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## Shelnutt resigning from Russellville Main Street Executive Director position

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

For the fourth time since its formation in late 2022, the Russellville Main Street Board of Directors will again be hiring a new Executive Director after Kara Shelnutt announced her resignation from the position.

Shelnutt was hired as the full-time Russellville Main Street Executive Director in July 2024. When the Downtown Russellville Collective formed three years ago, Ann Epperson McDermott was hired as the first Executive Director in February 2023.

After McDermott's resignation,

Yaneli Bahena Wallace filled the vacancy in March 2024 but resigned after only one month to pursue a business venture.

That prompted the search that led to Shelnutt's hiring in July 2024.

In a social media post, Shelnutt described her resignation as a 'difficult decision,' driven by 'personal health reasons that require my focus.'

She will remain in the position until a successor is hired and is committed to assisting with the transition to a new director in any way the Board asks.

"For personal health reasons that require my focus, it is the right time for me to step back," Shelnutt said.

See 'SHELNUTT,' Page 5

## Freeman's one-vote margin the lone win for City of Russellville challengers in August 26th election

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

August 26th was a good day for incumbents in the City of Russellville, as five of the six elected officials retained their positions for another four years.

Mayor David Grissom, District One Councilman David Palmer, District Two Councilman Darren Woodruff, District Three Councilman Gary Cummings and District Five Councilman Jamie Harris won reelection.

Lonnie Freeman, who defeated District Four Councilman Dexter Hamilton by one vote, was the lone challenger to win. Both received 83

votes on Tuesday, but Freeman won the absentee vote 5-4 to seal the upset.

After 45 years of serving as a poll worker, Freeman finally became a candidate, something he always had an interest in, but his lifelong friendship with former Russellville District Four City Councilman Jerry Groce, who served four terms in office, kept him from jumping in.

Freeman and Groce were fraternity brothers and talked about their mutual interest in running for office, but Freeman never considered running against his neighbor and friend.

"I decided it was the right time to give it a shot and see what I could do," Freeman said. "I love

FREEMAN,' Page 8

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# Back to the Bible by Larsen Plyler:

## Matthew 7:1-6

John 3:16 may still be the most famous Bible verse, but I think the first part of Matthew 7:1, "Judge not," is giving it a run for its money. But, to understand what Jesus is saying, we need to see it in its context.

In these verses, Jesus says don't judge so that you won't be judged. He explains that the standard that you use on others will be applied to you as well.

He illustrates the way we approach judging by saying sometimes we try to get a piece of sawdust out of someone else's eye, while we've got a log stuck in ours! If we're going to get the speck out of their eye, we've got to get the log out of our own first.

Jesus' point here is not that we can never point out someone's sin or that we can never call someone to repentance. Jesus is not saying we shouldn't make some "judgments." Just look at verse 6! We have to determine who the dogs and pigs are! Further, verses 15-20 show us how to judge if someone is a false teacher.

What Jesus is saying is that we should not criticize others when we're not willing to address ourselves. Jesus is condemning hypocritical judgment.

Jesus balances verses 1-5 in verse 6. We don't want to hypocritically judge, but when we see that people want nothing to do with the truth, then we should walk away. It would be a waste of time and perhaps a danger to throw it to them.

### Lessons to Learn:

Don't be a hypocrite. Jesus is not calling us to perfection. But, we should not be the kind of person who only sees the wrong in others and never in ourselves.

We want the "specks" out too. Notice that Jesus encourages getting the log out of your own eye and the speck out of someone else's. If we are being called to repent by someone else pointing out their sin doesn't mean we don't have a problem too. It's hard to take corrections from a hypocrite, but we need to want to be corrected when we're wrong.

When you judge, judge righteously. Jesus said that in John 7:24. To do so, we must be applying the standard to ourselves and use God's word as the standard. We don't want to evaluate someone from a human perspective, but from the Lord's perspective.

We're thankful to share these considerations of God's word. It's best if you have a Bible close to evaluate what we say. We want to go "back to the Bible" for all we teach.

Tune in to 100.7 WGOL Sunday at 8:30am for our Back to the Bible Radio Program.

