

Two-family yard sale this Friday, May 3 from 7 am-until and

Saturday, May 4 from 7 am-noon at 1260 Underwood Road. Men's and women's name-brand clothing, tools, glassware and much more!

Littleville Senior Center will host an Indoor Yard Sale Friday/Saturday, May 3/4. 7 a.m.-until. Old Jackson Hwy. in Littleville between Littleville Fire Department and Storm Shelter.

Multi-Family Yard Sale, Friday/Saturday, May 3/4. 7 a.m.-until. 460 Second St. (A.B. Hester Subdivision), Russellville. Name brand girls/boys clothing, ladies and big man's clothing, TV, glass end table, lift chair, lots of NEW items. If rain, postponed until following weekend.

Garage Sale: Multi-

Family Garage/Yard Sale, rain or shine. Clothing, toys and some furniture. 280 Skyline Drive in Hester Heights subdivision. 7 a.m.-12 p.m. Saturday, May 4.

Yard Sale this Saturday, May 4 from 7 am-2 pm at 5837 Hwy. 48. Five miles east of Russellville on Hwy. 48. First house on left past Tharptown Fire Department. Firefighter items, men's and women's clothes, two-way analog radios, lots of misc. items. Rain or shine!

Southwood Gardens Apartments (503 Cross Street) will have a Community Yard Sale this Saturday, May 4. Lots of everything! Too much to mention!

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'BANK,' from page 1

with vice-chairman Rebecca Reeves and their father, board chairman emeritus Cecil Batchelor, put the finishing touches on the agreement April 23 after meeting with PrimeSouth officials. The acquisition continues a business strategy of aggressive growth by the company.

"When something makes sense, where it can make sense for us and the bank we are looking to partner with, we are certainly open to other opportunities," Ross said.

PrimeSouth Bank has two offices in Tallahassee, one in Wetumpka, one in Pike Road and one in suburban Birmingham. Ross said PrimeSouth is financially healthy, and, since there is no overlap in the combined companies, all five offices will remain open for business and PrimeSouth banking customers will also benefit from the acquisition.

"Because of the sheer difference in the sizes of the banks, there may be some opportunities PrimeSouth was not able to provide service on a loan because it was too big for their institution, but we will be able to provide that service rather seamlessly," Ross said. "We also have CB&S Financial Services that provides insurance and wealth management services to our customers, so the PrimeSouth customer base, as soon as possible once the deal is consummated, will be able to receive those services as well."

PrimeSouth Bank opened on September 2, 1958, as the Peoples Bank of Carrville in Carrville/East Tallahassee, AL. The bank relocated to Tallahassee in 1985 and shortened its name to the Peoples Bank. The name change to PrimeSouth Bank came in April of 2004, and later that year the bank opened

its third location in Wetumpka. Ross said the acquisition was facilitated by the companies' similar business ideology.

"The more we visited, we figured out our companies are similar culturally. Like us, they are a good old-fashioned community bank," Ross said. "Both cultures were founded on customer service and community involvement. We felt good about that. They expressed some interest in trying to pursue the option of selling, so the more we talked about it, the more it seemed to make sense."

"When you have a healthy, well-run bank such as PrimeSouth, if you're going to make it work, you have to be ready and able when the opportunity presents itself. I think it's safe to say this deal was largely relationship-driven."

While CB&S Bank continues to grow, Ross said the Batchelors remain committed to the hometown values the bank family has held true since its inception in 1906.

"I hope everyone remembers the Batchelor family is our majority shareholder, and I know everybody is well aware they have been a huge supporter of Russellville and Franklin County and always will be," Ross said. "We hope our customers in Russellville and Franklin County take comfort that our dedication to our hometown communities will never change."

For more information on CB&S Bank, its services and locations, log onto www.cbsbank.com.

Diamond in the rough



COURTESY PHOTO

Located between Twin Forks and Bates Landing, 5 Points RV Resort offers campers access to 500 feet of water frontage, walking trails and a golf cart trail.

5 Points RV Resort has state-of-the-art camping

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When your father-in-law speaks, the wise son-in-law listens. And that's exactly what Phil Campbell resident Richie Habada did when his father-in-law Tommy Nix encouraged him to develop a six-acre tract of lake-front property for use as a campground for recreational vehicles.

The result? 5 Points RV Resort, a state-of-the-art 30-site RV campground located on Upper Bear Lake.

"I've had the property ten years. My father-in-law wanted me to develop it, so I finally decided to do it," Habada said. "We started last April. The campground is located on a point in a slew, and if you look at an aerial map, there are actually five points at the location. Local fishermen call it 5 Points, so we went with that name."

Owned by Habada and his wife Kristy, 5 Points RV Resort provides water, power (30 and 50 amp) and sewer hook-ups on site for each campsite. And for an RV owner, a sewer hook-up is a welcome site.

"To me, this lake and area is a hidden secret," Habada said. "We want our guests to enjoy the natural beauty of the area, as well as all the conveniences onsite they need to make their stay enjoyable."

"It saves you from having to dump sewage into a blue buddy and take it to the dump station," Habada said. "You can empty the tank right on site by connecting a hose."

5 Points offers weekly, monthly and annual RV camping for those with 10-year-old or newer vehicles. Weekly camping is \$150, the monthly rate is \$450, and, after six months of consecutive camping, that rate drops to \$400 per month.

There are no nightly rentals available.

The Habadas live adjacent to the campground, so Richie wanted to make sure it was a family-oriented location.

"We're not wanting a party crowd here," Habada said.

