LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

November 20, 2026

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INSIDE



Torrey Pines beats Helix, moves on to CIF semi-finals

PAGE 11



Lawsuit alleges city blocked only female lifeguard from top job

PAGE 7



The Sentry Open opens ticket sales for PGA tournament

PAGE 9



The Social Diary: Jewel Ball raises $1.4M

PAGE 12

Axolotls at Birch Aquarium



Guests get an up-close look at Axolotls in the Birch Aquarium's new Axolotl's Garden exhibit, which opened last month. Axolotls are a species of critically endangered salamander found in lakes near Mexico City. (Photo by Jordann Tomasek/Courtesy of Birch Aquarium at Scripps)

COVER STORY

Scripps and NOAA: Record-breaking ocean heat could amplify sea levels from winter storms

Offshore temperatures climbed to over 75 degrees Fahrenheit on Nov. 10 — the warmest on record for that day, according to Dr. Jennifer Smith, a marine ecologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. "We're now sitting on the precipice of yet another 'Godzilla' El Niño, where temperatures are supposed to be and are already higher than we've ever measured in the past," Smith said during a press briefing last week hosted jointly by Scripps and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries scientists. Waters off La Jolla have set new temperature records nearly every day since the end of September, according to the Scripps Pier sea surface monitoring station. **PAGE 2**

SURVEILLANCE

City shuts off ALPR cameras in challenge to Flock contract



The City Council on Nov. 16 took sweeping action on surveillance policies, unanimously voting to suspend the use of automated license plate readers. But in a surprise move, the council also voted to halt the city's Smart Streetlights program. Police defend ALPRs as important crime-fighting tools, but privacy advocates have raised alarms about the vast amount of data the technology collects, who has access to the local information and how it is being used. Critics have gathered enough momentum that dozens of cities have recently done away with Flock Safety's cameras. **PAGE 4**

SPORTS

Torrey Pines flag football wins second consecutive championship



Torrey Pines defended its place atop San Diego flag football on Nov. 9, shutting out Helix 13-0 to win the Open Division championship and secure its second consecutive section title. Alexa Avila scored both touchdowns, returning a punt 50 yards for the opening score before turning a screen pass from quarterback Izzie Dieter into a 15-yard touchdown. The Falcons' defense took care of the rest, holding the Highlanders scoreless at Olympian High School in Chula Vista. **PAGE 11**

Scripps: Record-breaking ocean heat could amplify sea levels from winter storms

By Thomas Murphy
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – San Diego's coastal waters have shattered temperature records, adding to the risk of storms, flooding and environmental damage expected this winter as the 'Super' El Niño strengthens.

Offshore temperatures climbed to over 75 degrees Fahrenheit on Nov. 10 — the warmest on record for that day, according to Dr. Jennifer Smith, a marine ecologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

"We're now sitting on the precipice of yet another 'Godzilla' El Niño, where temperatures are supposed to be and are already higher than we've ever measured in the past," Smith said during a press briefing last week hosted jointly by Scripps and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries scientists.

Waters off La Jolla have set new temperature records nearly every day since the end of September, according to the Scripps Pier sea surface monitoring station.

A marine heatwave off San Diego's shore began in late 2025, with record-high temperatures recorded well before this year's El Niño was declared in June. The natural climate pattern has since added more heat to already warm waters, the panel of scientists said.

The result is a combination of exceptionally warm ocean temperatures and elevated sea levels that could amplify the effects of winter storms hitting Southern California. Mark Merrifield, a Scripps physical oceanographer, said the region is facing a "triple threat" from El Niño: higher waves, more rain and rising sea levels.

San Diego's sea level is currently about 1.5 feet above normal, Merrifield said. A typical El Niño might raise water levels by six inches to one foot.

The elevated sea level contributed to flooding in Mission Bay and other coastal areas during an Oct. 27 storm, during which San Diego Bay saw the water rise more than one foot above NOAA's predictions. Merrifield said the current unusual weather is expected to last through November and December.

This raises concerns about what could happen when heavy rain arrives while coastal water levels and temperatures remain unusually high.

"We saw a little bit of that during the October flood event, when places like Harbor Drive were experiencing flooding," Merrifield said during the briefing. "That's just the water coming up through the storm drains. When the water is that high, if you do have rain on land, there's really no place for the water to go."

Merrifield said storm drains may need to be shut off to prevent ocean water from backing up through them. "It's the inability to drain that's really going to be an issue in a lot of areas when you get these compound flooding events."

ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS

El Niño tilts the odds towards wetter weather in Southern California, but it alone does not determine how much rain San Diego will receive this winter.

Rainfall depends heavily on atmospheric rivers — thousand-mile-long corridors of concentrated water vapor in the atmosphere that can drop large amounts of rainfall when they reach the California coast.

"El Niño sets the stage on the big picture," said Marty Ralph, a Scripps research meteorologist and director of the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes. "But it's really atmospheric rivers that are at the business end of El Niño impacts when it comes to rainfall and snow."

A strong, long-lasting atmospheric river can produce about 10 inches of rain in two days, Ralph said. If the storm continues for another day, some of the wettest areas could receive as much as 15 inches.

The unusually warm water offshore could amplify the rainfall from storms.

As an atmospheric river passes over warm coastal waters, the ocean transfers additional heat and moisture into the system, potentially increasing the amount of precipitation when storms make landfall.

The timing and number of storms also matters. Multiple atmospheric rivers arriving in quick succession leave little time for soil, rivers and drainage systems to recover between rainfall events.

