



EXCLUSIVE: Central Basin Director Vasquez Trying to Illegally Alter Districts

When told the move was illegal, Director Juan Garza said, “We make the law, we can bring the item back even if it’s illegal.”

By Brian Hews

Central Basin (CB) Director Leticia Vasquez-Wilson, who is facing a tough re-election campaign against her board ally Martha Camacho-Rodriguez, with dedicated support from her lap-dog-Directors Juan Garza, is attempting to illegally redraw Central Basin voting districts to retain her seat in the November 2024 election.

The scheme began a few weeks ago when Vasquez-Wilson, with the support of Garza, demanded that an item related to “redrawing district boundaries” be placed on the agenda in September of this year.

CB attorneys were forced to contact an outside law firm to prepare a memorandum concerning redistricting law; Vasquez-Wilson and the others were told the memo would be ready

by the November board meeting.

But that was not quick enough for Vasquez and her husband, Ron “Sweet James” Wilson, who filed a questionable contempt of court proceedings against CB - despite the fact they both knew the redistricting was illegal - to force placement of the redistricting item on the October board meeting agenda.

At the hearing, CB attorneys informed the presiding judge the item would be placed on the November agenda; the case was moved until February 2024, when CB will show proof that the item was placed on the November agenda.

By early November, the outside law firm completed the memo, which was included in the Board Packet sent out weekly by GM Alex Rojas.

The memo was clear; if there were an attempt to redistrict, the action would be met with lawsuits challenging the maneuver.

Despite the memo, Vasquez-Wilson and Garza demanded the item be

[See CENTRAL, page 6]

La Palma Will Consider Digital Two-Sided Billboard on 91 Freeway

By Brian Hews

Outfront Foster Interstate, LLC, is requesting approval of a double-sided digital display billboard to be located on a portion of the real property at 6951 Walker Street.

The proposed billboard will have an overall height of ninety-two feet on the Walker property.

The base structure for the billboard sign will consist of a three-part pipe sleeved together for

a single pole superstructure. The first 30’ feet of pole superstructure will a 60” inch diameter pipe buried underground in a concrete footing.

The billboard display size is dictated by City Code which states, “The maximum size of each digital billboard face display area shall be 25 feet in height and 60 feet in width, with the area of each face not to exceed an overall maximum of

[See BILLBOARD, page 14]

CIF-SS CHAMPIONS!



THE CERRITOS HIGH football team celebrates the program’s first CIF-Southern Section divisional championship in the sport after rallying for a 19-13 overtime victory over Yucca Valley High last Saturday night. The Dons are Division 12 champions. Photo by Loren Kopff.

The Bike-Friendly Transformation of Artesia



ARTESIA’S nearly completed Historical District Recreational Trail runs diagonally from 183rd St. and Gridley Road to 187th St. and Corby Avenue.

By Alan Caldwell

Artesia is undergoing a remarkable transformation into a bike-friendly community.

Spanning just 1.6 square miles with a population of about 16,000 residents, Artesia is a diverse city with a thriving Little India district coexisting

alongside multi-ethnic Asian, Latino, Black, and white neighborhoods.

Despite being surrounded by car-centric areas in the Gateway Cities sub-region, Artesia is determined to create a sustainable and active transportation infrastructure.

Artesia is not some

kind of bike paradise (yet), but the city is already surpassing its surrounding neighbors with new bike lanes, green pavement treatments, a new bike path, and more on the way. In early 2022, Artesia adopted the Artesia Active Transportation Plan, marking a significant

[See ARTESIA , page 6]

High School Football CERRITOS WINS AS ADHIKARI, SAGUN SUPPLY LATE GAME HEROICS

By Loren Kopff •
@LorenKopff on Twitter

Considering how the Cerritos High football team had outscored its past three opponents in the first half 77-6, a defensive tussle in the CIF-Southern Section Division 12 championship game wouldn’t have been thought of. While the Dons had to stave off fourth quarter rallies each time in the playoffs, it would be the opposite on the biggest stage in the history of the Cerritos football program.

In their 19-13 overtime victory over Yucca Valley High last Saturday night at Atkins Stadium on the Artesia High campus, the Dons ran 14 plays in the first half, gaining just a measly four yards, turned the ball over twice but was

[See CERRITOS, page 13]

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Cerritos High Student Just Misses State Finals, on to USC



CERRITOS HIGH’S Jasmine Koo placed twelfth in a tough field of competitors at the State semi-final golf event held at Los Serranos Golf, missing the finals by one stroke.

Staff Report

Cerritos High’s Jasmine Koo recently finished out her decorated high school golf career this past November 9 placing twelfth in a tough field of competitors at the State semi-final golf event held at Los Serranos Golf.

Koo carded a 1 under par 73, just missing a shot at the state finals by one stroke.

Koo’s journey to the state semi-final tournament started when she captured the two-day 605 League Finals on November 6 and 7 shooting a 9 under par 62 at Los Amigos Golf Course and a 6 under par 68 at Lakewood Country Club to win by 27 strokes.

Her win advanced Jasmine to the CIF-

SS Central Finals on October 23 at Spring Valley Lake Country Club where she continued her winning by capturing the 96-person field tournament with a 3 under par 69.

Jasmine moved on to play in the CIF-SS Qualifying Finals on November 2 at Morongo Golf Club where she shot a 3 under par 69 to finish in second to advance to the state semi-finals at Los Serranos Golf Course.

Jasmine’s accomplishment over the past several years caught the attention of many top college golf programs and after much consideration, Jasmine has chosen to continue her golf career by signing a letter of intent to play golf at the University of Southern California.

Artesia Business Celebrates Ten Year Anniversary



OPTIMUM CARE Therapy in Artesia celebrated its tenth anniversary last week. With Dr. Sherry and Noriel Simsuangco is, from (l-r) Artesia Councilpersons Ali Taj and Melissa Ramoso, the Simsuangco’s and Artesia Mayor Monica Manalo.

La Mirada Accepting Applications for Vector Control Representative

Staff Report

La Mirada is seeking residents interested in serving on the Greater L.A. County Vector Control District (GLACVCD) for a term beginning in January.

Applications are due Friday, December 15. The selected applicant would represent the La Mirada on the GLACVCD Board and provide information to the City Council about GLACVCD activities and

programs. GLACVCD is a public health agency that is a result of legislation incorporated in the California State Health and Safety Code. The GLACVCD provides ongoing mosquito and vector control for its residents.

The Trustees serve a minimum of two or four year terms without compensation, but do receive an in lieu travel expense of \$100 for attending each regularly scheduled board meeting. The regularly scheduled board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 7 p.m. at District HQ in Santa Fe Springs.

For more information, call the La Mirada City Clerk’s Office at (562) 943-0131 or visit cityoflamirada.org.

Holiday Celebration

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12PM – 2PM

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ABCUSD's Carver Academy Named National Blue Ribbon School



ABC SUPERINTENDENT Dr. Gina Zietlow, right, and longtime Carver Principal Ms. Deborah Berlyn, holding award plaque, at the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award Ceremony in Washington, D.C. on November 17.

From ABCUSD News

Carver Elementary was named a National Blue Ribbon School this year; only 353 schools were recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools nationwide, with 33 schools in California.

"We are so proud of Carver Elementary School for earning this well-deserved recognition," said ABC Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Gina Zietlow. "I congratulate Principal Berlyn, along with her team of educators and staff, for earning this prestigious designation."

