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CAROL MURPHREE
 Board of Education District 4
 Republican Primary Tuesday, May 24

Almost Elton John concert to return to Russellville's Roxy Theatre

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

When Jerred Price hits the stage at Russellville's Roxy Theatre this Saturday, he will perform a new music set with fresh visuals and videos.

Price, who performs as *Almost Elton John*, will return to the Roxy Saturday, April 23rd at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20-\$35 and available by calling 256-577-9932.

Price, who owns a roofing company in Memphis, is an Alaska native who was raised in Arkansas. He moved to Memphis when he was senior manager at Lowe's and that career move landed him in the home of the Blues.

Price began headlining his own Elton John Tribute Show in 2014 at

Memphis' Hard Rock Cafe on Beale Street.

He now performs monthly at Memphis' Lafayette Music Room and he's on the road as *Almost Elton John* for several other shows each month.

Price and his band, the Rocketmen, played the Roxy last September. Audience feedback was overwhelming, so a return show was scheduled for this month. Price said he's changed his song list and added new stories about him and Elton John, including his recent visit to Los Angeles to attend Elton John's Academy Awards Party.

Price is active in Memphis as a community leader and volunteer. He's a past president of the Memphis

See 'CONCERT,' page 3

FCCDC approves numerous grants to local schools and non-profit agencies

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Community Development Commission met April 15, 2022, and approved a number of grants to local schools and non-profit agencies.

The commission, which includes Brad Bolton, Jeremy Campbell, Chris Wallace and Charlene Fancher, meets quarterly to review grant applications. The next meeting of the commission will be June 24, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., at the Franklin County Courthouse Annex.

Any grant request for that meeting must be received by a member of the commission on or before June 17th at noon.

With the most recent grants, more than \$2.335 million has been returned to Franklin County since the

inception of the funding. The funds come from in lieu of tax payments from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The Franklin County Legislative delegation, Sen. Larry Stutts, Rep. Proncey Robertson and Rep. Jamie Kiel, each make an appointment to the commission to represent them.

Grant awards for the April 15th meeting included:

—\$6,000 transfer to Future Economic Development Fund.

—\$2,500 to Red Bay High School football for helmet reconditioning.

—\$1,500 to Belgreen High School for custodial equipment project.

—\$800 to Phil Campbell Elementary 2nd Grade classroom for purchase of tables and chairs.

—\$1,000 to Tharptown High School softball for purchase of hel-


See 'GRANTS,' page 7

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 May 24, 2022
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Deanna Marie Cross, 80, of Russellville, passed away on Wednesday, April 13th. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Martha Sue Newton, 91, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, April 14th. Interment at KP Cemetery.

Raymond Rice, 93, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Sunday, April 17th. Interment at Liberty Hill Cemetery.

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'CONCERT,' from page 1

Downtown Neighborhood Association, and a commissioner for Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland's *Memphis City Beautiful* program.

You can add radio host to Price's long list of community involvement. Last November, he created a Saturday morning show on Memphis' KWAM-FM 107.9. Unlike many radio news program, Price's show focuses on everything good happening in Memphis.

"We talk about music, new developments and other good things going on in our city," Price said.

In February, Price was honored by the Shelby County Commission with a proclamation and resolution in honor of his service as president of the Downtown Neighborhood Association.

Price, who ran for Memphis City Council several years ago, said he continues to have political interest but he's waiting for the 'right time and right position' before jumping back into politics.

For now, he's busy with his roofing business and his 'night' job, as *Almost Elton*.

Audience members are encouraged to get involved in Price's show, whether that means wearing costumes, signing or dancing to Elton John's hits.

Last September's show was Price's first in Alabama, and he's excited to return and play again in the historic Roxy Theatre.

"The small town I lived in in Arkansas had a theater on Main Street. It was the centerpiece of entertainment, so it takes me back to be in a theater like the Roxy in a small town," Price said.

