

# Tega Cay Sun



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March 2026

## Fort Mill Wrestling Cements Dynasty With Fourth Consecutive State Title



Patrick Byrne, Editor

The Fort Mill wrestling program further solidified its reputation as a state powerhouse Wednesday night, securing its fourth consecutive Class 5A, Division II state championship. The Yellow Jackets delivered a commanding 52-11 performance against Lugoff-Elgin at White Knoll High School, finishing the season with a perfect 31-0 record.

The victory marks the second straight undefeated season for Fort Mill, a team that has lost only three dual matches over the past four years. While Lugoff-Elgin entered the finals as the second-ranked

team in the state, they struggled to contain a Fort Mill lineup that led from nearly start to finish.

The dual began at 132 pounds with a Lugoff-Elgin victory, but the Yellow Jackets quickly took control. A string of wins by Cooper Van Beynum (138), Jayden Nguyen (144), Keenan Coston (150), Lincoln Greene (157), and Broden Mitcheson (165) pushed the score to 22-3. Greene, a senior who has been a part of all four championship teams, contributed a 16-0 technical fall to the effort.

After a brief response from the Demons at 175 pounds, Fort Mill

resumed its scoring run. Krystian Villatoro secured a first-period pin at 285 pounds, and Peter Escudero clinched the title at 106 pounds with a 19-4 decision. Morrison Murphy, Luke Van Beynum, and Grayson Wallen closed out the night with additional victories.

This win represents the third time this season Fort Mill defeated Lugoff-Elgin, with each margin of victory widening. While the team title is decided, the Yellow Jackets will now shift their focus to individual tournaments to close out the season. For Lugoff-Elgin, the loss marks their fourth straight year as state runners-up.

## Fort Mill High School's Joshua Prince Crowned MCJROTC National Champion



Photo by FMHS

Thomas Hyslip, Editor

SANDY, UT — In a historic performance at the 2026 Marine Corps JROTC National Air Rifle Championships, Fort Mill High School junior Joshua Prince secured the title of National Champion. Competing against elite marksmen from 270 Marine Corps JROTC programs across the continental U.S. and overseas, Prince delivered a

dominant performance to claim the top spot on the podium.

### The Road to the Championship

The prestigious competition, held at the Mountain America Expo Center in Sandy, Utah, spanned two grueling days of precision shooting. Following the initial rounds, only the top eight

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## Summary of the Tega Cay City Council Meeting – February 23, 2026

*Patrick Byrne, Editor*

During the February 23, 2026, session, the Tega Cay City Council formally inaugurated James (Jim) D. Foltz as its newest member, following his victory in the recently held special election. The primary focus of the proceedings was the unveiling of the 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan, a strategic decade-long roadmap designed to guide municipal development and infrastructure.

Complementing this long-term growth strategy, the Council announced critical operational updates to public safety. These include the capital investment in pedestrian-activated beacons for Tega Cay Drive and the organizational expansion of the police department through the introduction of a dedicated Community Relations Officer.

The evening began with the official swearing-in of Councilmember James D. Foltz. The ceremony highlighted the impact of grassroots civic engagement, as final vote tallies confirmed Foltz won his seat by a slim margin of 11 votes. Council members and residents noted that the high voter turnout for the special election served as a testament to the community's commitment to local governance.

**Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission.** 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan: City staff and the Planning Commission presented the draft for the city's 10-year guiding document. Developed over the past year with input from six steering committee meetings and three public events, the plan establishes a framework for land use and community vision through 2035. Officials clarified that the plan is a guiding document and does not independently change zoning or land development regulations.

**Hubert Graham Way Annexation:** A public hearing was held for the rezoning and 100% annexation of approximately six acres at 1557 Hubert Graham Way. The property is currently under construction, and the petition seeks to move the parcel from York County RSF-40 to City R-40 status.

**City Manager's Report.** City Manager Charlie Funderburk opened his report by announcing a clean audit for the 24/25 fiscal year and introducing Mia Elton as the new Municipal Clerk, while also previewing a new digital development module designed to streamline the city's subdivision and annexation requests. Shifting to public safety, Police Chief Joy Crosby introduced Officer Jen McCormack as the department's new Community Relations Officer and shared January statistics highlighting 467 calls for service with an impressive average response time of just 3 minutes and 52 seconds. Finally, addressing specific resident concerns regarding pedestrian safety, the city confirmed that Rapid Flashing Beacons are scheduled for installation by mid-April at the intersections of Tega Cay Drive with Seven Cove, Trail Ridge, and Callaway.

**Old Business: Ordinance 608 (Private Wells):** Council conducted the second reading of an ordinance to adopt Chapter 54, Article V, regarding the regulation of private wells within city limits.

**New Business.** The Council discussed awarding the bid for city-wide lawn maintenance services and considered an amendment to the city's Food and Beverage License Agreement to streamline operations. Additionally, Resolution 2026-02 was proposed to officially adopt local rules of order for conducting council meetings, alongside a proposal to amend the regular meeting schedule for the remainder of the year to avoid holiday conflicts.

The Council entered a closed Executive Session to discuss personnel matters specifically pertaining to the Chief Municipal Judge before adjourning the meeting.



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## Fort Mill Secures 50-Acre Tract for Future Parks and Preservation

*Thomas Hyslip, Editor*

In a significant move toward long-term land preservation, the Fort Mill Town Council has officially approved the acquisition of approximately 50.27 acres of land off River Crossing Drive. The \$7.8 million purchase marks a proactive step by town leadership to secure green space amidst the region's continued growth.

The property was purchased from Novant Health, Inc., which had originally identified the site for a proposed hospital. With this acquisition, the Town of Fort Mill pivots the land's future toward community-focused recreation and environmental stewardship.