Carver Elementary School received recognition in the Exemplary High Performing Schools category, meaning the school is among the state's highest-performing schools as measured by

state assessments or nationally normed tests. This year's National Blue Ribbon Schools award is Carver Elementary School's first. However, the State of California has previously recognized Carver Elementary as a Distinguished School, Gold Ribbon School, and the school received the Title I Academic Achievement Award.

"Earning a National Blue Ribbon designation is a huge honor," said Carver Principal Deborah Berlyn. "This recognition reflects the high quality of instruction we give our students and the ongoing support of our students' families."

You can learn more about the 2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools at www.nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov.

Cerritos City Council Strategic Planning Session to be held



The Cerritos City Council will hold a Strategic Planning Session on **Saturday, December 2** at **10 a.m.** in the **Cerritos Park East Malibu Room**.

Community members are encouraged to participate and submit written comments for this meeting related to the Preliminary Combined Financial Program for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Please submit comments via email to city_clerk@cerritos.us and include "Strategic Planning Session" in the subject line of any written correspondence.

Additional updates will be posted on the City's website at cerritos.us.

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Sup. Hahn and Others Delivered 700 Turkeys to Families in Need



LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR Janice Hahn helped to deliver over 700 turkeys bundles last week which included potatoes, canned goods, and pumpkin pies.

By Brian Hews

Commerce, CA – This past week Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn partnered with Assemblyman Miguel Santiago and the city of Commerce to give out more than 700 turkeys, bags of potatoes, canned goods, and pumpkin pies to families in need ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday.

“I am grateful that we could come together to make sure these families could put Thanksgiving dinner on the table,” said Supervisor Janice Hahn. “I appreciate our sponsors, the volunteers, the city of Commerce, and my friend Miguel Santiago for all of their hard work to make this possible.”

The drive-through turkey giveaway event took place Monday morning at the

Commerce City Hall.

Sponsors of the year’s event included Athens Services, Cal Water, the Water Replenishment District, the Commerce Casino, and TransTech Engineers, Inc.

People who received turkeys came from across Supervisor Hahn’s district including Commerce, Lynwood, Bell, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, Cudahy, Long Beach, Paramount, Whittier, and Downey.

“It was great getting together with Supervisor Hahn and Assemblyman Santiago to give these families a dinner they could enjoy,” said Commerce Councilman Hugo Argumedo. “We are really blessed to help them during Thanksgiving and everyone got together to help the families out.”

A Holiday Message from La Mirada Mayor Steve De Ruse

As the holidays arrive, it is time to gather with family and friends and celebrate the season. On behalf of the City of La Mirada, I invite you to join us for some fun and festive events!

It is time to start planning your most festive holiday home display for the Holiday Home Decorating Contest! La Mirada residents are encouraged to help spread holiday cheer throughout the

city by decorating their homes. Volunteer judges will be canvassing neighborhoods beginning Friday, Dec. 1 through Sunday, Dec. 10. Winners will receive a commemorative yard sign and be announced on the City’s website and social media accounts. A City-wide best decorated neighborhood will also be selected, so gather your neighbors to create a holiday display for all to enjoy!

Festivities continue Sat., Dec. 2 at 5 p.m. at the City’s Chili Holiday Celebration at Splash! La Mirada Regional Aquatics Center. The event includes the official tree lighting ceremony, live entertainment, warm beverages, chili, photos with Santa, sledding, train rides, and more!

Santa Claus is coming to town for a three-night magical journey to spread holiday cheer throughout La Mirada. Santa’s Caravan will begin at 5 p.m. each night from Tuesday, December 5 through Thursday, Dec. 7. Santa’s sleigh will make its way through many neighborhoods. To enhance your Santa tracking experience, download the free Glympse App, to follow Santa as he makes his way through the city! Visit the City’s website for map information.

This is also the season of giving, and I encourage you to help spread the holiday spirit by donating to the City’s Holiday Toy and Food Drive. Donations of new unwrapped toys and non-perishable food items can be brought to the Activity Center, City Hall, Community Sheriff’s Station, Community Gymnasium, La Mirada Library, Resource Center, and Splash! La Mirada Regional Aquatics Center through December 11. Donations can help bring holiday cheer to local families in need.

Seniors are invited to “Candy Cane Lane” at the All That Dance on Friday, Dec. 8 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Activity Center. Enjoy light refreshments, snacks, crafts, and musical entertainment by DJ Professor D for only \$5 per person.

Children are encouraged to let Santa know what is on their Christmas wish list. Special mailboxes are located at City Hall, the Resource Center and Splash! La Mirada Regional Aquatics Center for children to send a letter to Santa. Be sure to drop off your letter by Friday, Dec. 15 to receive a personalized reply from the North Pole. Remember to include a return address so Santa can write back.

Keep the tradition of making the La Mirada Theatre your home for the holidays. On Saturday, Dec. 16, for one show only, enjoy Navidad en Mexico, a joyous Christmas celebration of traditional Mexican song and dance. On Sunday, Dec. 17, catch Christmas with C.S. Lewis, the brilliant one-man play about the inspiring author. Finally, don’t miss the lively Nutcracker on Sat., Dec. 23. These high-energy performances will provide the perfect holiday entertainment for everyone.

On behalf of the City of La Mirada, I wish everyone a safe and joyful holiday season with all the best for 2024!

Warmly,
Steve De Ruse
La Mirada Mayor

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Santa’s Holiday Float Returns to Cerritos

Santa’s Holiday Float returns to Cerritos neighborhoods again this month.

The program will be offered on seven nights in December and feature a float with Santa traveling through the residential areas of Cerritos. Children will have the opportunity to wave at Santa and enjoy a festive float with music and holiday decorations.

Santa’s Holiday Float will travel through the city starting at 6 p.m. Monday, December 4 through Wednesday, December 6; Monday, December 11 through Wednesday, December 13; and on Friday, December 15.

Maps showing the float’s route each evening will be posted on the City’s website at cerritos.us by early December. A GPS tracker will be placed on the float to allow residents to track its location each evening through a link on the City’s website.

In the event of rain, the float will be canceled for that evening and the route will be rescheduled to another night.

Parents are urged to supervise their children to keep them from running into the streets while the float is passing.



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Classic Christmas Films \$5 on Starlight Lakewood’s Giant 70’ Screen



NEWLY RE-OPENED Starlight Lakewood Center Movie Theatres in Lakewood Center Mall celebrates with beloved holiday films for a limited time.

Lakewood, CA - This December, Starlight Lakewood Center Theatres presents classic Christmas movies playing in its premier 70-foot-screen auditorium for only \$5 admission.

Elf, the 2003 Will Ferrell comedy, will play on December 6th at 4:40 PM, 7:00 PM, & 9:20 PM. Irving Berlin’s 1954 musical **White Christmas** will play on December 13th at 4:15 PM, 7:00 PM, & 9:45 PM. **It’s a Wonderful Life**, the 1946 film considered one of the greatest movies ever made, will play on December 20th at 4:10 PM, 7:00 PM, & 9:50 PM. Tickets are available to purchase now at StarlightCinemas.com or at the theater box office.

Starlight Lakewood Center Theatres is now open and playing the latest film releases every week. Starlight Cinemas, a community-focused theater business with seven total locations all in Southern California, rebranded and re-opened the enormous 16-plex Lakewood Shopping Center building in August of this year, restoring much of the

interior with more improvements coming soon. The company hopes that families will join them in this extended opening celebration by bringing loved ones to experience iconic holiday films on the big screen for a low price.

