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Board of Education
District 4
November 8, 2022

Pd. Pol. Adv. By: Carol Murphree-879 Keeton Gap Rd, Spruce Pine, AL, 35585



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'Hidden' REB savings account, not disclosed by Canida, used for gift cards, cash withdrawals

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

An account that Russellville Electric Board manager Charles Canida kept hidden from a public records request was used to make more than \$8,700 in cash withdrawals and gift card purchases over a four-year period, the Franklin Free Press has learned.

The account, in the name of 'Russellville Electric Board,' was opened on October 26, 2017, according to bank records, with an initial deposit of \$25,000.

Russellville Electric Board employees Sherry Smith and Harlan L. Winston II were listed as joint owners on the account when it was opened.

Winston, who left his employment with REB last year, told the FFP he did not make any withdrawals, whether cash or gift card purchases, at any time on the account.

Smith, who is Charles Canida's Executive Assistant, did not respond to a request by the FFP for comment.

On December 22, 2021, the FFP served both Canida and Smith with an Alabama Open Records Act request to inspect and/or copy certain REB records. Paragraph 9 of the Open Records Request requested: "Balance statements of all bank accounts in the name of the Russellville Electric Board, or owned, maintained or accessed by the Russellville Electric Board, with balance statements as of November 30, 2021."

Canida produced statements for two accounts, but failed to produce

any records on the ACCU account being used for cash withdrawals and gift card purchases.

After the FFP and Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff learned of the existence of the ACCU account from a former employee, Woodruff made a specific Open Records Act request to see all records related to the ACCU account.

More than six weeks later, records that began on October 26, 2017, and ran through March 1, 2022, when the account was closed, were produced.

Those records show eight withdrawals totaling more than \$8,700 from October 26, 2017 through March 1, 2022, and no additional deposits after the initial \$25,000.

Of the eight withdrawals, six were cash withdrawals and two were purchases of ACCU gift cards.

Three of these withdrawals (totaling \$550 in gift cards and \$1,500 in cash) came less than five days before Canida and/or board members traveled to summer beach conferences in 2020 and 2021, and one 2021 conference in Lexington, Ky.

Five withdrawals totaling \$6,675 (\$5,175 in cash and \$1,500 in gift cards) were made shortly before Canida hosted the annual Russellville Electric Board Christmas Party at the Marriott Shoals in the years of 2017, 2019 and 2020.

In 2017, 15 gift cards for \$100 each were purchased 25 days before the Marriott party. In 2019, \$4,175 in cash was withdrawn in December, including a \$3,500 cash withdrawal five days before the Marriott party.

See 'ACCOUNT,' Page 3

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David Franklin, of Littleville, passed away October 16, 2022. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family

Grace Ellen Michels, 83, of Russellville, AL passed away Wednesday, October 12, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family

Samantha Gayle McCormick, 39, of Altoona, AL (formerly of Russellville) passed away on Wednesday, October 12, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Robert Steve Pace, 72, of Russellville, passed away on Friday, October 14, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



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'ACCOUNT,' from Page 1

A cash withdrawal of \$1,000 was made on December 9, 2020, seven days before the Marriott party.

In early December 2021, the FFP published the first of several investigative articles looking into how the Russellville Electric Board was spending ratepayer funds.



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Although Canida and the REB hosted the Marriott party in December 2021, no withdrawals of cash or gift card purchases were made from the ACCU account in advance of the 2021 event.

On March 1, 2022, the account was closed with a withdrawal of the remaining balance, \$16,546.18.

A review of Russellville Electric Board meeting minutes from October 2017

through March 2022 indicates the board never approved the opening of an account at ACCU, nor any cash withdrawals or gift card purchases from the account.

There was also no board action to approve the closing of the account in March 2022.

Canida failed to respond to a request for comment on this article.

