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NFL star remembers where he came from and helps others too.



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Providing vision care in the community they have cherished for years.



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High School basketball is back, check out the local schedules and support your team.



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[springhilllocal.com](http://springhilllocal.com)

**ON THE COVER:** NFL Superstar Shaq Mason grew up in Maury County, and he has never forgotten his roots. He and his mom, Alicia McGuire, operate a foundation providing support to children in the community and helping them succeed in life. Shaq is pictured with 3 of his 4 children, Isabelle, Kamrie, and Haizel.

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# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS



## COLUMBIA UNVEILS HISTORICAL MARKERS FOR PRESIDENT POLK AND FIRST LADY

The City of Columbia, in collaboration with Maury County Government, recently unveiled two new historical markers at The Polks at Preservation Park, enhancing the site dedicated to the 11th President of the United States, James K. Polk, and First Lady Sarah Childress Polk. These markers not only document the lives and legacies of the Polks but also complement the prominent life-size bronze statues of the President and First Lady, offering visitors a deeper understanding of their remarkable contributions to American history.

“Preserving the legacy of President James K. Polk and First Lady Sarah Childress Polk is essential to honoring our city’s history and its role in shaping our nation,” said Mayor Chaz Molder. “These new markers not only enhance The Polks at Preservation Park but also provide an opportunity for future generations to connect with the stories of two remarkable individuals who had a lasting impact on America’s history.”

The markers are strategically located directly across from the James K. Polk Home & Museum, making The Polks at Preservation Park a focal point for historical education and community gathering.



## NEW EV FAST CHARGING STATIONS

The City of Columbia, in partnership with Columbia Power and Water Systems (CPWS), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and the Tennessee Department of Environmental Conservation (TDEC), recently hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the installation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) Fast Charging Stations.

The newly installed charging stations feature Level 3 DC Fast Chargers, which can provide an 80% charge to a standard EV in just 15-20 minutes. This rapid charging capability allows EV drivers to power up quickly during short stops, making sustainable travel more convenient than ever.

Funded through a \$300,000 grant from TVA and TDEC, these new stations are part of a statewide initiative to expand EV infrastructure along Tennessee’s interstates and major highways. Columbia is proud to be part of this statewide effort, which supports the future of clean transportation and contributes to a greener, more sustainable environment.



## COLUMBIA MAIN STREET FALL FEST A SUCCESS

Thousands of folks attended the Annual Fall Fest in downtown Columbia. There were many things to do, great food, music, antique cars and so much more.

## WHOLE HOG FESTIVAL FEEDS THE COMMUNITY

The 2024 edition of the John Maher Builders Whole Hog Festival was the most successful event ever. Over 6,000 were in attendance and almost \$70,000 was raised to benefit The Well Outreach. The Well feeds 2,200 families each month in Williamson and Maury County. For more info visit [thewelloutreach.org](http://thewelloutreach.org).





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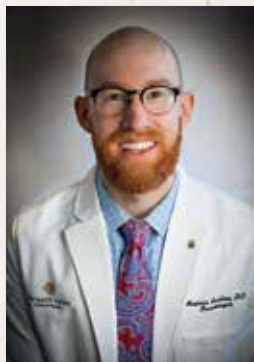
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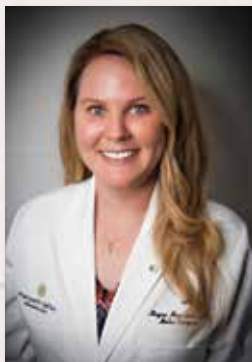
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Shaq Mason with mom Alicia McGuire and grandad Alonzo Pye Jr. Photography provided.

# PROVIDING HOPE FOR COLUMBIA'S YOUTH

## JASON ZASKY

In December 2018, the Shaq Mason Foundation held its first annual 'Shaq Mason Christmas,' delivering a bag full of gifts to each & every student at McDowell Elementary, where the foundation's namesake went to school when he was growing up. Of course, Shaquille Olajuwon Mason is now one of the most successful and well-known athletes to have ever come out of Maury County, a two-time Super Bowl-winning offensive guard who has played for the New England Patriots and Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and currently plays for the Houston Texans.