Starlight Lakewood Center Theatres, like its 6 sister theaters, features \$5 Bargain Days every week. Bargain Days are Tuesdays all day, and Sundays before 6PM; during these times guests can see any movie, including brand new films, for only \$5 admission (with small exceptions to this pricing for special events). With free refills on large popcorn and large drinks, and a free membership program with passively earned rewards, Starlight Cinemas aims to cement itself as the best local movie theater experience for your buck in the Lakewood, California.

Starlight Lakewood Center Theatres is in the Lakewood Center Mall at 5200 Faculty Ave, Lakewood, CA 90712. It is located at Candlewood St. and Clark Ave., next to Costco.

Recalled Cantaloupes Linked to 3 Deaths

Three people have died amid more than 150 cases of salmonella infections linked to cantaloupes, according to CDC and Canadian health officials.

Two deaths occurred in Minnesota, and 99 reported U.S. cases span 32 states. An additional person has died in Canada, where so far 63 people have had lab-confirmed cases of salmonella linked to contaminated cantaloupes.

Both whole and precut cantaloupe products have been recalled that were sold at multiple retailers under multiple brand names. The cantaloupe recalls currently listed by the CDC are:

Whole cantaloupes that might have a sticker on them that says “Malichita” or “Rudy,” with the number “4050” and “Product of Mexico/produit du Mexique.”

Some Vinyard brand pre-cut cantaloupes, melon and fruit medleys sold in Oklahoma.

Some ALDI whole cantaloupe and pre-cut fruit products such as pineapple spears that were sold in specific states.

Some Freshness Guaranteed brand and RaceTrac brand pre-cut cantaloupes, including melon and fruit mixes, sold in specific states.

Recalled products should be thrown away or returned where they were purchased, the CDC advises. Surfaces and items that may have come in contact with recalled items should be washed with hot, soapy water or in a dishwasher.

Most infected people will develop symptoms between 6 hours and 6 days of exposure. So far, the cantaloupe salmonella outbreak has affected people ranging in age from infants to people 100 years old, the CDC says.

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Visit schooslofchoice.abcusd.us or scan the QR code below to learn more about the Schools of Choice process.



Important Dates:
December 1, 2023 at 12:00 a.m. - Applications Open
December 31, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. - Applications Close
January 29, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. - Live Lottery
February 7, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. - Notifications Begin
March 6, 2024 at 11:59 a.m. - Schools of Choice Ends

Cerritos Sheriff's Station Receives Cheer from Local Church



MEMBERS of the Cerritos Mission Church brought a big floral arrangement and Thanksgiving meal for Cerritos Sheriff's Station Deputies and personnel.

Tree maintenance contract awarded

The Cerritos City Council recently awarded a \$2.7 million four-year

tree-maintenance contract to Golden West Arbor Services, Inc. The Pomona-based company will trim approximately 27,230 trees during the four-year term.



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ARTESIA from page 1

milestone in its pursuit of becoming a bike-friendly city. The plan outlines 17 priority bikeway projects, demonstrating the city's commitment to enhancing its cycling infrastructure. In a recent development, Artesia unveiled new bright green bike lanes on 166th Street between Pioneer and Norwalk Boulevards. This half-mile long project, spanning across Artesia, Norwalk, and Cerritos, incorporated a road diet to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike.

Additionally, Artesia is in the process of constructing the Historical District Recreational Trail along the soon-to-be-renamed West Santa Ana Branch rail right-of-way. While the walk/bike path is currently open to the public, the city is still adding finishing touches such as landscaping and irrigation. Stretching diagonally from 183rd Street/Gridley Road to 187th Street/Corby Avenue, this trail is set to become a valuable asset for both residents and visitors.

With Artesia's ongoing efforts to improve its cycling infrastructure and the developments taking place, other cities, like neighboring Bellflower, are setting their sights on creating rail-trails alongside new Metro lines.

These initiatives have the potential to inspire and pave the way for a more comprehensive network of bike-friendly transportation throughout the region.

Artesia's journey towards becoming a bike-friendly city is a testament to the importance of investing in sustainable and active transportation options.

By prioritizing the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, Artesia is creating a more connected, healthier, and environmentally conscious community for its residents.

CENTRAL from page 1

placed on the November agenda for discussion.

According to CB counsel, California Water Code Section 71540 makes any redistricting subject to the rules found in the Elections Code for Special Districts.

According to the Code, redistricting can only occur after the census, which is every ten years, or when a "sufficient change in population" has occurred.

Census data are presumed to be accurate for ten years. Consequently, Vasquez-Wilson would have to prove a sufficient change in population using a costly tax-payer-funded analysis.

Research by LCCN found established SCOTUS case law in 1983 that mandates using an established methodology to prove the population shift. Vasquez-Wilson intends to "redraw district boundaries," evidently without analysis, which would likely be challenged in court, again costing CB rate-payers thousands in legal fees.

Despite the overwhelming evidence, Vasquez-Wilson and Garza insisted on discussing the item and were again advised by staff and legal counsel that they would be open to lawsuits if they proceed.

Unconcerned, Vasquez-Wilson motioned "to bring back the item as an action item to and redraw the district boundaries."

GM Alex Rojas responded, saying, "We can't agendize an item that we have been advised is illegal and non-compliant with election law."

In a reckless statement harkening back to the uber-corrupt days of Art Aguilar and Ron Calderon, Juan Garza snapped back, "We make the law, we can bring the item back even if it's illegal."

Vasquez-Wilson made the motion to bring back the redistricting item as an action item, which lap-dog Garza, of course, seconded; the motion failed with Vasquez-Wilson and Garza voting yes, President Art Chacon voting no, with the remaining board members abstaining; Rodriguez and Gualtieri were conspicuously absent. According to sources, Vasquez-Wilson's failed scheme cost CB thousands in legal fees.



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Irvine PD Secures Electric Vehicles Funded by California



SENATOR DAVE MIN (center) was joined by Irvine Chief of Police Mike Kent and others to showcase 13 electric vehicles, including Ford Lightning trucks, Ford Mustang Mach Es, Polaris Rangers, and all-terrain vehicles.

Staff Report

This week, the IPD announced \$990,000 in state funding to purchase modern communications equipment, charging stations and 13 electric vehicles, including Ford Lightning trucks, Ford Mustang Mach Es, Polaris Rangers, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Funded in the 2023-24 State Budget, Senator Dave Min (D-Irvine) was joined by Irvine Chief of Police Mike Kent to showcase state of the art electric

charging infrastructure at the Great Park and a Ford Lightning truck slated for police patrols. “Today, I’m proud to announce that the State of California is making serious investments in both public safety and sustainability,” said Senator Min. “It’s no secret that Irvine ranks among the safest cities in America and this new fleet of all electric police vehicles will ensure that our community continues to lead with best in class technology.”

La Mirada’s Chili Holiday

Kick-off your holiday season at the annual Chili Holiday event on Saturday, December 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Splash! La Mirada Regional Aquatics Center. Festivities include live entertainment,

crafts, beverages, cookies, and, of course, chili! Families can enjoy snow sledding, riding the holiday train through a winter wonderland, and photos with Santa. Please bring non-perishable food items and unwrapped toys to donate to the Holiday Toy and Food Drive.

