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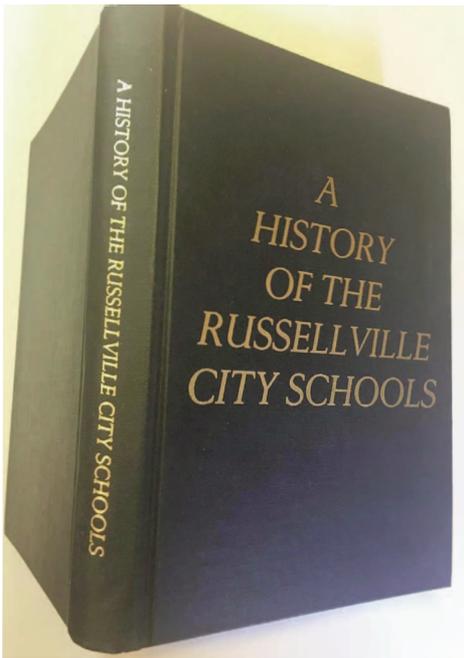
## Morrow donates book chronicling history of Russellville City Schools to RHS Library

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

Through his 28 years representing Alabama House District 18 in Montgomery, Johnny Mack Morrow met many people dedicated as much as he was to improving the quality of life for everyone in Northwest Alabama.

And former Russellville City Schools Superintendent of Education Dr. Rube Courington was among those at the top of the list.

Morrow shared his memories of Courington at the February 17th meeting of the Russellville City Schools Board of Education when he presented a signed copy of Courington's book, "A History of Russellville City Schools," to Russellville High School Principal



See 'HISTORY,' Page 4

## Condition of playground equipment at City Lake Park 'unacceptable'

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

With three different parks equipped with playground equipment in Russellville, there's no shortage of places for parents to take their kids for some outdoor play.

But one of those places, City Lake Park, adjacent to Russellville High School, is in dire need of repairs and replacement of equipment according to several parents who contacted the *Franklin Free Press* with concerns.

Tyler Harper, one of those parents, describes the condition of playground equipment at City Lake Park as 'disgusting,' as well as unsafe.

When Harper and his family visited City Lake Park on March 1st, Harper saw playground equipment that was broken, some with sharp, jagged edges, missing pieces, dilapidated floors and an elevated tunnel with cracks and splits. He's also concerned about rusted metal platforms on some equipment, as well as broken panels that could compromise the structural integrity of these elevated pieces of equipment.

"It was pretty disheartening knowing what could happen especially with the tunnel being in the condition it is," Harper said. "As a parent, you think of all the possible outcomes. If that tunnel was to give out while a child

See 'PLAYGROUND,' Page 5

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Dalton Arthur Thrasher, 84, of Bear Creek, passed away February 27, 2026. Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the family with arrangements.

Janice Sue Jackson Daniels, 76, of Russellville, passed away February 27, 2026, at Helen Keller Hospital. Arrangements are pending and will be announced when finalized. Spry Memorial Chapel of Russellville is assisting the family with arrangements.

Patricia Louise Saint, 84, passed away February 26, 2026, at Helen Keller Hospital. A celebration of life will be held Friday, March 6, from 4-7pm, at Akins Funeral Home in Russellville, with a short service to be held at 5pm.

Janice Lee Winchester Higginbottom, 73, passed away February 26, 2026, peacefully at her home. Deaton Funeral Home of Red Bay assisted the family with arrangements.

William Earlice Chandler, 71, passed away February 26, 2026, at his residence. Deaton Funeral Home assisted the family with arrangements.

Olene May Seal, 97, of Russellville, passed away February 26, 2026. Spry Memorial Chapel of Russellville assisted the family with arrangements.

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## *Back to the Bible by Larsen Plyler:*

**Matthew 12:22-37**

The people were so shocked by Jesus' power that they began to wonder out loud if He really was the fulfillment of the Son of David promise. But, the Pharisees tried to squelch that sentiment. The religious leader's accusation that Jesus worked by the power of Satan was serious. Here is Jesus, doing nothing but good, teaching the truth, and holding to the highest ethical standard. On the other hand, you have the scribes, who are bitter and perverse, saying, "He does it by the power of Satan!"

Jesus broke down their accusation by showing how foolish it would be for Satan to be at war with Himself. That kind of kingdom wasn't going to stand. Some of the religious leaders' own disciples were able to do this. Wouldn't their accusation condemn them too? In reality, this was evidence of the kingdom of God. Jesus explained that His miracles were part of a process in which He would gain victory over Satan.