Scientists are using reconnaissance airplanes to improve forecast predictions. These flights can travel hundreds or thousands of miles offshore to measure temperature, pressure, wind and moisture within storms before they reach the West Coast.

These observations are fed into weather models, giving forecasters more information about storms while they are still far offshore.

The program completed 52 reconnaissance flights last winter and is expected to continue this winter, with some flights potentially traveling farther west toward Japan to improve predictions, Ralph said.

OCEAN HEAT EXTENDS BELOW THE WAVES

The unusual conditions also extend deep beneath the ocean surface.

Unusually warm temperatures have been measured in waters over 160 feet down, which reached about 77 degrees in a southern inshore survey area — far warmer than previous observations, said Andrew Thompson, a California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations fish biologist.

The latest observations are already showing signs of how dramatically the unusual conditions are affecting marine life, Thompson said.

Researchers found preliminary evidence of near-record abundance of southern mesopelagic fish — species that typically live farther south and deeper in the ocean. Local fishermen and divers have also reported seeing tropical and other southern species off Southern California.

The scientists cautioned that this data is still being processed and that the greater number of some southern species could be accompanied by lower overall species diversity.

KELP FORESTS LOST A DECADE OF RECOVERY

The clearest ecological casualty may be one of San Diego's most recognizable marine ecosystems: its kelp forests, which provide shelter, a place to raise young, and hunting grounds for over 800 species, according to San Diego Coastkeeper.

Smith, a Scripps marine ecologist, said San Diego's kelp species generally begin



A massive wave crashes into the seawall at the Children's Pool damaging the railing. (Photo by Thomas Melville/Times of San Diego)

experiencing significant thermal stress around 23 degrees Celsius, or 73.4 degrees Fahrenheit. The Scripps Pier reached about 75 degrees on Nov. 10.

San Diego sits near the warm edge of the global range for giant kelp, which thrives in colder waters, making offshore forests particularly vulnerable to prolonged periods of extreme heat.

The last major El Niño and marine heat wave, from 2014 to 2016, caused widespread losses of canopy-forming kelp in San Diego. It took more than a decade for these ecosystems to make a significant recovery.

Only in 2025 did researchers begin seeing meaningful canopy recovery in areas including Point Loma, La Jolla and North County, Smith said.

Much of that recovery has now disappeared.

In La Jolla, little giant kelp remains, with large amounts washing onto beaches, Smith said. Some patches remain in Point Loma, where researchers are studying whether certain populations may have greater tolerance to heat.

Researchers are now collecting data from divers in the water and gathering reproductive material from surviving kelp.

Scripps is also working with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance to preserve kelp through biobanking and cryopreservation, allowing scientists to maintain genetic material until ocean conditions return to normal levels and restoration efforts can begin.

The goal in 2027 is to move beyond simply waiting for the forests to recover and instead determine how they can be actively restored, Smith said.

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City shuts off ALPR, Smart Streetlight cameras in challenge to Flock contract

By Tessa Balc
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – The City Council on Nov. 16 took sweeping action on surveillance policies, unanimously voting to suspend the use of automated license plate readers.

But in a surprise move, the council also voted to halt the city's Smart Streetlights program.

The steps opened the door to ending the city's contract with Flock Safety and Ubicquia, another less infamous AI-powered camera system.

Ahead of the 7-0 ALPR vote, Councilmember Henry Foster III proposed reconsidering the city's Smart Streetlights policy as well. That's because the two camera systems cannot be unbundled in the city's nearly $12 million contract.

The council was divided on that decision, rejecting the Smart Streetlights use policy in a 5-2 vote. Councilmembers Vivian Moreno and Raul Campillo voted nay, with Jen Campbell and Marni von Wilpert absent for the key votes.

Police defend ALPRs as important crime-fighting tools, but privacy advocates have raised alarms about the vast amount of data the technology collects, who has access to the local information and how it is being used.

Critics have gathered enough momentum that dozens of cities have recently done away with Flock Safety's cameras.

Those critics displayed their cross-cutting demographic representation during three hours of public comment before the city council on Monday. Baby Boomers stood alongside millennials singing Fall Out Boy spoofs and Gen Z students citing community surveys.

ALPR opponents take specific issue with Flock Safety, the dominant vendor in the industry. Many don't want their data in the hands of Flock, citing fears about the company's cooperation with ICE.

But San Diego police didn't escape the meeting unscathed either.

Many said at the Monday meeting that they do not trust the San Diego Police Department's use of the technology.



The city suspended the use of ALPR and Smart Streetlight cameras. (Photo by Thomas Melville/Times of San Diego)

Public speakers cited reporting from Times of San Diego showing a false ALPR hit led to a man spending months in jail for a crime he did not commit.

In another instance, also reported by Times of San Diego, an ALPR hit on a stolen car led to an SDPD officer shooting a 19-year-old passenger in the vehicle. The owner said the car had not been stolen.

Most recently, Voice of San Diego reported that SDPD used the technology to track a domestic violence victim during an internal investigation of inappropriate sexual conduct by an officer.

Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, a steadfast critic of the technology, pointed to these instances as justification for his view that police have lost the trust of its residents on this issue.

"I think all these cases share something that should make everyone concerned, and that's that our justice system rests on a very basic premise: that we're all innocent until proven guilty. ALPRs seem to turn that whole thing upside down," he said.