"The ultimate compliment is to see people singing and dancing because it means they are enjoying the show. I'm not an Elton John impersonator. We are a tribute band bringing some of the music and magic that is Elton John to you. I share my personal stories of Elton John concerts and getting to know him the past eight years," Price said.



COURTESY PHOTO

Price's show *Almost Elton John*, will return to Russellville's Historic Roxy Theatre this Saturday, April 23rd and tickets are available by calling (256)-577-9932.



JOE FIKE SHERIFF

Republican Primary May 24

My name is Joe Fike. I am the Republican candidate for Sheriff of Franklin County.

I started my twenty-year career as a jailer in 2000. I was quickly promoted to sergeant and supervised the daily operation at the Lawrence County Jail. I became A.P.O.S.T. certified at Jacksonville State University. I was the Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) Officer in Lawrence County, and worked for Town Creek and Courtland PD, where I was promoted to Assistant Chief.

I was appointed Police Chief in 2017 by the Town of Phil Campbell. I served the town in many roles, from Police Chief to Town Safety Officer, and occasionally rode the garbage truck. Leadership is about serving others and helping others around you rise.

I have operated a business for 16 years and understand what it takes to recruit and retain quality employees.

I am a Conservative Christian, and as Sheriff, I will be fair and impartial, and free from prejudice. I have grown a robust understanding while working in the correctional system and serving small communities to reason and be empathetic and compassionate while carrying out daily duties in these positions. I serve on the Franklin County Farmers Federation Board of Directors, the Phil Campbell Housing Authority, and the Franklin County Republican Executive Committee.

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JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Franklin County Commission is accepting applications for the following position(s):

Corrections Officer/Dispatchers

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on Friday, April 29, 2022.

An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N Jackson Avenue, Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM or applications are available at www.franklincountyal.org under the Careers tab.

Franklin County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in the employment or provision of services.

Why Does it Matter?

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As the *Franklin Free Press* has published a series of articles the last two months relating to the Russellville Electric Board, the public response to these news stories has been overwhelming.

Although the majority of responses have been positive, a few readers have accused the *FFP* of going on a 'witch hunt' against the REB manager. A few readers have questioned the newsworthiness of the articles.

So why does it matter that manager Charles Canida invoiced the *FFP* and Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff more than \$1,000 to produce copies of public records? Here's why...

The Alabama Open Records Act states any citizen has the absolute right to inspect and copy records of a public entity, including a utility board. That is your right under the law.

If you needed or wanted copies of records from REB, and you were invoiced \$95, or even \$78 per hour (Canida's hourly charge in the actual invoice paid by Woodruff) how would that change the narrative for you?

How is something a public right if it's cost prohibitive to exercise that right? Alabama law allows for a reasonable copying fee and a fee for producing the records. If that fee is so large that it serves as a deterrent from people asking for those records, that's a problem that impacts everyone.

The Alabama Attorney General's Office has previously stated when it comes to public records: *If possible, a public agency should provide free copies of public records. However, if budgetary constraints prevent this, then a public agency may charge a nominal fee, if necessary, to cover its costs in providing copies of public records. One may inspect public records without paying a fee unless a substantial amount of an employee's time is required.*

A March 2022 *FFP* article addressed the fee charged by REB for public records, how it changed three times, and how there were no employees' names included to explain how the \$876 'research' fee was calculated. If a public official won't put his or her name to something they're doing, that raises questions. If you're going to charge \$95/hour for records production, put your name to it.

These actions are newsworthy, as are salaries of public officials and utility

rate increases that impact more than 5,000 electrical customers served by the Russellville Electric Board.

Accusations of a personal attack by this newspaper against Charles Canida or any board member of the Russellville Electric Board are untrue. When a newspaper reports on the actions of a public entity, it's called reporting the news.

Ask yourself this: If the *Franklin Free Press* had not attended the Russellville Electric Board's January 2022 meeting, would anyone have known that the board approved a 3.1% rate increase?