They blasphemed the Holy Spirit by denying the source of power by which He did His work. Jesus warns them that their statement revealed their real character. They were hard, insensitive, unreachable, and unrepentant. When they saw Jesus' miracles, they were not struck by His power, but immediately began to think, "How can we explain this away?" They were so crazed with jealousy and hatred that they would not even listen. That attitude was reflected in their accusation. Thus, they were in danger of never being forgiven because their words revealed the attitude of their hearts (cf. Mk. 3:5; 4:11, 12; Mt. 12:18, 22-32). Their words reflected who they really were.

Jesus says that the way you can know whether or not someone is good on the inside is by hearing their words on the outside. Jesus points to a day of judgment where we will be called to account for even the careless words. They will justify or condemn us because they reveal us.

### **Lessons to Learn:**

Have you committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? My understanding is that it's not a phrase you say, but a disposition of heart that our words reflect. There is no sin that God will not forgive... except the one that you will not repent of. If there comes a point where you're rejecting God's will and you're so hard-hearted that you will not take His evidence and will not be moved by His will, then you'll remain in your condemned position forever.

Our words reflect who we are. In this case, they reflected a person's attitude toward Jesus and toward the Holy Spirit. Do our words reveal hearts of anger or immorality? Do they indicate that we think badly about others? James says that if we claim to be religious, but don't get a hold of our tongue, we have deceived ourselves (Js. 1:26).

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# 'HISTORY,' from Page 1

Norman Lier, to be donated to the Russellville High School library.

The book was given to Morrow by Courington and signed by the author and his wife.

Always a special possession for Morrow, he recently decided to donate it to the school to help Russellville students learn about the fascinating history of their school system.

When Morrow and former Sen. Roger Bedford took office in the early 1990s, they faced many challenges, none more important than improving the quality of public education.

At the time, public education lacked the financial commitment and support needed in Montgomery and Morrow and Bedford set out to change that. When Morrow tackled how to improve public education in Franklin County, it was his first opportunity to work one on one with Courington.

Morrow's mother Hazel knew Courington from the days they were children in Winston County, and his father Grover knew Courington from Morrow's days as Franklin County Schools Superintendent of Education in the 1950s. So it was no surprise when Morrow reached out to Courington for his ideas about what was lacking in public education.

"Both of my parents had always talked about their friends Rube and Eloise Courington. Now I found myself working with the Courington as a member of the Alabama legislature to improve the quality of life for Franklin County," Morrow said.

Among the laundry list of challenges facing the young legislative team of Morrow/Bedford in the early 90s were a lack of a four-lane highway connecting Franklin County to the Interstate Highway System, getting clean water for Franklin County rural residents, developing Internet infrastructure in Franklin County after the introduction of the World Wide Web in 1993, and strengthening public education in Franklin County.

"Roger and I accomplished all of these things and met all of of the challenges that we faced only because we had a lot of help from a lot of people like Rube and Eloise Courington," Morrow said.

Courington, who served as RCS Superintendent of Education from 1961 until his retirement in 1988, wrote the book that chronicled the growth, challenges and milestones of Russellville City Schools in 1977.

Although authored by Courington, "A History of Russellville City Schools" was truly a team effort Courington said in the book's acknowledgements, as he listed the many people who helped the massive project come together.

Courington's experience and insight helped give Morrow and Bedford the information necessary to address the shortfalls of public education first-hand from someone who helped shape the history of the school system that employed him. Yet Courington always realized that Russellville City Schools' history was being reshaped every day.

"All of us recognize the fact that this history is not complete. It is agreed by all who worked on it that it will need to be revised from time to time, as other bits of information about the past become available," Courington said in his book's acknowledgement.

When current RCS Superintendent of Education Tim Guinn spoke at the February 17th meeting, he shared his thoughts on Courington's impact on the school system.

"As we dedicate this signed copy we do more than just honor an outstanding leader," Guinn said. "The legacy of leadership in Russellville City Schools began in 1929. Their vision and courage shaped a school system that became a beacon in its community and across Alabama.

"And Dr. Courington's steady leadership and dedication to public service left a lasting impact on our state," Guinn added.

When Courington retired in 1988, he and Eloise presented Morrow with a copy of his book, signed with a special dedication 'to our very good friend Johnny Mack Morrow.'

"By having this book in a prominent place it will help let today's students know how important the history of their school system is," Morrow said. "And the story continues to be written every day."

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## 'PLAYGROUND,' from Page 1

was in it, they'd drop about eight feet to the ground.

"If small children are running up to this equipment that has sharp, jagged edges, they could get cut pretty badly. It's just a lawsuit waiting to happen. How is there always funding for everything else, but when it comes to the safety of our children, suddenly it's not urgent?," he added.

