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Biologists confirm sightings of endangered bird species in Franklin County

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A family of an endangered bird species has made its home locally, and it took the keen eyes of two local biologists to confirm their presence in western Franklin County.

The family of swallow-tailed kites, approximately 10-12 in number, have been sighted in Little Bear Valley for three consecutive years by biologist Joel Pounders.

After Pounders posted his sighting on Facebook, biologist Brian Pace contacted Pounders last month to report sightings of the same birds near his home in the Red Bay Bottoms.

Swallow-tailed kites are considered one of nature's most beautiful, and rarest, birds. With only an estimated

2,500 breeding pairs remaining as recently as five years ago, this unique bird of prey is found primarily on the Gulf Coast near swamps and marsh areas.

According to www.audubon.org, swallow-tailed kites enjoy a diet of insects, frogs, lizards, snakes and nestling birds. Their diet is well-suited to wooded river swamps with tall trees preferred for nesting.

And western Franklin County, with its lakes and creeks, has become the location of choice for one swallow-tailed kite family.

After Pace confirmed his sighting with photos, Pounders contacted the Avian Research and Conservation Institute, wildlife officials in Mississippi and South Carolina's Raptor Center, to verify the sightings in Franklin County.

See 'ENDANGERED,' page 9

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Cold case file feature: Yu Chin Goodson

Dr. Joe Teal
For the FFP

Yu Chin Goodson, a 57-year-old Asian female, was last seen on March 25, 2005, leaving a halfway house for mentally disabled adults where she lived in Russellville.

When the other house residents sat down to dinner, they noticed that she was not there. And when Goodson didn't return, law enforcement started a massive search for her.

At the time of her disappearance, she had graying black hair, brown eyes, and was wearing a pink or blue pullover shirt and blue jeans.

Investigators say she did not take

any identification or medications with her, her driver's license has never been renewed, her prescriptions were never re-filled, and she has not accessed her bank accounts since she disappeared.

Goodson has never been heard from again. Her case still remains unsolved.

Over the years there have been several sightings of a person believed to be Yu Chin Goodson, but those leads always turned cold. Police could never track down the person matching her description.

One witness said a woman matching Goodson's description was seen

See 'GOODSON,' page 7

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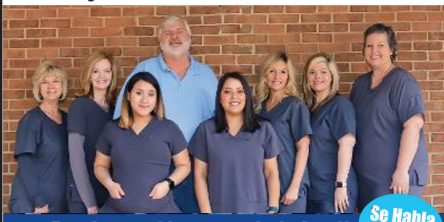
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Lawrence G. Brassard Jr., 52, of Red Bay, passed away on Saturday, August 28th. A celebration of life service was held with family.

Cathy Ann Kennedy, 67, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, September 2nd. Interment at Gray Rock Cemetery.

James Larry Robison, 76, of Russellville, passed away on Monday, August 30th. Interment at Knights of Pythias Cemetery.



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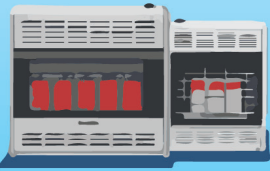
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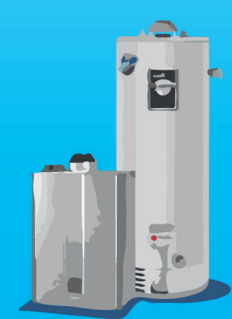
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September 13th meeting to introduce Main Street Alabama program to Russellville citizens

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The public is invited to an informational meeting of the City of Russellville Downtown Redevelopment Committee on Monday, September 13th at 6:30 p.m., at the Roxy Theatre.

Tanya Maloney with Main Street Alabama will present a program on her organization and how it works with Alabama communities to promote community revitalization in historic downtown areas.

The meeting will serve as a kickoff for the Downtown Redevelopment Committee's goal of working toward Main Street Alabama community designation.

Citizens are encouraged to attend and ask questions about the Main Street Alabama program and how it works in partnership with communities to build a sustainable community revitalization plan.

