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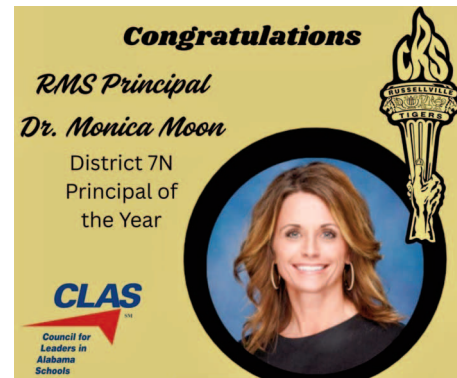
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Moon describes CLAS Principal of the Year award as a team honor

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As Russellville Middle School Principal, Dr. Monica Moon wears many different hats.

When called by a *Franklin Free Press* reporter Monday, Moon was wearing her 'custodian hat' as she mopped a floor on a day where the school was short staffed on maintenance staff. She put the mop down briefly to share her reaction to being named the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) District 7 North Principal of the Year last week.



Since its formation in 1969, CLAS has focused on children by providing

See 'PRINCIPAL,' Page 4

New Beginnings Church celebrates one year anniversary of its 'new beginning' in Russellville

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Pastor Zach Isom and the congregation of New Beginnings Church of Russellville recently celebrated the one-year anniversary of the church, the manifestation of a vision Isom said the Lord put on his heart two years ago.

Isom, an ordained minister in the Church of God of Prophecy, knew the denomination did not have a presence in Russellville. Isom and others in the movement began praying about starting new churches when he said the Lord put Russellville on his heart and tasked him to replant the flag and reach Russellville.

A man of action as well as devout faith, Isom has been amazed at what

the Lord has done in a short time with New Beginnings.

"It's truly been an amazing blessing, not just for our people but even those watching from a distance," Isom said. "When we started, the congregation was 10 or so. Now, when everyone is there, we're in the low 20s."

"But more than the numbers, we've added some people since we first launched who bought into the vision and became part of the family. And that's what we are at New Beginnings—truly a family," Isom added.

There is meaning to the church having been named New Beginnings and it's reflected in its vision statement: "We believe that God has called our church to be an open door in the community for those who are

See 'NEW BEGINNINGS,' Page 9

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AltaGracia Pasillas, 88, of Russellville, passed away Friday, Sept. 19, 2025. Visitation will be held at Pinkard Funeral Home on Saturday, Sept. 27, from 10a.m.-2 p.m., with funeral service to follow at 2 p.m. Burial will be at East Franklin Cemetery in Phil Campbell.

Evelyn Maelynn Gann, 89, of Phil Campbell, passed away Sept. 17, 2025. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family with arrangements.

Rayan Trapp, 95, of the East Franklin community, passed away Sept. 20, 2025. Visitation will be held Tuesday, Sept. 23, at Akins Funeral Home, from 1-2 p.m., with funeral service to follow at 2 p.m. Burial will be at East Franklin Cemetery.

Patricia Ernesteen Hellums Armstrong, 91, of Red Bay, passed away Sept. 22, 2025. Grave-side service will be Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 11 a.m., at Hillcrest Memorial Gardens, Red Bay. Deaton Funeral Home is assisting the family.

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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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Back to the Bible **by Larsen Plyler:** **Matthew 7:7-12**

The standard of righteousness to which Jesus calls us in the Sermon on the Mount is a high calling. How can I ever measure up?

Jesus says that if we will ask, seek, and knock, we will find and the door will be opened. Through a constant pursuit of God's help, we can be what Christ calls us to be.

Jesus illustrates. If my little boy asks me for some bread, I'm not going to give him a rock am I? If your children ask for fish, you're not going to hand them a snake! Right?! Well, you and I are not perfect parents. But, we still know how to give our children what is good for them. How much more true is that about our Father in heaven! He will always give good to those who ask Him. We could summarize what Jesus calls us to by "the golden rule." What we want for ourselves, we should do for others.