Located between Twin Forks and Bates Landing, 5 Points offers campers access to 500 feet of water frontage, walking trails and a golf cart trail. Habada will soon construct a bathhouse with restrooms and showers and a pavilion for use by campers.

"To me, this lake and area is a hidden secret," Habada said. "We want our guests to enjoy the natural beauty of the area, as well as all the conveniences onsite they need to make their stay enjoyable."

5 Points RV Resort is located at 734 Kelley Road in Phil Campbell. To make reservations, contact Habada at 256-456-5550.

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First-inning homers help RHS wrap up regional berth

Staff reports

Makala O'Neal hit a grand slam in an eight-run first inning by Russellville on Monday, and Megan Warhurst pitched a one-hit shutout as the Lady Golden Tigers clinched a regional berth with a 10-0 rout of Lawrence County at the Class 5A, Area 15 tournament.

Madison Murray also went deep in the big first inning for Russellville (19-16-1), which was in position to wrap up the area championship with a win over Hamilton on Tuesday.

The Lady Golden Tigers jumped all over

See 'HOMERS,' Page 19



PHOTO/KG Murray followed up an early grand slam by Makala O'Neal with a two-run homer, sparking a 10-0 rout of Lawrence County.

Tigers on top



PHOTO/KYLE GLASGOW
GREEN LIGHT - Red Bay advanced to round three thanks in part to Green, who improved to 5-1 on the season with a complete game last Friday in a series-opening win over Sulligent.

After sweeping Sulligent, Red Bay now takes on a tall task in its first quarterfinal appearance since 1993

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Just before the playoffs started a couple of weeks ago, Red Bay baseball coach Richard Maggerise took the opportunity to do a little redecorating around the team's facility.

"We started putting up banners, just to recognize some of our past teams and their accomplishments. Stuff like that," said Maggerise, now in his sixth season as the Tigers' head coach. "I think we hung nine banners."

Hopefully Maggerise made sure to save some room for this year's squad.

After sweeping Sulligent 7-6 and 13-8 last Friday in the second round of the Class 2A playoffs, Red

Bay (20-9) is preparing to play in the state quarterfinals for the first time since 1993. The Tigers, who advanced past the first round just once in their previous three postseason appearances under Maggerise, are now hosting their third playoff series in as many weeks—something their head coach could definitely get used to.

"Yes, absolutely. Without a doubt," said Maggerise, whose team swept Collinsville in round one before getting by the Blue Devils last week. "It's gotta be a first. There aren't very many teams who get a chance to host three series in a row. It's very rare for a team to get an opportunity like this. We're taking it in stride. Our guys love being at home. We have a lot of fan support."

See 'TIGERS,' Page 18

Bobcats break through to round three

Winfield up next for Phil Campbell in battle of 30-win teams

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Typically, by the time a team reaches the state quarterfinals, they're likely to run into an unfamiliar opponent. That's not the case this week, however, for Phil Campbell.

The Bobcats know Winfield well. "We do," said Jonathan Raper, now in his seventh season as the head coach at PCHS. "This year we played them real early in the season, back in February or early March. Over the years, we've played each other a lot, and our kids have played each other since they were in the seventh and eighth grade. We've played them in junior high and jayvee. We know each other pretty good."

Raper knows Winfield (33-7) well enough to know this much: If the Bobcats (31-7) are to survive and reach the state semifinals, they'll have to earn it the hard way.

"They usually don't beat themselves," Raper said. "You have to go out there and beat them. They are a very good baseball team, very solid. They have good pitching, they hit and they play good defense. They do all three very good."

In that respect, the two teams are very similar. Phil Campbell has excelled in virtually every phase this season, out-scoring its opponents by a margin of seven runs per game. The Bobcats bat .352 as a team and sport a collective on-base percentage of .468, driving an attack that averages 10.2 runs per game. The outs they do make are often productive ones, as evidenced by their team total of 31 sacrifice flies. The lineup boasts eight .300 hitters, and any lack of power [the team has hit just seven home runs, four of which have come from senior Nate Owens] is offset by an impressive amount of extra-base pop that has produced a whopping 79 doubles and 13 triples.

That prolific offense has come as a surprise to Raper, who was concerned enough prior to the season about his young team's ability to hit that he had them spend an inordinate amount of time working on bunting in anticipation of having to scratch and claw for runs the small-ball way.

"I think that's why our kids have hit the ball so good—they don't like to bunt," Raper said with a smile. "They tell me all the time, 'If we ever start not hitting, just tell us we'll have to bunt.' That's all I talked about at the beginning of the year was bunting. I think they learned to hit so they wouldn't have to bunt."

Sophomore shortstop Luke Barnwell sparks the high-scoring attack from

the leadoff spot, batting .365 with a .510 OBP, 13 extra-base hits and 57 runs scored. Third baseman Austen Baker, another sophomore, has settled into the two-hole, batting .350 with a .492 OBP, 13 extra-base hits (including two homers) and 43 RBIs.

Owens was held in check last week by second-round opponent Hanceville, but he's still batting .414 on the season with team-highs in hits (48), home runs (four), doubles (12), RBIs (48) and multi-hit games (17). Junior catcher Rilan Garrison (.430 average with 41 RBIs) is an on-base machine in the cleanup spot, drawing a team-best 37 walks and reaching base at a .586 clip.

There's no let-up in the lineup, with sophomore Ridge Raper batting .359 in the five-hole with a .469 OBP, 35 RBIs and 46 runs. Perhaps the most pleasant surprise of all has been freshman second baseman Mason Swinney, who didn't open the season as a regular but is now batting .415 with a .557 OBP, 29 RBIs and 34 runs. Senior Ty Leindecker has put the "hitter" in designated hitter, batting .333 with nine doubles and 32 RBIs.