Reach out with your questions, comments, or requests for personal Bible study at [backtothebiblepodcast.com](http://backtothebiblepodcast.com) or at [info@backtothebible-podcast.com](mailto:info@backtothebible-podcast.com)



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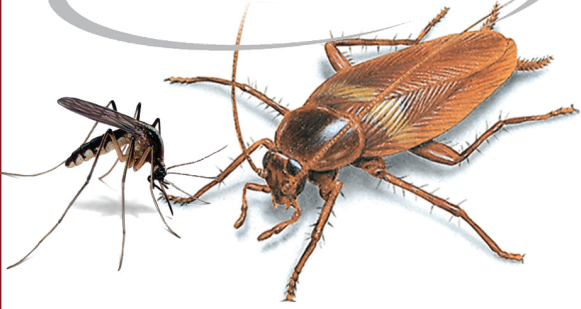
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**The following is a letter to the editor from Joshlyn Bowen, Director of the Russellville Public Library. We received this after the recent groundbreaking ceremony on the new Norris Public Library to be located behind Russellville City Hall.)**

Dear Editor:

July 29th, 2025, marked an incredible milestone for our city—a celebration of vision, generosity and unwavering community spirit. As we stand at the threshold of a new chapter with the opening of our new Norris Public Library, it is only fitting that we take a moment to express our deepest and most heartfelt thanks to those who have made this dream a reality.

First, to the Norris Family—thank you for the extraordinary gift of land that laid the foundation, both literally and symbolically, for this new library. Your family has long been a pillar of strength, generosity and civic pride in our community. This gift is far more than a piece of land—it is a legacy. Through every book read, every child inspired, and every life touched within these walls, your family name will live on.

To Congressman Robert Aderholt—we are so grateful for your tireless advocacy and support in securing our funding that turned this vision into a reality. Your commitment to education, rural development and the well-being of our citizens is deeply appreciated.

To Mayor David Grissom—thank you for your remarkable leadership, dedication and passion for our city. You have championed this project from the beginning, and your vision and guidance have been instrumental every step of the way.

To our city councilmen—thank you for the countless hours, thoughtful decisions and steady support you've provided throughout this process. Your service often goes unseen, but your impact is deeply felt. This library stands as a testament to your commitment to progress and community enrichment.

To my library board and advisors—your wisdom, direction and advocacy behind the scenes have guided us forward with clarity and purpose. To my dedicated library staff—you are the heart of what we do. Your passion for literacy, learning and service is what will bring this new building to life day after day.

And finally, to our beloved community—thank you for your support, your patience and your belief in the importance of this library. This space belongs to all of you. It is a place where children will discover the joy of reading, students will chase their dreams, adults will find new passions, and neighbors will come together. It is truly a community cornerstone.

Together, we are building more than a library—we are building a legacy.

Joshlyn Bowen, Director of the Russellville Public Library

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## 'SHELNUTT' From Page 1

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Applicants for the Executive Director position may send resumes to [director@russellville-mainstreet.org](mailto:director@russellville-mainstreet.org).

The Downtown Russellville Collective, a/k/a Russellville Main Street, is a 501(c)(3) non profit corporation with the mission of stimulating downtown revitalization in the City of Russellville through organization, economic vitality, promotion and design.



COURTESY PHOTO

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, be sure and visit us online at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net)!



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 **C**ommunity Action Partnership of North Alabama, also known as Russellville Head Start and Early Head Start, is a non-profit agency serving 3, 4 and 5 year old children absolutely free. We are located at 976 Ronnie McDowell Avenue in Russellville. Our hours are from 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Call for an appointment today at 256-331-0162. Give your child a Head Start on school readiness! We offer top-quality, comprehensive early childhood educational services provided at no cost to your family. To learn more, visit [www.capna.org/children-services](http://www.capna.org/children-services).

 **T**he 2nd Annual Community day in Littleville. It's October 4th. Car show from 8a- 12 noon. Vendors from 10a- 6 pm. We will have a food truck there. The Midnighters will be on stage from 4p-6p and we will have more information on other entertainment lineup later!

Send your letters to the editor, guest columns, cartoon panels and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).