Assemblyman Announces Legislation to End Time Change

Staff Report

Last week, Assemblyman Tri Ta (D-Rossmore) announced new legislation to end the practice of changing clocks twice a year. If passed, this measure would keep California on year-round standard time. “Changing clocks twice a year is not only frustrating, but it’s dangerous for drivers and contributes to our state’s mental and physical health crises every year. When voters passed Proposition 7 overwhelmingly in 2018, they did not expect the Legislature to stall the will of the voters by refusing to take up this important measure,” said Assemblyman Ta. “This legislation makes good on a promise that California voters decided on long before I was in office. It’s been 5 years, and now that I’m here in Sacramento, I’m going to hold government accountable and take action.” In 2018, Proposition 7 passed in California with nearly 60% of the vote, calling

on the Legislature to end twice-yearly time changes. According to several studies, time changes are linked to increases in vehicle accidents, seasonal depression, and other severe health issues. Dr Andrew Binder, MD, FAASM, FCCP, member of the Board of Directors of the California Sleep Society, who is excited and relieved to see this issue finally getting the attention it needs, says “I applaud Assemblyman Tri Ta for introducing this legislation. Children and teenagers are especially impacted by the disruption caused by time changes. Our natural sleep rhythms and internal clocks are best suited for year-round standard time and after the passage of Proposition 7, now is the time for the Legislature to act. I urge Assemblyman Ta’s colleagues in the Legislature to follow the science and join him in passing this important bill so Californians can lead healthier lives.” This bill would require a 2/3 vote of the Legislature and would go into effect in 2025 if passed.

Volunteers Sought for Friends of the 1st CEB

Cerritos adopted the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (1st CEB), United States Marine Corps, Camp Pendleton, in 2007 to encourage strong ties between the Marine unit, residents and the city. The Friends of the 1st CEB is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization that organizes programs in support of the Marines. Each month, the city joins with the Friends of the 1st CEB in honoring a marine for his or her high standards and outstanding work ethic and performance.

The program is designed to recognize the marines of the 1st CEB who serve our country and protect our freedom, in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. The battalion consists of Headquarters and Service Company, Engineer Support Company, and four engineer line companies: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta Company (Cadred). *For more information about the Friends of the 1st CEB or the Meritorious Marine Program, contact Chuck Sooter at (562) 860-8174 or visit friendsofthe1stceb.org.*

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SUPERVISOR · FOURTH DISTRICT

JANICE HAHN



UNIVERSAL STUDIOS UNWRAPS SPECTACULAR HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Staff Report

Universal Studios Hollywood celebrates the festive holidays with eagerly awaited seasonal favorites, “Christmas in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™” and “Grinchmas,™” beginning now running daily through Monday, January 1, 2024. All holiday activities are included in the price of theme park admission.

“Christmas in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter” brings the spirit of the holiday season to the village of Hogsmeade™ as the land is transformed with merry décor

of shimmering lights, decorative garlands and festive wreaths. Guests can take delight in special holiday a cappella performances from the Frog Choir, stroll through the village shops while sipping delicious hot Butterbeer™ or savor festive fare at Three Broomsticks™.

Beginning at dusk each night, “The Magic of Christmas at Hogwarts™ Castle” will dazzle with stunning imagery as the impressive light projection show illuminates Hogwarts™ School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, bringing the iconic Hogwarts™ castle to life and infusing the land with the sounds of an arrangement of music from the Harry Potter film series.



GRINCHMAS FOOD and other food items offered at Universal during the holidays.

Guests can commemorate their Christmas visit to Hogsmeade Village with a variety of exclusive keepsake items available for purchase, including personalized ornaments, sweaters, scarves and stockings.

The spirited “Grinchmas” Who-bilation also returns with an all-new daytime performance featuring the Who-Bee Doo-Wops group, Who-ville’s latest musical sensation rocking out to hip-swinging, bell-ringing holiday classics for the Whos and guests to enjoy.

The familiar and festive topsy-turvy 65 foot-tall “Grinchmas” tree, adorned with hundreds of ornaments and thousands of LED lights will stand tall within Universal Plaza, entertaining guests with a nightly tree lighting ceremony and snowfall flurry, bringing good tidings and season’s greetings to all.

“Grinchmas” activities will include photo opportunities with the Grinch and his faithful dog Max, a chance to spend time

with Cindy-Lou Who as she leads daily story time for young guests looking to learn “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” and visit to the Who-ville post office to mail a merry postcard sharing three good deeds.

A themed craft area will provide guests the opportunity for jolly holiday decorating by creating paper ornaments to adorn the Grinchmas tree or to take home as a holiday souvenir. Plus, a selection of themed Who-tacular sweet treats, including the Grinch Donut and hot cocoa, will be available for purchase.

Adding to the theme park activities, Universal CityWalk Hollywood will be dressed for the holiday season with spirited décor and a 40-foot-tall Christmas tree featuring more than 200,000 LED lights.





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By Loren Kopff
@LorenKopff on Twitter

The 605 League was dominated by Cerritos High in its early seasons of infancy, but now, Artesia High has been the team everyone else is looking up at, and it's expected to be the same this season. La Mirada High has had stellar seasons recently, and the Matadores are looking for another trip to the CIF-Southern Section divisional finals. Whitney High is looking for an encore performance with a new head coach while John Glenn High is seeking better things under their first-year head coach.



ARTESIA PIONEERS
22-8 overall last season, 10-0 in the 605 League, first place, lost to Buena High 66-56 in the Division 3AA second round playoffs.
Head coach: Jeffrey Myles (fifth season, 79-37)
Team's record previous five seasons: 97-48
Last time missed the playoffs: 1981
Division 3AA

STARTERS LOST: SR Aaron Banks (16.2 points per game last season), Steven Anderson Jr. (9.7 ppg.), Caleb Brown-Stanton (7.4 ppg. in 16 games)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Zion Staples (16.2 ppg.), SR Joshua Martinez (5.1 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Tyler Robinson, JR Cayden Del Rosario, JR Jaylen Reed, JR Judd Sajise

TOP NEWCOMERS: SO Kobe Young

Could the Artesia boys basketball program be gaining some momentum like the Artesia teams of early part of the 2000s when the Pioneers won three straight league titles, back to back CIF state championships and went 144-21 in a five-year span from 2002-2007? Time will tell, but if last season's performance, minus the second round exit in the playoffs, is any indication, then Artesia is headed for another banner campaign.

"Any loss is a hard loss," said head coach Jeffrey Myles of the early playoff loss last season. "Every season we go into with the expectations to make a deep run in the CIF playoffs and try to win CIF. Losing in the second round was heartbreaking. But we lost to a very good Buena team on

the road on a Friday night in a hostile environment. Buena won 30 games last year and went to the state finals. So, it's not like we lost to a bad team; they were a very good team, and we were right there with them and had our opportunity to win. But it just wasn't our time yet."

Artesia has had consecutive seasons of getting to at least the second round after seven straight first round exits. With the departure of senior Aaron Banks, who was the league's most valuable player, and seven other players, Myles will look to senior Zion Staples to carry most of the load, along with a solid group ready to do more. Staples is a likely candidate grab the same accolades that Banks did last season. But look for senior Josh Martinez to improve more as the only other returning starter. They will be joined in the projected starting lineup by juniors Jaylen Reed and Judd Sajise and sophomore Kobe Young, who is one of eight new players to varsity.

"During the offseason, we grind, we workout, we condition, we lift weights, we hit the beach for workouts, and we work on skill developments to try to help our players be the best basketball players they can be," said Myles. "The summer is about just playing games and getting experience and playing some teams you probably won't play in the regular season."

Outside of Martinez and Staples, senior Tyler Robinson, junior Cayden Del Rosario, Reed and Sajise played limited minutes, prompting Myles to treat this season's squad like a dozen new players. He said he couldn't pinpoint one or two top newcomers because every day, someone steps up or takes a step back, adding that after the top two options, he doesn't expect anyone to take a backseat to those players.