Harper made a social media post later that day that included photos of the City Lake Park playground equipment. The post caught the attention of Russellville Parks and Recreation Department Director Donnie Flanagan, who, along with Park and Rec maintenance employees, spent most of Monday at City Lake Park to see first-hand the equipment's condition.

Flanagan said the playground equipment at City Lake Park, Eastside Park and Chucky Mullens Park is inspected, but he was personally unaware of how serious the problem was with some of it. "We've had playground equipment and some parts ordered for a while but it takes a while to get it. We do inspect our playgrounds. That's the reason we knew about the problems at City Lake. But it's gotten worse since we last inspected it," Flanagan said.

On Monday, Park and Rec employees made a few minor repairs and closed off some equipment until it can be replaced or repaired.

Flanagan contacted a representative of the playground equipment's manufacturer and said she's going to come to Russellville and look at the equipment at all three parks.

"We are aware of the situation and spent all day Monday making it safe where hopefully no child could get hurt. We closed off some equipment and removed some as well," Flanagan said.

Although owned by the City of Russellville, the parks, playground and equipment are managed through Russellville City Schools, which took over operations of the city's Park and Recreation Department in 2019.

The mutual agreement provided that the city will fund \$750,000 annually for Park and Recreation Department operations, but that money goes to Russellville City Schools, who is responsible after that point for all operations, including maintenance of equipment, at city parks.

Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff, whose District Two includes City Lake Park, said he's received complaints and concerns from citizens about the disrepair of the City Lake Park playground.

Woodruff said he contacted Flanagan after hearing about the situation.

"I did reach out to Donnie to make sure he was aware of the issue," Woodruff said. "We want all city facilities safe for kids and their families, so I'm glad to hear new equipment was ordered, both prior to Monday's inspection and after."

With Flanagan's response coming one day after his social media post, complete with photos of various states of disrepair to equipment, Harper's message got through to the right people.

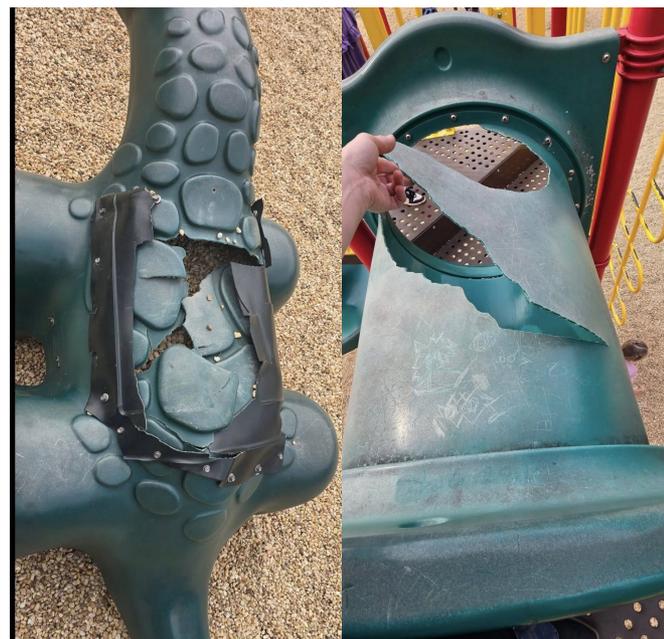
"It should not take a child getting seriously injured for the city to take action... This is unacceptable. Russellville needs to fix this immediately. Our children deserve safe places to play, not hazards waiting to happen," Harper said.

Flanagan said he welcomes input and concerns from the public about the Park and Recreation Department. And if someone had raised these concerns previously, action would have already been taken.

To report an issue with any Russellville Park and Recreation Department property, call 256-332-8770.

"We always appreciate hearing from the public regarding any concerns they have. I'd love for them to first reach out to us one-on-one, but if they go the Facebook way, that's fine too. I'll never take that personally."

"But if you reach out directly to us, your concern will likely get handled quicker," Flanagan said.



**Damaged playground equipment at City Lake Park. (Courtesy photo)**



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# Local pastor questions Russellville Electric Board's billing procedure

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When Cedars Church pastor Tanner Hall opened the church's December utility bill, he did a double take.

The \$1,162 bill, with \$1,064 for December electricity kilowatt hours, had to be a mistake, Hall thought, so he immediately contacted Russellville Utilities to request a check on the church's meter.

"Our power bill for December-January was right at \$1,200. It's never been that high," Hall said. "I went down and asked for someone to come check the meter and see if something was not right.

"I also asked why we were being assessed a multiplier of 20 times what our kilowatt hour usage was. Our read was 386KW hours. Then they multiplied it by 20, and charged us for 7,720KW hours of power," Hall added.