There are 28 designated communities in Alabama. According to www.mainstreetalabama.org, those communities have seen 2,588 new jobs, 729 new businesses and more than \$609,000,000 in private and public investment since 2014.

Main Street Alabama is a non-profit organization that focuses on public-private partnerships, combined with community engagement, to create new jobs, spark investment, attract visitors and promote new growth.



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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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My take on this... happy belated Labor Day!

All these years, I thought the meaning of Labor Day was a day to celebrate our military who are fighting for our country.

I looked up the meaning of this holiday that is celebrated on the first Monday in September and that's when I realized I didn't have all the information and most of you probably don't either.

I'd often laugh and say it should be a holiday to celebrate the hours women spend in labor. Being a mother and giving birth can often be long and hard hours. Well guess what? That was included in the description of the holiday! Now isn't that interesting?

Finding out it does refer to all the laborers who have built our roads, houses and the many other



Gail Motes

structures who have put in a lot of hard work for honest pay.

It doesn't stop there. The people who work from inside an office or your own home should consider yourselves a part of this celebration.

Lives evolve through *all* acts of labor.

Did you know that the idea of Labor Day was proposed by the Central Labor Union?

It was first celebrated in New York in 1882. It became an interest to the American worker and became a national holiday in 1894 and is still celebrated today.

The Department of Labor puts it beautifully on its website when it's referred to as a day when the nation pays tribute to the greater of so much of the nation's strength, freedom and leadership.

So yes, this is to celebrate our military, our first

SEE 'TAKE,' page 7

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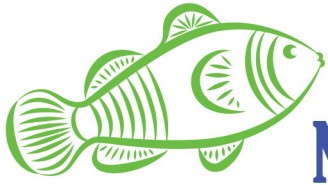
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The Why Knot Diner in downtown Russellville will host a Car Show on Sunday, Sept. 12, from 12 p.m-6 p.m. They have scheduled for Jackson Avenue between Lawrence and Montgomery Streets to be closed during the event. There is a \$10 entry fee for those who want their vehicle to be judged. (Best All Around Car, Truck/SUV, Bike will get trophies) and Race Car & RatRod will receive plaques. We will also have door prizes for those who enter their vehicles. But anyone who doesn't want to pay the entry fee can still bring their vehicles and show them off right along with the rest. Contact Dustin at 256-668-2585 for more info and follow @Why Knot Diner on FB to see posts and updates.

McLomoe and Turner reunion will be on September 11th at 11 a.m. at Spruce Pine Community Center. Bring covered dishes. Call (256)-324-5288 for more information.

Community Action of Northwest Alabama has COVID-19 funding available through its Utility Program. If you have missed work or lost income due to COVID-19, the program may be available for you. You can apply online at www.caanw.org, or in person at the Community Action office, located in the Russellville Wellness Shopping Center on Hwy. 43 South. The office is open Monday thru Friday from 8-4:30 p.m. Community Action also has a rental assistance program that may help you with rent if you meet the qualifications. Call 256-332-7534 for more information.

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AFoster Parent Training Course will be offered by the Franklin County Department of Human Resources starting Sunday, Sept. 12. The Sunday classes will be from 2-5 p.m., and will end on Sunday, November 14. Foster parent licensing requirements include being 19 years or older, passing a criminal background check for all household members 19 or older, clearance of state central registry on child abuse and neglect for all household members 14 or older, family stability, regular source of income, if married the marriage must be at least one year in duration. For more information, contact Leilani Johnson at DHR at 256-331-5940.

We love to hear from you! Please send your guest columns, cartoon panels, letters to the editor, recipes and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



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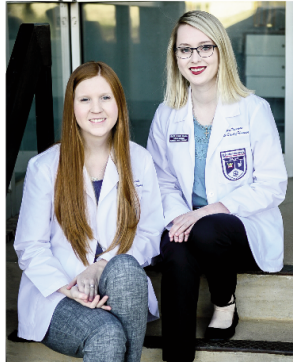
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'GOODSON,' from page 1

getting into a small gray or silver older-model car - possibly a Nissan or Mazda, with a loud muffler - and headed towards Decatur, AL on Highway 24. Authorities believe Goodson may have been trying to reach her son, who lives in Decatur.