But the 10-year NFL veteran has always remembered his roots. This Christmas, the Shaq Mason Foundation will once again be partnering with a local school, having previously supported the likes of Joseph Brown Elementary, J.R. Baker Elementary, High-

land Park Elementary, Riverside Elementary, and Randolph Howell Elementary STEM School.

"This Christmas, every child at the school in question will get a tablet, a blanket, an age-appropriate toy, and some goodies inside a bag," says Mason's mom, Alicia McGuire, who helps her son run the foundation, especially during the fall and winter months, when Shaq is going through the grind of the NFL season.

"A tablet and a blanket has always been his 'signature thing,' because he always wants to give something that contributes to education, and because blankets make kids feel secure," continues McGuire. "Blankets are something I started my boys with when they were young, and even today, Shaq loves a good blanket," she says with a laugh.

Not surprisingly, the Shaq Mason Foundation—which has

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# COLUMBIA



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Photography provided.

## < FROM PAGE 10

a stated goal of ensuring that “all youth have the opportunity to realize that the gifts placed in them are limitless”—doesn’t restrict its efforts to a Christmas project.

“This year, we are doing a food drive, as well as a coat giveaway. And we are also doing a lot with the South Central Human Resource Agency and its Head Start program,” offers McGuire, the latter of which helps address the needs of children who are three to five years old. She says that the foundation also supports Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball teams—a boys team and a girls team—in part because of her son’s fondness for the sport.

“Growing up, Shaq played basketball, football, and baseball, and he’ll tell you he’s a basketball player who happens to play football,” says McGuire.

It’s clear that she couldn’t be more proud of Shaq, who attended Columbia Central High School before he moved on to Georgia Tech, where he was named a first-team All-American by USA Today in his senior year. In turn, he was selected by the Patriots in the fourth round of the 2015 NFL Draft—and he has started almost all of the 140-plus games he has played during his professional career.

“When Shaq was in kindergarten, he said, ‘When I grow up,

I’m going to play pro football and buy my momma a house.’ And he did exactly that! He spoke that into existence,” relates McGuire, who says she still gets chills every time he runs out of the tunnel for a game, even after ten years in the league. “I’m still elated to sit back and say I watched my child’s dreams come true,” she adds.

Looking back, McGuire says her favorite memory of her son’s time in the NFL was his very first NFL game, which happened to be against her favorite team—the Pittsburgh Steelers. “I was a diehard Steelers fan all my life, but I had to turn (my allegiance) over to the Patriots,” she says, laughing at the memory.

These days, McGuire says her son, 31, rarely gets back to his hometown during the football season, and so for Thanksgiving, he flies the entire family down to celebrate the holiday at his house in Houston.

“Our family is very family-oriented. It’s a big thing for me,” continues McGuire, and one of the main reasons why she enjoys living in Columbia.

“I like the small-town feel of things because I’m a small-town girl,” she concludes. “I like being in a place where people know who I am and where I’m close to family. Nobody is too far away, everything is easy to get to, and we always get to do things together.”

For more info follow “Shaq Mason Foundation” on Facebook.



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Columbia Eye Physicians Jacob W. Fleenor, M.D. and Timothy E. Gordon M.D. Photography by Robbie Mathis.

# MULETOWN'S 'LOCAL' OPHTHALMOLOGY PRACTICE

## JASON ZASKY

If you're in Columbia, you need not look far to find someone who has had cataract surgery performed by Dr. Timothy Gordon, who has been providing eye care to patients in Maury County since the late 1980s. These days, the longtime Columbia resident is working alongside fellow ophthalmologist Dr. Jacob Fleenor, a Rogersville, Tennessee native who relocated to Columbia with his wife and three children to fill the shoes of the recently retired Dr. Ralph Hamilton, a founding member of Columbia Eye Physicians.