Compounding Hall's frustration was the fact that Cedars Church was closed from December 21, 2025 through January 5, 2026, for a Sabbath break, two weeks inside the billing window of the \$1,162 invoice.

"Other than our New Year's Eve service everything was off in the building but we were still charged for hours we weren't even here to use," Hall said.

In Alabama, businesses often are charged a multiplier, or higher rate structure, on the electricity they use because businesses generally use significantly more power, so the 'multiplier' is a way to offset the additional maintenance and infrastructure demands required to serve these accounts.

When Hall reviewed the church's past utility bills, he realized the 20X multiplier of the church's monthly meter readings was nothing new. It never came to his attention because Cedars Church had never incurred an electric bill as high as its December 2025 bill.

In the following days, Hall spoke with three different Russellville Electric Board employees and an employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority who came to check the meter at REB's request on January 30th.

Rather than receiving the answers he sought, Hall said he was left more confused by 'inconsistent information' from those he spoke with. Included among the REB employees Hall spoke with was REB General Manager Derrick Moore.

Moore said he explained to Hall that 20X 'multiplier' was not a surcharge like ones assessed by some utilities on large industrial or business accounts.

Instead, it was based on the limitations of the meter used to determine kilowatt hours used.

Moore told the FFP that the registering capacity of some meters only represents a fraction of the actual load used by the customer, unlike single-phase meters commonly used for residential accounts.

On instrument-rated meters like the one at Cedars Church, the registered usage must be multiplied by the multiplier for that particular meter, 20/1 on the church meter, he explained.

With this particular meter, it only records a fraction of the actual electricity passing through the service, specifically 1/20th of total usage, according to information provided by REB.

So the difference between the current reading and the previous reading is multiplied by 20 to determine actual usage.

Hall said he was given the option of having a single-phase meter installed, but at the church's expense. Hall said another REB employee said the meter on the Lawrence Street building is already a single-phase meter, so some confusion joined his frustration.

Converting to a household-type meter would require the church to incur the cost of installing a single-phase meter, Hall said he was told.

The pastor's next question was whether all churches served by the Russellville Electric Board are also paying the 20X multiplier.

"I spoke with representatives of two different churches who said they are just paying for actual hours of usage, so why would it be different for some churches?," Hall said. "Cedars Church just wants to be charged like other local churches that don't have a multiplier."

"I'm not trying to get out of paying our power bill. I just want to pay for what we use and not what a multiplier shows. Derrick said he couldn't do that because if he did it for one he'd have to do it for everyone," Hall added.

Cedars Church had a \$1,431 utility bill for February, so it's a concern that's not going away any time soon.

TVA gives Local Power Companies who purchase its electricity broad discretion to set their own policies and procedures, with the primary rule that policies, regardless of what they are, must be applied consistently to all similarly-based customers.

Russellville Electric Board has four categories, or classes, of commercial accounts, based on the account's electricity usage. Those accounts are categorized as Small Commercial (GSA-1), Large Commercial (GSA-2), Large Commercial (GSA-3) and Large Manufacturing (TDMSA).

The criteria for each account is available on the website [www.russellvilleutilities.com](http://www.russellvilleutilities.com), by clicking the 'Electric Board' option.

Almost two months after receiving the eye-popping December invoice, Hall still has more questions than answers about how Cedars Church is being billed, whether it's consistent with billing policies for other churches, what can be done with the church meter to eliminate the multiplier and, finally, whether that has to be done at the church's own expense.

Cedars Church received a \$1,431 utility bill for February 2026, though, so these issues are not going away any time soon, nor is the financial strain the church faces in order to pay these significantly higher bills.

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# Russellville's Goggans named Miss Northwest Shoals

Submitted

Northwest Shoals Community College (NWSCC) Freshman student, Ella Goggans, of Russellville, Ala., was crowned 2026 Miss Northwest Shoals on Saturday evening (2/21) in the Lou B. Bevill Center on the NWSCC Phil Campbell campus.

"Becoming Miss Northwest Shoals is a dream come true," said Goggans. "I'm so grateful to have the opportunity to represent my school and community."

Goggans has a passion for advocating for Athlete's Mental Health. Last fall, she started her community service initiative, Beyond the Uniform. Beyond the Uniform is designed to help create a world where athletes feel valued for who they are and not by their performance.

"I have seen firsthand the effect one bad performance can have on someone's emotional health and personal outlook on their self-worth," said Goggans. "As Miss Northwest Shoals, I plan to raise awareness of the importance of athlete mental health. I hope to host workshops to help educate athletes and coaches on the importance of words and empathy."