As for the season, which began with the Pioneers winning four of their first six games, Myles believes the recipe for success will be how quickly the new guys mesh together.

"The 605 [League] has gotten better this year and none of us expect it to be like last year," he said. "We expect to be in a dog fight every game and hopefully by league, our guys are up to the challenge, and I believe they will be. Someone once said, 'heavy is the head that wears the crown', and right now, we have the crown, and we know everyone in the league is coming for it. So, if we want to win the league and go back to back to back, we have to play every game like it's a championship

game and we have to implement what I've been preaching the last few years...ALWAYS COMPETE!!!"



CERRITOS DONS
14-16 overall last season, 8-2 in the 605 League, second place, lost to Newport Harbor High 51-47 in the Division 3A second round playoffs.
Head coach: Jonathan Watanabe (22nd season, second stint 319-264)
Team's record previous five seasons: 74-55
Last time missed the playoffs: 2007
Division 4AA

STARTERS LOST: Dominic Dela Cruz (7.0 points per game last season)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Osinachi Agaranna (4.8 ppg.), SR Tobeanna Ozoagu (8.5 ppg.), SR Shay Pema (7.1 ppg.) SR Luke Rigor

OTHERS RETURNING: JR Jaylen Barsana, JR Benson Cho, JR Nathan Ju, JR Jaden Ribac, JR Maddox Yokoyama, SO Yuuki Yamamoto

TOP NEWCOMERS: SR Evan Monteclaro, JR Nathan Dawit, JR Demetrius Washington

Longtime head coach Jonathan Watanabe has pretty much seen it all in his illustrious career. But this season will be different as he and the Cerritos nation will be playing with heavy hearts as senior Ethan Soriano passed away earlier in November. This would have been Soriano's first season on the varsity squad and the program will be dedicating the 2023-2024 season to him.

"Ethan is the ultimate teammate, always putting the needs of the team above his own," said Watanabe. "He is the epitome of hard work and perseverance."

"I see myself being a leader both vocally and through example as I hope my work ethic will inspire my teammates to keep getting better," said Soriano before the season began. "However, I will stay passionate for any role to make sure the team wins."

Last season was a rebuilding one for the Dons, who went through their second straight losing season, the first time that has happened since 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Watanabe attributes that to the youth and inexperience as there were three varsity returners and half a dozen more with

no varsity or junior varsity experience. But it must be mentioned that Cerritos began the season losing 10 of its first 11 games before the turnaround, and advanced to the second round of the playoffs.

Cerritos figures to be much stronger with seniors Osinachi Agaranna, Tobeanna Ozoagu, Shay Pema and Luke Rigor returning. In all, the team will field eight seniors, eight juniors, one sophomore and one freshman. Watanabe says the other five returning varsity players have gotten stronger and quicker, improved offensively and defensively and have a good understanding of the system and expectations to be successful, both on and off the court. He was speaking about juniors Jaylen Barsana, Benson Cho, Nathan Ju, Jaden Ribac and sophomore Yuuki Yamamoto.

"With all these returners, one of our biggest strengths has become our depth," said Watanabe. "We are comfortably able to rotate 10-12 players into the game with very little drop off."

Senior Evan Monteclaro, a transfer from Buena Park High, and juniors Nathan Dawit, a transfer from Servite High and Demetrius Washington, the MVP of the junior varsity team last season are listed as the top varsity newcomers who will make a big impact.

Watanabe sees Artesia as the team to beat again once league begins, but also knows the circuit is tougher. He adds that Whitney will still be good, especially if junior Morgan Marks can stay healthy. Among other tidbits he had about the league, he believes it's going to be "a fun and exciting league season".

The Dons will once again be put to the test in the first month and a half to the season, playing the likes of Cypress High, Gahr High, La Habra High, La Serna High, Los Alamitos High, Orangewood Academy and Servite High. They will also make their usual trek to San Diego to take part in the Mt. Carmel Tournament. The game against La Serna, which was this past Monday, was played at Crypto.com Arena, the 11th straight season the Dons have played a non-league game in that facility.

"A lot of coaches create a schedule allowing them to win 20+ games so they can have a "successful" season," said Watanabe. "At Cerritos, we are not concerned about the number of games we win in preseason. We are focused on getting better and winning championships. We schedule teams at or above our level of play to help our players and our team improve."



GAHR GLADIATORS
14-14 overall last season, 6-4 in the Mid-Cities League, third place, lost to Tustin High 29-18 in the Division 3AA first round playoffs.
Head coach: Marcus Girley (second season, 14-14)
Team's record previous five seasons: 63-59
Last time missed the playoffs: 2019
Division 3A

STARTERS LOST: SR Dayvon Gates, SR Trey Reyes, SR Evan Spurlin-Renfroe

STARTERS RETURNING: JR Uchenna Okoli, JR Joshua Pearson

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Noah Taylor, SO Roman Acosta, SO Austin Woon

TOP NEWCOMERS: FR John Cabral, FR Julian Cabral

No other information was given.



JOHN GLENN EAGLES
11-17 overall last season, 3-7 in the 605 League, tied for fourth place
Head coach: Chris Palisin (first season)
Team's record previous five seasons: 32-87
Last time made the playoffs: 2022
Division 5AA

STARTERS LOST: Armand Arreola (12.4 points per game in 18 games), Frankie Sanchez (2.8 ppg.), Michael Saucedo (13.0 ppg.), SR Sey-harmony Somchan (6.6. ppg. in 21 games)

STARTERS RETURNING: SO Sean DeLeon (8.0 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Justin Rodriguez, SR Nathan Serrano

TOP NEWCOMERS: Known for being the doormat of the old Suburban League with nine straight last place finishes, then a fifth place finish in the 605 League followed by consecutive 0-10 marks, Glenn has gone 25-30, the best two-season record the program has seen in over two and a half decades. That still wasn't enough to make a coaching change as Chris Palisin becomes Glenn's third head coach in the past four seasons

and 11th since the 1998-1999 season.

Palisin is entering his 26th season coaching boys basketball, 13 as the varsity level with previous stops at Hawthorne High, La Quinta High, Oxford Academy and Paramount High. Palisin led Oxford Academy to its first playoff victory in school history during the 2021-2022 season, then won 16 games last season at Paramount. While at Oxford Academy, he got to see the Eagles a total of six times and is familiar with the program that seems to be up and coming.

"They were tough-minded and had a great run the last two years, but it's a total rebuild right now with underclassmen," Palisin said. "We are very young, and accountability and fundamentals will be stressed as we grow as a team and as a program."

Player defections throughout last season forced the numbers to dwindle and when the season was over, the Eagles were left with three returning players for the 2023-2024 campaign. Since taking over, Palisin says the practices have been teaching moments, both good and bad, and the team was able to have a shortened fall season, which is positive for a rebuild. Since the Eagles are in rebuilding mode, they are stressing team daily with no individual more important than the team concept. With that said, he could not list a projected starting lineup or any individual players.

"My staff and I are building relationships and trust, and we expect positive effort and attitude daily," he said. "Sportsmanship and team energy is stressed."

Palisin admitted the 605 League is strong and experienced this year and added that Glenn's non-league schedule will be important to gain experience and confidence to build the young team's confidence and passion for league competition.

"We understand we will be a huge underdog this season with a total rebuild," said Palisin. "We will embrace and strive daily to help our student-athletes fulfill their maximum potential."