"The kids are excited. They're pumped," Raper said. "We can finally say we've made it past the second round. We got that monkey off our back. I told them before [Game 3 against Hanceville] that after the game I was either gonna be throwing up from happiness or throwing up from crying."

Cole Motes, another senior, reaches base at a .372 clip and has 28 RBIs. Speedy sophomore Trey Leindecker bats ninth but essentially serves as a second leadoff man, batting .310 with 11 extra-base hits, 41 runs scored and a team-leading 15 stolen bases.

Add it all up, and you get an offensive attack that has posted double-digit run totals 24 times this season while surpassing Raper's wildest dreams.

"I thought we'd be good hitters—but not this quick," the head coach said. "I will say this, though. These kids have worked their rear ends off. They've really bought in. We get a little pull-happy sometimes, but we've got a ton of hits from left-center to right-center. We've worked on hitting the ball to right field, and that's helped this group big-time. If the pitch is away, we'll go that way. We've worked on that a lot."

One of the only opposing pitchers to succeed this season in holding the Bobcats in check was Winfield ace Jackson Elkins, who struck out 10 and walked none in a complete game 2-1 win over Phil Campbell way back on the final day of February. Elkins (a 6'2, 180-pound right-hander) didn't start either game for the Pirates in their first-round sweep of Weaver, but he struck out 12 batters in 5.1 innings last Friday to finish off a two-game sweep of Sylvania with a 9-4 win.

"When we played them at their place, Elkins threw the whole game against us," Raper said. "He's their number one. He's mid-80s with his fastball, good breaking ball. He's a good pitcher."

The Pirates used a handful of different pitchers in a game at Phil Campbell on March 5, and the Bobcats earned a split of the season series with an 8-5 win.

Sophomore left-hander Brody Cook has started Game 1 for Winfield in each of the first two rounds, allowing zero earned runs and 11 hits in 11.1 innings. He has struck out eight and walked one, beating Weaver 4-2 and Sylvania 6-4.

"He's their true number two," Raper said, "a real good lefty who's 78 to 82 [with his fastball] and throws a good breaking ball. They've got another kid who plays short when Elkins is pitching, and he can come in and throw mid-80s."

Phil Campbell isn't exactly hurting for arms either. Ridge Raper didn't have his best stuff in Saturday's second-round clincher at Hanceville, but he still pitched into the sixth inning of an 11-3 win. The sophomore ace is now 7-0 on the year with a 1.88 ERA and 62 strikeouts in 41.1 innings. Owens, a senior lefty, tossed a one-hit shutout in last Friday's series opener at Hanceville and is now 7-1 on the season with a 1.94 ERA and 64 strikeouts in 46.2 innings.

The Bobcats have a plethora of other options on the mound, including Motes (5-0 with a 2.85 ERA and 34 strikeouts in 27.1 innings), Baker (1-2 with a 1.25 ERA and a 25/5 strikeout/walk ratio), Barnwell (3-1 with a 2.00 ERA in 13 appearances), sophomore Brett Saint (5-3 with a 3.16 ERA) and Swinney (2-0 with just one earned run allowed and 32 strikeouts in 15.1 innings).

The quality pitching on both sides has Raper expecting runs to be at a premium in this week's series.

"I really think they'll be low-scoring games," the coach said. "You never know. A lot of that depends on the umpire back there and whether it's a tight

See 'BOBCATS,' page 15

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Eady sets sectional record in javelin; seven other RHS athletes make state

Staff reports

Eight Russellville High School athletes qualified for the state meet with their performances at the sectional meet last week at James Clemens High School in Madison.

Grayson Eady qualified for state in the javelin, setting a new sectional record with a toss of 175'5". Brooks Scott qualified for state in the discus with a throw of 132'07". Ashaad Williams qualified for state in the 400M run with

a time of 52.89 seconds.

Naydelin Momentey qualified for the state meet in the 800M run with a time of 2:39.69. Don'Kyiah Ramson qualified for state in the long jump with a leap of 14'11". And the 4X400 relay team of Treyvia Pruitt, Lauren Rogers, Ramson, Momentey and alternate Lauren Hammond qualified for state with a time of 4:34.51.

The state track meet will be held at the Gulf Shores Sportsplex this Thursday, May 2 through Saturday, May 4.

'BOBCATS', from page 14

strike zone or a big strike zone. They may be slugfests. But I think we both have pretty good pitching. I expect tight games, low-scoring games.

"This past weekend [in the Hanceville series], we hit the ball well, but they covered so much territory in the outfield. Some of the hits we've been getting, they were running them down. Their short-stop and their second baseman made some great plays on us, back-handing balls and throwing us out. We're used to scoring a lot of runs, but they made it a little bit harder on us this past series. They were making the plays."

Phil Campbell didn't make the plays—not even the routine ones—in Game 2 at Hanceville, committing eight errors that paved the way for the Bulldogs to even the series with a 12-7 win. The Bobcats bounced back, however, and rolled to an 11-3 rout in the decisive Game 3, advancing to the

quarterfinals for the first time in seven playoff trips under Raper.

"The kids are excited. They're pumped," he said. "We can finally say we've made it past the second round. We got that monkey off our back. I told them before [Game 3] that after the game I was either gonna be throwing up from happiness or throwing up from crying. I'm glad we finally broke through."

