

HB Must Pay Nearly 1M in Library Suit

Another legal rebuke for city council

By a staff writer

The City of Huntington Beach has been ordered to pay nearly \$1 million in attorney's costs after losing a legal battle over its efforts to restrict access to some books in its library system.

In an Orange County Superior Court ruling on April 27 by Judge Lindsey E. Martinez, Surf City is now required to pay \$959,853.73 in expenses to a variety of plaintiffs who sued the city over its

2023 decision to separate some books on puberty, sexuality and related issues from access to minors, claiming they were "pornographic."

That amount was reduced from an original cost of \$1.5 million.

The judge ruled that the action by the city violated state law. Opponents of the city's action claimed that despite legal setbacks, the city has yet to return the relocated books or the signs indicating which books have been moved.

The ruling is the latest setback in the city's battles with the State of California. The city attorney's office – and in other cases such as voter

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MOURNING 'BLACK APRIL'



THE U.S. FLAG, followed by the banner of the former Republic of (South) Vietnam, is presented at the opening of the Black April Remembrance Ceremony held Thursday morning in the Sid Goldstein Freedom Park in Westminster. The event marks the 1975 capture of Saigon by Communist troops, ending the Vietnam War (Tribune photo).

Should HB water be fluoridated?

By Jim Tortolano
Orange County Tribune

■ **HUNT. BEACH CITY COUNCIL**

Should the supply of drinking water in Huntington Beach continue to be fluoridated?

On the agenda for Tuesday's meeting of the Huntington Beach City Council is an item requesting the discontinuance of

adding "supplemental fluoridation" to the city's supply.

In a staff report, it's stated that the council wants to request an amendment to the city's domestic water supply permit from the California State Water Re-

sources Control Board.

The report states that fluoride is "naturally present in the city's water" and discontinuing the program would save the city about \$160,000 in annual operations and about \$6.7 million in future capital costs.

The request does not cite political consider-

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In The Tribune



Flag football is rolling up scores

SEE SPORTS PAGE 6



Killer comedy at Golden West

ARTS & LIVING PAGE 5

'Claw arcade' permit is sought

How's your hand-eye coordination?

When it meets on Wednesday, May 6, there will be a public hearing of the Westminster Planning Commission on a request for a

■ **WESTMINSTER PLANNING COMM.**

conditional use permit for the operation of an indoor "entertainment facility" consisting of "claw arcade

machines" at 9550 Bolsa Avenue, Suite 101 (near Bushard Street).

Hours of operations would be on Monday to Thursday from noon to

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Attorney's fees

Continued from page 1

ID and land use – has contended, without success, that Huntington Beach's status as a charter city allows it to defy some state laws.

Fluoridation

Continued from page 1

ations, but some opponents have viewed mass medication without individual consent an infringement on personal choice.

In Orange County – according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – most cities and communities have fluoridated water, except for Buena Park, Midway City (partial) and Mission Viejo.

The council will meet at 6 p.m. in its chambers at 2000 Main St. (at Yorktown Avenue).

Claw arcade

Continued from page 1

9 p.m. and on Friday to Sunday from noon to 10 p.m.

Generally in the U.S., such games are considered entertainment, but some critics compare it to gambling and concern has been expressed about the possibility of addiction that might lead to adult gambling.

The commission will meet in the city council chambers, 8200 Westminster Blvd. at 6 p.m.

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News & Views

Small kindness just may turn out a big thing

Hey, Listen Dept.: There used to be a dance place in town — very popular — where when the patrons emerged around midnight the music they had been listening to was so loud that their conversations in the parking lot went like this:

“Where did we park?”

“What?”

“Park. The car. Where is it?”

“What are you saying?”

“What?”

And so on.

There was

a shop-

ping mall

(now under

demolition)

where the

air circulation was so perverse

that it exhaled the cigar smoke

directly into your face as soon

as you walked in the door.

Just came home from a book

store — my second favorite

place in the world — where the

magazine rack held about 100

titles, none of which was in the

right place. Magazines about

knitting were in the military

history section. Those about

classic automobiles could be

found (more or less) after

considerable searching, among

the puzzle books and cooking

magazines. Etc.

We poor souls who despair

about the state of the world,

about the persistence of war and

conflict, about prejudice and

bias, need only look around us

to find the root cause.

Do you clean up after yourself

in the food court? Do you turn

down the ear-splitting volume

on your car stereo when you

pull up next to an elderly man

on a bicycle? Do you open the

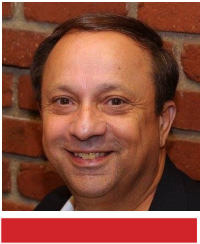
store door (or hold it open) for

someone burdened with bundles

of groceries?