LA MIRADA MATADORES
25-10 overall last season, 6-2 in the Gateway League, tied for first place, lost to Rancho

Christian High 63-55 in the Division 2A championship game, lost to Oxnard High 61-58 in the quarterfinals of the Southern California Division II Regional playoffs.
Head coach: Randy Oronoz (sixth season, second stint, 97-59)
Team's record previous five seasons: 88-57
Division 1A

STARTERS LOST: Sean Cervantes (8.5 points per game last season), Anegi Castillo, Athan Sierra (7.4 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Michael Torres (4.1), JR Julien Gomez (24.9 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Christopher Cuevas, SR Isaiah Valenzuela, JR Jarrett Cole, JR Jaydin Cox, JR Chris Perez, JR Morgan Smith (5.4 ppg.), SO Tristan Partida

TOP NEWCOMERS: FR Gene Roebuck

After reaching the CIF-SS divisional finals the past two seasons, La Mirada can only go one way, which is up. The Matadores have moved to Division 1A for this season with an opportunity to go to the Open Division once the playoffs begin. Head coach Randy Oronoz says the past two seasons have been special and the Matadores have played in 14 playoff games during that span which has given them a ton of experience in big games.

"The offseason for us is really simple," said Oronoz. "The team gets a ton of shots up and skill work in the gym and really tries to dedicate themselves to their individual development."

Everyone in the Southern California high school basketball world knows about junior Julien Gomez, who was the HMG-Community News Player of the Year and Gateway League MVP last season. People are running out of words to describe him and his talent, but Oronoz says he is working on being a better facilitator. He says the 6'3" Gomez is working on making plays for others and running the offense at the point guard position. But there's more to La Mirada than Gomez.

Junior Morgan 'MJ' Smith, who stands at 6'4" and freshman sensation Gene Roebuck, at 6'5" are two other projected starters with the other two still up for grabs depending on who plays better that particular week in practice, according to Oronoz. La Mirada returns nine players from last season and will have four newcomers with Roebuck the future of the program.

"Gene Roebuck is an extremely talented player that has potential to be one of the best players in the state as a freshman," said Oronoz. "He's 6'5"

and a great shot maker as well as a great decision maker." The Matadores won the 6th Annual "Rumble for Rosecrans Ave." Tournament, then defeated Villa Park High and Sonora High and opened the season playing seven games in the first 12 days of the season (not including this past Sunday), winning all of them. La Mirada will later participate in the prestigious Damien Classic plus other single games ahead of what figures to be another tough Gateway League season. "We enjoy the progress we've made and moving up to Division 1 is a testament to the hard work we put in," said Oronoz. "During the preseason, we play a ton of DI teams, so it's nothing we are afraid of and actually we embrace the challenge. In that division, anyone can beat you come playoff time. we are just hoping we are healthy and playing our best basketball come February."



NORWALK LANCERS
11-17 overall last season, 4-6 in the Mid-Cities League, fourth place
Head coach: Brent Campanelli (eighth season, 72-102)
Team's record previous five seasons: 51-71
Last time made the playoffs: 2020
Division 5AA

STARTERS LOST: Saul Barcelo Jesus Gomez (3.8 points per game last season), Vincent Hernandez (9.2 ppg.), Aytin Reyes (5.2 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Jakhari Ramey (11.0 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: JR Andruw Castellanos, JR Aaron Reyes

TOP NEWCOMERS: SR Sey-harmony Somchan (Transfer from Glenn)

No other information was given.



VALLEY CHRISTIAN DEFENDERS
17-12 overall last season, 4-4 in the Olympic League, tied for third place, lost to Dana Hills High 70-67 in the Division 2A first round playoffs.
Head coach: Dijon Thompson (first season)
Team's record previous five seasons: 84-53
Last time missed the play-

offs: 2011
Division 2AA
STARTERS LOST: Nick Bozanic, T.J. Waters (9.0 points per game last season)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Jacob Bayla (16.8 ppg.), SR Ryan Caracoza (3.3 ppg.), SR Myles Harvey (15.0 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Chris Allen, SR James Morales, SR Raymond Scott, SR Gavin Stahl (7.2 ppg.), JR Bryce Shepherd, SO Josiah James

TOP NEWCOMERS: JR Christian Manley, SO Nathan Maurer, SO Ryan Vasquez, SO Chris Wondimu No other information was given.



WHITNEY WILDCATS
22-10 overall last season, 5-5 in the 605 League, third place, lost to Lynwood High 93-46 in the 5AA semifinals, lost to Ramona High 77-59 in the quarterfinals of the Southern California Division V Regional playoffs.
Head coach: Nasir Akmal (first season)
Team's record previous five seasons: 48-46
Last time missed the playoffs: 2022
Division 4AA

STARTERS LOST: David Song (5.6 points per game last season), Justin Wahyudi (3.1 ppg.), Ethan Wong (9.4 ppg. in 26 games)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Sakeef Sekender (6.9 ppg. in 22 games), JR Morgan Marks

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Joseph Whitaker, JR Christian Carreon (6.9 ppg.), JR Alex Cheng, JR Kailan Hizon, JR Rafael Mercado, JR Peter Poitras

TOP NEWCOMERS: JR Jeffrey Nishida, SO Ismael Portillo, SO Shayan Saravankumar, FR Jezreel Dela Cruz, FR Jack Diancin

When it comes to boys basketball in Cerritos, the talk has been on either Gahr to the north or the successful Cerritos program. But the other school, this one on the east side of the city, is making waves very fast. Whitney had a season for the ages when it played in the So. Cal. Regionals after a semifinal loss to Lynwood High in the divisional playoffs. The Wildcats had never won more than 18 games in the past 26 seasons and now, they are hoping to build off that remarkable season with a new head coach.

Former Whitney assistant Nasir Akmal, who was hired as

the program's 10th head coach since 2000 at the end of October, replaces Joseph Webber whom he had sat next to on the bench the past two seasons.

Akmal had stepped down last May and had not been around the program until he was hired.

Akmal had also been an assistant varsity coach and the freshman head coach at Mayfair High from 2003-2005 and in between the Mayfair and Whitney stints, was a player and captain and a player/coach for his medical school university's team in the United Arab Emirates. He has also coached different AAU travel ball teams.

"Last season was an amazing experience and a season I will never forget," said Akmal. "That whole team was special and I'm grateful that they got to etch their names in Whitney history. As for an encore, we lost three starters, and their impact cannot be understated. But we still have a ton of varsity returners with big playoff experience."

With that said, Akmal was quick to point out that there were two weeks in between his hire date and the start of the season and there were many obstacles that needed to be overcome. He added that everyone involved is doing their best to expedite the change in the system and most of the players are up to the challenge.

Look for juniors Christian Carreon and Morgan Marks to improve from last season and try to fill in the shoes left behind by David Song and Ethan Wong. Marks missed a chunk of last season with an injury while Carreon was a consistent bench player. His projected starting lineup would be Carreon, Marks, seniors Sakeef Sekender and Joseph Whitaker and junior Alex Cheng.

Whitney will be built around their junior class of seven players and Akmal says freshmen Jezreel Dela Cruz and Jack Diancin have been solid and are quick learners and gamers.

"We're also looking for our sophomore class to take a big leap this season," said Akmal. "I'll be moving them around a lot between varsity and junior varsity just to get them more experience and playing time together. We'll need their height and skill sets when we get into league."

Speaking of league, Akmal says the main goal is to make the playoffs and go on another run just like last season. He admits Artesia and Cerritos are always going to be tough teams to beat and Pioneer High and Oxford Academy tend to get up for games against Whitney.