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PATROL OFFICER – POLICE DEPARTMENT

**DEFINITION OF JOB:** Patrols a designated sector of the city of Russellville and responds to complaints. Serves warrants and subpoenas and testifies in court. Provides traffic control assistance. Performs dispatching duties. Performs other police related duties as required.

**REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

Knowledge of: the city buildings and street system of Russellville; city, state and federal laws; court procedures; department rules, regulations and procedures; maintenance and use of weapons; radio codes, surveillance equipment and legal procedures involved with illegal drug cases.

Ability to: operate a motor vehicle; read; safely fire a weapon; communicate on telephone and radio; generate written documents such as reports and tickets; bend, crouch; stretch; stretch; walk; run; respond to emergency situations on short notice; and do the essential functions of the job as directed in this description.

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**QUALIFICATIONS and SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:**

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## 'FREEMAN,' From Page 1

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Freeman retired in 2004 from a career with the Franklin County Department of Human Resources, where he was a social worker in Adult Protective Services. The 71-year-old Freeman serves as Pastor at Emmanuel Christ Center in Leighton, a non-denominational church he started in 1990.

Freeman's campaign strategy was simple—to focus on his ideas and visions for Russellville when he visited with District Four residents, while avoiding any mudslinging.

"I made up my mind win, lose or draw, I would not say or do anything negative and not say anything negative about my opponent," Freeman said,

acknowledging Hamilton's clean campaign as well.

Freeman is excited about working together with the mayor and his fellow council members, but he won't forget it was the voters of District Four who elected him. As their councilman, Freeman wants to make sure his district is fairly represented when it comes to funding and representation on city boards, something he believes needs improvement.

"I'm definitely a team player, if you're eating off the table, I want to eat too," Freeman said, referring to city spending. "I tried to knock on every door. I didn't get them all but I got most. And I will work to The Russellville City Council will meet Tuesday, September 2nd to officially canvass the election. All newly elected municipal officials will take office on Monday, November 3rd at an organizational council meeting.



COURTESY PHOTO

Lonnie Freeman, fourth from left, will join David Palmer, Darren Woodruff, Gary Cummings, Jamie Harris and Mayor David Grissom when the newly elected Russellville City Council takes office in October.

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# How to manage anxiety in your relationships

Stan Popovich

Do you struggle with a lot of stress and anxiety in your relationships? It can be challenging to manage your relationships and your mental health. As a result, here is some healthy relationship advice when you are with someone.

1. Be a good listener: Listen to what your partner has to say when he or she talks about their problems. Do not judge the other person. Understanding comes from being a good listener and will reduce relationship issues that you may be experiencing.

2. Be ready for disagreements: During times of stress, couples will likely argue. Listen to what your partner is saying. Understand the person's concerns and feelings. If you feel you are getting angry or upset, give yourself some time and take a few deep breaths before you react.

3. Consider the source of their stress: If you're in an argument with your partner, it may be possible that the source of the problem was you or something you did that upset them. Think about what may be causing the tension in your relationship and work to address the real problems.

4. See things from their perspective: This will help you to see where the other person comes from, which will increase your understanding of the situation. Some people may make assumptions regarding their relationship. It is important to talk to your partner if you have any concerns and worries. Ask questions if things are not clear.

5. Learn to compromise: Be sure to balance your own needs with the other person's needs. Seek a mutually beneficial compromise on any areas of disagreement. This means we must understand the other person's perspective, thoughts, and feelings.

6. Talk about what's going well: It is important to acknowledge the things that are going well. Take a moment with your partner to talk about what is going well in the relationship and the impact it has on

you. Make expressions of gratitude when you see your partner doing something that you like. This will make the other person much happier.

7. Tackle one conflict at a time: Bringing in multiple argument topics can feel confusing and frustrating. By limiting your discussion to one issue at a time, you can focus on one issue and get closer to understanding the other person's viewpoint. This is very important when it comes to managing your finances.

8. Admit your mistakes: It's not easy to admit you've done something wrong in a relationship. If you don't take any of the blame for things that happened, you'll never realize what you must work on in the future. If you did something wrong, acknowledge it, and apologize to the person that you hurt.

9. Work with the other person: It is important to learn to work with your partner. Being in a relationship is like being part of a team. Each person must do his or her own part. One person can't do everything. Getting into the habit of helping each other will help improve your relationship.