Councilmember Raul Campillo, who switched his position on this issue last week, said the news that police used the technology as part of an internal investigation was more than enough to make him flip.

"The position that the department has taken on that reading, I'm utterly disappointed. And Chief," he said, addressing police Chief Scott Wahl, "I expected more, given how clear several council members have been about the fears we have about this and the trust that we put in you not just to follow the rules, but to see the bigger picture of what the public expectation was."

Some council members cited these instances as well, but the most common concern among them was the federal government's potential use of the data collected by ALPRs.

"My view of the effectiveness of ALPRs hasn't changed. What has changed is the context," said Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, who had backed the technology until announcing his reversal last month.

"When this city council initially approved ALPRs three years ago, it was during the Biden administration. A year later, Donald Trump was elected president. The two years since have been a living hell for too many families in our city."

But this vote doesn't spell an immediate end for Flock in San Diego.

The city's contract with Flock Safety and Ubicquia is still active. However, now that the council has rejected the city's use policies for both ALPR and Smart Streetlights, it can consider scraping the contract altogether.

Foster's motion to vote on Smart Streetlights separately came after Lyndsay Winkley, SDPD's community liaison manager, told the council that if both pieces of technology are no longer approved, the city could kill the contract. The city could also renegotiate, rather than cancel, the contract.

Despite Mayor Todd Gloria's support for ALPRs, ahead of the vote he announced he would respect the council's wishes and not wield his veto power. Gloria's council affairs adviser, Kohta Zaiser, told the council the city will shut down the system on their end and direct SDPD to initiate the process with Ubicquia and Flock to remove the cameras. He said by the end of this week the mayor's office should be able to provide the council with a plan to begin dismantling over 500 cameras citywide.

If the city is going to cancel the contract, though, officials must do it sooner rather than later to avoid paying a $2 million fee due in December for services in the coming year.

Streetlight repairs now take 340 days on average, city audit finds

By Dorian Hargrove
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – In fiscal year 2021, it took San Diego city crews an average of 144 days to fix a broken streetlight.

This fiscal year, the same repair takes 340 days, according to a newly released city audit.

During those six years, the Transportation Department's streetlight division hired more workers. The division paid $1.4 million in overtime last fiscal year, compared with more than $230,000 six years earlier.

Despite the longer waits for repairs and the increase in overtime spending, department managers did not use available tools to track workers and ensure work was being completed, according to the audit.

From December 2025 through May 2026, city auditors examined vehicle logs and found that workers' vehicles were stationary for several hours a day away from job sites or locations with reported streetlight outages. The stops averaged 2 hours and 25 minutes and totaled nearly 200 hours during the six months examined by the City Auditor's Office. One stop lasted 4 hours and 42 minutes, according to the audit.

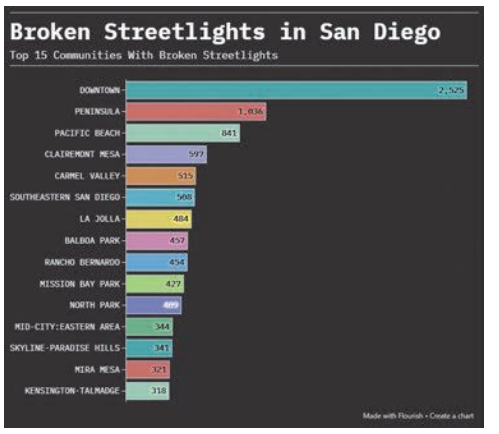
Streetlight division managers failed to address the lengthy stops and periods of crew inactivity, the audit found.

On Nov. 12, the San Diego Audit Committee discussed the findings and objections from the Transportation Department. Department officials said the audit relied on flawed information and that the City Auditor's Office failed to notify them of the alleged timecard violations before releasing the report.

In an Oct. 14 response, newly appointed Chief Operating Officer Bethany Bezak wrote:

"Department leadership was not notified of fraud hotline allegations until June 2026, at least seven months after it was reported, despite ongoing audit discussions throughout that same period."

Bezak also said city auditor investigators used misleading baselines in the report.



"Management recommended using the early 2021 backlog of 5,520 as an appropriate baseline for comparison rather than mid-2020 because it more accurately reflects the status of streetlight repairs in 2021 following a significant increase in the backlog during a period of massive vacancies due to COVID," Bezak wrote.

City data analyzed by Times of San Diego show 14,306 streetlight repair requests citywide. Downtown San Diego has the highest number of requests, with 2,525, followed by Peninsula neighborhoods with 1,036, Pacific Beach with 841 and Clairemont Mesa with 597.

At the Nov. 12 Audit Committee meeting, Interim Transportation Director Naomi Chavez said that while the department will address the audit's findings, managers must navigate multiple city data programs.

The streetlight repair backlog increased after a February 2025 decision to have department electricians focus on requests from residents and construction crews seeking to locate underground utilities, also known as DigAlerts.

"We receive about 6,000 DigAlerts per month, with electricians going out to perform 43% of those locations," Chavez said after the City Auditor's presentation. "It became clear that we simply weren't keeping up with the incoming demand of the DigAlerts, exposing the city to potentially significant liability."

Following Chavez's statements, representatives from unions representing city employees criticized the City Auditor's Office for failing to notify the unions.









San Diego Unified students need permit to ride e-bikes to school

By Drew Sitton
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – Students at San Diego Unified Schools will need to get a district-issued permit to ride e-bikes to and from school under new rules the school board unanimously passed Tuesday, Nov. 17.