Notice that following Jesus isn't just a list of "don'ts" (though they are there!) It is characterized by a life of doing.

Loving your neighbor as yourself. Notice Jesus does not say treat people the way they treated you. It does not depend on how they treat us, but how we want to be treated. We should reflect the way Jesus loved us (Jn. 13:34; Eph. 5:1-2). This was the basis of all of the instructions about how to treat others in the Law and Prophets (see Lev. 19:18; Rom. 13:8-10).

Lessons to Learn: When my prayer is for God's will to shape my life, the answer is always yes. When we are asking, seeking, and knocking to be more like what Jesus calls us to be, there is never a "no" or a "not right now." We are promised that prayer to be really righteous always receives the right answer from our good Father (see James 1:5, 16-17). We do not always get what we ask for. But, if our sincere prayer is always, in all things, for God's will to be ultimately accomplished, then the answer is always yes.

Real righteousness is active. It is more than not causing trouble. It is more than minding our own business. It is about considering others in light of what we would want and need in that situation. Sometimes that is generosity. Sometimes it is a word of encouragement. Sometimes it is a word of direction or correction. Sometimes it is forgiveness (see Mt. 6:14-15). It's not just about being "nice" but about doing for them what we'd want done for us. 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.

Reach out with your questions, comments, or requests for personal Bible study at backtothebiblepodcast.com or at info@backtothebiblepodcast.com.



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MS Industries II resumes production with big plans for growth, Smith says



Russellville Mayor David Grissom, right, and MS Industries COO John Christmas at the company's Walnut Gate Road plant in Russellville.

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

After navigating through financial uncertainty and a multi-million dollar lawsuit, MS Industries II is once again in production at its facility located on Walnut Gate Road in Russellville.

MS Industries II COO John Christmas took Russellville Mayor David Grissom on a tour of the facility last week and gave a status report on his company, which relocated at the former Vulcan Materials site in 2016.

The company produces a variety of industrial silica and other minerals and Smith the resumed operations at the Russellville location are producing 38 tons of a proprietary silica quartz product that exclusively is shipped to two customers.

Smith said the monthly production of 38 tons is just a fraction of what he expects to grow to more than 1,000,000 tons each year. Smith said there are 12 employees at the MS Industries II Russellville facility, again with plans to expand that number significantly.

"It's good news to see they have resumed operations at their Russellville facility and we hope they see tremendous growth and success, which will also benefit our city," Grissom said.

The silica is shipped from Russellville in three ways: truck, vessel and rail. Smith paid for the installation of a railroad spur connecting to the Norfolk-Southern rail line when his company purchased the

See 'MS INDUSTRIES,' Page 9

'PRINCIPAL,' from Page 1

administrators with the professional learning and resources needed to advance public education in Alabama.

In only her second year as RMS Principal, Moon reflected on the tremendous support she receives daily from her fellow administrators, faculty and staff.

"There were so many more deserving of this award who go unrecognized," Moon said. "This award is not about me. This staff takes care of each other. And there were so many leaders before me who laid the groundwork for success at Russellville Middle School."

Moon became RMS Principal after serving as the school's Assistant Principal starting in 2021. Principal Tony Bonds' resignation in the summer of 2024 led to Moon's promotion.

Moon's tenure with Russellville City Schools began when she was hired by former West Elementary School Principal Ramona Robinson. After nine years as a WES teacher, Moon was hired as the system's Instructional Technology Facilitator in 2014, a position she held for three years.

"They taught me a lot as well as those at the Central Office who see value in the ones coming behind them, keeping a level of excellence. It's never been or will it ever be a team of just one," Moon said. "And at the end of the day, it's the teachers who make the educational experience an excellent one for our students."

It was Robinson who first saw Moon's potential as an administrator. And Robinson shared that with Moon after her formal evaluation one year.

"She saw a lot of leadership ability within me. I was already working on my Masters at the time, so the timing just wasn't right," Moon said.