When the case was featured on America's Most Wanted Missing Person's Hotline, more tips came in, all pointing in the direction of the Huntsville area, specifically around Parkway Place Mall.

Detectives checked several leads, but none were successful.

Goodson is reportedly mentally and physically disabled, including cardiac problems, diabetes, hypertension, and paranoid schizophrenia. Although she is not insulin-dependent, she must take daily medication for all of those conditions and she does not have her medicine with her. As a result of her conditions, Goodson may appear to be disoriented or intoxicated. She may be staying in homeless shelters.

You might be able to solve a mystery. If you have any information on Yu Chin Goodson, regardless of how insignificant it may seem; or if you spot someone who could be her, you are encouraged to stay with her and contact Capt. Jake Tompkins of the Russellville Police Department at (256) 332-2230, or Shoals Crime Stoppers at 256-386-8685.

This article is a team effort of the Franklin Free Press, Dr. Joe Teal (member Atlanta Press Club), the Russellville Police Department, the Franklin County Sheriff's Department and Shoals Crime Stoppers.

'TAKE,' from page 4

responders and the overly exhausted workers in the medical field.

It's also for the people behind the scenes. The ones who cook, work in housekeeping, electricians and all the others who are tired but never mentioned.

I'd like to personally pay tribute to all of those who labor hard for honest pay. I appreciate you and I'm sure there are many others who share my thoughts.

I hope you had a day of rest and relaxation and have fun on your holiday.

Happy belated Labor Day!

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Russellville Middle School teacher profile: Mrs. Marisa Rich

The Tiger Times is a student newspaper written and published by Russellville Middle School students under the guidance of English Language Arts teacher Kaitlyn Richardson. The Franklin Free Press will publish articles written by these talented students as time and space allows. We're proud to help promote the talents of these young journalists.

Lily Cate Pace
Russellville Middle School

Mrs. Marisa Rich has been teaching for a total of 10 years and has been at Russellville Middle School since the fall of 2016. She teaches seventh and eighth grade accelerated mathematics.

We had the opportunity to go and have a one-on-one interview with Mrs. Rich. She was asked a few questions that might be fun to find out about her!

When asked what she likes doing in her free time outside of school, she said she enjoys the outdoors.

"I like kayaking with my oldest (son) and my husband, traveling and hunting, Rich said.

Mrs. Rich has a family of four: two boys, Landon and Aiden, and an amazing husband, Scottie.

A fun fact about Mrs. Rich is that she was a cheer and volleyball coach in the past.

When asked which one was her favorite to coach, she said, "Oh that's a hard question, but probably volleyball because that's what I played."

Seriousness aside, she was asked some pretty random questions. For example, we asked her how she likes her steak cooked.

"Medium—not too pink, not too brown," she replied.

Mrs. Rich went to Universal Studios this summer so we asked her what her favorite ride was.

"Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey. We rode it two times," Rich answered.

Mrs. Rich may seem like a math teacher on the outside, but she's a science teacher on the inside. Mrs. Rich said science was her second best subject in school, behind math.

When asked whether she would prefer to win the lottery or live twice as long, Mrs. Rich had a thoughtful answer.

"I'd rather win the lottery because I can enjoy it with my family. If I lived twice as long then I wouldn't be able to live the second life with my family," she said.

The next time you see Mrs. Rich, make sure to say hello and share what you learned about her in this article.



COURTESY PHOTO

Rich has been teaching at RMS since 2016 and teaches seventh and eighth grade accelerated mathematics.



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'ENDANGERED,' from page 1

"They require two witnesses with photographic evidence, so when Brian confirmed seeing them, we were able to report the sighting," Pounders said. "The last time this bird was known to be here in Franklin County was between 150-200 years ago."

Swallow-tailed kites are classified as a 'species of high conservation concern' in Alabama and sightings north of the Gulf Coast are rare.

The kites are extraordinarily graceful in flight and are among a handful of bird species that drink water while flying. They skim over the waterway with their beaks open just enough to draw in water during flight.