The Bobcats have no intentions of stopping now, though. Their objective remains the same as it has been for the past several years.

"This group has set their goals," Raper said. "We're gonna make the playoffs, win the area, win the county, and we're gonna play for a Blue Map. We talk about it 24-7. We feel like we've been good enough to play for it all the last few years, but we've been beat by some good teams."

"These kids believe they can play for it all, and that helps. We're not overconfident, but we think we have enough intangibles to make it. We're gonna be disappointed if we don't. The kids feel that way."

This week's series with Winfield is scheduled to open Thursday at Roger Bedford Park in Phil Campbell with a doubleheader starting at 4:30 p.m. Raper knows it will take his team's best performance to keep the Montgomery dream alive.

"We're gonna have to play very good defense," he said. "That's where it's gonna start. We have to throw strikes. We can't walk people. We have to run the bases smarter, too. We've made too many mistakes on the base paths this year."

"If we play good defense and throw strikes, top to bottom we can hit good enough that I feel like we'll score eventually—enough to win."

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Russellville run ends with second-round loss

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Standing just a few steps outside the home dugout at Russellville Baseball Stadium on a sunny Saturday afternoon, surrounded by members of the local media, Chris Heaps turned to look over his shoulder and surveyed an unfamiliar scene.

Having just capped off a frustrating weekend at the plate by stranding 10 runners in a season-ending 4-1 loss to Southside Gadsden in the second round of the Class 5A playoffs, Golden Tiger players were slowly—almost mechanically—packing up their gear, getting ready to leave the ballpark one final time. Heaps, a 25-year veteran of the coaching ranks who has been a part of seven state championship teams as a player, assistant and head coach, saw the slumped shoulders, the lowered heads, the tear-streaked faces. Then he turned back toward the field and spoke.

“This is what most teams experience, right here,” Heaps said, gesturing back toward the somber scene behind him. “If they make the playoffs, eventually they get knocked out in the first or second round. Most people don’t experience what we’ve experienced the last four years.”

What Russellville experienced the last four years prior to this one was nothing short of historic: 151 wins and only 40 losses; 20 series played in the postseason, with 19 series wins; four consecutive trips to Montgomery for the state finals; and back-to-back-to-back state championships in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The run of Blue Maps turned Red in 2018, and now the Montgomery streak has ended as well. The Golden Tigers would have been hard pressed to get by a loaded Springville team in this week’s quarterfinals [they barely survived the Tigers in *last* year’s third round], but Heaps was eager for the opportunity. It never materialized, absorbing a fatal blow on Saturday in the bottom of the sixth when a deep drive crushed by senior catcher Hunter Briles got caught up in a stiff cross-wind and came to rest in the glove of Southside centerfielder Brennan Stokes two steps shy of the fence.

It looked like a two-run homer off the bat, one that would have brought Russellville within a run at 4-3 and opened up a world of possibilities. Instead, it became the third out of the inning, and then the door slammed shut for good in the bottom of the seventh when second baseman Brock Ford dove into the hole to snare a line drive off the bat of Jackson Lindsey. He doubled Cole Barnett off of first, turning a potential tying-run-at-the-plate-with-nobody-out situation into two outs with the bases empty.

One groundball to third later, and both teams were heading home—Southside to host Springville in the quarterfinals, and the Golden Tigers to ponder what might have been.

“Hunter Briles, one of the best guys we’ve got, if he’s got yesterday’s wind, that’s a two-run homer,” Heaps said. “I thought it was gonna be. He whammed it. But I knew that wind was holding it up. Look at those oak trees out there right now, bending this way. But that’s life. The wind don’t always blow your way. Sometimes you gotta sail against it, and that’s where we are today.”



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Buckhalter (3) and four other seniors will be moving on, but the future still looks bright for Heaps (left) and the Golden Tigers.

The Golden Tigers struggled offensively all weekend, totaling just eight runs in three games, and two bad innings on the mound proved fatal. In the top of the first of Game 1 and the top of the first of Game 3, Southside (25-13) took advantage of five total walks, two hit batters and an error to score a total of seven runs. Russellville never recovered, trailing wire to wire in both games, and Heaps couldn’t shake the feeling that even though this season may not have been destined to end in Montgomery, it shouldn’t have ended on Saturday either.

“What hurts the most is I feel like we should have won both games last night,” Heaps said. “And so do our players. We were looking forward to hosting Springville here and getting that back on the schedule, getting that rivalry back that we had last year. It was unbelievable, that third game last year, and we were hoping to get something similar to that.”

Instead, Russellville (18-18) lost a playoff series for just the third time in 23 tries with Heaps as head coach. The previous two series losses had come in the first round (to eventual state champion in Hartselle in 2013, Heaps’ first season at RHS) and the last round (to Faith Academy in the state finals a year ago). On Saturday, though, Heaps had a different season on his mind—2014, when the Golden Tigers missed the playoffs altogether and finished 16-24 with a roster full of sophomores and freshmen who would become the core of those back-to-back-to-back state champions.

“In ‘14, it felt like this—but we didn’t make the playoffs that year,” Heaps said. “We went 16-24, but we had a lot of young players coming back, and they had some talent. That was my second year here, and they needed a better work ethic, and they needed better pitching across the board—other than just a young Cody Greenhill.

“We won it [in 2015] a year earlier than we ever thought we would have a chance to win it. We won it a year earlier than what people would have looked at our roster and said we should have. But that group of guys really worked. We call it the grind, what we do here.”

That grind has already begun anew, and it starts with honesty, introspection and accountability.