The permits are free but require parent/guardian acknowledgement and identifying information about the bicycle, as well as proof of taking a safety class.

The new rules are aimed at ensuring students learn the rules of the road and how to be safe on e-bikes amid a spate of traumatic e-bike injuries reported at pediatric emergency rooms. Rady Children's Hospital released a study in 2025 stating that e-bikes were on track to overtake falls as the top reason for traumatic injuries in their emergency department.

Trustee Shana Hazan, who brought forward the new rules, said it was those traumatic injury numbers that prompted her to introduce the policy.

"We need to make sure all of our students are safe," Hazan said in an interview Monday.

The troubling number of injuries led to cities in the region, including San Diego, to pass rules that ban children under age 12 from riding e-bikes. Only those 16 or older are allowed to ride Class 3 e-bikes, which can go up to 28 miles per hour. Those aged 12 to 15 can ride Class 1 or Class 2 e-bikes.

> 'We need to make sure all of our students are safe.'
>
> **Shana Hazan**
> Board Trustee

The school district's rules go further than the city's. Under the rules, students who intend to park their e-bikes on campuses will have to attend safety training and apply for a permit. If the district grants the permit, students will be issued a sticker that will be placed on their e-bike.

The district will provide a list of acceptable safety classes, as well as free or low-cost options.

"We want to support students and make sure they have access to courses. We want to connect students to free helmets and make this process as easy as possible for kids and families," Hazan said.

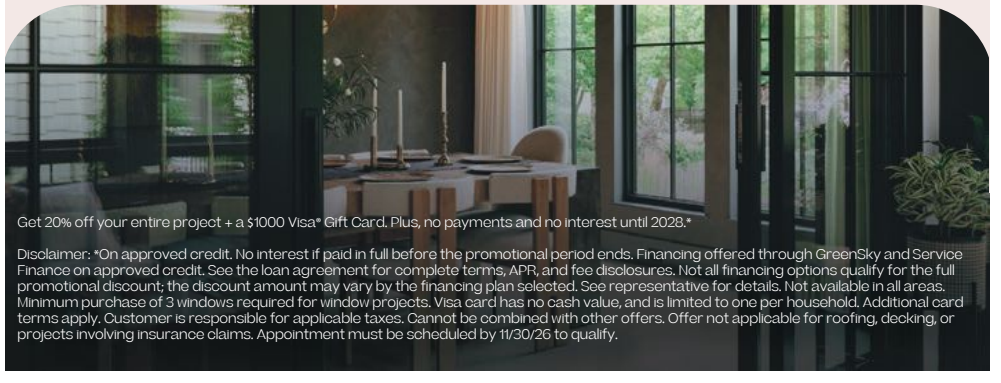
In addition to the permit, the policy has other rules including:

- E-bikes must have pedals and count as an e-bike under state law in order to get a permit, so cannot be a motor-powered cycle, a gas-powered cycle, a moped, an e-motorcycle or other motorized vehicle.
- Modifications, including ones to increase the speed above 28 miles per hour for Class 3 e-bikes, are banned.
- Students must walk, not ride, e-bikes on campus.
- E-bikes must be parked in designated e-bike spaces with an adequate lock.
- E-bikes cannot carry extra passengers, per California state law.
- Students cannot use campus charging stations.
- Students cannot perform wheelies, race, operate recklessly or block accessible routes.
- Permits can be revoked if a sticker is not prominently displayed or the student is caught breaking other rules.
- Students must ride with helmets.

There are additional rules related to battery safety, since lithium batteries can catch fire.

The city of San Diego began issuing citations for riding e-bikes on sidewalks, underage cycling and other violations in October. In addition, the city is rolling out lower speed limits for all vehicles in school zones, after several high-profile road deaths of children.

The school district's policy goes into effect Jan. 5, 2027 with a 60-day grace period before enforcement begins on March 8.

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Lawsuit alleges city blocked only female lifeguard captain from top job

By Dorian Hargrove
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – A little over a month after the City of San Diego fired its top lifeguard for mishandling a sexual harassment complaint, the second-highest-ranking lifeguard is now suing the city and department for barring her from applying for the top lifeguard post, allegedly hiring a less qualified man instead.

In a newly filed lawsuit, Maureen Hodges, the city's first and only female captain, says the city refused to let her apply for the open chief position after former Chief James Gartland was terminated in early October.

Hodges has served as a San Diego lifeguard for 20 years and currently serves as the department's Marine Safety Captain of Strategic Operations.

Following Gartland's termination, Hodges' lawsuit alleges she went to acting chief Dan Eddy to inquire about applying for the open chief position.

"Hodges performed well as the Captain, and when she asked interim Chief Eddy whether she would be considered to be promoted to Lifeguard Chief, Eddy replied: "I don't see why not," states Hodges' lawsuit.

Without any additional notice, four days later, the city announced it had hired former lifeguard turned Deputy City Attorney, Daniel Orloff, to become San Diego's top lifeguard.

The problem, according to Hodges' lawsuit, is Orloff is far less experienced than her.

"Orloff had departed the Lifeguard Service in 2023, in the rank of Sergeant, and had been employed as a Deputy City Attorney for several years," states Hodges' lawsuit. "Orloff was a full-time Lifeguard for less than five years. Hodges is more than qualified for promotion to Lifeguard Chief and is substantially more well qualified than Orloff."

Hodges is asking for general and special damages and, according to her lawsuit, is also asking that a judge issue an injunction "requiring the City to better protect its employees from discrimination."