Moon went on to earn her Masters Degree in Elementary Education from the University of North Alabama, her Education Specialist Degree in in Educational Administration and Supervision from Delta State in 2014, her Instructional Leadership Certification from UNA in 2015 and her Doctor of Education (EdD) in Rural Education: Organizational Change and Leadership in 2020 from the University of West Alabama.

She was now ready for a leadership position whenever God felt in His heart to bless her with one. That opportunity came in 2017 when the WES Assistant Principal job came open.

Dr. Tim Guinn recommended Moon as RMS Principal and the RCS Board of Education officially hired her in the summer of 2024, a move already paying dividends for the system.

"We are incredibly proud of Dr. Monica Moon for being named CLAS District 7's Principal of the Year. This recognition is a testament to her unwavering dedication, leadership and positive impact she has made on the students, staff and the Russellville City Schools community," Guinn said. "Dr. Moon's hard work and commitment to excellence sets a standard for all of us and we are fortunate to have such an outstanding leader in our district."

It's a true team effort at Russellville Middle School, though, and that's something not always seen in today's competitive world.

"Everyone here is so supportive to one another and genuinely want others to be successful and that's sometimes rare," Moon said. "Everyone has been so supportive since I started. And that brings value to our whole system when everyone is driven to push each other to succeed."

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The New God

by Ann Hill

The new god of technology
Is worshiped across our land.
You don't have to bow a knee,
You just hold it in your hand.

We often see heads bowed
In parking lots outdoors,
Or in churches, schools and
stadiums,
And even in the stores.

Just walk down an aisle at Wal-Mart
And hope you won't collide
With someone who is texting
And can't wait till they get outside.

Now, this poem may bring a chuckle.
You know that it's so true.
But it's not a funny thing
When this gets a hold on you.

It can take your time and affection
Away from family and friends,
And link you with strange spirits,
And addictions that won't end.

Let's use technology wisely,
And don't let it get control
Of our time and our affections,
And even affect our soul.

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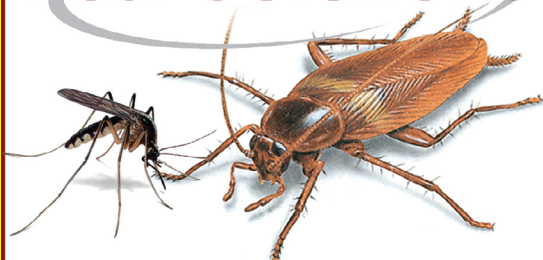
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 **T**he Cowboy Church of Franklin County will host a Trunk 'R Treat on October 31, 2025, starting at 5 p.m. There will be candy-filled decorated trunks and fun for all ages! Church is located at 25100 Highway 24, Russellville. For more information, call Michelle at 256-668-2344.

 **T**he Cowboy Church of Franklin County invites you to a Judgment House Experience Chili Cook-Off, Saturday, October 25th, at the church, located at 25100 Hwy. 24, Russellville. Bring your best chili, if you dare! Chili drop-off by 4 p.m. Judging begins at 4:30 p.m. 'Judgment House: The Last Ride, a hayride drama experience will begin immediately following the Chili Cook-Off. Free admission. Family-friendly Western-themed fun with a powerful message of eternity. For more information, call Jean at 256-275-0730.

 **Y**ou're invited to the Littleville Festival Car Show, sponsored by Why Knot Show 'Em Off, Saturday, October 4th, 8am-12pm at the Littleville Community Center, 1400 Old Jackson Highway. Everyone welcome. Cars, trucks, bikes and RatRods. There will be trophies and door prizes, 50/50 drawing. \$20 registration paid the day of show for entries. More info? Call 256-668-2585

 **T**here will be a Car Show as part of the Leighton Fire Department's 2nd annual Fall Festival, Saturday, Oct. 25th, 4-8 p.m., 2225 Railroad Street, Leighton. Sponsored by Why Knot Show 'Em Off. Free to spectate. \$20 registration paid day of show in person. Cars, trucks, bikes & RatRods. Trophies, door prizes, 50/50 drawing. Call 256-668-2585 for more info.