### A Vision Shaped by Residents

The decision to purchase the tract wasn't made in a vacuum. According to town officials, the move was directly influenced by:

**The Comprehensive Plan:** Aligning with the town's long-term developmental goals.

**The Parks and Recreation Master Plan:** Identifying a need for more accessible outdoor spaces.

**Community Feedback:** Public surveys and engagement efforts consistently showed that residents prioritize land preservation and trail connectivity.

Mayor Guynn Savage emphasized that the purchase is a direct response to the community's voice.

"Preserving land, expanding parks and trails, and protecting the character of Fort Mill are priorities for our residents," Mayor Savage said. "This acquisition allows us to do all three while maintaining the charm and sense of place that make Fort Mill such a special community."

As Fort Mill continues to be one of the region's most sought-after places to live, this 50-acre acquisition stands as a testament to the Town's commitment to balancing progress with preservation.

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### UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

**MAR 9TH**  
Planning Commission- will meet at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

**MAR 9TH**  
Storm Water Committee- will meet at 6:30pm in the Hearth Room.

**MAR 16RD**  
City Council Meeting- at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

**MAR 23rd**  
Economic Development Commission- will meet at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers.

**TUE. Weekly**  
Dr. Tom's Trivia - 6:30pm at Model A Brewing..

**THUR. Weekly**  
Bingo with Shane - 6:30pm at Model A Brewing..

**WED-SAT. Weekly**  
Live Music - Live music four nights a week at the SC Shore Club

**Saturdays Bi-Weekly**  
Tega Cay Lions Club - 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, the Tega Cay Lions Club meets in the lower level of the Glennon Center. More information available at <https://tegayclions.wixsite.com/tegayclions>

**Last WED. Monthly**  
Tega Cay Good Life Club -Meets the last Wednesday of each month More information available at <https://tegoodlifeclub.wixsite.com/teglc>

# ST. PATRICK'S DAY BASH

March 17

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## 2026 EVENTS



**MAY 9 SAT** **BEST DAM FOOD FESTIVAL**  
Come and enjoy an evening filled with delicious food, and fun at Catawba Park by the Dam! Fun begins at 2 PM and continues into the night with top-notch entertainment! Bring your chairs and relax under the Carolina sky!

**MUSIC IN THE PARK SERIES**  
Sat, June 13 in Runde Park Sat, August 8 in Runde Park Sat, October 10 in Catawba Park  
Join us for an enjoyable evening filled with fantastic music and delicious food! Bring your chairs and settle in to stay for a while!

**U.S. OF CAY CELEBRATE AMERICA**  
July 2 - Boat Parade | Carolina Ski Show  
July 3 - Uncle Sam Jam Runde Park  
July 4 - Land Parade | Fish Fry  
State of the City 6pm | Boom in the Cay Fireworks

**SPOOKTACULAR WEEK**  
Oct. 24 - Oct. 31 Pumpkin Palooza in TC Memorial Gardens  
Oct. 30 - Movie in the Park in Runde Park  
Oct. 31 - Boos & Ghouls Trunk-or-Treat

**SEPT. 26 SAT** **CATAWBA FEST**  
Kickstart your holiday shopping at Catawba Fest, where vendors will showcase their unique products and talents to help you discover the ideal gift! Bring the whole family for fantastic music, exciting amusements, and delicious food!

**DEC 3 THURS.** **LIGHTING OF THE TREE & SANTA'S ARRIVAL**  
Join Mayor and Council as they welcome Santa to town and officially kick off the holiday season in Tega Cay! Stay tuned for additional holiday events!



To discover more about our events, please visit [tegaycay.org](http://tegaycay.org). Events are subject to change. Be sure to check our website and Facebook pages for the latest updates.

## Rotary E-Club of the Carolinas to Dedicate Water Bottle Filling Station at Windjammer Park

Patrick Byrne, Editor

Rotary E-Club of the Carolinas will host a dedication ceremony for a new water bottle filling station on Wednesday, March 18 at 12:30 PM at the pavilion entrance of Windjammer Park in Tega Cay. Mayor Carmen Miller will speak, as will Parks & Recreation Director Dustin Overton, and E-Club President Alberto Meloncelli.

The project is made possible through financial support from the Mark Makulinski Donor Advised Fund with The Nature Conservancy and the Rotary E-Club of the Carolinas to the City of Tega Cay for the purchase and installation of the unit.

The bottle filling station will provide convenient access for residents and visitors enjoying the park's waterfront amenities. The installation of the filling station is a meaningful investment in sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Plastic bottles take centuries to decompose, contributing significantly to landfill waste and environmental pollution. A single bottle filling station can help eliminate tens of thousands of single-use plastic bottles over its lifetime. By encouraging the use of reusable water bottles, the new station at Windjammer Park will help reduce plastic waste and promote environmentally responsible habits. This project aligns with the ongoing service and commitment to sustainability of the Rotary E-Club, having supported environmental projects for more than 5 years.

The public is invited to attend the dedication ceremony and join in celebrating this collaborative effort to support environmental stewardship in Tega Cay.

## Fort Mill Officially Dedicates New Town Hall at Historic Springs Site



Thomas Hyslip, Editor

FORT MILL, S.C. — Marking a transformative chapter in the town's downtown revitalization, the Town of Fort Mill officially dedicated its new Town Hall at 205 N. White St. with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 9, 2026.

The public event, held at the building's main entrance along McCammon Street, brought together local leaders, elected officials, and residents to celebrate the milestone. The ceremony featured a dedication plaque honoring the citizens of Fort Mill and listed the current administration, including Mayor Guynn Savage, the Town Council, and Town Manager Cary Vargo.

### A Historic Rebirth

The new facility is the centerpiece of a broader effort to repurpose historic structures that were once the heartbeat of the town's textile era. The buildings at 123 and 205 North White Street formerly served as the Springs Executive Office and the Springs Research and Development Center for Springs Industries.