NEWS AND NOTES FROM PRESS ROW

CERRITOS HIGH FOOTBALL MOVING ON TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONALS

By Loren Kopff
@LorenKopff on Twitter

Last season, Valley Christian High’s football team fell to Lancaster High 44-42 in the CIF-Southern Section Division 12 championship game. This season, in the same division, Cerritos High claimed the title, getting past Yucca Valley High 19-13 in overtime last Saturday night at Atkins Stadium on the Artesia High campus.

Now, the Dons move on to the CIF State Southern California Division 6-AA Regional finals where it will host Wasco High on Friday at Artesia. Game time is slated for 7:30 p.m. The winner will face the winner from the Northern California Regional finals, either Palo Alto High or St. Vincent de Paul High the following week for the state championship.

“It started hitting me yesterday and I started having anxiety [attacks],” said Cerritos first-year head coach Demel Franklin following the win over Yucca Valley. “I went to the cemetery to visit [former Cerritos offensive line coach Webster] Peters, who we lost. We had a conversation, and I knew he was with us. So, he helped calm me down. I saw him again today. It started hitting me yesterday; I’m not going to lie. I was nervous.”

Cerritos, which has won nine games for the first time since 2001 when that team went 9-2 and advanced to the quarterfinals, enters the contest on the program’s hottest streak in over

25 seasons with six straight victories. During that stretch, the Dons have been winning with stellar performances from both sides of the ball.

The three-time defending 605 League champions have outscored their opponents 260-104 during the winning streak. Offensively, Cerritos is led by senior running back Josh Park (692 yards on 107 carries and 13 touchdowns) and juniors Dikshanta Adhikari (151 rushes, 807 yards, five touchdowns) and Josiah Ungos (117 carries, 526 yards, four touchdowns).

Spreading the wealth around also applies to the passing game where senior quarterback Julian Morales and sophomore Justin Sagun have combined to throw for 1,121 yards and 13 touchdowns. Of those numbers, Adhikari, Park and junior John Lim have combined for 48 receptions, 479 yards and half a dozen touchdowns. Sagun has also picked up another 313 yards on the ground with two more touchdowns. Cerritos has gained 4,703 all-purpose yards and those six players have combined for nearly 3,500 of those yards.

On the defensive side, junior line-backer Nathaniel Crawford is the leader



of the pack with 117 tackles, but not far behind is sophomore linebacker Tyler Ky with 104 tackles. Other defensive stars are senior linebackers Jeremiah Bagaygay and Gabe Gaudi (90 tackles each) and sophomore linebackers Bailey Crawford (57 tackles) and Jacob Hoosac (68 tackles). Bagaygay also has six sacks.

Wasco, a small town 24 miles northwest of Bakersfield, won the CIF Central Section Division V crown by defeating Bishop Union High 42-41. The Tigers have won three straight games and six of their last seven after beginning the season alternating wins and losses through their first four outings. Wasco won the Division IV championship in 2012, defeating Bakersfield Christian 29-22, capping off a 13-0 season. The previous season, Wasco lost to Washington Union 55-12 in the Division IV finals.

The Tigers are not as high scoring as the Dons, just six points shy of 300. In fact, they have given up more than they have scored. Wasco has had three games in which it has eclipsed 35 points but has yielded at least 25 points half a dozen times.

Cerritos’ run defense will be put to the test again as the Tigers have rushed for over 3,000 yards and the Dons will be keying in on No. 4, Noah Lopez, who has rushed for 1,171 yards and scored 15 touchdowns and No. 21, Michael Dominguez, who has gained 943 yards with 10 touchdowns. Wasco doesn’t pass much as David Manzo has completed 18 of 39 yards for 390 yards.

Prediction: Cerritos 35, Wasco 21
Last week’s predictions: 1-0
Season to date: 53-18

BOYS BASKETBALL

Artesia High began the season with three straight wins, but after a 74-63 loss to Arlington High in the third place game of Artesia’s 12th Annual Winter Classic, the Pioneers are 4-2 as they host Bravo Medical Magnet on Friday.

Cerritos picked up a 58-51 win over La Serna High this past Monday at Crypto.com Arena, evening its record to 2-2. The Dons will host Chaparral High on Friday and Sunny Hills High on Tuesday before going to Kennedy High on Thursday.

After three straight wins in its own tournament to begin the season, Gahr High fell to Maranatha High 64-40 last Saturday in the championship game. The Gladiators will face St. John Bosco High on Monday in the opening game of the St. John Bosco Winter Classic.

Up and coming John Glenn High is 3-2 after knocking off Legacy Prep 35-25 this past Tuesday. The Eagles will host EF Academy, a freelance team in its first season, on Friday and go to Samueli Academy on Wednesday.

The hottest team around remains La Mirada High, which has won its first seven games, including the first five in the Rumble for Rosecrans Ave. Tournament. The Matadores, who defeated Sonora High 89-60 last Saturday, open play in the 72nd Ryse Williams Pac Shores Showcase against Har-

vard-Westlake High this past Tuesday and faced Santa Margarita High on Nov. 30.

Norwalk High fell to Irvine High 60-53 this past Monday in the first round of the Garden Grove Tournament, which wraps up on Saturday. The Lancers will then go to Segerstrom High on Wednesday.

V.C. also competed in the Rumble for Rosecrans Tournament, going 2-3, then lost to Marina High 73-45 on Nov. 22. The Defenders, just like La Mirada, is another team in the Ryse Williams Pac Shores Showcase where they opened with St. Anthony High this past Wednesday and will tussle with Redondo Union High on Friday and Oakwood High on Saturday.

Whitney High bounced back from its first loss of the season to defeat Rancho Alamitos High 64-50 this past Tuesday in the Garden Grove Tournament. The Wildcats, who improved to 4-1, will be in the Calvary Chapel Downey High Grizzly Classic, beginning on Monday.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Artesia picked up its first win after two starting the season with two losses with a 44-35 victory over The Webb Schools this past Monday in the Grizzly Classic. The Pioneers had pool play games against Bethel Baptist High and St. Joseph High and will host their own tournament beginning on Tuesday.

Cerritos fell to Diamond Bar High 63-62 in overtime in the championship game of the Corona Del Mar Tournament last Saturday. The Dons (3-1) will host Santa Margarita on Monday and go to Peninsula High on Wednesday.

Gahr has won its first four games, allowing 75 points in those games and hosted Narbonne High this past Wednesday before going to Bellflower High the next day. Gahr will visit Dynamally High on Monday.

Glenn began the week at 2-3 and hosted Mountain View High this past Tuesday. The Eagles will entertain Santa Ana Valley High on Friday before co-hosting their annual tournament with Norwalk next week.

La Mirada began the Vernie Ford Classic, hosted by Fullerton High, this past Monday by facing East College Prep and Western Christian High two days later. The Matadores will play Estancia High on Friday and wrap up the tournament on Saturday before going to Canyon High on Tuesday.

Norwalk ended a five-game losing streak with a 44-39 win over Cabrillo High this past Monday and followed that with road games against Costa Mesa High this past Tuesday, Santa Fe High on Nov. 30, and Montebello High on Friday. The Lancers will open their co-hosted tournament on Monday against Workman High and will face Whitney on Tuesday.

V.C. began its own tournament with a 53-42 loss to Palos Verdes High this past Monday but defeated El Segundo High 44-20 the next night. The tournament ends on Saturday and the Defenders will then host San Gabriel Academy on Wednesday.

Whitney began the week winning its first three games of the season as it hosted Northwood High this past Tuesday. The Wildcats visited Crean Lutheran High on Nov. 30 before participating in the Glenn/Norwalk Tournament.