"Dr. Hamilton finished up about a year and a half ago, and that's when Dr. Fleenor and I talked, and he moved to Middle Tennessee. He felt like Columbia was where he wanted to live," offers Gordon.

"I was in training in Temple, Texas, learning to do cataract surgery, and I was sporting my favorite University of Tennessee polo at work when a patient asked me about my connection to Tennessee. I told her I had graduated from college in Knoxville, and as it turns out, she had formerly gone to church with Dr. Gordon," relates Dr. Fleenor, explaining how the pair initially got connected.

Fast forward to today, and Dr. Fleenor has already performed over 800 cataract surgeries in Columbia while offering advanced glaucoma treatment at the time of surgery.

"We've got a surgery center here—we're in the TOA Building on James Campbell Boulevard—and we do almost all our cataract (procedures) here," notes Dr. Gordon.

Of course, the pair—with the help of their 14-person staff—

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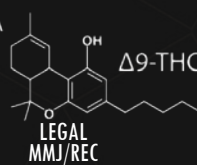
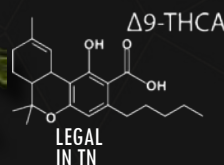


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Photography by Robbie Mathis.

## < FROM PAGE 16

also provide general eye exams and address all manner of eye problems, including macular degeneration and dry eye.

“We want to be known as a place where people get good quality eye care and eye exams—all the way up to cataract surgery,” says Dr. Gordon, who believes “everyone needs to have at least one good baseline eye exam after age 45 and then every year or two after age 60, even if you’re not having any trouble. In most people, cataracts start occurring between the ages of 65 and 70.”

Meanwhile, Columbia Eye Physicians patients who need glasses find it convenient to have a Christopher Optical location in the same building.

In addition, doctors from Nashville-based Tennessee Retina see patients at the offices of Columbia Eye Physicians for a half-day each week.

“It’s an added benefit that Tennessee Retina comes down and sees patients on Thursday mornings, as opposed to patients having to travel all the way to Nashville to seek help,” notes Dr. Gordon, who says he derives a lot of satisfaction from being able to help people and improve the quality of their lives.

“I recall one lady who had cataract surgery, and (during a follow-up appointment) she was tearing up and crying. I said, ‘What’s wrong? everything has gone well.’ She said, ‘This is the first time I’ve seen that my grandchild had freckles.’ She could see

well enough to see her grandchild had freckles. That gives you a warm feeling, knowing you are helping people do things that most people take for granted,” he says.

“With cataract surgery we can do a lot to help people stay independent—whether that is recognizing people, reading, driving, generally staying active, or simply keeping people from falling. Many times, people fall because they don’t see well,” notes Dr. Gordon, before steering the conversation toward his love of Columbia, where he and his wife Maribeth raised their children and where he has served on the local school board and has volunteered at his church.

“The good thing about Columbia is that it’s a great place to raise a family. My son is a neurosurgeon, and my daughter is a dental hygienist—they are both married and live in Nashville—but I still love the quaintness of the small city of Columbia.... If you can still say it’s small,” he says with a laugh, before emphasizing the practice’s strong local roots.

“We’re the only ophthalmology practice where (the doctors) live here and are here full-time,” concludes Dr. Gordon. “We live here locally and are here every day.”