Russellville Electric Board Account History Alabama Central Credit Union

- 10/26/17: Account Opened with \$25,000 deposit.
- 11/21/17: \$1,500 withdrawal to buy 15 \$100 gift cards.
- 12/16/17: Russellville Electric Board Christmas Party at Marriott Shoals. Cost of Party: \$7,200.
- 12/4/19: \$525 Cash withdrawal.
- 12/11/19: \$3,500 Cash withdrawal.
- 12/16/19: \$150 Cash withdrawal.
- 12/17/19: Russellville Electric Board Christmas Party at Marriott Shoals. Cost of Party: \$6,391.98.
- 7/8/20: \$550 withdrawal to buy nine \$50 gift cards and one \$100 gift card. \$25 deducted from account for gift card fees.
- 7/13/20: Canida, Russellville Electric Board members attend beach conference.
- 12/9/20: Cash withdrawal of \$1,000.
- 12/16/20: Russellville Electric Board Christmas Party at Marriott Shoals. Cost of Party \$5,170.54.
- 7/1/21: Cash withdrawal of \$500.
- 7/12/21: Canida, Russellville Electric Board members attend beach conference.
- 8/26/21: Cash withdrawal of \$1,000.
- 8/30/21: Canida and some Russellville Electric Board members attend conference in Kentucky.
- 3/1/22: Withdrawal of \$16,546.18. Account closed.



Franklin Free Press

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Letter to Editor: Reader urges voters to take a closer look at Aderholt

Dear Editor:

They say that the definition of insanity is someone who keeps doing the same thing over and over expecting different results.

If that is true one must ask why the good citizens of Congressional District 4 keep voting for Robert Aderholt. Do they really expect different representation and better results than he has provided for the last two decades?

- Are the citizens aware of Aderholt's voting record?
- He supports higher taxes for the middle class over 90% of the time.
 - He voted in favor of the wealthy 95% of the time.
 - He voted against Civil Rights legislation 98% of the time.
 - He has supported women's rights 0% of the time.

Apparently, our representative has a total disregard for over half of his constituents. He does not care if a female of any age is raped, forced to give birth to the criminal's child, and gets beat up on a regular basis while not receiving a fair wage to support that poor mis-begotten child.

According to Aderholt's Republican Party Platform, if elected, within five years Social Security, Medicare and Veteran's benefits will be gone. During this session, the Republican packed Supreme Court is poised to eliminate our personal voting rights. The right-wing extremist party has been working ridiculously hard to convince us that right is wrong, and wrong is right, that up is down and down is up, that truth are lies and lies are ok, and evil is good and good is evil. When our Right-Wing Representative, Robert Aderholt could do something---anything---to improve the lives of his constituents, he either votes against it or sits on his hands and fails to vote. He fails to do his job and fails to represent those of us who are not wealthy or influential.

In addition to the above disgraceful behavior, Robert Aderholt has committed one the worst offences against our Democracy that anyone could imagine. On January 6,, he voted against certifying our Presidential Candidate in a clearly won election. He voted against Democracy. He Voted against our Government. He voted against the peaceful transition of power!. He voted against you, me, and our neighbors. He voted against our children, our grandchildren, and the future of our Nation. This man can not be called a Patriot. He has no business serving in our House of Representatives!

The only way to avoid descending into the black abyss of a Republican

Dictatorship we the people must resist the cavalier, corrosive, punitive agenda designed to eliminate our Democratic Republic. We the people must upset the applecart and throw out those bad apples. It is past time to throw out the "Bobbies" with the bath water. The mid-terms are upon us, and it is incumbent on every citizen to exercise the right to vote before that right is lost. As far as the current economic problems, our country has weathered far worse and come out on top. Time and good government changes everything.