That rate increase may or may not be justified. That's not for us to decide. But the citizens of Russellville have a right to know this, as well as the rights they have to oppose the rate hike with the Tennessee Valley Authority.

That's not a 'witch hunt.' It's called reporting the news.

Last month, we reported that \$28,800 in illegal 'performance and safety incentive' bonuses were returned by four REB board members. Before we ran the article, the *FFP* interviewed the board chairman and the senior board member. We included their responses in the article.

Over the past 10 years, Canida and the REB have submitted to the *FFP* numerous articles and press releases that tout the safety and professional accomplishments of the board and its management. We've run every one of them (at no cost to the Russellville Electric Board) and will continue to do so if they are submitted.

When REB substations were dedicated in the names of former board members Tom Pace and Jerry McDuffa, you found stories both times in our paper.

When Canida was elected Chairman of the Electric Cities of Alabama, the *FFP* reported this as a news story. We have emails from REB employees thanking us for our coverage of news events they submitted to us.

But news isn't always 'good.' It's not our job to label news good or bad. That's up to the reader.

We can promise what we publish will be accurate and fair, with all sides given an opportunity to be quoted within an article. Sometimes, people don't follow up on that opportunity. That doesn't mean the article is biased. It simply means you can't tell both sides of a story when one side isn't talking.

Canida has been given the opportunity to respond and be interviewed
SEE 'MATTER,' page 9

FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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RUSSELLVILLE, AL 35653
256-332-0255

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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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Commission approves landfill closing on Saturdays

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission approved new hours of Saturday operation for the Franklin County Landfill at the commission's April 18th meeting. Commissioners followed the recommendation of Franklin County Solid Waste Officer Gene Ward to close the landfill on Saturdays with the exception of the first Saturday of the month.

Beginning in June 2022, the landfill will be open the first Saturday of the month, from 7 a.m.-12 p.m, and closed on the remaining Saturdays.

Ward said the reason for the Saturday closings results from inspections by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management that are taking place early on Monday mornings. Those inspections are to make sure landfills do not have uncovered garbage.

When garbage is received on Saturdays, it can remain uncovered until Monday so there was concern that ADEM inspectors would find Franklin County in violation.

Employees will remain after the landfill closes the first Saturday of each month to cover all garbage received that day, Ward said.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said he wanted to delay the Saturday closings until June so that residents would have sufficient advance notice of the new schedule.

In other agenda items, the commission:

—authorized Moore to activate the state bid Debris Removal and Monitoring contract when necessary during or after a natural disaster and declaration of Franklin County as a disaster area.

—authorized Franklin County Emergency Management Agency Director Mary Hallman-Glass to apply for and sign grant applications for a \$12,000 Thermal Imaging Camera and a \$4,000 Grain Bin Rescue Grant.

—authorized up to \$40,000 to be spent to replace the truck driven by the Franklin County Engineer.

—approved the hiring of Joshua Wigginton as a permanent Corrections Officer/Dispatcher and Rikki Tharpe and Wyatt Burnett as temporary Corrections Officers/Dispatchers with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

—approved the hiring of Chris Hill as a permanent Deputy with the FCSO.
—approved the resignation of Carson Benson, Dustin Wiley and Holly

Salisbury as Corrections Officers/Dispatchers and agreed to advertise for the same.

—accepted the high bid of \$6,000 on a 2014 Chevrolet Caprice previously declared surplus property to Zachary Allen.

—approved the hiring of Jeremy McCarley as a part-time Heavy Equipment Operator in the Solid Waste Department.

—approved a donation of \$5,000 to Place of Grace to be used for construction of a permanent facility in Hackleburg.

—heard an update from Assistant County Engineer Jason Baggett about repairs to a sinkhole on Walnut Gate Road. The sinkhole has been repaired and filled with 10 yards flowable fill and riprap. Asphalt work was scheduled Tuesday and the road should reopen.