By winning the title of Miss Northwest Shoals, Goggans is poised to represent her college and community at the upcoming Miss Alabama 2026 competition on June 1-6, 2026, at the Wright Center at Samford University. She plans to get her associate in science degree at NWSCC, then obtain her physical therapy assistant certification, as she trains and mentors young dancers.

Reflecting on Goggans' notable achievement, Miss Northwest Shoals Program Director Savannah Liles expressed, "This moment represents so much more than a title — it reflects the passion, purpose, and positive influence that will reach countless lives in the year ahead." said Liles. "We are incredibly proud of every woman who stepped onto that stage with courage, grace, and determination. Each of them embodies excellence, and we are honored to have them as part of our Patriot family."

Seven women competed for the title of Miss Northwest Shoals, showcasing their talents through five stages of competition, including private interview, on-stage conversation, health and fitness, talent, and evening gown. Alongside Goggans, other winners were recognized:

- Caroline Blackmon, of Muscle Shoals, second alternate
- Aidyn Kate Marshall, of Russellville, first alternate
- Ella Goggans, of Russellville, talent competition award
- Alexis Stewart, of Phil Campbell, most inspirational award
- Hannah Corum, of Florence, outstanding community service award
- Olivia Schurfeld, of Florence, leadership award
- Sara Beth Davis, of Muscle Shoals, bookstore scholarship for exceptional courage in competition

In addition to the prestige of the title, Goggans receives a bundle of prizes, including a One-Year Tuition Scholarship, Official Custom Jewelry by Creative Jewelers, a year of facial spa treatments from NWSCC Salon & Spa, wardrobe discounts from Cherry Tree Lane, a Bookstore Scholarship, an Official Portrait by Butler Studio Photography, and alterations for the Miss Alabama competition by Savannah Liles. She also receives the Miss America Local Crown, Miss America Crown Pin, Tickets to Miss Alabama Teen Finals Competition in Birmingham on March 8, 2026, and other gifts from partners including Hangout Nutrition, Maggie J's Boutique, and Gigi's Boutique, and the Board of Directors.



Goggans crowned as the 2026 Miss Northwest Shoals by 2025 Miss Northwest Shoals Lara Gunderman (NWSCC photo)

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# Community Spirit Bank makes \$120,000 contribution to Red Bay Hospital through Alabama Rural Hospital Tax Credit Program

Submitted

Community Spirit Bank and its holding company, Independent Bancshares, have committed a \$120,000 investment to Red Bay Hospital through Alabama's Rural Hospital Tax Credit Program, reinforcing the bank's longstanding commitment to strengthening healthcare access in the communities it serves.

"Our local hospital has always been deeply connected to the history and leadership of Community Spirit Bank," said Billy M. Bolton, Chairman of the Board. "Dr. Z.L. Weatherford and Dr. Walker Dempsey, both of whom served as leaders of our bank, played instrumental roles in the construction of the hospital more than 60 years ago. We are proud to continue that legacy of service by supporting an institution that remains essential to the health and vitality of Red Bay."

Brad M. Bolton, President and CEO of Community Spirit Bank, emphasized the broader impact of the investment.

"Red Bay Hospital is more than a healthcare facility — it is a cornerstone of our local economy and a lifeline for the families and businesses in our area. Through the Rural Hospital Tax Credit, we are able to redirect a portion of our state tax liability into a direct investment of \$120,000 that helps sustain local healthcare services. We appreciate the leadership of Sherry Jolley and Huntsville Hospital for their continued commitment to providing quality care close to home," Bolton said.

The Rural Hospital Tax Credit Program, established by the Alabama Legislature, allows taxpayers to receive a state income tax credit for qualified contributions made to eligible rural hospitals. The program was designed to help stabilize and strengthen rural healthcare systems across the state.

Red Bay Hospital serves as a critical healthcare provider for residents of Red Bay and surrounding communities, supporting not only the health of local citizens but also the economic infrastructure and employment base of the region.

Community Spirit Bank remains committed to investing in initiatives that enhance the quality of life and long-term prosperity of the communities it proudly serves.



Courtesy photo

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## Russellville girls, boys sweep Tharptown in varsity soccer action

*Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press*

In the Russellville derby between Russellville High School and Tharptown High School, played at Golden Tiger Stadium on Tuesday night, the hosts came away with shutout victories in both girls' and boys' varsity play.

In the girls' match to start the evening, the Lady Golden Tigers played to a 2-nil win over their counterparts from down County Road 48.

The 13th minute brought the first break through for Russellville when a headed clearance by Tharptown landed in the path of senior Keyla Martinez, who smashed in a right-footed volley from 20 yards out. The Lady Golden Tigers would take the 1-0 lead into the halftime break.