“There’s three questions you have to ask yourself after a loss,” Heaps said on Saturday. “What went well? And not just this game, but the season as a whole. Starting off 1-9 and then getting one game away from the third round, I think that’s a pretty good...it’s not the ending you want, but, again, most people don’t experience what we’ve experienced the last four years.

“The second question you have to ask is, what needs work? And the third one is, how and why will we be better because of what happened? We’re gonna look at it that way.”

The 2014 team had a sophomore class led by the likes of Austin Bohannon, Austin Kitterman, Landon Oliver and Reed Smith—not to mention a pair of future Auburn Tigers in the freshman class in Greenhill and Judd Ward, who sat out that season with a shoulder injury. It’s patently unfair to hold the current crop of young varsity players to the standard set by what, in retrospect, was probably a once-in-a-lifetime collection of next-level talent, but that doesn’t change the fact that the immediate future of Golden Tiger baseball looks bright.

Sophomores Lindsey (.352 average with a .486 OBP and 12 extra-base hits) and Barnett (.263 average with nine doubles and 25 runs scored) were fixtures at the top or in the middle of the lineup all year in their first seasons as varsity regulars, and sophomore right-hander Gordon White (who tossed a complete game four-hitter to extend the Golden Tigers’ season last Friday with a 4-0 win in Game 2) has the look of an emerging ace on the mound after going 7-3 this season with a 2.08 ERA in 57 innings.

Rowe Gallagher, another sophomore right-hander, struck out 45 batters in 41 innings this season while flashing big-time potential with his fastball-slider combo. Fleet-footed sophomore outfielder J.D. Bishop, already a plus defender and base runner, started to show signs with the bat late this season, and other talented youngsters like freshmen Nathan Brockway, Ethan Oliver and Canyon Pace, plus eighth-grader Casen Heaps, got their first—but most assuredly not their last—taste of what big-time playoff baseball is like.

Add in a bevy of potential difference-makers (especially on the mound) coming up from the junior varsity and middle school ranks, and it’s not hard at all to imagine Russellville reasserting itself as a state championship contender in very short order.

“We have some guys coming back who have a lot of talent,” Heaps said, “and we’ve got some good young players to put in the mix with them. We may still be a year away next year, because we’re still gonna be young. But a couple of years after that, we’ve got a chance to be in Montgomery back-to-back. That’s what we’re gonna work toward.

“This was disappointing, but it’s very much like life. It don’t always bounce your way.”

Moon to continue golfing career at Calhoun

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - Chris Moon has a pet peeve on the golf course. Truth be told, Moon, who helps his wife Monica coach the girls golf team at Russellville High School, probably has more than one pet peeve on the links. [Golf, after all, can be a very frustrating game.] But one in particular irks him the most.

"I see some players who can drive it right there by the green, or on the green," Moon said, "but then they'll five-putt. That's my pet peeve. My big thing as a coach is, you don't want to three-putt a green. Once you get there, it's two putts. When we're practicing, I try to get the girls into a two- or three-foot radius when they putt that ball up there for a lag putt. That way, nine times out of ten, you can make that putt."

If one of Russellville's players slips up and violates Moon's rule on three-putts, they can count on hearing about it after the round—especially if that player happens to be Moon's daughter, Morgan.

"Never get above a two-putt," Morgan said when asked to describe her philosophy on the green. "No three-putts. That's the rule."

And does she always follow that rule?

"I do," she said, before back-pedaling a bit and flashing a quick smile. "Well...I try. If I don't, I don't think Chris is gonna be happy."

He won't be.

"That's exactly right," Chris says with a grin when his daughter's words are relayed to him. "We've got three other golfers [on the varsity team] this year, so I'll try to watch them during the round. But when I'm with Morgan and I can see her, and I see her three-putt, that's what I put on the scorecard. After the match, I'll be like, 'Hey, on hole number six, you three-putted this green,' or 'on hole such-and-such you didn't lay up on the green, and you hit two shots to get on the green.' I can see those things, and that's what we work on."

That work has certainly paid dividends. Morgan, a senior and the Lady Golden Tigers' No. 2 player, has become extremely proficient on and around the greens, and her short-game skills have helped her earn a shot to continue her career at the next level. She signed a scholarship offer from Calhoun Community College in Decatur last Friday at a ceremony on the top floor of the RHS field house.

"That's what I like about the game of golf," Morgan said. "You can take it on further and keep playing, even after high school. I can still play the sport when I get older. It was probably a year ago when I realized there was actually a good possibility that I could play in college."

She'll get to do just that next year at Calhoun, where new head coach Arin Eddy was only too thrilled to make Moon a part of her first signing class.

"I'm very excited to sign Morgan," said Eddy, who played golf at Hartselle High School and then later in college at both Samford and Montevallo. "I got hired [at Calhoun] in December, and at that point everybody had already signed, or some girls had decided they didn't want to play in college. I was kind of struggling to find girls to play, but I prayed about and thought about it, and luckily I found the five girls I got. It worked out."

"The principal here at Russellville [Jason Goodwin] emailed me about Morgan and mentioned that she might be interested in playing college golf. Of course, me struggling to find girls, I went after her. Luckily she turned out to be an awesome girl. She has a great personality, and she's good at golf. It just kind of worked out."

Moon is particularly good on and around the putting surface, and that's no accident. It's by design—primarily her father's.

"Ever since Morgan started off as a seventh-grader, my big thing with her has been her short game," Chris said. "You can see it in girls golf—that's where they struggle the most. They can hit some drives, they can hit irons, but when they get around that green they struggle—just knowing how to read greens and how to putt. So from the seventh grade to the ninth grade, I really just tried to work with her on the game, how to play the game, how to read greens, just simple things like how to mark a ball on the putting green to get out of another girl's way. Just the fundamentals."