10. Adjust your expectations: Accept yourself, your partner and your relationship as they exist today. It's natural to want the honeymoon phase to last forever. But people and relationships change over time, and each new milestone brings different dynamics and routines.

11. Give each other some space: It is a good idea to spend time with your friends when you are in a relationship. Spending all your free time with one person could cause problems in your relationship. Do not overwhelm your partner and give them some space.

## BIOGRAPHY

Stan is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear" which covers a variety of techniques that can drastically improve your mental health. For more information, please visit Stan's website at <http://www.managingfear.com>

## Franklin County Democratic Party to host United States Senate candidate forum in Russellville

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Democratic Party has landed a major event, as it will host a forum for Democratic candidates seeking the party nomination for the United States Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Tommy Tuberville next year.

Local Democratic Chairman Rick Neighbors told the FFP the three candidates who have announced intentions to seek the Democratic nomination in the May 19, 2026 primary have committed to attend the forum in Russellville. They include businessman Dakarai Larriett, businessman Kyle Sweetser and Mark Wheeler, a chemist.

The forum will begin at 6:30 p.m., at the A.W. Todd Centre in downtown Russellville.

While the Democratic nominee will face long odds to win Tuberville's seat in a state where Republicans hold every statewide elected seat and all but two Congressional district seats, there will still be statewide attention on Franklin County as it hosts the Senate candidate forum. According to an itinerary provided to the FFP, after a welcome from the event coordinator, candidates will each make a three-minute opening statement, followed by a moderator-led question and answer session, with each candidate having 2-2.5 minutes to respond.

Questions will be submitted by those in attendance and questions selected for use will be chosen by a sorting committee comprised of 5-7 volunteers with no affiliation to any campaign.

Questions must be short, specific and relevant to the United States Senate race.

Ben Harris, Vice Chair for County Affairs with the Alabama State Democratic Executive Committee, praised the Franklin County Committee's efforts in organizing the event.

"Outstanding work! Thank you Rick and everyone! I know this will be a very successful forum," Harris said.

## Russellville City Council officially certifies August 26th election results

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

At a short meeting Tuesday morning, Russellville City Council canvassed the results of the August 26th municipal elections, the final step taken to officially certify the results.

In Alabama, when a city council canvasses an election, it means the governing body is performing the official post-election process of reviewing, confirming, and certifying the results. This is a required procedure for municipal elections in the state.

The August 26th results saw Mayor David Grissom, Councilmen Jamie Harris, Darren Woodruff and Gary Cummings win reelection and Lonnie Freeman elected to represent District Four.

District One Councilman David Palmer had no opposition and was certified as the winner in July.

In other agenda items at the September 2nd meeting, the council: —authorized City Clerk Belinda Miller to close the 2019 Capital Improvement Fund.

—approved the hiring of Zain Holland as a patrol officer with the Russellville Police Department.

—approved a claim for \$537.42 submitted by Clarence Hamm, whose vehicle was damaged when his wife drove on Madison Street on August 5th, after milling work had been done on the road, and incurred a bent rim after hitting an exposed sewer drain.

The council will next meet September 15, 2025, with work session at 6p.m, and meeting to follow.





# Classifieds

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# Bobcats fall 22-16 to Vinemont in Region 5 opener

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

The Phil Campbell High School varsity football team came up just short in its Class 3A Region 5 opener, falling 22-16 on the road at Vinemont on Friday night. The defeat dropped the Bobcats to 0-2 overall and 0-1 in region action.

A defensive battle throughout, the game was scoreless at the halftime break. The deadlock was first broken by Phil Campbell in the second half, but it was ultimately the hosts who found the final, go-ahead score to win the ballgame.

"It was a good, intense game," third-year Phil Campbell head coach Jacob Hamilton said. "It was physical. (Vinemont) studied well for us. And I don't think that we underestimated them; we played very hard considering the circumstances, we just couldn't capitalize on a lot of things in the red zone.

"I thought we had a great game defensively. I was really proud of our defensive effort," he added. "Offensively, watching the film, there's so much that we could've capitalized on that we didn't and penalties killed us."