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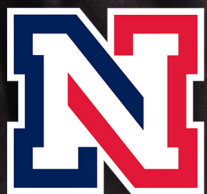


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REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

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.

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Willingness to: work overtime, irregular hours, weekends and holidays; travel and attend seminars and workshops.

QUALIFICATIONS and SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a high school diploma or GED

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'NEW BEGINNINGS' from Page 1

seeking a new beginning in their lives. A new beginning that starts with an encounter with Jesus and leads to a daily relationship with the King of Kings. We are committed to being a place for all to come to Know Jesus, Experience Transformation and Find Purpose."

At New Beginnings' one year anniversary service on September 7th, the church celebrated the special day by taking in several new members and approve some incoming member transfer requests. Church of God of Prophecy District leader Bishop Mark Williams was the guest minister and delivered a timely message on winning the spiritual battles.

After holding its initial services in the Russellville Recreation Center twice monthly, Isom said the church was invited to hold services at WMTY television's Russellville studio on Highway 24 West.

"Keith Nichols was the one who encouraged us to come to the TV station and hold services there," Isom said. "But we all were sensing we wanted a place that would be home for New Beginnings. We started looking, praying and checking locations around the city. In May, we signed an agreement to relocate to our new church home in the Franklin Shopping Center."

For Isom, it's not about growth in congregation size. It's about spiritual growth.

"There are churches with thousands of members but that doesn't make them a healthy church. True health is found in the midst of each individual who attends that church. During the week, when they are out in their community as a true reflection of Jesus Christ. That's what I want to see," Isom said.

"We are in a unique opportunity to build a strong foundation without any rush, where can truly pour into our people there now, build them up and become a healthy church in the process," he added.

The task of starting a new church in Russellville, where so many churches are established already, is daunting. He first credits the Lord for the past year, but also knows there are other important reasons he's been able to balance the challenge of a full-time secular as a Shift Coach at Essity Tissue Plant, his pastor duties and his recent successful campaign to serve on the Hackleburg City Council. And her name is Ashanti, his wife.

"A pastor's wife sees the other side of the pastor not everyone else sees. She's the one often giving me advice. Wives of pastors can get overlooked. Without her by my side, none of this would be possible," Isom said.

The couple has two sons, Bentley and Kamden, and a daughter, Kallayha.

New Beginnings has a weekly Sunday morning service at 11 a.m., and it recently launched a Wednesday night Bible study at 6 p.m. Melissa Roberts serves as Associate Pastor and the children's ministry is run by Katelyn Frazier and Ashanti.

The church is located at 14001 Highway 43, Suite 4, in the Franklin Shopping Center.

For more information on New Beginnings Church of Russellville, visit the church Facebook page or contact Isom at 256-324-8332.



New Beginnings Church Pastor Zach Isom with his wife Ashanti

'MS INDUSTRIES' from Page 4

site. Presently, the company is using truck transport exclusively, but he said that will change as production grows.

"We paid for installation of a rail spur and rail switch that will allow immediate on-site shipping from our Russellville facility," Smith said. "There are a lot of things coming for us and this is going to be big for the area."

Smith said his company's contract with the two customers has a confidentiality agreement and, as the product is a proprietary blend, he did not indicate what the specific silica quartz product is used for.

The company has the capability to produce a range of products, from micro proppants used in fracking to glass and roofing products, concrete additives, sports facilities and even some cosmetics.

Resumed operations represent progress for a company which has faced its share of obstacles over the past nine years. Those include a multi-million dollar lawsuit filed by Arkansas businessman and former MSI investor Steven Booth.

Court records show the case was dismissed last year with prejudice, meaning it may not be refilled. Smith said the case, which also included a counterclaim against Booth, was settled under a strict confidentiality agreement and he did not elaborate on its terms.

Regardless of its terms, resolution of that lawsuit and other legal actions have cleared the way for Smith's company to finally move forward mining and producing high-grade silica products in what he describes will be an 'ever-growing operation' at the 58-acre Russellville facility.