Morgan took those lessons to heart, and it wasn't long before she began to consider her short game as her greatest strength.

"My putting is something I've been strong at," she said on Friday. "I can always improve my swing and my score. I can always improve from tee to green. I try to get to 200 [yards] on my drives. I'm a little girl, but I'm getting there. I've been working out a little more. I'm really just focusing on accuracy, trying to always keep it in the middle. Right and left will get you in trouble. "My iron play has gotten much better this year. That's what I've tried to focus on—my irons. They've gotten more accurate."

As she works to add length off the tee and become more precise with her irons, Moon can take comfort in knowing that she excels at the one aspect of the game that impacts scoring more than any other—the short game. She's

become highly adept on and around the putting surface, and others have long since started to take notice.

"Now I can really see it," Chris said last Friday. "We'll go around and play in tournaments, and Morgan and some of our other girls [senior Josie Willis and sophomores Ashlyn DeArman and Alayna Fish] will be playing, and people will be like, 'Man, their short game is just so good.' That's where I've seen her grow the most. It really tickles me. At the last tournament we played, another parent came up and said, 'Man, she just doesn't miss putts.' And I said, 'That's where she makes up the strokes.'"

Of course, the more strokes Morgan shaves off her game [her best 18-hole score this season was an 84 at a tournament in Fairview, and her best nine-hole score was a 43 at Twin Pines], the closer she gets to beating her dad.

"He's pretty good. He's better than me—right now," she said with a smile on Friday. "But I'm gonna get him. I haven't beaten him yet, but he doesn't play with me much anymore. I think he's a little bit intimidated."

Chris does not deny this. "She's exactly right," he said with a grin last Friday. "We're gonna be playing in a tournament next week together, and I already told her, 'If you ain't carrying us on the driver, I'm gonna be a little disappointed. I may make you go home.'"

Morgan has certainly come a long way since 2014, when Russellville first adopted a girls program and she competed as a seventh-grader against juniors and seniors from other schools. Now that she's at the other end of the spectrum, she always tries to remember what it was like starting out.

"It was a little bit intimidating," she said. "I was playing seniors. Now that I am a senior, I try to always make sure the girls are having fun, even if they're younger, because I know what it's like to have those nerves."

One of the things that excites Moon the most about heading to Calhoun is the opportunity to learn from Eddy and continue to grow her game.

"Coach Eddy, she's super nice," Moon said. "She knows what she's talking about. I can't wait to play under her. Calhoun is a very nice school, and they have an indoor golf facility, so we can still play on rainy days. We don't have that here. I love their home course, too. It's Point Mallard [in Decatur], and I love playing that course."

See 'MOON,' page 19

Legacy CHEVRON PRESENTS **ATHLETE of the WEEK**

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Shaylee Wieting
Junior Shortstop, Tharptown

Wieting batted .650 in six games for the Lady Wildcats last week, collecting 13 hits in 20 ABs. She drove in five runs, scored 10 and also stole nine bases, helping Tharptown go 4-2.

Wieting has been a dynamic presence in the leadoff spot all season for the Lady Wildcats, batting .526 (50-for-95) through Sunday with 53 runs scored and 49 stolen bases in 53 tries. She had collected multiple hits in 16 games while drawing 17 walks and striking out just eight times. Wieting was at it again Monday, going 3-for-4 in a win over Colbert County.

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'TIGERS', from page 13

"And with us having so many seniors, that's just an added bonus." Maggerise said at the outset of the playoffs two weeks ago that he thought his veteran team was primed to put together a deep run for the first time in a long time. But just because he saw it coming doesn't make it any less remarkable. Red Bay has made it this far only twice before and not in 26 years. It's a landmark (and certainly banner-worthy) achievement—even if his players may not realize it just yet.

"At the time, when we won last week, I don't think they understood," Maggerise said. "The kids are trying to play. They're just trying to play an extra week. But after the game, we talked about it some, and I think they started to realize what they've done."

"Of those nine banners we put up, I'm fortunate enough that five of them have been with me. So these kids have been part of some stuff, but never to this magnitude. They're excited. They really are. They're excited for this series."

Up next for Red Bay is a loaded Westbrook Christian juggernaut that has won its first four playoff games by an aggregate score of 59-1. The Warriors are led by brothers Andrew Dutton (a junior who has verbally committed to Birmingham Southern) and Samuel Dutton (a sophomore who has verbally committed to LSU).

On Sunday, Maggerise confessed that he's had his eye on a potential meeting with Westbrook (19-12) for a while now.

"You hate to say that we've looked ahead—but we have," Maggerise said. "As a coach, you're never supposed to admit that or say that, but as soon as we got in we knew what was lurking in round three. To be able to play a team like that with great players like that, we're excited."

Samuel Dutton, a 5'11, 185-pound right-hander with a fastball that touches 89 on the radar gun, has been dominant in his two playoff starts thus far, allowing a total of one earned run on three hits in 10 innings while racking up 22 strikeouts. His elder brother, Andrew, has been equally impressive, striking out nine batters in a perfect game against Vincent in a series-clinching 13-0 win two weeks ago. He has allowed only one hit across eight innings in two playoff starts, with 16 K's and no walks.

The Dutton boys (who combined for 15 strikeouts in a 6-1 win over Class 5A Russellville back in early March) will present a major challenge for a Red Bay team batting .325 as a group and averaging 8.3 runs per game, but Maggerise doesn't expect his guys to back down.