—heard an update from Baggett about repairs to washout spots on Railsplitter Road, and a bridge washout on Highway 34 near Orange Church.

—authorized Moore and Commissioner Chris Wallace to execute documents if necessary to change the polling place for the Newburg precinct from Macedonia Baptist Church. The church is no longer meeting and power has been cut off. There will be power reconnected and the church will be used for the May 24, 2022, primary election, but its future use after that date is uncertain.

—approved resolutions honoring the Russellville High School Scholars Bowl team for winning the 2022 5A Alabama Scholastic Challenge and the Belgreen High School Scholars Bowl team for winning the 2022 1A Alabama Scholastic Challenge.

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What's Happening

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

O Osborn Hill Cemetery -Decoration Day will be on May 7, 2022. 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 its 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.

B Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, 305 Bethlehem Road, Russellville, has changed its Decoration Day to the first Sunday in May. This year that date will be Sunday, May 1st.

Recall LaGrange's Distillery Raid on the Mountain will include a period-correct, living history event centering on a Prohibition Era Raid on a "suspected moonshine still." A group of lawmen will descend on the pioneer village of LaGrange and will engage in a brief skirmish with the locals. The skirmish will be held at 2PM on Saturday, May 7 at the College Site Park. Living history presentations will be ongoing throughout the day and also tours of the near-by Dawson Distillery earlier in the day. Craft Vendors and Tours of the LaGrange's Pioneer Village will be open inside the park all day. The Event is Free. Donations are always appreciated for continued operations of the park.

It's that time again—Mowing Season. Time to remove all old flowers from graves and headstones at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on Highway 724, Newburg. Donations are needed for the upkeep of the cemetery. If you have a loved one buried in this cemetery or want to help by contributing, please send contributions to: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, 941 Highway 87, Russellville, AL, 35654.

Jerred Price will return to Russellville's Roxy Theatre for his Almost Elton John concert on Saturday, April 23 at 7 p.m. Reserved tickets are \$35, \$30, \$25 and \$20 and may be purchased by calling 256-577-9932. Proceeds benefit the Historic Roxy Theatre.

The NACOLG Seniorx – Medicine program is a program for free and low-cost medications for the uninsured, underinsured, Medicare coverage gap or disability waiting period. For more information, contact NACOLG Seniorx today. There is no charge for this service. 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) Paula Pardue 256-389-0529.

Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church #2 will hold Revival Monday-Wednesday, May 2,3,4, beginning nightly at 7 p.m. Evangelist is Bro. Roger Akers. Pastor Roger Bond and congregation invite everyone to attend. The church is located at 1570 Highway 48, Russellville.

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'GRANTS,' from page 1

- \$6,000 to Red Bay Museum for restoration and painting of railroad caboose for Railroad Park Project.
- \$800 to Belgreen High School Computer Lab for purchase of printer and lab supplies.
- \$2,500 to Red Bay High School Softball for purchase of surveillance equipment, including fiber, cameras and installation.
- \$2,000 to Red Bay High School Football for nutrition program.
- \$3,300 to Russellville Police Department Digital Communications Project for equipment and service to move digital repeater.
- \$250 to Red Bay Senior Citizen Center for Car Show.
- \$2,500 to Franklin County Chamber of Commerce for Watermelon Festival.
- \$1,500 to Red Bay High School Golf for purchase of golf bags and program expenses.
- \$800 to Belgreen High School Science Lab for purchase of whiteboard and TV mount.
- \$1,000 to Phil Campbell High School Cheerleading for purchase of signs and vacuum.
- \$400 to Russellville High School Softball for purchase of Smart Coach radar app.




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NW-SCC Show Choir to host 70's World Tour Concert

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Northwest-Shoals Community College's show choir will hold a '70s World Tour' concert April 29-30 in Phil Campbell.