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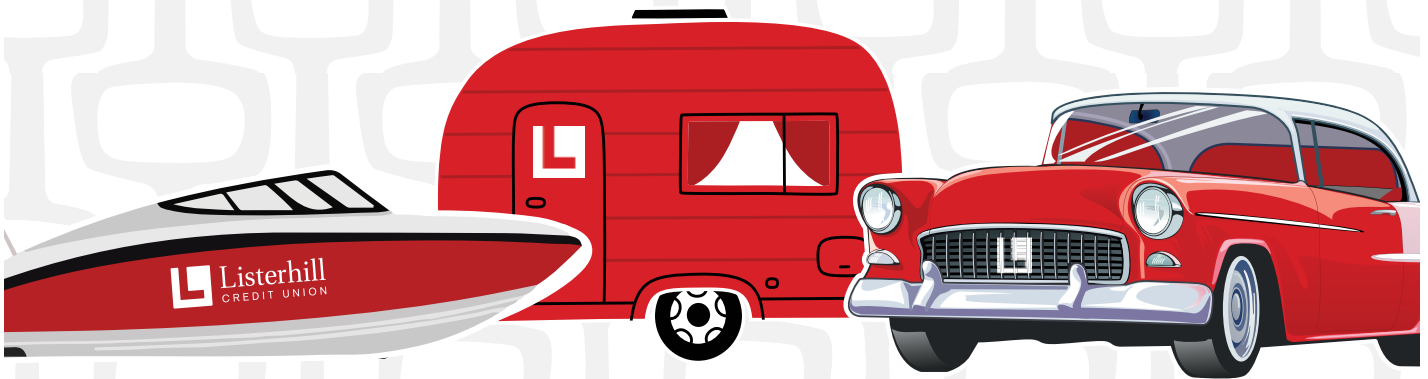
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# EXCITING NOVEMBER EVENTS

## **BRIGHT APPLE FUND RAISER**

**NOVEMBER 2, NOON TO 3 PM**

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**INFO: BRIGHTAPPLE.ORG**

Bright Apple is set to host the first-ever Apple Fest on Saturday, November 2, 2024, from noon to 3:00 pm, at Iglesia Una Esperanza Viva Church, 2628 Pulaski Highway in Columbia. The event is being held to raise funds to support Bright Apple's mission of providing healthy snacks for students in Maury County. Since 2019, Bright Apple has provided over 850,000 healthy snacks to students in Maury County. For more information about Apple Fest and to purchase tickets, visit BrightApple.org or email to: info@BrightApple.org.

## **MAURY COUNTY MASTER GARDNERS MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 5, 6 PM**

**MAURY COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER, 1020 MAURY COUNTY PARK DRIVE, COLUMBIA**

**INFO: PLEASE CONTACT DARRELL AILSHIE AT 931-375-5301 OR DAILSHIE@UTK.EDU**

The meeting starts with a potluck, followed by a short business meeting and a presentation. The presentation details will be announced later. Meeting at the Maury County Senior Center the first Tuesday of January, February, March, April, August, September, October, and November. Visitors are always welcome.

## **NOVEMBER'S FIRST FRIDAY**

**NOVEMBER 8, 5 PM TO 8 PM**

**DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA**

**INFO: COLUMBIAMAINSTREET.COM**

On the first Friday of each month, we're closing down the street in historic downtown Columbia from 5 pm to 8 pm for FIRST FRIDAYS. This is a free, family-friendly event with a vendor market, food trucks, street performers, & a cruise-in. And don't miss FIRST FRIDAYS 'INSIDERS', select merchants have created an experience inside of their stores...look for the balloons to identify participating merchants!

## **SPRING HILL FFA ALUMNI TRACTOR & CAR SHOW**

**NOVEMBER 9, 8 AM**

**SPRING HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

**INFO: CONTACT BRANDON MCCULLOCH 931-212-8373 OR GWYNNE EVANS 931-698-5804**

Fun for the Whole Family all day long! Chili Cook Off and Food Trucks on premises. Door Prizes/Tractor games/Skillet throwing/wrench toss/kiddie corral/pedal tractors Tractor & Car Registration is at 8am Parade of power at 11am. Silent auction 12pm

## **VETERAN'S DAY PARADE**

**NOVEMBER 11, 11 AM**

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**INFO: 931-375-1514 OR EMAIL**

**LVONHAGEN@MAURYCOUNTY-TN.GOV**

Pick up registration forms at 308 W 7th St. at the Maury Co Veteran Service Office.

Inviting all business, service organizations, school groups and churches, bands and JROTC and Veteran Organizations to come out and support our Veterans!