The Town acquired these iconic properties in May 2024 following a facilities study that highlighted a need for expanded municipal space. By choosing to renovate these 1950s-era landmarks rather than build new, Mayor Savage noted the town was able to "preserve precious history" while providing space for at least 20 years of future growth.

### Centralized Civic Services

The move to the new campus has been



a multi-phase process:

April 2025: The Fort Mill Police Department officially relocated its headquarters to the remodeled facility, moving from its long-time home on Confederate Street.

January 2026: The Planning, Development Services, and Customer Service/Utility Billing departments completed their transition to the 205 N. White St. building.

February 9, 2026: The formal dedication and ribbon-cutting by the Town Council signaled that all primary municipal functions—including Council Chambers and the Municipal Court—are now unified under one roof.

With this move complete, the town is moving forward with the sale of its former properties at 112 Confederate Street and 200 Tom Hall Street.

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THURSDAY, 6:30PM

## Silfab Solar Moves to Strike New Claims in Ongoing Fort Mill Whistleblower Lawsuit

Thomas Hyslip, Editor



FORT MILL, SC — The legal battle between Silfab Solar and former employee Jason Rhoades has entered a new phase of procedural maneuvering as the company seeks to block Rhoades' latest allegations of workplace safety violations and breach of duty.

In a motion filed on February 13, 2026, defendants Silfab Solar, Inc. and Silfab Solar Cells SC, Inc. asked the York County Court of Common Pleas to strike Rhoades' Second Amended Complaint. The filing follows months of litigation centered on Rhoades' claims that he was fired in retaliation for reporting safety hazards at the company's Logistics Lane facility.

### The Whistleblower's Allegations

Rhoades, a former quality control technician, expanded his lawsuit in January to include detailed claims regarding hazardous conditions at the site. According to the Second Amended Complaint:

**Hazardous Chemicals:** Rhoades alleges Silfab stored toxic and hazardous chemicals on the warehouse floor in close proximity to workers. He claims these containers lacked Safety Data Sheets (SDS), leaving employees unaware of exposure effects or emergency procedures.

**Operational Violations:** The complaint states management required employees to work for months in a facility that lacked a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) and had not properly installed fire suppression systems.

**Special Confidence:** Rhoades argues a

fiduciary relationship existed, claiming he "reposed a special confidence" in the company to ensure his safety and guarantee that any work injuries would be covered by workers' compensation—coverage he believes was jeopardized by the lack of a TCO.

**Retaliatory Firing:** Rhoades maintains his July 2025 termination was a direct response to his report to the Fort Mill Senior Fire Marshall, which resulted in a surprise inspection and a temporary stop-work order.

### Silfab's Legal Defense

Silfab's motion to strike presents a two-pronged defense, arguing the new filing is both procedurally improper and legally flawed:

**Procedural "Nullity":** Silfab argues that under South Carolina rules, Rhoades was required to obtain court permission or company consent to amend his complaint for a second time. Because he did neither, Silfab contends the document is a "nullity" with no legal effect.

**No Fiduciary Duty:** The company argues that South Carolina law does not recognize a fiduciary duty within a standard employer-employee relationship. They maintain the relationship is purely a contract of work for compensation, not a "special confidence".

**Lack of Damages:** Silfab points out that Rhoades failed to allege any actual physical or financial injury resulting from the lack of a TCO or chemical warnings, calling the claims a matter of conjecture or speculation.

### Current Status

Rhoades is seeking actual, compensatory, and punitive damages for whistleblower violations, retaliatory discharge, and wrongful discharge. The court previously dismissed a claim regarding the South Carolina Unfair Trade Practices Act in December 2025.

## Healthy Living with Dr. Hall: Fewer Spinal Surgeries Through Chiropractic Care

Dr. David Hall

A recent study suggests that chiropractic care may play a big role in reducing the need for repeat back surgeries. By restoring natural spinal motion and supporting overall spinal health, chiropractic treatments can help the body heal more effectively and prevent future complications. Dr. Hall of Hall Chiropractic explains, "We're not just treating symptoms — we're helping the body create the right conditions to heal and function at its best."

Here's how chiropractic care supports long-term spinal health and helps lower the risk of future surgery:

- 1. Promoting Healthy Spinal Mobility** Keeping the spine moving properly is key. When spinal joints become stuck or misaligned — known as subluxations — it can lead to pain, nerve irritation, and even degeneration over time. Through gentle adjustments and targeted therapies, chiropractors work to restore healthy motion to the spine. This not only eases discomfort but can also prevent the worsening of problems that might otherwise require surgical correction.

- 2. Reducing Adjacent Segment Degeneration** In some cases, injuries or age-related wear and tear make spinal fusion surgery necessary. However, the result can put extra stress on nearby joints and discs, sometimes leading to a condition called Adjacent Segment Degeneration (ASD) — where new problems develop near the fused area. Proper chiropractic

care helps minimize the effects of ASD by maintaining mobility in the surrounding joints through safe adjustments and other movement-based techniques.

- 3. Natural Pain Management** Chiropractic care focuses on relieving pain naturally through hands-on methods such as spinal manipulation, soft tissue therapy, and guided stretching. By targeting the root cause of discomfort rather than masking it, many patients find lasting relief and avoid more invasive treatments like surgery.

- 4. Education and Lifestyle Support** A big part of chiropractic care involves helping patients take charge of their own health. This includes guidance on posture, exercise, ergonomics, and nutrition. Small daily changes can make a big difference — reducing stress on the spine and lowering the risk of chronic back problems down the road.