Hamilton said he was frustrated by many of the penalties, some of which he disagreed with but many of them costly. The Bobcats

See, 'BOBCATS,' Page 13

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# Golden Tigers open Region 7 play with 35-6 win over Lawrence County

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville High School varsity football team picked up its first win of the 2025 campaign on Friday night, defeating the visiting Lawrence County Red Devils 35-6 at Golden Tiger Stadium. Russellville's win over its region rival improves its record to 1-2 overall and 1-0 in Class 5A Region 7 play.

"It's always important to get the first (win) and hopefully that gives these guys some confidence and shows them that they can be a good football team," Russellville second-year head coach Dustin Goodwin told the Franklin Free Press. "We haven't arrived by any means but we're on the right track, and getting the first region win is a big deal."



DEVIN MORRIS

After taking the opening kickoff, Russellville started in good field position around mid-field. The Golden Tigers drove deep into Lawrence County (1-2, 0-1) territory, but the opening drive stalled inside the Red Devils' five-yard line and the hosts turned the ball over on downs.

That first hangup didn't deter RHS, though. The remainder of the first half was pretty much all Russellville.

See, 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' Page 12

# Belgreen rolls to 3-0 start after rout of Tharptown

Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press

Three games into the 2025 campaign, the Belgreen High School football team remains the sole unbeaten team in Franklin County. The Bulldogs improved to 3-0 Friday night after a 34-0 Homecoming win over county rival Tharptown.

"I think we played well offensively and were able to move the ball up and down the field," Belgreen head coach Jonathan Raper said. "Defensively, I thought we played pretty well.

"It was a great night for the (players) and for the community. The atmosphere was awesome. We had a great crowd," he added. "We appreciate the crowd we had, and I've thought since game one the kids have done a great job of staying focused and really understanding what it takes to win football games."

Five different players scored touchdowns for the Bulldogs in the win. Sophomore quarterback Rush Berryman, after Belgreen lost a fumble on its opening possession, the only major hiccup for the BHS offense for the night, scored the first points of the evening on the Bulldogs' second drive.

Following that score by Berryman were touchdowns from junior Ethan Dawson, sophomores Colton Ashton and Brayden Messer, and senior Easton Mitchell.

"I thought our offensive line controlled the game very well," Raper told the Franklin Free Press. "I'm not positive but I think we scored on just about every possession we had other than the turnover," he added. "So offensively we played pretty good all night except for a couple miscues."

On defense, the Bulldogs pitched the first shutout in the program's short history. Although Tharptown controlled the football for most of the second half, and Raper thought his defense

See, 'BELGREEN,' Page 14



# 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' FROM PAGE 11

The Golden Tigers got the scoring started late in the first quarter on a 22-yard touchdown pass from sophomore quarterback Whit Goodwin to senior wide receiver Bryson Cooper, his first touchdown catch of the year. Goodwin, rolling to his right, found Cooper open in the corner of the endzone to make it 7-0 after the extra point.

Just over two minutes later, with 10 seconds left in the quarter, junior running back Tarus Davis gashed the Lawrence County defense with a 74-yard rushing score to make it 14-0. The run was his longest of the season.

Davis found the endzone again a few minutes later on Russellville's next possession; his 13-yard run with 9:52 remaining in the half made it 21-0.

RHS closed out the half with one final rushing touchdown, this one by junior running back Devin Morris, who took the handoff into the endzone from five yards out to make it 28-0.

Between Davis, Morris, and the quarterback Goodwin, who also had a few impressive carries throughout the contest, the Golden Tigers finally got their rushing attack going Friday night, something RHS failed to do effectively in the opening two games.

"(The run game) is something we've really focused on getting better at because we know we're going to have to run the football," Goodwin said. "I thought the guys up front did a good job paving the way and opening up running lanes, and the (running) backs, to their credit, seeing those lanes and pushing the ball downfield.

"For the offense to work everybody's got to do their part, and I think tonight we were able to do that a lot better in the run game," he added.

The Russellville head coach said running the ball well against Lawrence County also allowed the Golden Tigers to push the ball down the field through the air more effectively, as well.