To learn more about MS Industries II and its operations in Russellville, visit www.msind.com.

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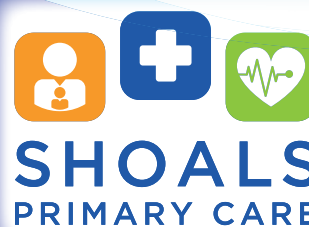
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Local cross country teams compete at meets held on September 20

Kadin Pounders
Franklin Free Press

Local cross country teams competed in a couple of different cross country meets on Saturday, September 20.

Belgreen and Vina participated in the Warriors Invitational, hosted by Wilson High School, in Florence, while Russellville raced in the Aggies XC Invite at Hamilton High School.

For Belgreen, senior Briseyda Luna was the top girls finisher in the 5k race, coming in 19th place with a time of 24:08.80. Elizabeth Motes finished in 32nd (26:18.27), Lilibeth Cruz finished 61st (30:55.11), and Lidseyd Donagustin came in 77th (35:52.82).

Belgreen's boys had four compete in the 5k, as well. Miguel Perez (20:26.92) and Jose Gabriel Estrada (20:31.14) finished 38th and 39th, respectively, while Skylar Hardy and Aaron Rubido ended their races with times of 23:48.54 and 24:30.40 to finish 97th and 104th.

The Bulldogs had one competitor in the boys two mile race; that was Casein James, who came in 57th with a time of 17:29.26.

Vina High School had several girls race in the two mile in Florence. Kylie Cochran was

See, 'CROSS COUNTRY,' Page 13

Red Bay's hopes for region title buoyed by 34-21 win over region foe Lexington

Kadin Pounders
Franklin Free Press

The Red Bay High School varsity football team picked up a crucial 34-21 win over Lexington on Friday night in what could prove to be the de facto Class 2A Region 8 championship game when everything is said and done this season. Improving to 3-1 overall and 3-0 in region play with the win, the Tigers massively bolstered their region resume while simultaneously surpassing their win total from 2024.

"We're just really clicking right now on offense, and we're getting better each week. The run game, the passing game, up front—we've gotten better each week on that side of the ball," first-year Red Bay head coach Tyler Jeffreys told the Franklin Free Press. "Defensively, we're more physical than we were when we started this season."

"We still make some mental mistakes that hurt us, but we were able to overcome that Friday night," he added. "It was a really big win, and I'm really proud of those guys."

The two teams traded scores to start the contest with Red Bay's first touchdown coming by way of Jaxon Vinson. The senior running back finished the game with over 120 yards rushing on 28 carries and four receptions for 87 yards.

The Tigers and the Bears swapped two more touchdowns each before halftime. Red Bay's third score, which made it 21-20, Lexington, came with under a minute to go before the break.

After the intermission, the hosts were able to march down the field and score to take their first lead of the game, 26-21. The Tigers would add a final touchdown in the fourth quarter to make it 34-21 after the successful two-point conversion.

"The offense stepped up big the whole game," Jeffreys said. "Except twice, every time we touched the ball we scored and that was huge."

In addition to Vinson's stellar night, senior quarterback Jeremiah Thorne ended the game with 223 yards on 14 completions and sophomore wideout Davien Colburn finished with 121

See, 'RED BAY,' Page 12

Golden Tigers dominate at Ardmore, stay perfect in region heading into bye week

Kadin Pounders
Franklin Free Press

It was all Russellville near the Alabama-Tennessee state line on Friday night as the Golden Tiger football team defeated the hosting Ardmore Tigers 42-7 to improve 3-2 overall and remain perfect in Class 5A Region 7 play at 3-0.

"A road game, a region game, I'm happy to get the win, for sure. I thought our kids came in focused and ready to play," second-year Russellville head coach Dustin Goodwin told the Franklin Free Press postgame. "We did a good job offensively moving the ball down the field and finishing drives, and defensively did a good job of holding them to seven points."