**The Bottom Line:** Chiropractic care isn't just about short-term relief — it's about long-term spinal wellness. By improving mobility, managing pain naturally, and encouraging healthy habits, chiropractic treatments can help many people avoid repeat spinal surgeries and enjoy a more active, pain-free life.

Dr. David Hall is the owner of Hall Chiropractic Center. With over 40 years of experience, Dr. Hall is proud to serve the residents of Tega Cay and Fort Mill.



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# Buzz around Town



## Strengthening Bonds, Serving Community: The Rise of YMSL Fort Mill

Thomas Hyslip, Editor



In the whirlwind of the teenage years, finding quality time between mothers and sons can feel like a disappearing act. Between sports, academics, and a growing desire for independence, the "mother-son bond" often moves to the backseat.

However, in Fort Mill, a dedicated group is changing that narrative. The Young Men's Service League (YMSL) Fort Mill Chapter is proving that the best way to connect is by looking outward—together.

### A Legacy of Service Starts at Home

Founded locally in 2023 by Pam Masek and her son, the Fort Mill chapter has seen rapid growth. For Masek, the mission was clear: create a space where young men don't just learn about charity, but live it alongside their mothers.

"We partner with nonprofit organizations in the area that fit our mission: to assist, serve, and support those who are in need in our community, develop leadership

See YMSL, Page 9

## A New Standard for Sophistication: Velvet Coupe Wine Bar Officially Opens in Tega Cay



Thomas Hyslip, Editor

Tega Cay's social scene just received a significant upgrade. Velvet Coupe Wine Bar, located at 1177 Stonecrest Blvd, is now officially open, bringing a refined, metropolitan elegance to the heart of the community.

While the anticipation has been building behind its sleek storefront for months, the wait is over. Velvet Coupe has transitioned from a neighborhood curiosity into the area's premier destination for fine wine, artisanal pairings, and upscale relaxation.

### Where "Velvet" Meets Vibe

True to its name, Velvet Coupe offers a sensory experience designed to be as smooth as its namesake fabric. The interior strikes a balance between modern chic and timeless comfort, featuring:

**Plush Lounge Seating:** Perfect for intimate conversations or group celebrations.

**A Curated Atmosphere:** Warm, deliberate lighting and a "velvet touch" aesthetic that makes it an ideal spot for an after-work unwind or a sophisticated date night.

**The Wine List:** A deep, thoughtfully selected menu ranging from bold, structured reds and crisp, refreshing whites to celebratory sparkling favorites.

### Beyond the Glass: Elevated Small Plates

While the wine is undoubtedly the star of the show, the culinary program at Velvet Coupe is designed to be the perfect supporting act. Chef Eunice Namondo Gwanmesia is an internationally-trained chef and pastry chef whose culinary career spans Michelin-starred and luxury kitchens from Madrid to Las Vegas.

Moving beyond the "drinks only" phase, the kitchen is now in full swing, offering a menu focused on high-quality, shareable fare:

**Artisanal Cheese Boards:** Featuring rotating selections of domestic and imported cheeses.

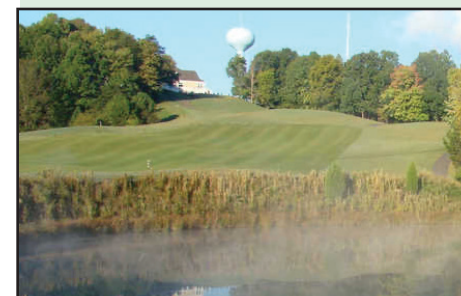
**Curated Charcuterie:** Premium meats paired with traditional accompaniments.

**Signature Small Plates:** Seasonal bites crafted to complement the nuances of the wine list.

Velvet Coupe is now operating with full service and a complete menu. Whether you are a seasoned connoisseur looking for a rare vintage or a casual enthusiast eager to explore a new flight, the team is ready to welcome you.

Velvet Coupe provides the perfect backdrop for both. Raise a glass to a new local favorite—the doors are open, and the wine is chilled.

## Birchfield & Lounsbury Surge to Victory in Tega Cay MGA Member-Member



Thomas Hyslip, Editor

The leaderboard at Tega Cay Golf Club saw a dramatic transformation on Sunday as the Men's Golf Association concluded its 2-Day Member-Member Tournament. While Saturday was a story of survival and strategy, Sunday was a test of endurance through two grueling 9-hole formats: Best Ball Net on Carolina Pines and the much-feared Both Balls Net on Grand View.

When the final putts dropped, one team in Flight 1 had staged a massive comeback, while a steady veteran duo held their nerve to claim the Flight 2 crown.

### Final Overall Leaderboard

The grueling "Both Balls Net" format lived up to its reputation as the "Great Equalizer," causing significant shifts in the standings.

#### Flight 1


1 Tyler Birchfield + Chris Lounsbury -1

2 Matthew Bowman + Tom Cannarozzo +5

T3 Gary Anderson + Ryan Ratcliffe +6

T3 Tom McGrath + Doug McGowan +6

See Golf, Page 8

  
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# SPORTS



## Fort Mill Schools Shine at State Wrestling Championships

Thomas Hyslip, Editor

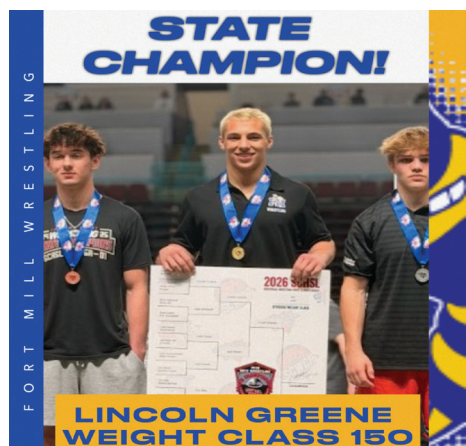


Photo by FMHS

Athletes from the Fort Mill area delivered a powerful performance at the South Carolina State Individual Wrestling Championships, bringing home multiple individual titles and podium finishes.