Vocal Point, directed by Jonathon Romero, will hold the concerts on Friday, April 29 and Saturday, April 30. Both shows begin at 7 p.m., and will take place in the Lou B. Bevill Center on the NW-SCC Phil Campbell campus.

Admission for the concert is \$8 and children under 12 are admitted free. NW-SCC employees and students will be admitted free after completing online registration.

Tickets must be purchased in advance for both shows online at <https://bit.ly/3OXeYa>.

Show Choir members from the *Franklin Free Press* readership area include: Dylan Adkins, Belgreen. Amberly Brown, Avery Guinn, Russellville. Chloe Carpenter, Makenzie Galloway, Ari Gilstrap, Phil Campbell. Briley Mills, Red Bay.



COURTESY PHOTO

The NW-SCC show choir's '70's World Tour' concert will be held April 29-30th and will begin at 7 p.m. at the Phil Campbell campus.

'MATTERS,' from page 4

before every article we have written was published. Each and every time, he never responded.

I had a long conversation recently with an old friend of mine whose opinion I respect. He stated that people in our community are most concerned about their bottom line. They want to know how the actions of a utility board impact their monthly bill, more so than what type of SUV the manager is driving.

So we investigated how local electricity rates compare to other TVA customers, and they were higher. In fact, REB's electricity rates are among the highest of Alabama local power companies served by the Tennessee Valley Authority, so that's what we reported.

If there's evidence of illegal or unethical conduct by anyone associated with the REB, we'll report that. And if no evidence is indicated, we won't portray someone unfairly if he or she is acting within the legal scope of (his or her) job duties, even if we disagree with their actions.

For almost 16 years, this newspaper has been the public's voice in most of Franklin County. The *FFP* is the only newspaper many people receive, and is their only source of local news. We take that responsibility seriously when we report the news.

We're not on a witch hunt against anyone. We don't take the news in a certain direction. We follow the news, no matter where it leads us. Our news and sports coverage have received more than 30 awards for outstanding journalism from the Alabama Press Association over the last 10 years.

We strive to tell both sides of the story. When one side won't pick up the phone, though, it makes that impossible.

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SPORTS

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Area title secured



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

The Bobcats outscored West Point 17-0 across three games en route to an area title and more importantly, a first round playoff host berth.

*Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press*

For the eighth time in ten seasons under head coach Chris Heaps, Russellville will host a first-round playoff series as an area champion. The Golden Tigers will begin their pursuit of a fifth Class 5A state championship next Friday at Russellville Baseball Stadium as they will take on Pleasant Grove.

But before the Golden Tigers could turn their focus towards the postseason, they had to take care of business against area rival West Point with the aforementioned home-field advantage on the line.

And over the course of three games against West Point, the Golden Tigers held the Warriors scoreless as Banks Langston, Logan White and Samuel Pace led the way on the mound for Russellville.

In game one of the area series, Russellville got a grand slam from Canyon Pace and a four-hit shutout from Banks Langston on Tuesday at West Point, taking a big step toward an area champi-

onship with a 5-0 win over the Warriors.

Tuesday's game was scoreless in the top of the third when West Point starter Eli Folds walked Casen Heaps with two outs. Grayson Thorpe and Eli Gipson both reached on errors, loading the bases for the most prolific home run hitter in the state of Alabama in 2022. Pace, a senior catcher, smacked the first pitch from Folds over the fence in right for his ninth homer of the season (and his 100th career base hit), a grand slam that made it 4-0.

According to Maxpreps.com, Pace's nine dingers on the year put him three ahead of Oak Mountain senior Davis Gillespie for the state lead. Pace's 41 RBIs on the year rank second in the state behind only Macon East Academy junior Jabe Boroff, who has 42.