For more information or for a registration form call 931-375-1514 or email lvonhagen@maurycounty-tn.gov

## **BREAKFAST WITH THE MAYORS**

**NOVEMBER 19, 8 AM**

**MEMORIAL BUILDING IN COLUMBIA**

**INFO: MAURYALLIANCE.COM**

Join Maury Alliance for breakfast and Q&A with our local Mayors.

Join Maury County Mayor Sheila Butt, Columbia Mayor Chaz Molder, Mt. Pleasant Mayor Bill White, and Spring Hill Mayor Jim Hagaman for this very informative event. Please note registration will close Tuesday, November 12.





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## Pumpkin Spice Bundt Cake

If your family's taste buds have grown tired of apple-inspired fall desserts, simply look toward another quintessential autumn flavor: pumpkin. Quick and easy to prepare using a spice cake mix that provides all the flavor without the stress, this cake can be dressed to impress at a fall gathering or served after weeknight dinner.

*Find more recipes perfect for fall at [Culinary.net](http://Culinary.net).*



### **BUNDT CAKE:**

**1 BOX SPICE CAKE MIX**  
**1 CAN (15 OUNCES) PUMPKIN**  
**1 STICK BUTTER, SOFTENED**  
**2 EGGS**

### **TOPPING:**

**3 TABLESPOONS CARAMEL SAUCE**  
**2 CUPS POWDERED SUGAR**  
**1/2 CUP CHOPPED NUTS OF CHOICE**

Heat oven to 350 F. Grease Bundt pan.

In mixing bowl, mix cake mix, pumpkin, butter and eggs well then pour into Bundt pan.

Bake 45-50 minutes until toothpick inserted in middle comes out cleanly. Let cool in pan 5 minutes then remove from pan and let cool completely on rack.

Once cooled, mix caramel sauce and powdered sugar; drizzle over Bundt cake. Sprinkle with chopped nuts.

Recipe courtesy of **Cookin' Savvy**



# LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL SCHEDULES



## COLUMBIA ACAD.

Nov. 19	Home	Lincoln Cty
Nov. 23	Away	Ezell-Harding
Nov. 25/26	Away	Ravenwood (girls)
Nov. 25/26	Away	Friendship (boys)
Nov. 29/30	Away	Ezell-Harding (girls)
Dec. 3	Away	Marshall Cty
Dec. 6	Away	Middle TN Christian
Dec. 9	Home	Hickman Cty
Dec. 10	Away	University School
Dec. 13	Home	Webb
Dec. 20/21	Away	FRA
Jan. 3	Home	Grace Christian
Jan. 7	Away	Providence Christian
Jan. 9	Home	Fairview
Jan. 10	Away	FRA
Jan. 14	Home	BGA
Jan. 17	Home	Middle TN Christian
Jan. 21	Home	University School
Jan. 24	Away	Webb
Jan. 28	Away	Grace Christian
Feb. 1	Home	FRA
Feb. 4	Home	Providence Christian
Feb. 7	Away	BGA



## BATTLECREEK

Nov. 19	Away	Hickman County
Nov. 23	Away	Murfreesboro Central
Nov. 29	Away	Boys Cascade
Nov. 29	Away Girls	Mt. Pleasant
Nov. 30	Away Boys	Community
Nov. 30	Away Girls	Mt. Pleasant
Dec. 5	Away	Lawrence County
Dec. 6	Away	East Hickman
Dec. 12	Away	Fairview
Dec. 13	Away	Summertown
Dec. 17	Away	Santa Fe
Dec. 20	Away	Boys FCA
Dec. 21	Away Boys	Franklin Classical
Dec. 27	Away Girls	Moore County
Dec. 28	Away Girls	Moore County
Jan. 10	Away	Spring Hill
Jan. 17	Away	Loretto
Jan. 21	Away	Mt. Pleasant
Jan. 27	Away	Forrest
Feb. 7	Away	Lewis County