Fort Mill and Catawba Ridge both celebrated state champions.

Lincoln Greene (Fort Mill): Secured the 150-pound state title with an 8-0 major decision over Max Johnson.

Alex Johnson (Catawba Ridge): Claimed the 285-pound heavyweight championship with a 4-1 decision against Malachi Miles.

Brody Harris (Fort Mill): Earned a spot on the podium, placing fourth in the 113-pound weight class.

### Girls State Championships

The girls' division featured significant success from Catawba Ridge athletes, who secured multiple top-three finishes.

Carson Robertson (Catawba Ridge): Became the 100-pound state champion after a dominant 11-0 major decision.

Legend Pender (Catawba Ridge): Fought through the bracket to secure a third-place finish at 125 pounds.

These championships mark a successful conclusion to the season for these Fort Mill programs and their dedicated athletes.

## Local Runners Shine at Dorman Distance Carnival

Thomas Hyslip, Editor



### Northwestern Coach Chris Ardis Cheering on a Runner

Local track and field athletes traveled to Spartanburg on February 21, 2026, to compete in the highly anticipated Dorman Distance Carnival. The event is a favorite for runners because it features a true one mile race rather than the standard 1600 meter run. This year the meet expanded its schedule to include new Elite races in the 400 meter, 800 meter, and 3200 meter distances.

### Team Standings

Area schools made a significant impact on the overall team leaderboards. The Fort Mill boys delivered a standout performance, finishing in a tie for first place overall with 26 points. South Pointe followed closely behind, securing a tie for third place in the men's division with 23 points. Northwestern also added 5 points to the local total.

On the women's side, South Pointe led the local contingent with an eighth place finish and 11 total points. Fort Mill remained highly competitive, taking the ninth spot with 10 points. York High School also performed well, finishing in a tie for thirteenth place with 6 points, while Northwestern added 2 points.

### Elite Distance Results

In the new Elite 3200 meter run, Keller Brown of South Pointe claimed a second place podium finish with a time of 9:29.91. Hudson Haley representing Fort Mill followed in sixth place with a time of 9:40.55. On the girls side of the 3200 meters, Elizabeth Faircloth of South Pointe finished eighth overall, clocking in at 11:33.66.

The Elite 800 meter race saw Ava Shook from York High School take a fifth place finish with a time of 2:19.41. Marlee Cook of Fort Mill also broke into the top ten in that event, finishing ninth in 2:23.06. For the boys, Quinlan O'Toole of Fort Mill earned a seventh place finish in the 800 meters with a time of 2:00.93.

### Sprint and Middle Distance Highlights

In the Elite 400 meter dash, Wyatt Gremillion of Fort Mill led local runners with a fourth place finish in 49.60 seconds. Northwestern star Andrew Morton followed in fifth at 50.45 seconds, while Tristan Amico of Fort Mill took sixth place in 50.47 seconds. Northwestern's Makayla Kirk also secured an eighth place finish in the girls 400 meter dash. Other notable performances in the 400 meter heats included Reagan Hyslip and Noella Ebrahimi from Fort Mill, as well as Jada Williams from Northwestern.

See Track, Page 9

## Heard Hits 1,000 as Nation Ford Cruises Past Hillcrest in Playoff Opener

Chris Coffee, Sports Editor



A milestone night for sophomore sensation Aariah Heard provided the backdrop for a dominant postseason start as Nation Ford defeated Hillcrest 56-39 in Tuesday night's varsity home playoff game.

Heard entered the record books during the contest, surpassing the 1,000-point career mark in just her second season of high school basketball. The milestone served as the emotional high point for a Falcons squad that looked every bit the contender, using a stifling defense and a balanced scoring attack to dismantle the Rams.

Nation Ford's Haven Land scored eight points in her team's 56-39 win over Hillcrest Tuesday night in the first round of the 5A-D2 playoffs.

The Falcons established their rhythm early, but it was a 21-point explosion in the second quarter that broke the game open. Nation Ford's Haven Land provided the outside spark, draining a pair of three-pointers during the first half to help build a 33-18 halftime cushion. Land finished the night with eight points and a gritty defensive performance.

Hillcrest struggled to navigate the Falcons' length and transition speed. Despite efforts from Malan Alston and Alana Scott to keep the Rams within striking distance, the deficit widened in the third quarter as Nation Ford extended the lead to 47-27.

Nation Ford's Aubrey Morrow moves the ball down court against Hillcrest in Tuesday night's 5A-D2 playoff game.

The Falcons showed poise in the closing minutes, effectively putting the game away at the charity stripe.

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## YMCA of Upper Palmetto Rays Power to Top Finishes at State Championships

Thomas Hyslip, Editor

The YMCA of Upper Palmetto Rays (RAYS-SC) delivered a commanding performance at the 2026 SCLSC Short Course Age Group Championships held from February 12–15, 2026, at the Greenville County Aquatic Complex.

Competing against the state's top age-group talent, the Rays established themselves as a premier program, securing a runner-up finish in the girls' team standings, 4th in the boys' teams standings, and 3rd in combined teams. The Rays collected 6 Event Championships, 13 Silver Medals, and 9 Bronze Medals, showcasing depth across sprints, distance, and stroke events.

### Team Standings Highlights

Girls Team: 2nd Place (2,290.50 Points)

Boys Team: 4th Place (1,431 Points)

### Championship Highlights

The Rays' 13-14 Girls were a dominant force, led by Julia Corbi and Belle Gload. Corbi was a standout individual performer, capturing gold in the 400 Yard IM and 500 Yard Freestyle, while Gload sprinted to victory in the 50 Yard Freestyle and the 100 Yard Freestyle. The 13-14 Girls also displayed incredible teamwork, winning titles in both the 200 Yard Freestyle Relay and 400 Yard Medley Relay.