Langston (5-2) took care of business on the mound Tuesday afternoon, zipping through his first complete game of the season on just 69 pitches (49 strikes). The junior right-hander was in a groove from the outset, getting three strikeouts in

See 'TITLE,' page 14

Bobcats rout Vinemont to claim area title, first-round home playoff berth

*Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press*

Phil Campbell got three hits from Mason Swinney and eight strikeouts from Cam Habada in a five-inning complete game on Tuesday, improving to 5-0 in area play with an 11-1 rout of visiting Vinemont.

The Bobcats (20-6 overall) took advantage of six Vinemont errors to score five runs in the bottom of the first and never looked back, cruising to their sixth straight and 12th in their last 13 games. Swinney, who came into the day batting an even .500 (35-for-70) on the season, got the scoring started with an RBI double, and Jacob Barnwell capped off the big inning with an RBI single. The other three runs all scored on errors.

That was more than enough run support for Habada, who improved to 7-1 on the season and 10-1 in his varsity career. The junior left-hander recorded multiple strikeouts in the first, third and fourth innings on his way to striking out eight. According to Maxpreps.com, Habada's 87 strikeouts on the season (in just 45.2 innings) rank second in the state behind New Brockton's Drew Cashin, who has 95 K's.

Leading 5-0 after one inning on Tuesday, Phil Campbell added two runs in the bottom of the second. Sage Raper reached on an error and scored on Swinney's RBI single. Swinney took second on the throw home, stole third and scored on a sac fly by Kyle Pace to make it 7-0.

The Bobcats added two more runs in the fourth

See 'BOBCATS,' page 12

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'BOBCATS,' from page 11

on RBI singles by Habada and Bryant Hyde, stretching the lead to 9-0. Vinemont scored an unearned run off Habada in the top of the fifth, putting together a single, a groundout and an error to get on the board.

Phil Campbell answered with two runs in the bottom half to end the game. Raper drove in the first run with an RBI single, moved to second on Swinney's third hit of the day and then scored when Kyle Pace reached on an error to make it 11-1.

Swinney finished 3-for-4 with two RBIs, two runs and three stolen bases. The senior shortstop now has seven games this season with at least three hits and 22 such games in his varsity career. Swinney raised his average to .514 on the year, and his 38 hits rank fifth in the state (according to Maxpreps.com) behind Macon East Academy's Jabe Boroff (46 hits), Russellville's Eli Gipson (40) and Canyon Pace (39), and Holtville's Tanner Potts (39).

Raper was 1-for-3 on Tuesday with three runs scored and two stolen bases. The senior outfielder is now batting .419 on the season, and his 36 hits are tied for sixth in the state, according to Maxpreps.com.

Barnwell went 1-for-2 with an RBI and a run, and Habada was 1-for-4 with an RBI and two runs scored. Kyle Pace was 1-for-2 with an RBI and a run, and Hunter Baker was 1-for-3 with a run. Hyde went 1-for-3 with an RBI, and Cole Pace walked and stole a base.

Habada held Vinemont to three hits and one unearned run in five innings, striking out eight and walking two. He also got five groundball outs and threw 57 of his 84 pitches for strikes.

On Thursday, in game two of their area series against Vinemont, the Bobcats made quick work of their area opponent by way of a 15-0 rout to clinch a perfect area record and an area title along with it.

After a pair of singles sandwiched around a pair of flyouts, the Bobcats got two runs on the board in the first inning off the bat of Kyle Pace as he would double into right field to put the Bobcats on top 2-0.

Pace, who got the start for Phil Campbell, retired the side in order in the bottom of the first, preserving the 2-0 lead.

After a quiet and scoreless pair of innings in the second and third innings, the Bobcats erupted for seven innings in the top half of the fourth to extend their lead to 9-0 over Vinemont.

See 'BOBCATS,' page 13



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'BOBCATS,' from page 12

Two straight walks, a hit by pitch and *another* walk kicked things off for Phil Campbell in the top of the fourth inning, loading the bases for Sage Raper who then coaxed the third walk of the inning to plate a run. Then, with the bases still full of Bobcats, Mason Swinney doubled home home two more runs while advancing Raper to third on the play.