It might be a stretch to connect

those everyday courtesies with



Retorts
Jim Tortolano

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MAID'S DAY OFF?



ANOTHER LOOK at the underground dwelling of a homeless person beneath the San Diego (405) Freeway at Newland Avenue last week in Huntington Beach. Justin Tylor Lockhart, 35, was arrested on multiple charges (HBPD photo).

Mixed-use project at corner of Beach/Katella approved

A proposed mixed-use development with 159 residential townhomes along with 15,949-square feet of commercial space was approved by the Stanton City Council when it met on Tuesday night.

The vote was 4-1 with Councilman Gary Taylor absent.

The development received its

■ STANTON CITY COUNCIL

final approval on Tuesday; it was introduced and initially approved at the April 14 meeting.

The development is by Stanton Land LLC and will be located at the corner of Katella Avenue and Beach Boulevard.

Strawberry Ball royalty named

The City of Garden Grove's H. Louis Lake Senior Center will host the 49th Annual Strawberry Ball on Thursday, May 21, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Garden Grove Community Meeting Center, at 11300 Stanford Ave. This annual event will honor the Senior Volunteer King and Queen, JJ Jauregui and Dawn Miller.

Local seniors are invited to at-

tend the celebration, which will include dinner, dessert, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, live music, and dancing.

Advance reservations are required. Tickets are \$20 and must be purchased in person at the H. Louis Lake Senior Center, 11300 Stanford Ave., now through May 14.

Ticket sales are available Mon-

Continued on page 8

Follow rules for seat belts, child seats

The Westminster Police Department reminds travelers to always buckle up and secure children in the right car seats when visiting friends and family.

This year's Click It or Ticket campaign runs from May 18 to 31. During this time, the Westminster Police Department will have additional officers on patrol actively looking for drivers and passengers who are not wearing seat belts. This includes vehicles in which children are not secured in child safety seats or the appropriate safety seats for their age.

“Our priority is protecting the people in our community. Wearing a seat belt or properly securing children in car seats or a booster seat gives everyone

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History Minute

The old days of downtowns

Westminster and Stanton are making efforts to develop downtown areas, such as exist presently in Garden Grove and Huntington Beach. Both those communities once had downtowns which didn't survive the passage of time.

Westminster's original downtown was near what's now Sigler Park, at Olive Street and Westminster Boulevard

In Stanton, once called Benedict, it was along what's now Beach Boulevard and Cerritos Avenue.



DOWNTOWN STANTON, around 1913.

NewsUpdate

Trump Doesn't Like Peace Proposal

Also raises the tariff with E.U. on automobiles

President Donald Trump on Friday said he was not satisfied with a peace proposal from Iran, although he provided no details.

The Associated Press is reporting that Trump said the war between the United States and Iraq was "terminated" because the cease-fire between the two nations was still in place.

The president also declared that the War Powers Resolution passed in the 1970s in the aftermath of the Vietnam War that requires that Congress must either declare war or authorize the use of military force within 60 days was "unconstitutional."



DONALD TRUMP, president of the United States (Shutterstock).

The deadline for meeting the law was Friday, May 1.

In an unrelated act, President Trump declared on Friday that

he planned to raise the tariff on automobiles from the European Union from 15 to 25 percent.

He claimed that the Europeans

weren't complying to the existing agreement on the importation of cars and trucks.

Access to 'abortion pill' by mail is restricted by court

The use of the abortion pill mifepristone may be significantly limited by a federal appeals court ruling on Friday temporarily blocking the prescribing of the drug by mail.

The New York Times reports that a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals granted a request from the State of Louisi-

ana for a temporary stay of a decision by the Food and Drug Administration to end a requirement that patients must see a medical provider in person before receiving a prescription for the drug.

A federal district court in Louisiana in April had declined to pause the sending of the drug by mail.

Great Thoughts

"Find out what you like doing best, and get someone to pay you for doing it."

– Katherine Whitehorn

"Don't confuse having a career with having a life."

– Hillary Clinton

"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door."

– Milton Berle

Weather: Warmer, then cooler

The weekend in our West Orange County cities will start warmer, and drop to cooler temperatures. The forecast calls for clouds in the morning on Saturday with sun in the afternoon. The daytime high should be 76 with an overnight low of 59. Sunday is expected to cool to 69 (57) with similar conditions. Monday will follow with clouds and a bit chillier at 67 (54). A slight turn toward warming should follow on Tuesday to 68 (56) with partly cloudy conditions.