Russellville was impressive in the rout of region foe Ardmore (2-3, 0-3), scoring touchdowns on explosive plays on offense and keeping the Tigers penned in on defense. Sophomore quarterback Whit Goodwin, who threw for just 14 yards in the previous game against East Limestone, had a monster game against Ardmore, tossing it around the yard for well over 300 yards. He ended his night with four passing touchdowns to three different receivers. Goodwin also made some excellent plays with his legs to extend drives, move the chains, and pick up positive yardage when he didn't have open receivers.

The head coach of the Golden Tigers said his game plan was to get the ball out to his play-makers on the perimeter and run off-tackle and use his team's speed to make Ardmore, which is known for having big players—boy, do they!—chase them and keep them running. It's a simple concept but one that paid big dividends for Russellville Friday night.

"I think our coaches did a good job of putting (the game plan) together. We were able to get the ball out on the perimeter and stalk block and get on the edges," Goodwin said. "All in all, I thought we did a good job all around in those areas."

See, 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' Page 12

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‘RED BAY,’ from Page 11



Red Bay senior Jaxon Vinson. (Photo by Caleb Ramey)

receiving.

Meanwhile, on the defensive side of the ball, the Tigers pitched a shutout in the second half. Lexington threatened to score just once in the final 24 minutes, but on that drive the Red Bay defense was ultimately able to force a fumble and keep the Bears out of the endzone.

“We made some adjustments at halftime to stop those guys. Without that, I don’t think we win that game,” Jeffreys said.

The big region win over Lexington puts Red Bay in the driver’s seat with three region games to play. The Tigers’ remaining region schedule has them hosting Tharptown on October 10 before traveling to Decatur Heritage the following Friday and then Tanner in the penultimate week of the regular season. The combined record for Tharptown, Decatur Heritage, and Tanner this season is currently 2-11.

“You can’t say that we’re the region champs just yet, but we’ve put ourselves in an opportunity to do that,” Jeffreys told the FFP. “That’s a huge step forward for this team. That’s a huge step for this program.”

Red Bay’s next game will be at home against state-line rival Belmont (MS) on Friday, September 26.

‘GOLDEN TIGERS,’ from Page 11

Russellville, after a turnover-on-downs on its first offensive possession, scored on its second drive of the game to open the scoring. Junior running back Tarus Davis scampered for an 11-yard touchdown, his fourth of the campaign, to make it 7-0 with 5:41 to go in the first quarter.

The next four touchdowns for Russellville were all through the air. The quarterback Goodwin found senior receiver Ben Pounders for his first touchdown pass of the evening—a 40-yard pitch-and-catch as time expired in the first quarter to make it 14-0 to the visitors. It was Pounders’ first touchdown reception of the season, but it wouldn’t be his last of the evening; Pounders scored again early in the fourth quarter on a 56-yard touchdown reception to make it 35-0, Russellville.

Less than five minutes into the second quarter, RHS scored its third touchdown of the night when Goodwin, rolling out to his left, found senior Bryson Cooper striding wide open down the Russellville sideline and hit him for a 65-yard touchdown. Then, on the Golden Tigers’ first possession after halftime, Goodwin connected with senior Connor Devaney on a 15-yard touchdown strike to extend Russellville’s lead to 28 points.

“We wanted to spread the ball around. Playing in an offense like this, that’s the goal,” Goodwin, who earned his 10th win in charge of the Golden Tigers Friday night, said. “Really fortunate and happy that we were able to spread it around and throw and catch and protect well. Just all the way around, I thought we had a nice night.”

On the other side of the ball—the defensive side—the Golden Tigers had another strong showing. RHS recorded multiple sacks, at least two of which were made by junior defensive lineman Patrick Johnson, and did not give up any explosive plays. Russellville came into the game with the 13th best scoring defense in Class 5A and almost certainly moved up in those rankings after allowing just seven points to the hosts. Ardmore avoided the shutout with a touchdown run by junior running back Javean Riddle early in the fourth quarter to make it 35-7 with 9:26 to go.