For those fortunate enough to witness these birds in flight, their acrobatic show includes hanging motionless in the air, swooping and gliding and rolling upside down then zooming high in the air with ease, according to www.audubon.org.

Pounders has seen the same family of swallow-tailed kites for three years now, as the birds have warmed to the well-suited habitat near the Bear Creek Lakes.

Pace and his mother Dianne, an avid bird-watcher, recognized the birds when they saw Pounders' FB post. But the Paces thought they might be osprey hatchlings or some other species until they shared their video and confirmed they were swallow-tailed kites.

"We've got a pond behind our house and Little Bear Creek runs just below us. The grist mill waterfall is nearby," Pace said. "And we've got lakes within a 10-minute drive, so we're surrounded by water and tall trees, which is their preferred habitat."

Both Pounders and Pace wanted to publicize the sighting of swallow-tailed kites so that hunters don't mistake them for hawks. From their bills to the tips of their forked tails, swallow-tailed kites measure almost two feet long, with a wingspan exceeding four feet.

In a few months, the kites will migrate south, with many of them gliding/flying all the way to Cuba for winter. Others will rest overnight, then migrate as far south as Ecuador or Peru in South America.

"One swallow-tailed kite that was banded did more than a 1,700-mile flight without ever touching the ground on its way to Brazil," Pounders said.

Pounders said if there was just a one-year sighting, there wouldn't be much significance, scientifically speaking. But with sightings confirmed for three consecutive years, that's enough to interest conservation experts.

"There's just something about Franklin County these birds like. I suspect it's our abundant water resources," Pounders said. "They are considered the most beautiful of birds, with their long, pointed wings and forked tails."

Pounders said it's exciting for Franklin County to be part of the journey for an endangered species to regain its numbers.

"There are a lot of sound biological concerns about how we're losing a lot of species, so it's pretty cool to see one down to 2,500 breeding pairs coming back and Franklin County as one of the areas they're choosing," he said.



COURTESY PHOTO
According to Pounders, the last time a Swallow-tailed kite was spotted in Franklin County was between 150-200 years ago.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net!

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YARD SALES

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Previewing week four of high school football in Franklin County

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

Last week was the first week that every school with a football team in Franklin County were on the gridiron at the same time during the 2021 season. Going 2-3 for the week, schools in Franklin County will look to post a winning record this week as four out of the five schools will play games this Friday night.

So without further ado, let's begin this week's breakdown of the local high school matchups that you will be in attendance for this Friday night.

Russellville at Brewer

Going on the road for the first time in 2021, the Golden Tigers are fresh off of a 44-10 victory over Mae Jemison last Friday night. Russellville will look to continue their winning during region play this Friday night as they travel to Somerville to take on the Brewer Patriots.

The Golden Tigers head into this week sitting at 3-0 with wins over Decatur, Deshler and the aforementioned Mae Jemison while averaging a staggering 38.6 points per game while allowing just 20.6 points per game.

Brewer on the other hand has struggles so far in 2021, coming into this week at 0-3. With losses to Danville, Ardmore and Priceville (by a 70-0 margin), the Patriots have yet to pull out a victory this season.

Brewer is averaging a touchdown per game on offense while giving up an average of 38.6 points per game, which as we mentioned above, matches the Golden Tigers scoring average for the season.

The all-time series has strongly been in favor of

See 'PREVIEW,' page 14

Starting off on a high note

Fresh off of their first playoff appearance since 2015, the Phil Campbell Bobcats are looking to make it back-to-back playoff berths. And they will try to do it with a sound offense and a relentless defense along the way.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

The Bobcats are off to a 2-1 start to the season thanks in part to a stifling defense that has allowed just 15 total points so far during the 2021 season.

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - Over the course of the 2020 season, one thing was apparent for the Phil Campbell Bobcats football program: they could score with just about anyone.

During their season which included a playoff run, the Bobcats eclipsed the 30-point threshold three times while setting a school record for points in a game with 62 in a win over Elkmont.