## SPRING HILL

NOV. 26	Home	Marshall County
Dec. 2	Home	Giles Cty
Dec. 6	Away	Marshall Cty
Dec. 9	Away	Nolensville
Jan. 10	Home	Battle Creek
Jan. 14	Home	Warren Cty
Jan. 17	Away	Lincoln Cty
Jan. 25	Away	Columbia Central
Jan. 31	Home	Warren Cty
Feb. 4	Home	Lincoln Cty
Feb. 7	Home	Columbia Central



\*Schedules may be incomplete due to press deadlines



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## MT. PLEASANT

Nov. 18	Away	Agathos (Girls)
Nov. 19	Away	Franklin Classic
Nov. 26	Away	Forrest
Nov. 29	Home	Hampshire (Girls)
Nov. 30	Home	Forest Vs Battlecreek
Dec. 2	Away	Hampshire
Dec. 3	Home	Grace Christian
Dec. 6	Away	Richland
Dec. 9	Away	East Hickman
Dec. 10	Home	Zion
Dec. 13	Away	Giles Cty
Dec. 16	Away	Franklin Hughes
Dec. 20	Home	Christmas Tourney (Boys)
Dec. 21	Home	Christmas Tourney (Boys)
Jan. 3	Home	Community
Jan. 7	Home	Hampshire
Jan. 10	Away	Zion
Jan. 14	Home	Loretto
Jan. 17	Home	Summertown
Jan. 21	Home	BCHS
Jan. 24	Away	Lewis Cty
Jan. 25	Home	Frank Hughes
Jan. 28	Away	BCHS
Jan. 31	Away	Loretto
Feb. 4	Away	Summertown
Feb. 11	Home	Lewis Cty
Feb. 13	Away	Cascade



## ZION CHRISTIAN

Nov. 9	Away	FC Boyd
Nov. 12	Home	Riverside Christian
Nov. 14	Home	Franklin Classical
Nov. 15	Home	Lancaster Christian
Nov. 18	Home	FC Boyd
Nov. 19	Home	Grace Christian
Nov. 21	Home	FRA
Nov. 22	Away	Culleoka
Nov. 25	Away	Hampshire
Nov. 29	Neutral	TBD
Nov. 30	Neutral	TBD
Dec. 3	Away	Riverside Christian
Dec. 6	Home	Franklin Christian
Dec. 10	Away	Mt. Pleasant
Dec. 13	Home	Culleoka
Dec. 17	Away	Franklin Rd Christian
Dec. 20	Away	Dickson Christian
Dec. 27	Neutral	TBD
Dec. 28	Neutral	TBD
Jan. 2	Away	Summertown
Jan. 3	Away	Cornersville
Jan. 7	Away	Franklin Christian
Jan. 10	Home	Mt. Pleasant
Jan. 14	Home	Dickson Christian
Jan. 17	Home	Lancaster Cristian
Jan. 20	Neurral	TBD
Jan. 23	Home	Franklin Rd Christian
Jan. 27	Home	Frank Hughes
Jan. 28	Away	Franklin Classical
Jan. 31	Home	Stem Prep Senior Night



## COLUMBIA CENT.

Nov. 21	Away	Oakland
Nov. 22	Away	Whites Creek
Nov. 25	Away	Beech
Nov. 26	Away	Beech
Dec. 3	Home	Lawrence Cty
Dec. 6	Home	Summit
Dec. 10	Away	Brentwood
Dec. 13	Away	Lawrence Cty
Dec. 17	Home	Blackman
Dec. 20	Away	Giles Cty
Dec. 21	Away	Portland
Jan. 3	Away	Summit
Jan. 7	Away	Blackman
Jan. 10	Away	Warren Cty
Jan. 14	Home	Lincoln Cty
Jan. 17	Away	Coffee Cty
Jan. 24	Home	Warren Cty
Jan. 25	Home	Spring Hill
Jan. 28	Home	Shelbyville
Jan. 31	Away	Lincoln Cty
Feb. 4	Home	Coffee Cty
Feb. 7	Home	Spring Hill
Feb. 11	Home	Hickman Cty
Feb. 13	Away	Shelbyville

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