A spokesperson for the City Attorney's Office declined to comment due to pending litigation.

Police say crime is down in coastal areas after launch of Operation Blue Tide

By Thaïs Giraudet
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – Crime in coastal areas has dropped by 12.6% in the month since the San Diego Police Department embarked on an effort to clamp down on violent crime in Pacific Beach and other communities.

The department began Operation Blue Tide on Oct. 16 to increase law enforcement presence during weekends when city residents and other beach-goers flock to San Diego's shore. The operation will continue every Friday and Saturday until further notice, police said.

Police provided data on the results of Operation Blue Tide so far, including the 12.6% drop, which is compared to the same period in 2025. Officers have made four arrests, including the recovery of one firearm, and issued 13 citations in the weeks since the initiative began.

The operation came in response to the death of a security guard in Pacific Beach.

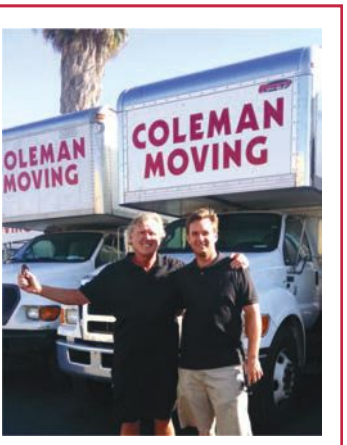
On Oct. 5, Luis Alberto Quiroz-Arreola, 31, was shot and killed while working at Crystal Pier. Police arrested the man suspected of the murder, Brian McColley, who pleaded not guilty on Nov. 6.

Operation Blue Tide did not have a role in that arrest however, according to Northern Division Captain Jo Makwana.

"Other investigative teams independently affected the arrest of the homicide suspect," Makwana said in an email to Times of San Diego.

Still, Makwana said Operation Blue Tide would continue. That means increased high-visibility foot and vehicle patrols.

"Our primary objective is to maintain a safe, secure and orderly environment for all residents and visitors," police said.

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UC San Diego looks to improve upon last year's 23-11 campaign

By Mark Nero
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA - It was an up-and-down season last year for UC San Diego's men's basketball team under first-year head coach Clint Allard.

The squad won seven straight games to start the season and also had three- and five-game win streaks later in the year. However, the team alternated between wins and losses during the middle of the season and at one point dropped three in a row.

That inconsistency culminated in a loss against Cal State Fullerton in the quarterfinals of the Big West Conference tournament, ending their season with a 23-11 record (12-8 Big West), a sizable step back from the 30-5 (18-2 Big West) finish the previous year – which culminated in a trip to the NCAA Tournament – under former head coach Eric Olen.

But now, with Allard's first year as a head coach under his belt and experience gained and lessons learned, the upcoming season could be less of a rollercoaster for the coach and his team.

Allard, who had been UCSD's associate head coach for 11 years, was promoted to the head role in March 2025 after Olen headed to the University of New Mexico. Allard's a UCSD basketball alum and was a four-year starter and three-time captain for the team from 2004-2008.

So, what can supporters and observers expect from his Tritons during the upcoming season?

NEW AND RETURNING PLAYERS

UCSD brings back nine players from the previous season, while also adding seven freshmen and transfers.

"Our coaching staff did an outstanding job identifying and recruiting this group," Allard said in June of the newcomers. "This is a very balanced class with players who complement one another. They are exceptional competitors, high-character people and we're excited to welcome them to our program."

One new player to keep an eye on is



UC San Diego newcomer Treysen Eaglestaff. (Photo by Jet Santos/Courtesy UCSD Athletics)

Trey Eaglestaff, a 6-foot-6-inch tall transfer and fifth-year guard from West Virginia. When playing in his first preseason game as a Triton against USC on Oct. 17, Eaglestaff scored a game-high 29 points – including five three-pointers on eight attempts – and pulled down seven rebounds.

Although one preseason performance isn't necessarily indicative of what to expect in the regular season, it's worth noting that last year, Eaglestaff had five games with 20 or more points for West Virginia.

For the season, he averaged 9.8 points and 4.6 rebounds while starting all 35 games for the Mountaineers.

"He brings versatility and experience, as well as the ability to be a threat on and off the ball," Allard said of Eaglestaff when he joined the team in August. "Just as importantly, his competitiveness and team-first approach fit well with the culture that has been built here."

Among the returning players is Leo Beath, a 6-foot-8 senior forward who led the team in scoring with 12.2 ppg last season during 32 starts in 33 games. Also returning is Tom Beattie, a 6-foot-5 senior guard whose 3.4 assists per game led the team last season.

The Tritons did lose two noteworthy players: last year's leading rebounder, sophomore guard Hudson Mayes (5.7 rpg), who transferred to New Mexico, and Emanuel Prospere II, tops in steals (1.7 per game), who graduated.

However, Beath averaged 5.1 rebounds last season and incoming junior guard Jordan Johnson averaged 5.7 rebounds.

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The Sentry Open opens ticket sales for its PGA tournament in La Jolla

By Mark Nero
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – The PGA Tour event formerly known as the Farmers Insurance Open has taken another step toward its future.

The classic San Diego golf tournament, which was renamed The Sentry Open in the spring, has opened ticket sales for the 2027 version of the event, which is set for Jan. 27-30.

The tournament, which is played annually in La Jolla, will be held for the 75th time overall next year and for the 60th consecutive time at Torrey Pines Golf Course.