Russellville closed out the scoring, making it 2-0 in the 48th minute, on another shot from outside the box. This time it was junior Maricela Andres, who latched on to a through ball, outpaced two defenders, and finished with a shot over the Tharptown keeper into the far corner.

For the next 22 minutes and change, Russellville's defense kept Tharptown out to record the clean sheet.

The Lady Golden Tigers improved to 3-2 with the win. THS fell to 1-5.

The proceeding boys' game saw

**See, 'SOCCER,' Page 14**

## Baseball roundup, February 23-28: Belgreen, Phil Campbell off to hot starts

*Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press*

Local baseball teams are getting into the swing of things after a first full week of play. Here's a look at the action from around Franklin County:

### Monday, Feb. 23 Tharptown 7, Vina 5

Led by center fielder Randy Holliman and his two hits and two RBIs, the Tharptown Wildcats snuck by at Vina to earn their first win of the season. The Wildcats led 4-1 after four and a half innings and then added three more runs in the top of the sixth to take a 7-2 lead. Vina surged in the bottom half, picking up three runs itself, but it wasn't quite enough; both teams were scoreless in the seventh inning. Hayden Parker, who pitched three and a third innings for THS, picked up the win, allowing just one hit and striking out six batters. Vina starting pitcher Chris Sparks took the loss after allowing one unearned run on two hits; he struck out four batters in his outing.

### Belgreen 13, Shoals Christian 2

The Belgreen Bulldogs scored in six of their seven innings played against Shoals Christian and finished strong with a five-run seventh inning to win by 11. BHS, led by three hits and two runs scored from leadoff man Colton Ashton, finished with 13 hits collectively. Right

**See, 'BASEBALL,' Page 12**

## Softball roundup, February 23-28: Tharptown's Kennedy throws no-no, RHS starts 4-1

*Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press*

Here's a look at the softball action from around Franklin County last week:

### Monday, Feb. 23 Phil Campbell 12, Covenant Christian 2

The Lady Bobcats eased past Covenant Christian to start their week after putting up crooked numbers in the first three innings of the game and then adding a solo run in the bottom of the fourth to give them the necessary 10-runs to end the game in the fifth. Shiloh Madden, Madison Baker, and Addi James all had two RBIs each and four PCHS players scored multiple runs. In the circle, James overpowered the Lady Eagles, allowing two runs (neither earned) on two hits and striking out five.

### Tuesday, Feb. 24 Haleyville 6, Tharptown 2

### Shoals Christian 16, Vina 6

### Russellville 10, Florence 4

Down 4-2 going into the sixth inning, the Russellville Lady Golden Tigers used a huge eight-run sixth inning to sink Class 7A Florence to start their week. There were more errors (13) than hits (9) in the game and that was the story in this one. Of Russellville's 10 runs only two were earned and of Florence's four runs just one was earned. Taitum Bishop did have a solid

**See, 'SOFTBALL,' Page 13**

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# 'BASEBALL,' from Page 11

fielder Zed Wilson and left fielder Ethan Dawson had team-high two RBIs. On the mound, Ty Hamilton tossed three and a third innings for the Bulldogs and didn't allow a hit; his one run allowed was unearned.

## **Tuesday, Feb. 24**

### **Tharptown 6, Colbert County 4**

Behind 4-2 going into the final two innings at Colbert County, the Wildcats scored four unanswered runs in the sixth and seventh innings to come from behind and grab a second straight win. In the sixth, Tharptown's Jackson Knighten scored on a bases-loaded walk by Jacob Fretwell, and then in the seventh the Wildcats plated three thanks to a passed ball, a balk, and an RBI single by Fretwell. Christopher Fretwell earned the win for the Wildcats after a five-inning outing that saw him strike out eight batters.

### **Belgreen 9, East Lawrence 7**

Belgreen put up crooked numbers in the fourth, fifth, and sixth innings to propel itself past East Lawrence. The biggest inning was the sixth when the Bulldogs put four runs past ELHS thanks to an RBI walk and two RBI singles by Easton Mitchell and Zed Wilson. Wilson finished with a team-high four hits and five RBIs on the day. Braden Hamilton earned the win for BHS tossing five innings while allowing just one earned run on four hits and striking out five.

### **Red Bay 10, Covenant Christian 0**

Red Bay made quick work of Covenant Christian, run-ruling the Eagles in the fifth inning. The Tigers did most of their scoring in the front half with three runs plated in the first inning and six in the second. Jeremiah Thorne, who finished with a team-high two RBIs, earned the W on the mound after pitching three scoreless and striking out seven Eagles. Carson McGee threw two innings in relief to complete the combined shutout.