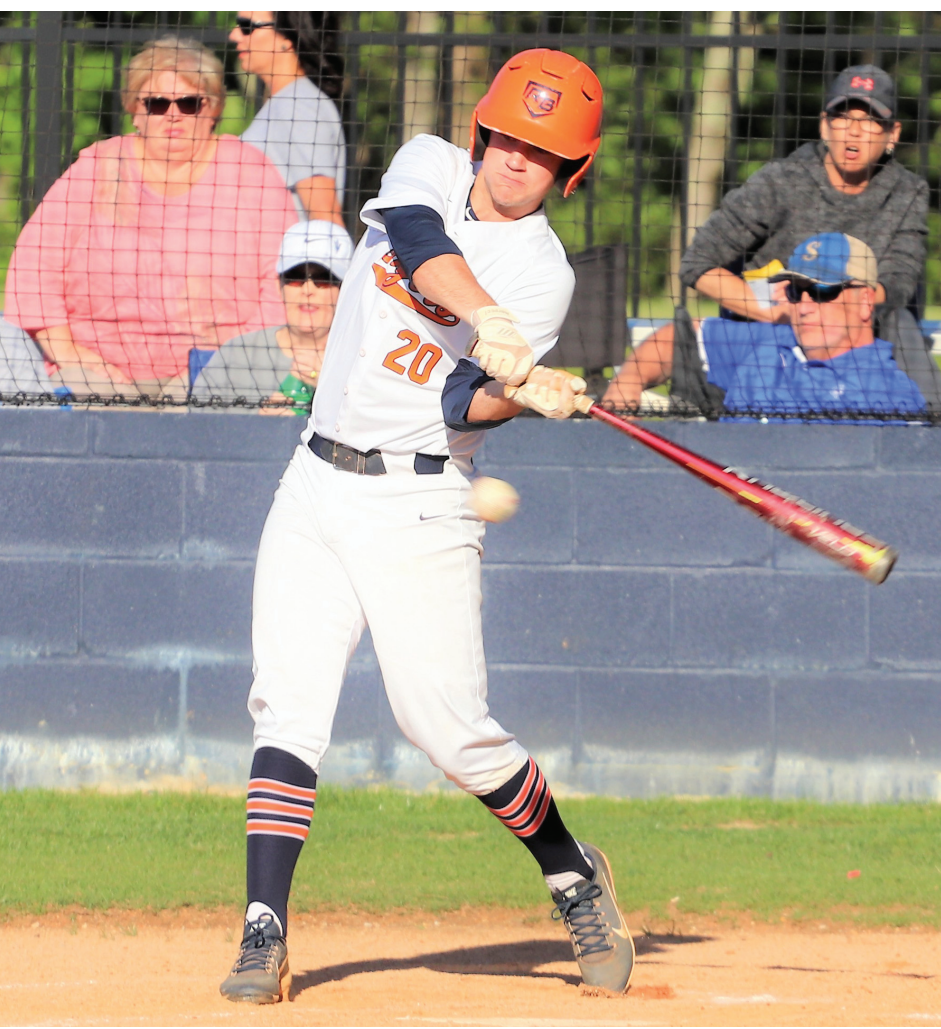


PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

THE CHASE IS ON - Allen is batting .430 with 44 RBIs for a Tiger team averaging 8.3 runs per game heading into this week's quarterfinal showdown with Westbrook Christian.

"We're excited, just for the simple fact that we've played teams like this before," said Maggerise, whose squad has won 17 of its last 21 games since stumbling to a 3-5 start. "We've played Phil Campbell four times, and they're in the quarterfinals [in Class 3A]. We've played Winfield, and they're in the quarterfinals [also in 3A]. We've always played Mars Hill, and they've had teams play for state championships. So we've played high-caliber teams before with guys that were gonna play Division One baseball. My guys won't be worried about that."

"Is there a little something extra about facing a guy like [Samuel] Dutton who's committed to LSU? Without a doubt, yes. But this is not the first time we've faced SEC guys."

Red Bay's lineup is anchored by senior Kolby Bragwell, a Shelton State signee who went 4-for-6 in last week's sweep of Sulligent and is now batting .557 (39-for-70) on the season with 16 extra-base hits, a .706 OBP, 28 stolen bases and 50 runs scored.

Fellow seniors Chase Allen (.430 average with a team-high 44 RBIs), Peyton Green (.356 average with 26 RBIs) and Cade McKinney (.388 average with 12 extra-base hits, 24 RBIs and 30 runs scored) round out what has been a highly productive middle of the order for Red Bay, but Maggerise maintains that table-setters like Colbie King (4-for-7 last week against Sulligent with three runs and three stolen bases), Kaleb Bragwell (.305 average with a .411 OBP, 28 stolen bases and 32 runs) and Alex Burroughs (20 stolen bases and 34 runs scored) are the key to the offensive attack.

"We've been swinging the bats pretty well," Maggerise said. "We feel like it's just a matter of time with our offense. We've got four or five guys who can hit a double off the wall at any time. Those guys are gonna hit. How does our 9-1-2 do?"

"Our nine-hole guy [King], he can fly. He's the fastest kid on the team. If he gets on, Kaleb gets on and Alex gets on, we're gonna score a lot of runs. Those guys are base-stealing threats, and they'll go first to third on a routine single to the outfield. When they get on base, we can score in bunches."