Wisconsin-based Sentry Insurance replaced Farmers Insurance as the event's title sponsor on June 1, so after being known as the Farmers Open for the previous 17 years, the tournament has rebranded at The Sentry.

The tournament, which was first played in 1952 as the San Diego Open and has been held at Torrey Pines each year since 1968, is organized by the Century Club of San Diego, a 501c3 nonprofit whose Champions for Youth program serves at-risk and underserved communities.

"We are excited to usher in a new era with our partners at Sentry (Insurance) as we continue to deliver on the traditions of San Diego's leading sporting and lifestyle event," Century Club of San Diego CEO Marty Gorsich said in a statement.



Xander Schauffele tees off on hole No. 3 of the North Course at Torrey Pines on Friday, Jan. 30. (Photo by Thomas Melville/Times of San Diego)

Daily grounds tickets start at $50 for Round 1 and increase by $10 for each following round. Kids 15 and under receive free admission with a paid adult (one free children's admission per grown-up), and discounted daily grounds tickets for senior citizens and military personnel begin at $45 during the tournament's first two days.

Daily tickets to the Pechanga Club are $350 for Round 1, $395 for Round 2, and $450 per day for rounds 3 and 4. Tickets include a reserved seat along with in-seat beverage service and other perks.

There are also individual, day-specific tickets that start at $150 for Round 1 and increase by $15 for each successive round.

This year, Jan. 27 and 28 are the tournament's full field days (Rounds 1-2), where spectators can see the entire roster of players compete on Torrey Pines' North and South courses before the cut is made.

The championship days, rounds 3-4, will then be held on the South Course from Jan. 29-30.

"San Diego is now a Sentry community, and we look forward to celebrating the region and creating an impact that extends beyond tournament week," Sentry Insurance chairman and CEO Pete McPartland said. "Our commitment to supporting and strengthening the communities in which we have a presence is an integral part of our business. It's who we are, and who we'll always be."

Information on ticket options, including discounted group rates, discounts for seniors and military and advance purchases on parking, is available at https://thesentry.com/tickets/.

For those who can't be there in person or prefer to watch on TV, the tournament will be broadcast on CBS, the Golf Channel, PGA Tour Radio on SiriusXM and the World Feed. It will also be streamed live on Paramount+ and ESPN+.



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After midseason forfeit, Country Day rallies to reach quarterfinals

By Noah Perkins
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – The injuries kept mounting. At one point, La Jolla Country Day didn't have enough healthy players to take the field.

The Torreys nevertheless reached the CIF-San Diego Section Div. V quarterfinals before their season ended Friday night with a 34-13 loss to Olympian.

The severity of the injuries became clear in October, when La Jolla Country Day forfeited its Oct. 8 game against undefeated county powerhouse Santa Fe Christian rather than risk putting an undermanned team on the field.

The Torreys had just 34 players on their roster, including 14 freshmen. Following a 35-0 loss to Bishop's and a bye week, injuries left them without enough healthy players to compete safely, head coach Carmy Cesaire said.

"It was tough because we want to coach games, play games and compete. That's football. But I just couldn't see anybody else get hurt," Cesaire said. "I told the parents I wasn't going to put the kids in that position, where we'd have to put someone out there who had never played before. We weren't going to throw 14-year-olds to the dogs."

The players understood the decision, Cesaire said, even though it meant giving up a chance to compete.

"We would have played that game 100 times out of 100 if we could," he said. "I think the young guys were probably a little bit relieved. It was a chance to breathe, get healthy and get back into it."

"Forfeiting on a team is never a mindset you have planned in advance as a team," said Marvin Jones III, a wide receiver who moved to quarterback amid the injuries. "We were low on guys and didn't want to risk further injuries on the team that could potentially affect our outcome of the season moving forward.

"So, it's not a matter of we were not capable of playing SFC, more that we were putting the team first and preparing for what is best for the team and what was going to happen in the long run."

No position was hit harder than quarterback. The Torreys went through four quarterbacks in a Week 4 loss to La Jolla High. Starter Will Bertrand, who threw 10 touchdowns in the team's first three games, suffered a season-ending broken leg early in the game. Jones took over before an MCL injury sidelined him for several weeks. Rocco Taccone stepped in next, but an AC joint injury forced the Torreys to turn to sophomore Jaydon Turman.

La Jolla Country Day lost six offensive starters through the first six weeks, forcing players into unfamiliar roles and the coaching staff to simplify its offense.

"We have done a good job adopting the next-man-up mindset," Bertrand said.



La Jolla Country Day QB Marvin Jones III tries to find running room. (Photo courtesy of LJCD)

"People have had to play in spots they didn't think they would, but everyone has made plays and adapted to difficult situations. We have lost a ton of people for a significant amount of time."

"We've kept it real simple these last few weeks. You don't motion as much, you stick to a couple of formations and get good at a couple of plays," Cesaire said. "We've focused on fundamentals and techniques. When you lose one guy, you're losing three guys for us — an offensive player, a defensive player and a special teams guy. It was cool to see some of the young guys, especially sophomores and juniors, step up and take on different roles."

Senior Owen Dorros became one of the Torreys' most versatile players, contributing at wide receiver, running back and kicker.

After years of playing soccer, Dorros began playing tackle football in eighth grade. His soccer background led coaches to put him at kicker, but he continued working at receiver, his preferred position.