### **Phil Campbell 12, Winston County 2**

Chandler Benford had a day at the plate for the Bobcats on Tuesday, accounting for five of his team's 12 runs, including a game-high four RBIs. Phil Campbell, which outhit Winston County 13-4, put up crooked numbers in all but the first inning to eventually run-rule WCHS in six innings. Three straight RBI singles in the top of the sixth proved to be decisive in the shortening of the game. Isaac Duboise received the win after pitching three scoreless innings and striking out four batters.

### **Russellville 12, Hatton 2**

The Golden Tigers run-ruled the Hornets in five innings thanks in large part to an explosive seven-run second inning that put RHS well ahead going into the last few innings. A few RBI singles by Brayden Hatton, Brayden Entrekin, and Ty Engelthaler, as well as an error and RBI hit-by-pitch were key to scoring those seven runs in the second. Catcher Tristan Ray also did his fair share with two hits, a team-high two RBIs, and a walk. Four different Golden Tigers made appearances on the mound, but it was Sam Hamilton who got the most work; he pitched two innings, allowing two hits while striking out four.

## **Thursday, Feb. 26**

### **Mobile Christian 10, Russellville 7**

After leading 4-2 after two innings, the Golden Tigers surrendered four runs in the fourth and three runs in the sixth.

## **Friday, Feb. 27**

### **Phil Campbell 7, Haleyville 6**

The Bobcats survived a back-and-forth game on the road at Haleyville after coming from 4-0 down. The hosts led 4-0 after three innings, but Phil Campbell's bats came alive in the fifth and were able to plate five runs to take a 5-4 lead. PCHS was able to add to it by two runs in the top of the seventh and then hold onto the lead thanks to a combined pitching effort from Isaac Duboise and Chandler Benford. Miles Duboise was credited with the win. Benford, with three RBIs on two hits and a run scored, was Phil Campbell's best bat in the contest.

### **Colbert Heights 25, Tharptown 0**

### **Tuscaloosa County 12, Russellville 3**

## **Saturday, Feb. 28**

### **Belgreen 4, Smithville 2**

Belgreen scored two in the first inning and then added solo runs in the third and fifth innings to brush past Smithville. Leadoff man Colton Ashton led BHS with three hits and a run scored while Ty Hamilton, Easton Mitchell, and Noah Scott all had an RBI each. Hamilton secured the W on the bump after tossing six innings and allowing just one earned run off five hits. Braden Hamilton collected the save after striking out three batters in the top of the seventh.

### **St. Paul's 10, Russellville 8**

### **Phil Campbell 13, Sulligent 1**

### **Orange Beach 6, Russellville 3**

### **Red Bay 10, Belmont 3**

### **Hackleburg 9, Red Bay 8**

### **Belgreen 12, Meek 2**

### **Phil Campbell 10, Covenant Christian 1**

# 'SOFTBALL,' from Page 11

outing in the circle for RHS, tossing a complete game and striking out 11 Lady Falcons. Bishop also had two RBIs, as did catcher Erin Grimes.

## **Phil Campbell 12, Winston County 2**

Chandler Benford had a day at the plate for the Bobcats on Tuesday, accounting for five of his team's 12 runs, including a game-high four RBIs. Phil Campbell, which outhit Winston County 13-4, put up crooked numbers in all but the first inning to eventually run-rule WCHS in six innings. Three straight RBI singles in the top of the sixth proved to be decisive in the shortening of the game. Isaac Duboise received the win after pitching three scoreless innings and striking out four batters.

## **Wednesday, February 25**

**Russellville 8, Hatton 1**

## **Thursday, Feb. 26**

**Tharptown 10, Cherokee 0**

Cadence Kennedy pitched a nearly perfect game in Tharptown's shutout win over the Cherokee Lady Indians. Allowing just one walk, Kennedy didn't allow a hit and struck out 10 batters over the course of five innings. She also had a solid day at the plate, going 1-for-3 with an RBI. Lexi Little and Gabi Johnson led with two hits each and Allie Gann scored a team-high two runs.

## **Friday, Feb. 27**

**Vina 11, Covenant Christian 7**

After falling behind 6-0 in the bottom of the first inning, the Lady Red Devils responded by scoring 10 unanswered runs in the second through fifth innings. In the circle for Vina was Lana Bell, who, after taking a beating early, finished the rest of the game strong. Bell tossed all seven innings, allowing four earned runs on eight hits while striking out four and walking three. Harleigh Ridge was Vina's top producer at the dish, going 3-for-4 with an RBI and a walk. Three Lady Red Devils scored two runs and Braxtyynn Quinn had two RBIs.