On the boys' side, Nicho Giraldo was a consistent podium presence in the 13-14 age group, earning silver medals in the 100 Yard Butterfly, 200 Yard Butterfly, and 400 Yard IM.

## Fort Mill girls end 20-year drought, boys rally to sweep Northwestern in 5A playoffs

Chris Coffee, Sports Editor



History and a dominant defense took center stage Monday night as the Fort Mill girls basketball team secured its first postseason victory in at least two decades, dismantling Northwestern 61-15 in the opening round of the SCHSL Class 5A Division II state championships.

The No. 5 seed Yellow Jackets left little doubt from the opening tip, stifling the No. 12 seed Trojans with a defensive performance that allowed just 15 points over four quarters. The win marks a significant milestone for a program that had not tasted playoff success since at least 2006.



The atmosphere remained electric for the second game of the twin bill, though the Fort Mill boys had to work much harder to complete the sweep of their Rock Hill rivals.

The Yellow Jackets trailed 28-24 at halftime as the visiting Trojans found success from the perimeter. However, Fort Mill's defense tightened in the second half, allowing the Jackets to claw back for a 53-48 comeback victory.

## Winterize your garden!

Carol Holden & Gardening by the Cay

Hello Garden Friends,

I hope your fall has been wonderful so far! December is here, the daylight is getting shorter, and our gardens are beginning to look a little weary. Now is the time to help them recover and prepare for the new year.

If you garden with pots, go ahead and empty them, clean them, and store them for winter. Use soapy water or a mixture of equal parts vinegar and water to scrub them clean. Rinse well, let them dry completely, and store them in a dry, protected place until next season.

This is not the time to do heavy pruning or prune spring blooming plants—pruning encourages new growth, and that is the last thing your plants need going into winter. Pruning in late winter or early spring is a better idea because most plants are dormant, reducing stress and disease risk. Pruning at the wrong time can harm your plant or cause loss of flowers in springtime. Before you prune read up on when the best time to prune is for your particular plant. Also avoid fertilizing, as it can stimulate tender new growth that will not survive frost and wintry weather.

As winter approaches, temperatures can fluctuate. Here in the South, we are lucky not to drop below 28°F too often, which is when cold becomes especially dangerous for many plants. After the first frost, add 2–3 inches of mulch around the base of your plants. Mulching insulates the soil, retains moisture, and protects roots from sudden temperature drops. Waiting until after the first frost when the ground freezes also help discourage pests from overwintering in your mulch.

Have you ever wondered how plants survive in winter? Well, in fall and winter, plant roots store sugars that help them resist freezing. They also reduce moisture in their cells, allowing flexibility that prevents cell walls from bursting when temperatures dip. Aren't plants amazing?

Although many plants have evolved to survive colder weather, we still need to help them at times. One issue to watch for is soil "heaving"—when

*See Garden, Page 9*

## Golf, From Page 6

### Flight 2

1 Bob Auman + Larry Harley +1  
2 David Kimpel + Jared Vestal +2  
T3 Jeff Roesler + Doug Presley +3  
T3 Greg Kniska + Eric Thompson +3

### Flight 1: The Birchfield-Lounsbury Charge

Entering Sunday three strokes off the lead, Tyler Birchfield and Chris Lounsbury were the story of the day. They navigated Carolina Pines with a solid 36 in Best Ball Net, but they truly separated themselves on the treacherous Grand View back nine.

In the "Both Balls Net" format—where every stroke counts—they carded a phenomenal 74. To put that in perspective, they and the team of Gary Anderson and Ryan Ratcliffe were the only teams in Flight 1 to break 77 in that format. Meanwhile, Saturday's leaders, the Elias, fell victim to the format's difficulty, carding an 85 to finish T5. Birchfield and Lounsbury's consistency earned them a commanding six-shot victory.


### Flight 2: A Battle of Inches

Flight 2 provided the drama the gallery expected from a Day 1 tie. Bob Auman and Larry Harley and the team of David Kimpel and Jared Vestal went blow-for-blow all afternoon.

Kimpel and Vestal actually posted the better "Best Ball" score (32), but Auman and Harley's discipline on the "Both Balls" leg (78) allowed them to cling to a one-stroke victory.


As is tradition at Tega Cay, the Grand View proved to be the ultimate judge. The transition from counting one ball to counting both balls saw scores fluctuate by as much as 10 to 15 strokes per team. In the end, the 2026 Member-Member belonged to those who could avoid the "big number" and rely on their partner when the pressure was highest.

Congratulations to our flight champions: Birchfield/Lounsbury and Auman/Harley!



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**YMSL, From Page 6**

skills among our membership, and promote mother-son relationships," says Masek.

Today, YMSL is a national powerhouse with over 31,700 members across 24 states, but its impact is felt most deeply at the local level through three core pillars: Service, Learning, and Leadership.

**More Than Just Volunteering**

While many organizations offer community service hours, YMSL is a comprehensive four-year curriculum designed to turn high school boys into "capable, confident, and compassionate leaders."

**Hands-on Service:** Members commit to 20 hours of service annually. At least half of these hours must be completed as a mother-son team, ensuring that "time well spent" is at the heart of the experience.

**Life Skills:** The program goes beyond the "what" of service to the "how" of adulthood. Young men attend five meetings a year covering practical skills like car maintenance, interview preparation, cyber security, and hazing prevention.

**Leadership Roles:** This isn't a passive club. Every mother and son holds a specific job or leadership position within the chapter, rotating annually to provide a wide range of experience.

**Impacting the 803 and Beyond**

The Fort Mill chapter supports a massive roster of local philanthropies. From environmental efforts with the Catawba Riverkeeper to providing essentials through the Fort Mill Care Center, these young men see the direct results of their labor.