Goodwin said he knew his defensive players would be disappointed in giving up the shutout but was proud of their performance.

Anyhow, Russellville’s defense quickly made up for the Ardmore touchdown by scoring one of its own.

The Golden Tiger defense capped the scoring with less than two minutes to play when Ardmore backup quarterback Kaden Larsen was intercepted by sophomore defensive back Darron Jones, who returned the interception 55 yards for a touchdown. It was Jones’ fourth interception of the season, his second pick-six in as many games, and it gave his team the final 42-7 advantage.

With three region wins in their pocket, the Golden Tigers head into a bye week before facing off against No. 4-ranked Fairview on October 3. The blowout victory over Ardmore will certainly be a boost for RHS as it heads into the off week and begins to prepare for a showdown which, if scenarios play out like many expect, could serve as the de facto region title game.

“You never know if it’s going to be the region championship game or not. At the time (of the Russellville-Fairview meeting) last year it turned out that way—and it could play out the same this year. But we try to think about being 0-0 every week and trying to find a way to get to the end of the week 1-0,” Goodwin said. “It doesn’t matter who we’re playing, we’re always going to be focused on the one we’re preparing for and not the two or three down the road. That’s sort of the mindset we try to take, and so far we’ve been able to do that in region play.

“It’s good to get another region win (Friday night). I’m proud of the guys, proud of the coaches, and looking forward to working on us next week,” he added.

WEEK 5 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Belgreen (3-1) @ Cherokee

Russellville (3-2) — BYE WEEK

Phil Campbell (1-3) vs. Hackleburg

Tharptown (0-4) vs. Vina (0-4)

Red Bay (3-1) vs. Belmont

'CROSS COUNTRY,' from Page 11

was the Lady Red Devils' top finisher at that distance, coming in 57th with a time of 19:43.94. Bella Creekmore (20:18.02; 64th), Kinsley Newton (21:06.19; 71st), Maralynn Peterson (21:26.98; 73rd), and Cecilia Rowbottom (22:38.35; 74th) also ran in the two mile race for VHS. Samantha Elders was the lone runner for Vina in the girls' 5k. She came in 73rd with a mark of 34:34.57.


At the Aggies XC Invite, Russellville had many competitors take part in the meet. In the girls' 5k race, the Lady Golden Tigers had three finish in the top 10: Heidy Jacobo took fourth place with a time of 22:34.71, Hannah Waldrep finished seventh at 24:19.59, and Maria Felix ended in 10th place with a time of 24:21.70.

In the boys' 5k, Russellville's Pascual Felipe and Cesar Felipe finished in sixth and seventh place, respectively. They were the two top 10 finishers for the Golden Tigers. Six others finished in the top 25.



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Varsity volleyball roundup: Russellville sets new program record, Red Bay celebrates seniors during packed week

Kadin Pounders
Franklin Free Press

Below is a breakdown of all the local varsity volleyball action that took place September 15-20:

Belgreen opened the week with an area match against the Mars Hill Lady Panthers on Monday, September 15. The Lady Bulldogs came up just short in that match, falling 3-2 (25-23, 13-25, 25-20, 12-25, 11-15). Carson Hovater had 12 kills, Lilliana Willingham had 11 kills and 15 digs, Bryn Scott recorded 36 digs, and Alayna Tate had 30 assists and 10 digs in the loss.

BHS suffered a second area defeat again on Tuesday in a 3-1 (25-20, 15-25, 18-25, 16-25) final against Covenant Christian. Hovater recorded 11 kills and five digs, Willingham had four kills and 15 digs, Tate made 16 assists and 10 digs, Scott made 17 digs, and Randi Terry had nine kills and nine digs for the match.


On Thursday, the Lady Bulldogs played a tri-match at Colbert Heights against the hosting Lady Wildcats and Waterloo. Belgreen beat Colbert Heights 2-1 (23-25, 27-25, 18-16) and downed Waterloo 2-0 (25-6, 25-23) to improve its record to 12-10 overall this campaign. In the final two matches of the week, Hovater had 19 kills, Tate recorded 35 assists, and Scott had 29 digs.