Most of us are descendants of people who immigrated here either recently or in the far past. My first ancestor came to America in 1637 to escape religious persecution. Please ask yourself why your ancestors chose to come to America. One can surmise that they wanted the freedom from oppression and a better life for their offspring. Even those who came here unwillingly have contributed a great deal in the building of this wonderful nation. We cannot allow power hungry tin- pot politicians to destroy what others have worked so hard to achieve. "

Vote on November 8. Vote for your own self-interest. Vote for the betterment of your community and your country. Vote for your children and your grandchildren. Vote for people of high moral character. Vote as if your life depends upon it. Because it does

Randi Gross
Russellville, Alabama

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 The Russellville Book Lovers will host a "Walk to Wellness" on Saturday, October 29th at 9 a.m., at the Russellville High School Field House and Track. There will be refreshments and information booths. Registration is \$25 and comes with a t-shirt. The annual event raises funds for breast cancer awareness. Funds will be used to benefit women with breast cancer who are on their "walk to wellness." More than \$2,400 has been donated to the Russellville Hospital Cancer Fund and cancer survivors. This year is dedicated to Maudie Bedford who recently passed away after an extended bout with cancer. She is the person who sponsored the Book Lovers' first year of Walk to Wellness. Please make plans to take part if you can!


 There will be a Swamp John's Fundraiser for North Russellville Baptist Church 2023 Vacation Bible School on Wednesday, October 19, from 4-7 p.m. Catfish, chicken and shrimp. All plates are \$14. Pick up at North Russellville Baptist Church, 1401 Waterloo Road.

 Gateway Church of God will host its 71st Homecoming on October 23, 2022. Service at 10:30 a.m., with Bishop Alton Bristow ministering. Dinner after service with Singing at 1:30 with Purpose. questions call 256-627-793

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 The Phil Campbell Arts & Historical Society will host its Second Annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 5th from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Phil Campbell Community Center, 132 Sherry Bryce Rd., in Phil Campbell. For booth information, please call 256-810-4572. There will be Arts & Crafts, Homemade Treasures, Scentsy, Christmas Decor, Unique Gifts, Bake Sale and Food Truck on site. Proceeds will be applied toward the purchase of a building in Phil Campbell.

 Hop on board the Haunted Hay Ride, Friday, Oct. 28, Saturday, Oct. 29, Sunday, Oct. 30 and Monday, Oct. 31, starting at 7 p.m., each night. Location is the end of Maddox Road in Phil Campbell. All proceeds go to the Ashridge Volunteer Fire Department in Haleyville. Admission is \$10 per person.

 First United Methodist Church will hold a Rummage Sale for Missions, Friday/Saturday, November 4/5. Friday hours 7-5, Saturday 7-11. There will be furniture, kitchen items, household goods, jewelry, books, baked goods and more! Sale will be at the church, located on North Jackson Ave in downtown Russellville.

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Saturday concert features RV native Kelly and the Burnells

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Mark Kelly and the Burnells take the stage this Saturday at the Roxy Theatre, it will be a homecoming of sorts for Kelly.

The 1980 Russellville High School graduate lives in Birmingham, but he's hoping the response to this weekend's show will be good enough to do it on a regular basis.

Tickets for the October 22nd show are \$20 for adults, \$12 for students and will be sold at the door. Doors at the Roxy will open at 6 p.m., and the band will take the stage at 7. Seating is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The Burnells' shows feature original music, much of which was written by Kelly and Gary Hyche, or in conjunction with vocalist Kat Beckham. It's difficult to compartmentalize the group's sound. It's a musical jambalaya of rock, blues, country-western, folk and gospel.

The band consists of Kelly, Hyche, Beckham, drummer Jason Ruha, David Kilmer and bassist Mike Fields.

Their new album, Turn to Now, was recorded at Wishbone Studios in Muscle Shoals, with owner Billy Lawson producing it. The album also includes appearances by Travis Wammack, horn player Brad Guin and Spooner Oldham.

Kelly said his song writing incorporates some personal experiences, but he's not telling listeners his story directly.

"There are impressions within my music and it's like a painting. Ideally, it means something different to everyone who listens to it," Kelly said. "It's a thrill to be coming to Russellville. I have such great memories of the Roxy. All the band is excited about playing there, but it's a very meaningful thing for me."

David Ferguson, another Russellville native, is on board handling promotions and marketing for the Burnells. Kelly said the idea for a Roxy show came up during his 40th high school reunion.

"Some people in our class started getting fired up about the idea, so we'll see how it turns out," Kelly said.