Ukraine thanks Melania for help in returning 26 kids seized by Russia during war

A Ukrainian official has thanked First Lady Melania Trump for her role in arranging for the return of at least 26 Ukrainian children who had been abducted by Russia.

According to United Press International, Mrs. Trump had become "an important ally" is negotiating with the Russian government to return the children to the families.

They had been in Russia and regions "under Russian control." "She helped us a lot," said Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukraine Parliament's Human Rights Commissioner.

He said that Moscow "can't avoid" responding to requests from Ukraine when they were routed via the White House.

Arts & Living

A Killer Comedy at Golden West

Getting fed up with relatives? Here's an idea

By Thom deMartino
Orange County Tribune

Family.
Can't live with 'em, can't do away with 'em, amirite?
Or can you...?

A delightfully dark yet colorful new musical comedy is playing for a limited run at the Golden West College Mainstage Theater, "A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder." Directed by Martie Ramm, with book and lyrics by Robert L. Freedman & music and lyrics by Steven Lutvak, "Gentleman" is the story of the young Montague "Monty" Navarro (living in Edwardian England) and the sudden revelation that his whole life has been a lie, that he's actually been swindled out of his birthright...and how he might get it back.

Just after his mother's funeral, Monty is approached by the mysterious Miss Shingle (Megan Cherry), who asks him what he knows about his mother's family: it seems she'd been disinherited for marrying for love without her family's approval, and that both he and his mother had been exiled this entire time. It even comes to light that he is ninth in line for the Earldom of Highhurst... if only he didn't have those pesky eight estranged family members standing in his way.

When Monty writes to the head of the family – the 8th Earl of Highhurst – he finds himself and his claims of birthright rejected and his mother's memory insulted by the Lord Adalbert D'Ysquith (Jay Harbison, who portrays the D'Ysquith clan through the performance.) This final affront is the catalyst for his plans for vengeance and his descent into creative homicide.

But young man is not without



CASSIDY McCLEARY as Sibella and Whitney Ackerman as Montague Navarro in "Love and Murder."

Stage Review

love – or lust, anyway – as he continues an affair with the beautiful, soon-to-be-married Sibella (Cassidy McCleary), whose desire to climb the social ladder also provides Monty the impetus for his lethal ascent. But almost tempering him is the compassionate Phoebe D'Ysquith (Catherine Dosier), a distant cousin whom the calculating Monty finds himself increasingly captivated by. (Thank heavens she's not in the line of succession.)

Revenge may be a dish best served cold, but as Monty ascends the social ladder – racking up cadavers with every rung – the hungrier the audience becomes for more. But as the story begins with him in prison, writing his memoirs, will he really get away with it... or will the final, extinguished D'Ysquith breath be his own?

The really remarkable bit about this show – besides the chemistry

between the players, and Jay Harbison's kaleidoscopic range – is how lively and lighthearted it is, considering the darkness of the subject.

Director Ramm keeps a steady, staccato pace to the show, and the audience will be thrilled to be tagging along for the ride. Bits like

Great ★ ★ ★ ★

the back-and-forth door scene with Ackerman, McCleary and Dosier really showcase the comic skills and timing of the actors. Ackerman keeps it delightfully

Continued on page 8

An 'Ocho De Mayo' Fiesta

The Garden Arm in Garden Grove will be hosting its "Ocho de Mayo Fiesta" with a south of the border theme on May 8. It will feature a musical tribute to Santana along with Freddy Fender, War, Malo and El Chicano. It's from 5-10 p.m. in the Village Green park, at Main and Euclid streets.



TheSportsPages

What's in a name? Some silly laws from the capital

Farewell, kemosabe. The news has come down from Sacramento that a new state law is requiring high schools with “potentially derogatory” mascot names will be required to be dumped and replace them with something more ... I guess “politically correct.” Affected here in Orange County – according to Register prep sports columnist Steve Fryer – are the Fullerton Indians and the Canyon (Anaheim) Comanches. The logic – such as it is – is that use of those kinds of names is a kind of “cultural appropriation” that degrades native people.



Sports Retorts
Jim Tortolano

Hmmm. Just how is never explained, but the folks in charge Up North have their own state of mind. The real danger here is that the wobbly logic

can be taken to one even shakier extreme.

Let's take a look at some local teams. How about the La Quinta Aztecs? That's a Native American civilization. I guess the fact they don't really exist any more may be a factor, but maybe we just haven't looked for them hard enough.

The Fountain Valley Barons. Should we really be endorsing the idea of royalty, as opposed to democratic values? And the Bolsa Grande Matadors ... aren't matadors cruel to bulls?

Garden Grove Argonauts. What could be problematic about them? I mean, they were fictional. But there were no women Argonauts. That can't be fair.