**A Snapshot of Local Partners:**

**Community Support:** Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte, Hugaroo, Defend the Fatherless, Tender Hearts, and The Life House Women's Shelter.

**Youth & Sports:** Miracle League and Victory Sports – Conquer League.

**Hunger & Health:** Nourish Up, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Rice n' Beans.

**Veteran Honors:** Wreaths Across America.

**How to Join the Class of 2030**

The membership process is unique. YMSL is a sponsorship organization, meaning prospective members are typically mentored by a current member. However, for those new to the area or the organization, the chapter is eager to help bridge that gap.

**Key Enrollment Details:**

**Timing:** Enrollment begins during the son's 8th-grade year.

**Current Window:** The 2026 membership season is currently open (as of January 1).

**Availability:** The chapter is actively seeking members for the Class of 2030 (incoming freshmen) and has limited spots for the Class of 2029.

**Contact:** To learn more or attend the prospective member meeting at the end of February, reach out to [VPMembershipYMSLFM@outlook.com](mailto:VPMembershipYMSLFM@outlook.com).

As these young men prepare to navigate high school, YMSL provides them with a compass—and ensures their mothers are right there beside them for the journey.

**Track, From Page 7**

**Marquee Mile and Youth Results**

The marquee Elite Mile races and Freshman Mile events remained a major focus. Lauren Allen of Fort Mill took fourth place in the Girls Freshman Mile with a time of 5:37.85. For the boys, Gray Shelton of South Pointe finished sixth in the Freshman Mile at 4:53.15, followed closely by Jacob Audley of Fort Mill in seventh at 4:55.62.

The younger divisions showed great promise for the future. Emma Kate Brown of South Pointe took third place in the girls 1500 meter run with a time of 5:40.59. On the boys side, Evan Rogers of South Pointe secured a seventh place finish, while Nolan Sova and Will Raymond of Fort Mill both finished in the top fifteen.

**Garden, From Page 8**

repeated freeze-thaw cycles push plant roots up out of the soil. Exposed roots are vulnerable to wind, cold, and sun. A good mulch layer helps prevent this and keeps plants anchored and insulated.

Dry winter winds are tough on evergreens, which can lose moisture through their foliage. If the ground is frozen, roots can't pull in more water, leading to browning or "winter burn." Protect your evergreens with burlap wraps, shade cloth, or use an anti-desiccant spray like Wilt Stop, which coats the leaves to reduce moisture loss.

Young trees can also suffer. Sudden temperature drops may cause bark to crack. To protect them, wrap trunks with tree wrap—starting at the base and going up to the first set of branches. Secure it well, and don't forget to remove the wrap in the spring.

Keep an eye on your soil throughout the season. If it has not rained and the ground is dry, give your plants a deep watering—even if you have already winterized your hose. Happy Gardening from Gardening on the Cay!

**Prince, From Page 1**

competitors were selected to move into the final championship stage.

Joshua Prince entered the finals among the top eight and finished with an aggregate score of 1,123 - 47, handily winning the national title. His victory not only earns him the title of Marine Corps National Champion but also qualifies him for the All Service Air Rifle Nationals at Camp Perry, Ohio, scheduled for next month.

**Local Excellence: Nation Ford High School**

The local success story extended to Nation Ford High School, which saw a strong performance from Carl Ransone. Ransone finished in the top tier of the individual sporter results, securing 8th place nationally with an aggregate score of 1,092 - 36.

**Team Standings**

Both York County schools were represented in the overall team rankings. In the Marine Corps Overall Sporter Team standings, the local squads finished side-by-side:

Fort Mill High School finished 20th in the nation with a total score of 2,175 - 64. Nation Ford High School finished 21st nationally, following closely with a score of 2,151 - 62.

**Looking Ahead to All-Service Nationals**

Joshua Prince's journey continues as he prepares to represent the Fort Mill community on the national stage in Ohio. Having proven his skills against the best in the Marine Corps, he now looks to duplicate that success against the top shooters from all JROTC branches—Army, Navy, and Air Force—for the All-Service JROTC National Champion Title.

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# Charlie's Crossword Puzzle

## ACROSS

- 1) Team's setback
- 5) A dollar, in slang
- 9) River to the Rio Grande
- 14) Skip over
- 15) Big Southwestern cooking jar
- 16) Observe Yom Kippur, e.g.
- 17) Redhead, slangily
- 19) Third canonical hour
- 20) Bit of newspaper advertising
- 21) Held sway
- 23) One way to join metals
- 25) Ceramist's ovens
- 26) Cardinals' manager?
- 29) "The Gold Bug" monogram
- 31) Missouri River tributary
- 34) Newspaper page
- 35) Sundance Festival site
- 37) Break-in indicator
- 38) Flier's concern, for short
- 39) Cocoon critters
- 41) Language of Southeast Asia
- 42) Cheapskate
- 45) Badly wound
- 46) Comic sketch
- 47) Tote with effort
- 49) Race on snow
- 50) "Cast Away" setting
- 51) Drunk, in slang
- 53) "Miracle On Ice" losing team
- 55) Whom mentors mentor
- 58) Dancer who got a head?
- 62) Dine at home
- 63) Veggie-loving beetle
- 65) Discharge, as lava
- 66) Letters on a phone button, once
- 67) A tiny amount
- 68) Auto dealership department
- 69) "\_\_\_ went thataway!"
- 70) More than want