Kelly said he's always loved music, but he didn't start singing or writing songs until later in life, when he started playing guitar and harmonica.

This is essentially the second time around for the Burnells, who formed

in 1997 as the Happy Burnells, playing the Birmingham musical haunts for five years, before life carried band members in different directions.

17 years later, in 2019, five of the original six members reunited as the Burnells. The Turn to Now album came together three years later.

Another Russellville connection with the Burnells is Jaimie Copeland, who helped coordinate the Wishbone Studios project. Copeland played keyboards on several tracks, and appears with the band occasionally.



COURTESY PHOTO

1980 RHS graduate Mark Kelly and the Burnells hit the stage at the Roxy this Saturday at 7p.m.

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Turnaround complete: 6-2 Red Bay playoff bound

Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press

The Red Bay Tigers traveled to Tanner last Friday night where the Tigers secured a playoff berth with a 54-14 win.

"We came out ready to play. We jumped on them pretty quick and coasted the rest of the game," said Red Bay head coach Heath Childers.

The Tigers' total offense was 574 yards. 525 of that came on the ground, with Brady Hardin rushing for 347 and five touchdowns. Keaton Lanpher had nine carries for 108 yards with a touchdown.

The Tigers averaged 11 yards a carry while the defense only allowed five first downs all night. Eli Farris led the Tigers with tackles with 10. Oden Inman made his seventh interception of the season for Red Bay.

The Tigers secured the fourth place spot in Class 2A Region 8 with the win over Tanner. They will have the opportunity to creep into third place with a win over the Hatton Hornets this Friday night.

"Going into these last these games, we controlled our own destiny and we still control our own destiny with a win over Tanner that put us in the playoffs, and with a win over Hatton that would put us in the three seed," said Childers.

This time last year the Tigers were 2-6 and this year they've turned things around and are 6-2.

"These kids have done a phenomenal job and are doing the things to be successful," Childers said.

The Tigers will travel to Hatton Friday for the Region 8 battle for third place.

Russellville/Fairview for Region 8 title

Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville Golden Tigers won their 5th straight region game Friday night against the Ardmore Tigers 49-7.

That victory sets up a showdown this week for the 5A Region 8 championship between Russellville and the Fairview Aggies. Both teams are undefeated in Region 8 play.

Fairview ended Russellville's playoff run last year, with a 35-21 defeat of the Golden Tigers. Coach John Ritter's team did its job against Ardmore, which set up Russellville for a chance to claim a regional title.

"We felt like we had a really good chance to win, but we knew we had to go out and execute for that to happen," Ritter said.

The Golden Tigers' opening drive began with a turnover, but that didn't stop them from coming back and scoring seven straight touchdowns to take a 42-0 lead into halftime.

Conner Warhurst carried 13 times



RHS Coach John Ritter

for 220 yards for an eye-popping 16.9 yards per rush. He also found the end zone four times.

Quarterback Harrison Burch completed nine of 13 passes for 221 yards and two TDs.

Freshman Cam Phinizee had the other rushing touchdown for Russellville.

In the second half the Golden Tigers punched in another touchdown and went on to win the game 49-7.

"I though we played well in all phases including offense, defense and special teams," Ritter said. The Golden Tigers offensive line played well, Ritter said, leading to the Golden Tigers' impressive total of 521 yards of offense. "You don't put up 521 yards with play makers. You control the line of scrimmage," Ritter said.

"If Weston Jackson, Hank Cartee, Neyland Baker, Grayson Murray, Logan Lindsey, Tait Barnes, and Tilmon Baker don't play well, we don't have the night we had," Ritter said.

Fairview is a tough region opponent who is 7-1 this season. Their wins include Columbia, East Limestone, Good Hope, West Point, Ardmore, Brewer and Lawrence County. Their only loss is to the Priceville Bulldogs, who are undefeated at 9-0.

Bobcats one win away from playoff berth

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As he spoke minutes after his team's regular season home finale, Phil Campbell varsity football coach Kevin Barnwell's voice cracked as he filled with emotion.