Errors would once again plague Vinemont much like in game one of the series. A pair of errors and a single ultimately led to four more runs being scored in the inning for Phil Campbell.

Pace continued his shutout performance through the fourth inning, getting a fly out, strikeout and groundout to get Vinemont to go down in the home half of the fourth inning.

Looking to add on to their already impressive 10-0 lead, the Bobcats managed to string together three consecutive walks (with a runner caught stealing wedged between the walks) to start the top of the 5th inning, Pace then helped out his own cause singling in Mason Swinney while moving Habada to second.

A walk followed up by a single made it 12-0 in favor of the Bobcats when two more walks (one of which produced another run) set up a two-RBI double for Cale Faust to cap off a six-run inning for Phil Campbell.

In the home half of the inning, needing just three outs to secure the win, Pace would get the first two Vinemont batters to groundout and strikeout before surrendering a single and a walk. But Pace would find his groove again, punching out the final Vinemont hitter to cap off the week for the Bobcats.

Across five scoreless innings, Pace recorded four strikeouts and only allowed one hit and one walk on the night.

Cale Faust (1-2), Bryant Hyde (1-4) and Mason Swinney (2-3) each recorded two RBIs on the day while Pace led the way with an astounding five RBIs while going 3-4 with two runs scored to add in.

The Bobcats will begin their push for a second consecutive 3A state title this Friday at home as they will take on Saks High School in the first round of the AHSAA playoffs.

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'TITLE,' from page 11

the bottom of the first, three groundouts in the second, two pop-ups and a strikeout in the third, and then retiring West Point in order on just seven pitches in the fourth.

Caiden Rodgers broke up Langston's perfect game with a one-out single in the bottom of the fifth. Langston responded by striking out two of the next three batters and then working a one-two-three sixth. He gave up a double and a single in the seventh, but a failed double-steal attempt by the Warriors helped him escape the jam and finish off the shutout.

Langston struck out seven and did not issue a walk. After finishing his sophomore season in 2021 with 25 K's and 25 walks in 24 innings pitched, Langston has now struck out 49 batters and walked only 13 in 47.2 innings this season, posting a 1.76 ERA.

Following Pace's third-inning slam on Tuesday, the Golden Tigers scored their only other run of the day in the top of the fourth. Ethan Oliver stroked his ninth double of the season to center with one out, and pinch-runner Logan White moved to third on a passed ball. White scored on a groundout by Brayden Spurgeon to make it 5-0.

Pace went 1-for-3 on Tuesday and is now batting .379 (39-for-103) on the year and .323 (100-for-310) in his varsity career with 12 home runs. Thorpe, Oliver and Andrew Hatton also had one hit apiece for Russellville.

Rodgers had two of West Point's four hits. Folds went the distance in the loss, allowing five runs (all unearned) on four hits in seven innings. He struck out five and walked two.

Fast-forward to game two on Thursday, Logan White made quick work of West Point, holding the Warriors to just two hits in his first career shutout as the Golden Tigers clinched another area championship with a 2-0 win at Russellville Baseball Stadium.

White, a junior lefty, surrendered back-to-back singles to Andrew Putman and Caiden Rodgers to start the top of the first before locking into an all-time groove. He got Isaac Hoffpauir to pop out to first and then struck out cleanup man Colton McCoy on three pitches. The inning ended when senior catcher Canyon Pace picked Putman off second for the third out.

White was perfect the rest of the way, tossing six consecutive one-two-three innings. He retired the final 20 batters he faced, getting six strikeouts, five ground-outs, five infield pop-outs and four fly-outs. On the heels of Banks Langston's 69-pitch complete-game shutout in the series opener on Tuesday, White was even more efficient in Thursday's gem. He only needed 66 pitches (46 strikes) to get through seven innings, throwing first-pitch strikes to 17 of the 22 batters he faced and walking none.