The quarterback Goodwin, who has made his living dispersing the ball on short, quick routes, was throwing more vertically against LCHS Friday night. There were some dropped passes, but he was able to find open receivers across the middle and on the perimeter throughout the night. His second touchdown pass of the evening—and Cooper's second touchdown reception—came on an 18-yard slant route across the middle of the field with about six minutes remaining.

"We want to be balanced and being able to run the football definitely helps with that," Goodwin said. "Anytime we have space to attack we want to find good, effective ways to do that. For the most part, I thought we did a good job of doing that tonight in several areas.

"I thought we came out ready to play tonight, and we were able to put some things together offensively and finish drives—which is something we really haven't been able to do the last couple weeks," he added. "It still wasn't perfect, but I'm proud of the effort, proud of the execution. I thought we were able to take what they were giving us and get the ball into the endzone."

On the defensive side of the ball, Russellville was no slouch either. The Golden Tigers forced two turnovers—a Malaki Groce interception in the first half and a forced fumble, recovered by sophomore Jason Noel, in the second—and applied plenty of pressure on the LCHS quarterbacks, especially in the first half. RHS pitched a shutout in the opening 24 minutes, and aside from the one LCHS scoring drive in the third quarter, were able to stop the Red Devils before any real damage was done.

"Defensively, we played well enough to keep them to one score," Goodwin said. "I thought there were times when we could've tackled a little better and times when they were on the field a little too long, but we're not going to complain about winning a football game."

As Goodwin mentioned previously, he's hopeful this first win will boost the confidence of his players. He added that the Golden Tigers will take both the good and the bad from this game and use it to improve as they near the halfway mark of the regular season.

"There's always things to improve upon in all three phases of the game," he said. "We'll watch the film and break it down. We'll see what we did right and praise (the players) for that. We'll see what we did wrong and attack it and continue to improve as we move forward."

Russellville returns to Golden Tiger Stadium for its next game against region foe East Limestone on Friday, September 12.

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## 'BOBCATS,' From Page 11

ended up with 11 penalties for 89 yards during the game. "We had a touchdown called back in the first half because of a holding call that I don't know if I agreed with," Hamilton said. "We were able to move the ball and we would drive it, but it's just when we got to the redzone penalties would kill us. We'd have to go for it on fourth down and couldn't convert," he added. In spite of the penalties, it was Phil Campbell that opened up the scoring early in the third quarter. A touchdown run of 13 yards by Braxton Downey made it 6-0, Bobcats, before quarterback Hayston Scott's completion to Hagen Raper on the two-point try made it 8-0. Vinemont responded with a touchdown run of its own later in the third to make it 8-6, but PCHS was able to make it a two-score game after another touchdown run by Dempsey and another successful two-point attempt gave the Bobcats a 16-6 lead. But it was on the ensuing kickoff that things took a turn. Phil Campbell's kickoff to Vinemont was returned all the way, and this time the Eagles' two-point conversion was good, making it a 16-14 game with the fourth quarter looming. "That was a huge momentum shift for them," Hamilton said of Vinemont's special teams score. A few plays later, after regaining possession, Phil Campbell turned the ball over on an interception. The hosts took advantage, scoring the go-ahead rushing touchdown in the fourth quarter and converting on the two-pointer to make it 22-16, Vinemont. Phil Campbell wasn't out of it, though. The Bobcats got the ball back with time to march down the field and tie or recapture the lead. Unfortunately for PCHS, penalties once again came back to bite. The visitors had several penalties on the final drive, including back-to-back false starts in the last sequence. "We were driving down the field and then all of a sudden we have false starts that I'm not seeing; and linemen downfield consecutively when we have passes and are trying to score in the redzone, and I'm