And it wasn't because his team defeated Colbert Heights 36-0 to move within one win of clinching a playoff berth.

Instead, Barnwell struggled to verbalize the bond he's formed with his senior players. Friday was Senior Night in Phil Campbell, and Barnwell was asked to describe what his 16 senior athletes mean to him.

"It's hard for me to talk about our seniors. They have really put a lot of time and effort into making us a respectable opponent," Barnwell said. "I told them today I know I'm hard to deal with sometimes because I try to get them to see themselves the way I see them. It will be really difficult at the end of this season to let go of these guys.

"These kids were eighth graders when I got here. These are the ones who bought in from day one and I kicked them in the tail, griped and complained, made them run, but they stayed with it and they have so much to be proud of," he added.

If the Bobcats defeat Clements this Friday, those 16 seniors will have at least one more game in their football careers, as Phil Campbell will lock in

the fourth playoff spot for Class 3A, Region 8.

After two losses to Lauderdale County and Mars Hill Bible School, the Bobcats faced a must-win scenario in their final two Region 8 games. They are halfway there, and Barnwell liked what he saw Friday night.

"If we beat Clements, we're in. We'll be the fourth seed. If we lose, it would go to a tiebreaker and be decided by the amount of wins our non-

See, 'BOBCATS,' page 13

Friday Night Football Schedule
October 21, 2022

Russellville @ Fairview

Phil Campbell @ Clements

Tharptown @ Falkville

Vina BYE Week

Red Bay @ Hatton

Have an opinion?
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Photo by John Pilati

PIER PRESSURE: TVA officials were joined by BCDA employees, local elected officials and dignitaries Monday morning for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the new pier near Little Bear Creek Dam. The arrow-shaped pier incorporates the design of the old pier it replaced, and is fully ADA accessible. The pier replacement project cost 200,000 and was funded through TVA's Stewardship Project Fund. The spacious pier is expected to be a popular attraction for weddings and prom photos.

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'BOBCATS,' from Page 11

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region opponents have," Barnwell said. "We just need to win next week and everything will take care of itself."

This year's senior class includes: Kyle Pace, Bryant Hyde, Sage Raper, Cole Pace, Jeitt Traywick, Robbie Robinson, Brenen Misner, JJ Quillen, Grant Rollins, Mason Mims, Kyle Perez, Nick Williams, Kanen Seay, Tyler Osborn, Cooper Riddle and Landon Herron.

Pace, who suffered an AC sprain against Mars Hill, showed some senior leadership by gutting it out in a game Barnwell wasn't sure he'd be able to play. Add junior Braxton Goodson and sophomore Noah Raper to the list of Bobcat 'walking wounded' who showed up big against Colbert Heights.

Phil Campbell ran an unorthodox Notre Dame box offense Friday, to protect Pace and to feature Bryant Hyde, its healthiest offensive weapon.

The offense is a variation of the single-wing formation in which the half-back becomes the featured passer, and Hyde finished 4-6 for 43 yards through the air. He also rushed for 120 yards on 12 carries with a touchdown.

Even with his shoulder injury, Pace threw for 68 yards on 4-8 passing and connected with Goodson for a 12-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Barnwell said the implementation of the Notre Dame box formation was the idea of assistant coach Bill Smith.

"Last Saturday I was out on the field doing my weekly mowing and I looked up on the hill and there was Coach Smith," Barnwell said. "We talked about some ways to get Bryant the ball. And he literally came up with the Notre Dame box. That's the benefit of having a veteran coach like Coach Smith to give opinions I can rely on in critical moments."

Phil Campbell led 8-0 in the first quarter after a Pace one-yard TD and a two-point conversion by Hyde. The Bobcats took a 14-0 lead into halftime after Pace's second TD, this one from two yards out.

Second half scores came from a 14-yard Sage Raper run, a 57-yard TD from Hyde and Pace's 12-yard TD pass to Goodson.

Goodson was another player who again proved his toughness, as he and (Noah) Raper both played with a brace after incurring knee injuries two weeks ago.