## DOWN

- 1) Locales or venues
- 2) Arab League member
- 3) Dubbed ones
- 4) Broadcast about
- 5) Hold in
- 6) Consultants, at heart?
- 7) Drain backup cause
- 8) Life preserver stuffing
- 9) Kneecap
- 10) Adjective applied to Rome
- 11) They're all ears, practically
- 12) A single time
- 13) Bit of bird food
- 18) Metallic rock
- 22) Club section
- 24) Information item
- 26) It could be verse
- 27) Fiber-\_\_\_ cable
- 28) Small-caliber weapon
- 30) Daddies
- 32) Thing to follow in the woods
- 33) Act theatrically
- 36) Japanese verse form
- 40) Delegate
- 43) Snooty sort
- 44) Lets up
- 46) Steak choice
- 48) Wooden hat-holder
- 52) Railroad terminal
- 54) Sank into the sofa
- 55) Chick's pronouncement
- 56) "Muffin" starter
- 57) Frosh, in a year
- 59) Pastoral woodwind
- 60) Horn blower's accessory
- 61) "Good grief!"
- 64) Golf gadget

## VEGGIE TALES

By Carla Azure

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15				16				
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55	56					57		58		59	60	61
62					63		64					
65					66				67			
68					69				70			

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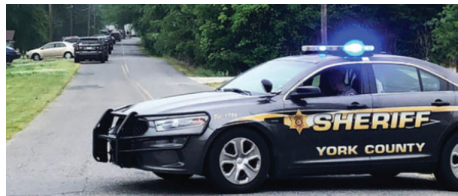
FREE • Vol. 2 - No. 3

Shining a Light on York and Lancaster Counties

March 2026

## Woman Arrested After Disrupting Lake Wylie Church Service

*Patrick Byrne, Editor*



A Sunday morning worship service at New River Church was interrupted by an outburst that led to the arrest of a 44-year-old woman. Audrey Bahneman faces one count of disturbance of religious worship following the incident, which occurred just before 10 a.m. as reported by WCNC.

According to an incident report from the York County Sheriff's Office, Bahneman entered the sanctuary and began screaming profanities at both the pastor and the assembled congregation. The disruption occurred as the church was beginning its morning activities.

Church security personnel intervened shortly after the shouting began and successfully escorted Bahneman out of the building. However, investigators noted that she repeatedly attempted to re-enter the facility to continue disrupting the service.

Deputies arrived at the scene and took Bahneman into custody. Under South Carolina law, disturbing a religious worship service is a misdemeanor offense that specifically protects the right of congregations to meet without intentional interference or disorderly conduct.

Bahneman was transported to the York County Detention Center, where she was initially held without bond. No injuries were reported, and the church was able to proceed following the arrest.

## York County's Kevin Madden Named New CFO for Rock Hill Schools



*Thomas Hyslip, Editor*

York County leadership and Rock Hill Schools have officially announced a major transition in local governance. Kevin Madden, CPA, the current York County Assistant Manager, has been appointed as the new Chief Financial Officer for Rock Hill Schools, with his new tenure set to begin on March 3rd.

Madden leaves behind a distinguished 10-year career in York County, where he served as Treasurer, CFO, and Assistant County Manager. His departure marks the end of a period of significant fiscal strengthening for the county, though his move to the school district ensures his expertise remains within the community.

### A Legacy of Fiscal Integrity

During his time with York County, Madden navigated the financial complexities of a region that has ballooned to nearly 300,000 residents. Managing an annual budget of \$450 million and overseeing more than 1,300 employees, his leadership was defined by long-term sustainability and transparency.

Key achievements under Madden's stewardship include:

**Top-Tier Credit:** Achieving an AAA general obligation bond rating, reflecting disciplined management and clean audits.

**Debt Elimination:** The successful removal of longstanding debt service taxes.

**"Pay-As-You-Go" Funding:** Implementation of capital strategies that allowed for infrastructure and technology upgrades without new borrowing.

**Infrastructure Reserves:** Creating the financial structures necessary to support the county's rapid growth.

"York County benefited tremendously from the leadership, skill, and wealth of knowledge Kevin brought to his role," said York County Manager Josh Edwards. "We are sad to see him depart York County but wish him all the best for his new role."

While Madden is well known for his county-level work, he brings specialized experience to the Rock Hill Schools Superintendent's Cabinet. Earlier in his career, he was an audit partner with Greene Finney Cauley, LLP, where he worked directly with school districts and local governments across South Carolina. This background provides him with a deep understanding of school-specific finance, accountability, and the importance of public transparency.

Madden, a Certified Public Accountant, holds both a Master of Science in Finance and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Texas A&M University.

## Harrisburg Global Academy Hosts Groundbreaking Ceremony

*Thomas Hyslip, Editor*

INDIAN LAND, SC – Harrisburg Global Academy (HGA) officially broke ground Wednesday afternoon on its permanent campus, marking a major milestone for the growing public charter school and the families it serves.

Leadership, community members, and local supporters gathered at 1774 Harrisburg Road to celebrate the start of construction on the new three-story facility. The building will house all classrooms and laboratories, along with a combined café and gymnasium, creating a centralized and modern learning environment for students.

The new campus is designed to support HGA's mission to focus on differentiation to improve outcomes for each individual student. They plan to deliver high-quality instruction with a strong emphasis on Spanish world language development and STEM education.

"This groundbreaking represents more than the start of construction. It reflects the vision and commitment of a community that believes in expanding educational opportunity for families in the greater Fort Mill and Indian Land community," said Jennifer Lucas, Chief Academic Officer of Alliance Education Services. "We are excited to see this permanent home take shape and to provide a space where all students can thrive academically and develop leadership skills they need for the future."

Harrisburg Global Academy is scheduled to open in Fall 2026, initially serving grades K–6 and expanding to grades K–8 at full enrollment. As a tuition-free, public charter school, HGA is committed to providing families with an innovative educational choice in Lancaster County.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/HarrisburgGlobalAcademy](http://www.facebook.com/HarrisburgGlobalAcademy)

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