just not seeing that," Hamilton said. The penalty setbacks helped keep the Bobcats out of the endzone and Vinemont retained its six-point advantage at the final whistle. "Congratulations to Vinemont (on the win), but it was very frustrating," Hamilton added. Despite the loss, Hamilton said he was proud of how his team played and the effort his players showed. "We've got some really good kids. They play hard and they fight to the end," he said. On offense, the quarterback Scott finished with 17 completions on 29 attempts for 175 yards. His top outlet for the evening was receiver Austin Elliott, who had five catches for 78 yards. In the ground game, Downey led the way with 11 carries for 64 yards and two touchdowns while Scott had 10 rushes for 57 yards. Defensively, the Bobcats got standout performances from Cody Snead and Ethan Hallman, both finishing with 14 total tackles. Eleven of Snead's 14 tackles were solo and he also recorded a sack. Reflecting on the outcome of the game, Hamilton said there is still plenty of season left. The Bobcats will get to work on fixing mistakes as focus shifts to their next opponent, region foe Oakman. "We're going to come back next week and luckily we get to come back to home," he said. "We've got eight more games left so we're going to focus on that, focus on ourselves, get back to fundamentals and clean things up." Phil Campbell-Oakman is set to kickoff at Parrish Stadium at 7 p.m. on Friday, September 12.

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# 'BELGREEN,' From Page 11

could've done a better job of getting off the field the final two quarters, the BHS head coach praised the unit for keeping the Wildcats off the scoreboard.

"(Tharptown) ran right at us. They controlled the clock and they basically kept the ball the whole third and fourth quarter. But they would drive down the field on us and then we'd hold them," Raper said. "It was three or four yards at a whack, and they did a good job of moving the chains and eating clock."

"We probably gave up a lot of yards, and we didn't get off the field as quick as I probably would've liked, but we would make adjustments and when we did that we were able to stop them," he added. "Anytime you can keep the other team from scoring that's always good."

In addition to how his team played Friday night, Raper applauded the way his student-athletes handled practice during the week. The players, he said, remained focused on preparation for the game while still being able to enjoy the Homecoming festivities. It made for a special and memorable week.

"The kids had a very good week of practice. They stayed locked in and were getting after it; that carried over to the game," Raper said.

"It's a big rivalry so going in we knew that was going to add to it, not just counting the Homecoming stuff," he added. "Overall I thought our kids handled themselves so well during the week and during the game and handled everything with Homecoming well."

"It was a big deal with first Homecoming and first Homecoming dance on a Friday night. The kids had a lot of fun and enjoyed it. The kids were excited about all that and it turned out to be a very successful night. It's one of those great things about Homecoming and football on a Friday night. It was a very fun night—a fun week."

The Bulldogs have a bye week before their next contest at Tanner on Friday, September 19. Raper said Belgreen will use the off week to self-correct before eyeing the Rattlers.

"We're going to work on ourselves. That's the biggest thing we're going to do this week," Raper said. "At the end of the week we may start to take more of a look at Tanner, but I think we've got some things that we need to work on and some things that we need to clean up so that we can continue to improve and get better."

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# Goodwin to coach North in annual AHSAA North-South All-Star football game

*Kadin Pounders*  
*Franklin Free Press*

Russellville High School varsity football head coach Dustin Goodwin will be coaching a whole team of all-stars later this year. On Thursday, August 28, the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) and director of the Alabama High School Athletic Directors & Coaches Association (AHSADCA), J.T. Lawrence, announced the coaching staffs for the 66th AHSAA North-South All-Star Football Game, and Goodwin was one of seven head coaches tapped to coach the North team.

“I’m honored and looking forward to it. It’s not something that I’ve had the opportunity to do up to this point in my career, and I’m grateful to have the opportunity to do it this year,” Goodwin said.

The Russellville head coach joins three other Golden Tiger coaches who have participated over the years. John Ritter and Mark Heaton assisted with the North team in 2021 and 2017, respectively. AHSAA Hall of Famer Perry Swindall was the head coach of the North in 2003. This year’s North All-Star team will be led by Vestavia Hills’ Robert Evans, who picked Goodwin for his staff. Evans’ other staff selections were Hartselle’s Bert Newton, who will serve as defensive coordinator, and Brooks’ Tim Bowen as offensive coordinator; as well as Gadsden City’s Ali Smith, Hayden’s Chad Eads, and Springville’s Chris Metcalf.

“I think both coaches have put together staffs that feature some of our finest up-and-coming young head coaches,” Lawrence said in the AHSAA press release announcing the coaches. “I am looking forward to seeing just how well this coaching staffs can prepare their teams.”

The 2025 North-South All-Star Football Game, which is managed by the AHSADCA, is scheduled to be played in Mobile on Friday, December 12.