However, the one pitfall for the Bobcats in 2020 was the defense as they allowed 30 or more points five times over the course of the season.

And while the offense is still talented enough to hold their own despite losing a ton of veteran talent last season, there is more of a focus on the defensive side of things for head coach Kevin

Barnwell and his squad here in 2021.

Finding a team that's had a better defensive start to their 2021 season than the Phil Campbell Bobcats would be quite taxing.

Through three games, the Bobcats have allowed just 15 points total and boast a 2-1 record headed into this Friday night's matchup against Clements.

"I feel like we're at this point for a reason because we've made a commitment to get better on the defensive side of the ball and it's showing for us," Barnwell said.

What's to credit for the sudden change for the Bobcats on defense?

Barnwell says it's a mixture of good coaching and good players buying into a process.

"We've got a very good buy-in on that side of the

See 'STARTING,' page 13

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'STARTING,' from page 11

football. Last year we felt like offensively we did enough but we didn't go all-in on the defensive side," Barnwell said. "Trevor Allison has come along in coaching our defensive line and the d-line is playing really well. And of course I think that David Palmer is one of the best defensive minds around and he does so much to help us and so does coach Gilbert. We're all on the same page and our kids are getting coached every single play."

The Bobcat defense against Elkmont limited the Red Devils to just 128 yards of total offense while picking off four passes and forcing two fumbles on the night as well.

In a game against Lamar County the week before the Bobcats' matchup against Elkmont, the offense was unable to find its footing and as a consequence the Bobcats were held scoreless.

That scoreless streak of four quarters didn't hold over from week-to-week. On the road for the first time this season, it took the Bobcats less than three minutes to jump on the board as Bryant Hyde broke away for a 38-yard touchdown run to kickoff what was an extremely productive offensive showing for the Bobcats.

"We made the commitment to distribute the ball to our playmakers because last week I didn't do a great job of making that happen against Lamar County. And we did a much better job of that this week," Barnwell said. "And that was ultimately the difference from last week to this week. You get the ball into those guys' hands that are going to make plays for you and that's what we were able to do."

The Hyde touchdown run was the first of many scores for the Bobcats, to the tune of 41 unanswered points before Elkmont was able to get on the board with their only score late in the third quarter.

An impressive offensive showing that saw the Bobcats amass more than 500 yards of total offense and 24 first downs also saw five different Bobcats find the endzone en route to a 55-8 victory to kick off their region slate.

Allowing just eight points in their first region matchup of the year points to encouraging signs for both Bobcat coaches and fans alike as Phil Campbell will have their first significant region test this Friday night against Clements.

"Clements has played some really good teams in West Limestone and

See 'STARTING,' page 15



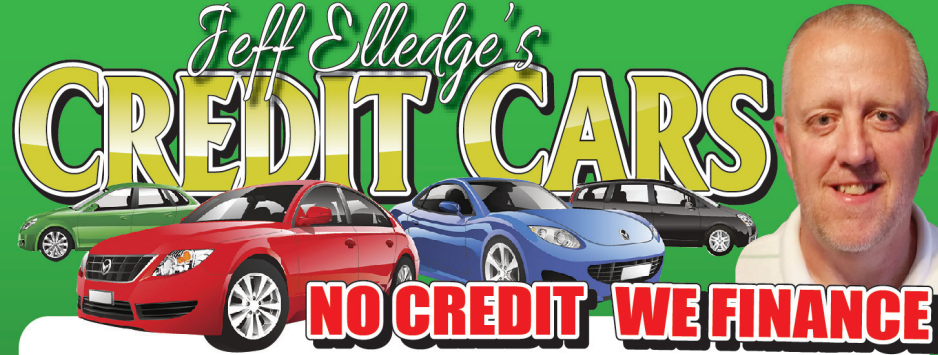
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'PREVIEW,' from page 11

the Golden Tigers dating back to the first matchup in 2002.

Since then, Russellville has won all seven matchups to date (including last year's 59-0 victory) while scoring an average of 49 points per contest.

Brewer has averaged 6.5 points per game on offense in those seven games.