**Red Bay 11, Covenant Christian 4**

**Russellville 12, Mars Hill 0**

Russellville's Taitum Bishop continued her solid week in the circle with a double-digit strikeout performance over four shutout innings against Mars Hill on Friday. Allowing just two hits, Bishop recorded 10 strikeouts in the circle to go along with her one hit and RBI at the plate. Leadoff batter Ticelee Gholston and second baseman Sadie Odom also performed well in the blowout win, both batting a perfect 3-for-3. Odom and Sappington, who went 2-for-3, led the team with three RBIs each.

**Red Bay 8, Tremont 7**

Tied 6-6 after three innings of play, Red Bay plated two runs in the fourth and final inning and then held on to eke out a win over Tremont. The Lady Tigers jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first thanks to RBIs from Kyla Blackburn, Emma Blackburn, and Lexi Medina. However, Tremont was able to cut into the lead and then tie the game up with a four-run bottom of the third. In the top of the fourth, RBHS retook the lead on a go-ahead, two-run double by Mikayela Jackson to make it 8-6. In the bottom half, pitcher Hadley Griffin, who tossed all four innings, allowed one run but staved off a complete Tremont comeback to earn the win. Griffin finished with three strikeouts and allowed four earned runs off five hits.

## **Saturday, Feb. 28**

**Tishimingo County 10, Vina 0**

**Phil Campbell 11, Covenant Christian 10**

Phil Campbell trailed 10-9 after an explosive first two innings by both squads, but it was the Lady Bobcats who ended up with just a little more in the tank. PCHS scored solo runs in the third and fourth innings to tie and then win on a walk-off RBI single by Addi James that scored Mckenzie Kratz. Amyah Hamilton earned the win in the circle after coming in in relief of Shiloh Madden for the final two innings.

**Vina 6, Oakman 1**

A five-run third inning proved more than enough for Vina to claim victory in a five-inning contest against Oakman. After drawing two walks to start the third, Vina scored its first run on a dropped third strike. An RBI double by Kenzie Elrod made it 2-0, Lana Bell stole home to make it 3-0 and then Braxtyynn Quinn's RBI single make it 4-0. Vina rounded out the scoring in the inning thanks to an Oakman error. The Lady Red Devils' sixth and final run came in the next inning on a groundout RBI by Bell. In the circle, Bell received the win; she allowed just two Oakman hits and the one run allowed was unearned.

**Russellville 10, Brooks 7**

**Tharptown 5, Berry 0**

**Belmont 6, Phil Campbell 0**

**Cordova 6, Tharptown 3**

**Corinth 8, Vina 1**

**Tharptown 4, Lynn 3**

**Tishimingo County 8, Phil Campbell 4**

**Tharptown 7, Cordova 6**

# 'SOCCER,' from Page 11

Russellville's boys put four past Tharptown, ranked No. 6 in the Class 1A-3A coaches' poll, to win 4-0.

Russellville's first goal came early, just over a minute into the contest, when a Tharptown headed clearance away from goal landed at the feet of sophomore Jose Tristan who hit a right-footed volley from 20 yards out into the left side of Tharptown's goal.

The Golden Tigers' second goal of the night in the 12th minute of the match. Taking advantage of an ill-advised back heel pass by a Tharptown defender, a Golden Tiger attacking player lined up his shot from 25 yards out and curled into into the top left corner of goal.

The Golden Tigers would take the 2-nil advantage into the second half.

A third Russellville goal came in the 52nd minute. An initial Erik Jacinto shot forced Tharptown goalkeeper into a fantastic save, but the Wildcats couldn't clear it out of the box and RHS was able to pounce on the rebound and sneak the ball into the back of the net.

The last goal of the night came in the 57th minute on a penalty kick. A Tharptown handball foul at the edge of the box sent Tristan to the penalty spot; the sophomore coolly slotted his PK shot past the Wildcat GK, who guessed the wrong way, into the bottom left corner.

The victory improved Russellville to 9-3 on the year. Tharptown dropped to 5-2 with the loss.

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The FFP Athlete of the Week for February 16-21 is Phil Campbell baseball's Jack Owens who, in three games against Lamar County, Hackleburg, and Meek, batted .556 with 3 RBI and 7 runs scored.

The FFP Athlete of the Week for February 23-28 is Russellville softball's Taitum Bishop, who helped the Lady Golden Tigers get off to a 4-1 start last week. In the circle, Bishop went 3-0 and recorded a save while striking out 27 batters over 16.2 innings pitched. At the plate, she batted .538 with 4 doubles, 2 HR, 11 RBIs and 6 runs scored.

RUSSELLVILLE SOFTBALL



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