"I lack the vocabulary to express the amount of heart shown by some of our kids who came back and played with injuries," Barnwell said. Our players showed up tonight in a big way. They all played hard and worked hard all week when our backs were against the wall."

That big time performance came on defense as well, as Phil Campbell held a talented Colbert Heights offense to 178 total yards and forced three turnovers.

"We held a really good offensive team scoreless. Coach (Lucas) Gilbert, Coach (David) Palmer and all our defensive coaches did a heck of a good job this week," Barnwell said.

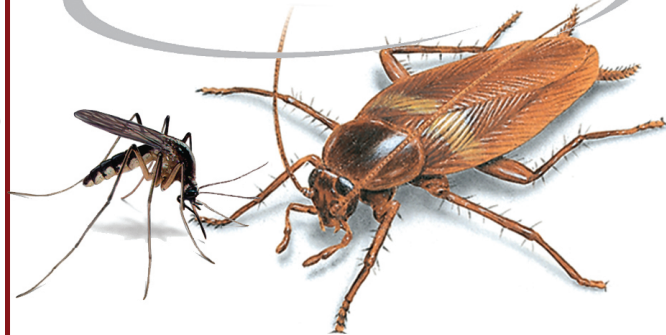
Eli Cartee had an interception for the Bobcats. Ethan Kimbrough led the way with seven solo tackles to lead the defense.

Although students will be on Fall Break Monday and Tuesday this week, Barnwell's team voted to practice at 8 a.m., each day, as they prepare for Clements, the final hurdle to reach the post-season.

Phil Campbell and Clements have split their four games since Barnwell was hired. The Colts are 2-7 and 1-4 in Region 8, with their lone region win coming against Elkmont.

Clements was on the short end of an offensive shootout Friday night, as Colbert County outscored them 75-38.

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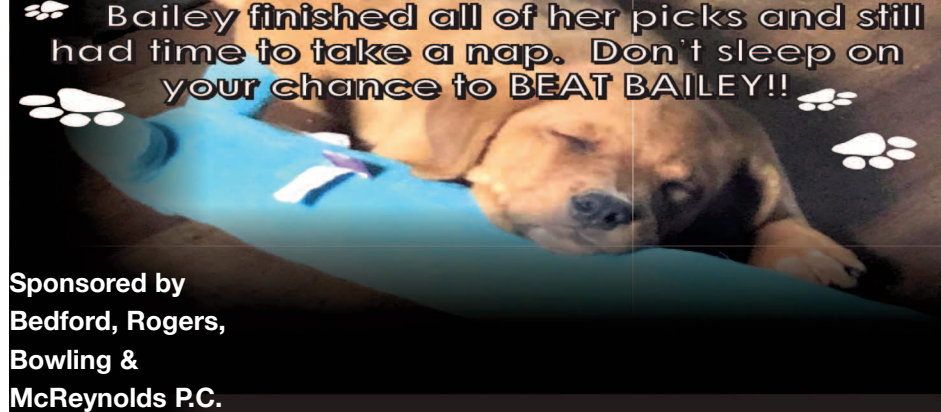
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Bailey was on fire this week predicting 9 of 10 games. Congratulations to Linda Fancher, who hit 9 as well and won on the tiebreaker.

Submit your picks to us each week in one of two ways: Fill out the entry form on this page and mail it to us at 113 Washington Ave. NW, Russellville, AL 35653, or email your picks to us along with your name and number at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. Picks sent in by mail for Week 8 must be postmarked by Friday, October 21st and picks submitted by email for Week 8 must be received by Saturday, October 22nd, at 10 a.m. Each week, the contestant who correctly picks the most games will win a free T-shirt and the chance to pick in the grand-prize final-week contest. If multiple contestants correctly pick the same number of games in a given week, the tiebreaker score will be used to determine a winner. Contestants are only eligible to win the weekly contest once. No multiple winners allowed. ONE entry per telephone number.

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Vanderbilt at Missouri	Missouri	
Miss. State at Alabama	Alabama	
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