Belgreen's varsity volleyball team will play its next match against Colbert Heights on Monday, September 22.



Left to right: Red Bay seniors Anna Kate Burks, Haidyn Emerson, and Kyla Blackburn (COURTESY PHOTO)

See 'VOLLEYBALL,' Page 15



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'VOLLEYBALL,' from Page 14

Phil Campbell began the week with home matches against Colbert County and Hackleburg on Tuesday, September 16. The Lady Bobcats improved to 2-2 in their area with a 3-1 (25-8, 24-26, 25-14, 25-16) victory over the Indians. PCHS fell to Hackleburg 2-0 (11-25, 24-26).

Thursday night, the Lady Bobcats traveled to Hamilton to face the Lady Aggies and Cordova. Phil Campbell lost both matches 2-0; against Hamilton 15-25, 20-25 and versus Cordova 14-25, 15-25.

Phil Campbell's next matches will be played on Tuesday, September 23, at East Lawrence. PCHS will play a tri-match against ELHS and Covenant Christian.

Red Bay started its week on Tuesday with a tri-match against Russellville and Haleyville. The Lady Tigers lost both, falling to Haleyville 2-0 and to Russellville 2-0 (17-25, 17-25).

On Thursday, Red Bay hosted Class 1A Hackleburg for Senior Night where it honored its three seniors Anna Kate Burks, Kyla Blackburn, and Haidyn Emerson. RBHS fell in that contest 3-1.

Up next for Red Bay is an area contest at home against Lamar County on Tuesday.

Russellville started its week on Monday, September 15, with a match against Covenant Christian. The Lady Golden Tigers dispatched their opponent in four sets, 3-1 (17-25, 25-8, 25-20, 25-21) to improve to 20-6 overall this campaign. Laila Hill and Blevyn Sappington led the RHS attack with 12 and 11 kills, respectively, in the contest while libero Bri McCulloch led the team in digs with 25 and senior setter Fatima Ramirez ended the night with a team-high 16 assists.

The Lady Golden Tigers continued play on Tuesday night with matches against Haleyville and Red Bay. RHS fell to Haleyville 2-0 (25-27, 25-27) before defeating the Lady Tigers of Red Bay 2-0 (25-17, 25-17). In the loss to HHS, Sappington led the RHS attack with a team-best nine kills while McCulloch recorded 16 digs and Ramirez had 13 assists. In the victory over RBHS, Hill had a team-high eight kills, McCulloch had seven digs, and Ramirez finished with 11 assists.

RHS ended its week on Saturday at a tournament hosted by Brooks High School where the Lady Golden Tigers finished runner-up to tourney champ Lauderdale County. Russellville went 6-1 on the day sweeping Clements (25-18, 25-14), Colbert County (25-11, 25-6), Brooks (25-21, 25-21), Florence (25-14, 25-17), Mars Hill (30-28, 25-20), and Lawrence County, Tenn. (25-23, 25-12) before falling to Lauderdale County in the final 2-0 (16-25, 25-27).

The Lady Golden Tigers had an excellent day on the court that also translated over to the record books. Individually, libero Bri McCulloch recorded the 1,000th dig of her career, and the program set a new record for wins in a season. The old record, 21 wins, was met after Tuesday's matches, but this team blew the record out of the water by improving to 27-8.

RHS continues its campaign at home on Tuesday; the Lady Golden Tigers will face Lawrence County in an area matchup before playing Lexington.

Tharptown came up short in all three of its varsity contests during the week. In road matches against Rogers and Florence on September 16, the Lady Wildcats fell 2-0 in both; 23-25, 21-25 were the set scores against Rogers and Florence won 25-16, 25-5.

Thursday Tharptown faced area foe Mars Hill and lost 3-1 (14-25, 25-23, 16-25, 19-25).

The Lady Wildcats are scheduled to play their next varsity match at home against rival Belgreen on Thursday, September 25.



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