Dorros finished the season with 316 rushing yards and three touchdowns on 53 carries, while catching 52 passes for 736 yards and nine touchdowns. He also made all 27 of his extra-point attempts and converted three of five field-goal attempts, including a season-long 44-yarder.

"He got off to a hot start receiving-wise before my injury, but he has continued to make plays as both a receiver and running back, doing whatever the team needs him to," Bertrand said.

Dorros said losing both the starting and backup quarterbacks against La Jolla affected team morale but reinforced the need to find his own role.

"Losing our starting and backup quarterback against La Jolla definitely hurt team morale a lot," Dorros said. "I was told to play kicker and fell in love with it while continuing to work on my skills at receiver until I'd get the opportunity to play.

"I think kicking is what has got me so far throughout my high school football career because it always felt like there was a reason I was on the team, even when my true passion was getting the ball out at receiver. I knew from the get-go I would have to find a place on the team."

Tritons sink Vikings in playoffs, UC moves on to semi-finals

By Hector Trujillo
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – La Jolla was eliminated in the CIF Div. III playoffs after a 56-35 defeat in the quarterfinal round to University City on Friday, Nov. 13.

The 91 combined points matched that from their previous meeting on Oct. 30 at La Jolla where University City won 49-42 in a game that combined for 759 yards of offense.

"Overall, proud of my guys for battling all season long and just staying the course and trusting the process," said La Jolla head coach Tyler Roach. "Credit to University City, they've got a talented offense."

The Vikings were led by senior Nico Bardaro who accounted for all five touchdowns with two coming on the ground and three receiving while the Tritons were led by running back Deshaun Hille who had six rushing touchdowns along with 231 yards on 33 carries.

La Jolla earned its spot in the quarterfinal round by defeating Central High 31-14 on Nov. 6, while University City received a first-round bye as the fourth seed.

"There was a lot of learning throughout the season and a lot of growth," Roach added. "Records get kind of thrown out the window in the playoffs and it's win or go home. It comes down to one play at a time and one quarter at a time in the playoffs."

> "...proud of my guys for battling all season long..."
>
> **Tyler Roach**
> La Jolla head coach

The Vikings earned a fifth seed by going 3-7 during the regular season but bounced back after losing four of its first five games including its first three. Four of those seven defeats were by one score including the first meeting against University City where La Jolla had a chance to win on its final drive, but a costly fumble gave the ball back to the Tritons who then drive down and scored with just a few seconds left.

"We would have loved to have a few more wins in the win column," said Roach. "Considering the schedule, we were playing with some tough opponents and losing a couple of close games with a young squad, you just got to continue to trust the process. There was a lot of learning throughout the season and a lot of growth."

La Jolla's playoff performance was an improvement from 2025 when it also entered as the fifth seed only to be eliminated by 12th-seeded Scripps Ranch in the first round.

University City now moves on to face Steele Canyon this Friday in the semifinal round.

Falcons shut out Highlanders for flag football championship

By Noah Perkins
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

CHULA VISTA – Torrey Pines defended its place atop San Diego flag football Saturday, shutting out Helix 13-0 to win the Open Division championship and secure its second consecutive section title.

Alexa Avila scored both touchdowns, returning a punt 50 yards for the opening score before turning a screen pass from quarterback Izzie Dieter into a 15-yard touchdown. The Falcons' defense took care of the rest, holding the Highlanders scoreless at Olympian High School in Chula Vista.

The shutout capped a three-game postseason run in which Torrey Pines allowed only 25 points. The Falcons beat Mira Mesa 19-7 on Oct. 28 and Carlsbad 27-18 in the semifinals Nov. 3 before blanking Helix.

Kate Conway and Lola Johnson intercepted passes against the Highlanders. Helix also tested the Falcons with a deeper passing attack than they typically faced, forcing adjustments from the defensive backs. Falcons head coach Ryland Wickman said the corners made those adjustments while the rushers worked to contain Helix quarterback Vida Sanchez, whose athleticism made her a threat to run.

"They threw a lot more deep balls than usual," Wickman said. "They missed a couple. We got kind of lucky; they dropped a couple, and then our corners made some good adjustments."

Wickman said the defense improved throughout the postseason, stepping up in all three playoff games. The players became more comfortable with their assignments and attentive to details, allowing them to react rather than overthink.

"They weren't thinking out there; they were just reacting and playing football and having fun," Wickman said.

The defensive performance was the culmination of a season that tested the Falcons. Wickman said the team dealt with several injuries while playing what he considers one of the toughest schedules in San Diego.



Torrey Pines flag football team celebrates their championship on the bus. (Photo by Ryland Wickman/TPHS)

A trip to Sacramento gave the players an opportunity to bond away from the field and strengthen the camaraderie that carried them through the season.

Wickman said there were stretches when he wasn't sure how the season would turn out. The players, however, stayed together and continued working toward the postseason.

"They stuck through it, stuck to it, and when it came down to the end, they were ready to roll," Wickman said.

The championship extended a run the program began last season. Wickman noted that last year's championship also featured an eight-team field, though it was not called the Open Division.

"These girls have created something special here," Wickman said. "They kind of understand that, and so they want to continue to keep this going."

Torrey Pines stuns Helix with last second score in Div. 1 quarterfinals

By Noah Perkins
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA MESA – Torrey Pines went on the road last Friday night and knocked off the biggest prize in the San Diego Section Div. 1 playoff bracket. Eighth-seeded Torrey Pines stunned No. 1 Helix, 20-17, in the quarterfinals when Clark Drcar drilled an 18-yard field goal as time expired to send the Falcons into the semifinals.