Phil Campbell vs. Clements

This one figures to be one of the more highly-contested local matchups this Friday night as the Bobcats play host to the Clements Colts as they continue region play.

The story so far in 2021 for the Bobcats has been their defense as Phil Campbell has allowed just 15 points total on the season. Yes, you read that right - 15 points total.

The defense will have a critical task on their hands on Friday night as the Colts have scored an average of 28 points per game in their two matchups (both losses) against Wilson and West Limestone, both of whom are higher calcification than the Colts.

And while the defense has certainly been the calling card for Phil Campbell this season, the offense is more than capable of holding their own as well.

Scoring 27.3 points per game on the year, the Bobcats sit at 2-1 with their lone loss coming at the hands of Lamar County by a 7-0 final.

Over the course of their series history, Phil Campbell and Clements has been fairly evenly matched.

Across seven matchups, the Bobcats have won three games while scoring a combined 175 points (25 points per game) while the Colts have won four games scoring 200 points (28.5 points per game).

Last year's contest resulted in a win for Clements by a 38-18 final.

Tharptown at Lexington

The Wildcats started off the year 2-0 before falling to Colbert County last week in their first region game of the season.

This week, Tharptown makes the trip to Lexington to take on the Golden Bears.

In three games this season against Shoals Christian, Phillips (forfeiture) and Colbert County the Wildcats have averaged just over two touchdowns per contest (14.5 points per game) while allowing 23 points per game.

Lexington in 2021 sits at 2-1 with their only loss coming to Lauderdale County by 6-0.

Across three games against Lauderdale County, Tanner and Red Bay, the Golden Bears are averaging 29 points per game on offense while allowing a stifling 10.6 points per game on defense.

In a short all-time series, with the first matchup being played last season, the Golden Bears own the only matchup by a 55-0 final in 2020.

Vina at Decatur Heritage

The Red Devils opened up their region schedule for the season with a loss to Shoals Christian last Friday night.

This week, Vina continues their region schedule with a road trip to Decatur Heritage Christian Academy.

Vina currently sits at 0-2 on the season with losses to Marion County and Shoals Christian while averaging 11 points per game on offense and allowing an average of 39 points per game.

For Decatur Heritage, the Eagles sit at 1-2 in 2021 with losses to Falkville and Colbert Heights and a win over Phillips. Across those three games, the Eagles are scoring an average of 29 points per game while allowing 24.3 points per game.

Through six meetings between the Red Devils and the Eagles, Decatur Heritage owns the all-time series by winning all six matches.

The latest matchup, which came in 2020, went the way of the Eagles by a 53-8 final.

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Bryant Hyde Junior, Running Back Phil Campbell

Hyde showed up in a big way for the Bobcats in their first region game against Elkmont, both in the air and on the ground. The junior running back totaled 90 yards on 11 carries (8.1 yards per carry) and two touchdowns on the ground while also hauling in two catches for 43 yards and a touchdown to give him three total scores in the Bobcats win over Elkmont.



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'STARTING,' from page 13

Lauderdale County and they made a deep playoff run last season so they're a good program," Barnwell said. "We know that they're going to be sound in what they do and well-coached. So we're going to go in and make sure that we match the level of intensity that they bring. This week we're going to focus more on us than the opponent because last year they outplayed us and so that's why the focus this week is going to be more on us than anything."

Kyle Pace threw just seven passes but completed six of them for 169 yards and two touchdowns to go along with eight carries for 21 yards and a touchdown on the ground as well.

Hyde finished with 11 carries for 90 yards and two touchdowns on the ground while catching two passes for 43 yards and a touchdown.

Blain Goodson, Sage Raper and John Herring also found their way into the endzone on the ground as well with Goodson adding another touchdown through the air.

On the defensive side of things, Jeitt Traywick, Braxten Goodson and Andrew Green all came away with interceptions.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net!

Send your guest columns, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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Washington vs. Michigan	Michigan	_____
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Hawaii vs. Oregon St.	Hawaii	_____
Missouri vs. Kentucky	Kentucky	_____
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