So, clearly, can the Warriors, who are averaging a shade under 15 runs per game thus far in the playoffs. As is the case on the mound, it's the Dutton boys who set the tone at the plate for Westbrook. Samuel is 6-for-10 thus far in four playoff games with two home runs and eight RBIs; Andrew has gone 8-for-13 with a home run, a triple, a double and 10 RBIs.

But it's not just a two-man show for the Warriors on offense, and Maggerise knows it.

"They've got four or five guys who can hit for power," he said. "Everybody else is a typical high school player, but they're a very, very good team. They're a state championship-caliber team. But once you get to the quarterfinals, that's the expectation of the talent level you're gonna see there."

"We feel good about the seniors we have. We're not gonna shy away from a challenge like that."

Red Bay goes particularly senior-heavy on the mound, where Kolby Bragwell (6-0 on the season with a 1.30 ERA) again leads the way. The hard-throwing right-hander has struck out 64 batters in 43 innings while allowing only 23 hits, but 11 of those hits came last week in Game 2 against Sulligent. [Bragwell needed 123 pitches to get through five innings but did earn the win.]

"Kolby had probably his worst outing in three years the other night against Sulligent," Maggerise said. "He was leaving the ball up in the zone. They were hunting fastballs early on, and we didn't do a good job of trying to play off his fastball with something else. They hit him up pretty good and ran his pitch count up."

"It was significant, though, for us to still win the game, because I think it gave Kolby confidence to know he doesn't have to have his best stuff to still be successful."

Green, another senior right-hander, scattered 12 hits over seven innings to win last Friday's opener against Sulligent and is now 5-1 on the season with a 3.50 ERA, three complete games and three saves. Burroughs (4-3) finished up for Bragwell in Game 2 and earned the save, and Allen (3-4) should be fresh and rested this week after not pitching in round two. The senior lefty leads the staff with 46 innings pitched on the year and has three complete games and one shutout among his seven starts.

It's up to Maggerise and his staff to figure out who pitches when and what the best plan of attack is to try and pull off a shocker and take two of three from Westbrook, the popular pick to emerge from the north half of the bracket and reach Montgomery.

"As crazy as it sounds, we haven't had the same pitching rotation through the entire playoffs," Maggerise said. "We're gonna look at the scouting report and see who gives us the best chance. How do we mix and match? Kolby will go at some point, obviously, but when he goes is to be determined. I'm not a believer in the mindset that I've gotta throw my number one against their number one and try to win a 1-0 game. I don't necessarily believe that. "It's about winning two."



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'HOMERS,' from page 13

Lawrence County in the bottom of the first. Jenna Whitfield got things started with a one-out single, and Alivia Clemmons reached on an error. After Autumn Logan walked, Whitfield scored the game's first run when Warhurst reached on another error.

Chalea Clemmons followed with an RBI single, and then O'Neal smacked her first home run of the season to center field, a grand slam that made it 6-0. One out later, A.J. Taylor kept the inning going with a base hit, and then Murray hit her second home run of the year, a two-run shot to left that capped the rally and made it 8-0.

That was plenty of offense for Warhurst (15-6), who allowed a third-inning single but nothing else. The West Florida signee worked her 14th complete game of the season, striking out five and walking one in five innings. She threw 46 of her 69 pitches for strikes.

Russellville scored its final two runs in the bottom of the fourth. Taylor led off with a single, but Murray lined into a double play. Whitfield started a two-out rally with a single, and Alivia Clemmons followed with a base hit. Logan and Warhurst then came through with back-to-back RBI singles, stretching the lead to 10-0.

Whitfield went 2-for-3 with two runs scored, and Taylor was 2-for-2 with a run. Alivia Clemmons went 1-for-3 and scored twice, and Murray, Logan, Warhurst, Chalea Clemmons and O'Neal each had one hit.



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

Whitfield had two hits and scored twice for Russellville in Monday's rout. The Lady Golden Tigers clinched a regional berth and moved one step closer to claiming an Area 15 tournament title to go along with their regular-season area championship. Russellville needed a win over Hamilton on Tuesday to wrap up the area crown. The regional tournament will be held in Florence starting next Thursday, May 9.

Boutwell, Bendall help RHS boys clinch sub-state berth

Staff reports

Sophomore Eric Boutwell and senior Brayden Bendall each shot 75 for Russellville at Gunter's Landing on Monday, tying for third as individuals in the Class 5A, Section 4 tournament and helping the Golden Tigers earn a sub-state berth with a second-place finish.

Tournament host Guntersville High School shot 312 to win the sectional championship. Russellville finished five strokes back at 317, followed by Arab and Scottsboro.

The top four teams in the 13-team field advanced to play in the North Sub-State tournament, which will be held next Monday, May 6 at Eagle's Nest Golf Course in Guntersville.

The top two teams at sub-state will advance to play in the state tournament, which will be held May 13-14 in Prattville.

'MOON,' from page 17

Chris and Monica were both beaming at last Friday's ceremony, and both are excited to see Morgan get the opportunity to play at the next level.

"This is a special day for us," Chris said. "I've been a golfer ever since I was growing up and my granddaddy got me into the sport. Morgan started off when she was a seventh-grader. For me, it's really special to see that she can carry her career on into college, and it's not done yet. I'm really blessed and tickled, just to have Arin give her this opportunity to further her career."

Of course, a few training sessions and practice rounds under the watchful eye of Eddy at Calhoun could give Morgan that final push she needs to get over the hump and beat her dad. Chris is well aware of this.

And he's just fine with it. "Oh yeah. I'm prepared for that," he said. "But like I told her, it ain't gonna be easy."

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