The Highlanders had drawn even at 17 with a field goal when Torrey Pines' Jaydan Tong intercepted QB Caden Thompson with 26 seconds left. Tong returned the interception to the Helix 1-yard line. Torrey Pines used its next play to position the ball for Drcar, then allowed the remaining seconds to drain before the field-goal attempt.

"Clark is someone we can always count on," Torrey Pines running back Jacob Kreiss said. "He honestly doesn't get the recognition he deserves. The kid just doesn't miss, and we all knew he was going to make that kick."



Torrey Pines running back Jacob Kreiss leaps over a Helix defender. (Photo by Jayden Ricasa/Special for Times of San Diego)

"Once we were in the position for the game winning field goal, I already knew Clark was going to nail it," Torrey Pines wide receiver Logan Bonneau said.

Earlier in the game, Drcar's 44-yarder at the halftime horn was his longest field goal of the season. Only his 52-yard kick last season was longer.

Quarterback Blake Miller found Bonneau for a 64-yard touchdown in the first quarter, giving Torrey Pines its first points. Bonneau finished with three receptions for 145 yards.

"On that long touchdown I had a seam down the middle and the safety flipped his hips," Bonneau said. "Both me and Blake have a great connection so he knew I would take the middle I did and it worked out."

The Falcons moved in front for the first time in the fourth quarter. Kreiss finished a 78-yard possession with a 7-yard touchdown run, putting Torrey Pines ahead 17-14. He carried 21 times for 71 yards and the score. Helix answered with a field goal to tie the game at 17.

Torrey Pines entered the playoffs as the Div. 1 eighth seed after finishing 1-3 in Avocado West League play. Helix entered the postseason with an 8-3 record after sweeping its four Grossmont Hills League games and winning five consecutive contests to close the regular season.

"This win shows how much fight our team has and that we never give up," Kreiss said. "Everyone was fired up after the game, and it was a great feeling to get that win."

Bonneau said the Falcons approached the postseason with a clean slate, regardless of their regular-season record.

"The win says a lot about us as a team, we will not stop fighting and we know that once the playoffs started, we were back to being 0-0," Bonneau said. "After the game we were fired up! But now it's time to prepare for Granite Hills."

Thompson threw both of Helix's touchdown passes to Jacob Andrew-Johnson, who finished with five receptions for 80 yards. Stephon Fuentes led the Highlanders with 59 rushing yards.

Torrey Pines will face No. 4 Granite Hills in the Div. 1 semifinals on Nov. 20.

The Social Diary – 80th Jewel Ball raises $1.4M, and Scott Peters in '28

By Margo Schwab
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

Oct. 21 was a day full of amazing announcements for Las Patronas, as guests gathered for lunch at the La Jolla Country Club. More than $1.4 million was raised for critical San Diego organizations like Canine Companions for a climate-controlled van for service dogs in training; Meals on Wheels San Diego County for a hybrid delivery vehicle for meal distribution and wellness checks; National Marine Mammal Foundation for a mobile "Dolphin Doctor" field laboratory for marine care; Promises2Kids for playground equipment for foster youth; Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute for advanced laboratory equipment to accelerate biomedical research; and Workshops for Warriors for heavy-duty forklift and charger to support hands-on vocational training for veterans.

A lot of good thanks to the diligent work of LP and community support from Jewel Angel Dianne Bashor, Caroline and Nico Nierenberg, Emma Zuckerman, Valerie and Harry Cooper, and the tireless and generous 80th Jewel Ball chair Jenny McGowan, her mother Jean Sexton, and co-chairs Laurel Hanson and Sara Carpenter!

Next year's 81st Jewel Ball theme is Okavango, inspired by that region in Botswana. The Jewel Ball is in good hands with chair Lisa Bresnahan at the helm, along with new LP members Liz Cebron, Daisy Dai, Katie Emery, Diana H. Ferguson, Taylor Doyle Hilsman, Jennifer Levy, Catherine (Cat) Martin, Anna Palmer, Nicole Peck, Karen Scarff, Allison Stone, and Erica Tsai.

About that Scott Peters mention. At the Jewel Ball, I asked MaryAnne Pintar, Peters' chief of staff, are the rumors true that he will be running for mayor of San Diego... yes!



Margo Schwab in Herve Leger with Festa Di Venezia 2026 Jewel Ball chair Jenny McGowan.



2027 Jewel Ball chair Lisa Bresnahan with Margo Schwab, and 2026 Jewel Ball chair Jenny McGowan. (All photos by Margo Schwab/Special for Times of San Diego)



(From left) Jennifer Landa, Chris Andrews, 2027 Jewel Ball chair Lisa Bresnahan, design chair Stephanie Stone, (sitting, from left) Allison Stone, Jennifer Levy, Elizabeth Cebron, and Dagmar Smek.



LP president Dagmar Smek with centerpiece flowers.



Jenny McGowan with her mother Jean Sexton.



Scott Johnston with former Jewel Ball chair Wendy Segall.



A record $1,403,212 raised from the 2026 Festa Di Venezia Jewel Ball.



New Las Patronas members!



81st Jewel Ball chair Lisa Bresnahan with her mother Chris Andrews.



Megan Casey-Jones, Julia Civardi, and Amanda Walker aka 'Moo.'



Some of the wonderful Las Patronas past Jewel Ball chairs.



Jenny McGowan having fun photobombing LP past presidents' photo.