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CERRITOS from page 1

down a touchdown to the Trojans. But, in the final 6:07 of the fourth quarter, sophomore quarterback Justin Sagun found junior running back/wide receiver Dikshanta Adhikari for a pair of touchdowns to send the game into overtime. There, after the Trojans were stopped at the 14-yard line, Sagun tossed a short three-yard pass to senior Jeremiah Bagaygay, who was wide open in the left side of the end zone to give the program, and the City of Cerritos a historic victory.

With the Desert Valley champions up 13-6 with 2:50 left in the fourth quarter, the Dons got the ball at their own 25-yard line. After a pair of plays totaling 15 yards, Sagun threw three straight incomplete passes before first-year head coach Demel Franklin called his final timeout with 1:20 remaining.

“We just needed to score,” said Adhikari. “We had to get it together, play together and just score. That’s all that was said. [Franklin] just expected us to score and we did it.”

Coming out of the timeout, Sagun connected with Adhikari for a 27-yard gain on fourth and 10, then a 15-yard play and finally a 13-yard touchdown pass with 30.7 seconds remaining. Adhikari found himself wide open on the left side, but the play was intended for Sagun to roll out to his right. However, Yucca Valley sent its linebackers all the way out, forcing Sagun to go the opposite direction where he found Adhikari. Franklin said he wanted Sagun to throw backside and find senior running back/wide receiver Josh Park, but instead saw Adhikari on the opposite side of the end zone.

“It was just a game of chicken,” said Franklin. “They were daring us to throw the ball and we started throwing the ball. We knew they were not going to cover us. I could have gone to that earlier, but if one thing goes the wrong way, then we’re now chasing 21 points. It was kind of designed to keep it close and I just had to pray that it was going to work out.”

“[Sagun] had to scramble and do what he did,” said Adhikari. “He threw me up a great ball in the end zone and I caught it for the touchdown and celebrated with the team. That’s it.”

The game started in the most ominous way for the Dons, who have now won seven straight games. Their first four plays went for negative yardage and when the scoreless first quarter ended, the 605 League champions had minus seven yards on eight plays. But the Trojans were struggling as well, running eight plays and getting 13 yards in the fast-moving stanza that took 16 minutes of actual time to complete.

The pace picked up in the second quarter and on third and five from the Yucca Valley 43-yard line, sophomore linebacker Bailey Crawford sacked Michael Ramos Jr. for a six-yard loss, forcing the Trojans to punt. Four plays later, on the ensuing Cerritos possession, Walker Rauschenberg recovered a fumble near midfield and Yucca Valley went 51 yards to put the first points on the board, a one-yard sneak from Ramos Jr.

The drive, which lasted five and a half minutes, was extended when Cerritos was offside on fourth and seven as Anthony Morando was lining up for a potential 28-yard field goal. Then on the next play after the touchdown, Rauschenberg picked off sophomore quarterback Julian Morales and the Trojans ran out the clock to end the half.

Even though the Cerritos defense was doing its job, holding Yucca Valley to 80 yards 30 plays, most of them rushing plays, the Dons were still stymied with four yards on 14 plays, punting three times and turning the ball over twice. Cerritos had one first down in the half

and got as far as the Yucca Valley 40-yard line.

“So, it was me being hesitant to throw the ball,” said Franklin. “I knew coming in, and I told my staff, that we were going to throw the ball on these dudes. We were going to take chances. When we threw that interception, it made me a little gun shy. We could have thrown the ball all night if that’s what we wanted to do, but I wanted to try to be conservative and keep it tight.

“We saw they were just putting all their attention on [our running backs],” he later said. “It’s cool; we would use them as decoys, and we would run everybody off that. That’s why [senior running back/wide receiver Josh] Park had big plays and Dikshanta had big plays.”

“It was most definitely a different game,” said Adhikari. “Every game, we had no trouble against running the ball. We would run; me, Josh, back to back to back. No backs in the backfield were tired. But we came out this game, started passing more and that started to work too. We were just able to come out for the win.”

Three plays into the second half, senior Diego Martinez intercepted Ramos Jr. But Cerritos couldn’t take advantage as senior Moises Mendoza was wide left on a 39-yard field goal attempt with 7:41 left in the stanza.

After both teams traded punts, the Trojans closed out the quarter by going 47 yards on seven plays, covering the final 3:36. The key play of the drive was Bagaygay sacking Ramos Jr. for an eight-yard loss on third and eight from the 15-yard line. That forced Caden Beasley to try a 33-yard field goal on the first play of the fourth quarter, which was short.

“We were contemplating switching to

a different [defensive] front because they started kind of getting some consistent runs,” said Franklin. “But [Nathan] Endo believed in what he was doing and that’s my defensive coordinator.”

Cerritos continued to pick up more steam, converting a key play on fourth and four from its 38-yard line when a missed tackle allowed Park to take a short reception from Sagun and turn it into a 37-yard gain. Four plays later, Adhikari’s 27-yard touchdown reception put Cerritos on the board, although the extra point was missed. The Trojans came right back and extended their lead to 13-6 when leading rusher Myles Harper, who entered the game with over 1,700 yards, galloped 50 yards for a touchdown. But junior cornerback John Lim blocked the extra point, giving the Dons hope with just under three minutes left and a pair of timeouts.

In overtime, Myles had runs of 10 yards and one yard before Ramos Jr. threw three straight incomplete passes from the 14-yard line, all towards the left side of the end zone. Cerritos got the ball at the 25-yard line and Park immediately gained 12 yards. Adhikari followed that with a three-yard gain, then Park had runs of a yard, six yards and no yards before the game-winning touchdown.

“We’re down there and I see [Yucca Valley] loading the box,” said Franklin. “I told Sagun, once everyone got into the huddle, run a bootleg, fake the handoff, and run left and hit Bagaygay. Tell him to just touch the end and run to the corner. I said you could run or throw; I don’t care, but he’s going to be wide open.”

Yucca Valley, which won the Division XI title in 1996, was seeking its second title. Harper led everyone with 170 yards on 25 carries while Stephon Rogers added 59 yards on a dozen touches. Ramos Jr.

completed five passes for eight yards and was sacked twice.

“He’s a lot tougher than what I thought,” said Franklin of Harper. “We met him at the [CIF-SS] luncheon [last Monday] and I saw that he wasn’t that big. But he’s a very tough kid on both sides of the ball. I tip my hat off to them.”

“They just started out fast,” said Adhikari. “We came here to play, for sure. But they came out with a little more energy than we expected them to. But we went into the halftime, made a few adjustments, came out and got our offense to start getting on all [cylinders]. We started running the ball and throwing a little bit and stuff started to work.”

Sagun was 12 of 17 for 158 yards with Adhikari catching five passes for 94 yards. Park had three catches for 45 yards and Lim two more for 22 yards. Defensively, Bagaygay and sophomore linebacker Tyler Ky each had five and a half tackles while senior linebacker Gabe Gaudi and sophomore linebacker Jacob Hoosac each had five tackles.

The Dons will host Wasco High on Friday in the CIF State Southern California Division 6-AA Regionals with the winner to face either Palo Alto High or St. Vincent de Paul High the following week for the state championship.

“I don’t even know how to feel right now,” said Adhikari, who moved to Cerritos when he got into middle school. “I’ll go home and definitely look back at this moment.

“It just feels unreal; we’ve been dreaming about this moment for so long,” he continued. “Now we’re finally living it and hard work got us here. We ran the ball hard; we played hard both sides of the ball. We just came out and played.”

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