Rodgers started for West Point (14-14, 2-2) and matched White zero for zero through the first four innings, but Russellville (22-10, 4-0) broke up a scoreless tie with two runs in the bottom of the fifth. Andrew Hatton got things started with a leadoff single and then moved to third when Casen Heaps put down a bunt and reached safely on a fielder's choice.

Heaps stole second, and Grayson Thorpe walked to load the bases. Senior shortstop Eli Gipson followed with a sac fly, driving in his 27th run of the year and giving the Golden Tigers a 1-0 lead. Thorpe was caught stealing at second for out number two, but Heaps scored when Pace reached on an error to make it 2-0.

That was enough for White (4-3), who lowered his ERA to 1.34 on the season and now has 44 strikeouts and only 10 walks in 41.2 innings. In the two area games against West Point this week, he and Langston (also a junior) combined to strike out 13 batters and walk none while holding West Point to just six hits in 14 scoreless innings.

Hatton recorded his eighth multi-hit game of the year on Thursday, going 2-for-3 with a run. Gipson was 1-for-2 with an RBI, and Thorpe went 1-for-2 with a walk. Brayden Spurgeon also went 1-for-2 with a walk, and Reed Hill was 1-for-3.

For the eighth time in ten seasons under head coach Chris Heaps, Russellville will host a first-round playoff series as an area champion. The Golden Tigers will begin their pursuit of a fifth Class 5A state championship next Friday at Russellville Baseball Stadium.

Just for good measure, the Golden Tigers capped off their area series against West Point in game three with a 10-0 win across five innings to go a perfect 6-0 in area play on the season.

Samuel Pace got the start for the Golden Tigers in game three and worked around a hit by pitch and a one-out double in the top of the first inning to prevent the Warriors from getting on the board.

The Golden Tigers then went to work in the home half of the first after back-to-back doubles from Grayson Thorpe and Eli Gipson put Russellville on top 1-0. After two consecutive walks loaded the bases, Ethan Oliver drove in a run via sac fly to make it a 2-0 advantage for the Golden Tigers through just one inning.

Russellville and West Point would both go scoreless in the second inning as Pace worked through the Warriors lineup in order in the inning.

See 'TITLE,' page 15

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'TITLE,' from page 14

Pace picked up two more strikeouts in the top of the 3rd then gave way to the Golden Tiger offense.

A leadoff walk to Reed Hill enabled Ethan Oliver to double him home and just two batters later, Banks Langston singled to left field to plate Oliver and extend the Russellville lead to 4-0. With Langston on second base, Thorpe came through with an RBI single into center field to make it a 5-0 lead going into the fourth inning.

Pace almost struck out the side in the top of the fourth but hit a batter after punching out the first two Warriors in the inning, but then capped off the frame by striking out Eli Folds to end the inning.

Opening up the fourth inning, Canyon Pace doubled into left field which was followed up by back-to-back walks to Reed Hill and Ethan Oliver, after which Shayden Romans drove Pace in on a sac fly. A one-out walk to Banks Langston put two Golden Tigers on-base for Andrew Hatton drove in another run on another sac fly in the inning.

Then, with two outs and two runners on, the big breakthrough in the inning came off the bat of Casen Heaps. The Russellville center fielder launched a no-doubter over the left field fence for a three-run homer to extend the Golden Tiger lead to 10-0.

Much like the fourth inning, Pace made quick work of the Warriors in the top of the fifth inning. Facing just four batters in the inning, Pace would strike out three of the four to end the inning and the game and cement a perfect area record for the Golden Tigers across the season.

Going all five innings scoreless, Pace racked up 11 strikeouts in the win while allowing just one hit and two walks on the night.

Grayson Thorpe went 3-3 with a run scored and one RBI while Gipson (one RBI), Canyon Pace, Oliver (two RBI), Langston (one RBI), Hatton (one RBI), and Heaps (three RBI) all notched a hit as well.

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