## Area play begins for five Franklin County teams

*Kadin Pounders*  
*Franklin Free Press*

Last week, the five local varsity volleyball programs—Belgreen, Phil Campbell, Red Bay, Russellville, and Tharptown—started area play. Below is a recap of all the volleyball action from September 1-6.

Belgreen (5-7) played just one match for the week, its Class 2A Area 14 opener at Covenant Christian on Thursday, September 4. The Lady Bulldogs fell in three sets 3-0 (18-25, 23-25, 17-25). In the defeat, Carson Hovater had nine kills, Randi Terry recorded six kills and seven digs, Alayna Tate finished with eight assists, Bryn Scott had 16 digs, and Audree West had 11 digs.

Belgreen, who received votes in the Class 2A volleyball poll released earlier in the week, will host Cherokee in its next match on Monday, September 8. BHS will host area foe Tharptown on September 9.

Phil Campbell started its week playing a tri-match at Russellville. The Lady Bobcats played Deshler, falling 2-0 (13-25, 7-25) before taking on the Lady Golden Tigers. The visitors fell in that match, too, 2-0, losing the first set 13-25 and the second 14-25.

On Thursday, PCHS continued play with its first area match of the season against Colbert Heights. The visitors fell to CHHS 3-0 (23-25, 18-25, 16-25).

The Lady Bobcats will host Sheffield for its next match on September 9.

Red Bay opened its week with a 3-0 home win over the Sheffield Lady Bulldogs on Tuesday night. The Tigers continued their winning ways on Thursday with two road wins at Hamilton; RBHS defeated Oakman 2-0 and then knocked off the hosts 2-1.

Red Bay’s next contest will be played on Monday, September 8 when the Lady Tigers travel across the border to face Belmont.

Russellville (17-5) hosted Deshler and Phil Campbell to start the week on Tuesday. RHS, who received votes in the latest Class 5A volleyball rankings, defeated Deshler 2-1 (27-25, 15-25, 15-10) and followed it up with a decisive victory over Phil Campbell 2-0 (25-13, 25-14). Russellville’s Blevyn Sappington led the Lady Golden Tigers with 16 kills over those two matches, including 10 against Deshler. Libero Bri McCulloch finished the night with 28 digs.

On Thursday, RHS traveled to Moulton for its first Class 5A Area contest against Lawrence County and also faced Class 4A Danville. Against No. 10 Lawrence County, the Lady Golden Tigers fell short 3-0 (10-25, 20-25, 21-25), dropping to 0-1 in area play. In the match against Danville, RHS toppled the opposition 2-1 (25-19, 21-25, 15-10). Laila Hill had 16 total kills in the two matches, while McCulloch finished the day with 41 digs.

RHS finished the week up on Saturday with its RVL Spike Fest Tournament at the RMS gymnasium. The Lady Golden Tigers ultimately finished as the runner-up in their tourney. Russellville swept Colbert Heights (25-13, 25-12), Meek (28-26, 25-17), and Marion County (25-22, 25-21) on the way to the tournament championship, but fell to Covenant Christian 2-1 (23-25, 25-17, 13-15) in the final match. For the day, Hill led RHS with 22 kills, Sappington had 20 kills, McCulloch recorded 60 digs, Fatima Ramirez had 24 assists, and Bella Malone made seven blocks.

Russellville’s next match is an area game at West Point on Tuesday, September 9.

Tharptown started area play on Tuesday with a match against Covenant Christian. The Lady Wildcats lost that contest 3-0 (20-25, 17-25, 19-25).

On Thursday, Tharptown went 1-1 with a win over Decatur Heritage and a loss to Lexington. Tharptown defeated DCHS 2-1 (16-25, 26-24, 15-10) before falling to the Lady Bears 2-1 (11-25, 29-27, 9-15). The Lady Wildcats then wrapped up the week hosting a tournament, the Tharptown Invitational, on Saturday. THS went 2-1 in the tourney, sweeping Sheffield (25-11, 25-7) and Cherokee (25-13, 25-12) before ultimately being swept by Sulligent (18-25, 19-25).

Next up for THS is a road match at area rival Belgreen on Tuesday, September 9.





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