Marina Vikings ... those were some pretty violent dudes ... should those nimrods be role

Continued on page 8

Flag Football Races On

Tournament for women could be a next big step

By David Brandt
AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Rylen Bourguet sprinted down the sideline and then faked a curl toward the quarterback, juking her defender before continuing downfield. The pass that was already in the air was perfect and the Arizona State receiver hauled it in for the game-winning touchdown.

It was one of the many highlights of last week's inaugural Fiesta Bowl Flag Football Classic on the Arizona State campus.

Bourguet is confident these game-winning scenes for women's flag football will become more common as the sport continues its widespread growth at the NCAA Division I level. The fast-paced game should also get a popularity boost from the upcoming 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles — there will be a men's and women's competition in Los



FLAG FOOTBALL — especially women's flag football — is the fastest-growing sport in America (Shutterstock).

Angeles and Bourguet hopes to part of the inaugural team.

“It was so awesome — it blew everything I've ever experienced out of the water,” Bourguet said of the Fiesta Bowl tournament.

“It's great to see how much it's taking off at the youth level, the high school level and now the collegiate level. Seeing what it's become is so surreal — very ex-

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Angels, Dodgers suffer defeats

Despite a slow week or so, the **Los Angeles Dodgers** remain in first place.

After a 7-2 loss to the St. Louis Cardinals Friday at Busch Stadium, the Blue Crew is 20-12, still a half-game ahead of the second place San Diego Padres in the National League West.

The Dodgers fell behind 3-0 in the first inning on a three-run homer by Nolan Gorman and the visitors could never catch up. Leading 4-2 in the seventh, the Cards put the game away with three runs and the help of a Dodger error, one of two in the game.

LAD managed seven hits, but leadoff man Shohei Ohtani was 0-for-5 and struck out once. The 2025 National League MVP is in an unusual hitting slump, bat-

AL West Standings

	W-L	Pct.	GB	L10
Athletics	17-14	.548	—	6-4
Texas	16-16	.500	1.5	5-5
Seattle	16-17	.485	2	6-4
ANGELS	12-21	.364	5.5	1-9
Houston	12-21	.364	5.5	4-6

NL West Standings

	W-L	Pct.	GB	L10
DODGERS	20-12	.625	—	4-6
San Diego	19-12	.613	0.5	5-5
Arizona	16-15	.516	3.5	3-7
Colorado	14-19	.424	6.5	5-5
San Fran	13-19	.406	7	4-6

ting a modest .261.

Emmet Sheehan (2-1) had a rough start, giving up eight

hits — including two homers — and four runs in 4.2 innings. He struck out eight batters and walked two.

The teams will face off again on Saturday.

In Anaheim, the **Los Angeles Angels** surged to an early 3-0 lead over the New York Mets, but couldn't hold on to it. With the score tied at 3-3, Ronny Mauricio hit a solo homer in the top of top of the seventh.

The final was 4-3, Mets, and a seventh straight loss for the Halos. They're now 12-21 and tied for fourth and last place in the American League West.

Jorge Soler had the best night for with a two-run homer, but the offense was weak otherwise with three hits and 14 strikeouts.

■ Prep Sports Scoreboard

THURSDAY

Baseball

Loara 11, Magnolia 1
El Modena 2, Pacifica 0

Softball

Edison 13, Fount. Valley 9
Pacifica 4, Cypress 2
Garden Grove 11, Kennedy 10
Newport 12, Ocean View 10

CIF Boys Volleyball Division 6

Garden Grove 3, Ayala 0

FRIDAY

Baseball

Estancia 2, La Quinta 1
Pacifica 4, El Modena 1
Orange 19, Saddleback 0
Bolsa Gr. 15, R.Alamitos 5

Los Amigos 22, Western 11
Santiago 12, SA Valley 4
Gar. Grove 15, Godinez 0
Edison 16, CDM 3
Marina 5, Fountain Valley 1
Magnolia 5, Anaheim 2
Ocean View 4, Arlington 2

Softball

Marina 12, CDM 2
Los Alamitos 2, Edison 1
Ft. Valley 17, New Harb. 8
La Habra 7, Pacifica 1
Magnolia 5, Anaheim 2
Ocean View 4, Arlington 2
Hunt. Beach 6, Palos Verdes 2

*Send your scores, statistics,
photos to us at:
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■ NHL and NBA

Ducks oust Oilers; Lakers beat Rockets

It took a while, but the Anaheim Ducks finally finished off the Edmonton Oilers in their NHL Western Conference Stanley Cup playoff series with a 5-2 sixth game win on Thursday night.

Five players lit the lamp for the Ducks in front of a sold-out crowd at Honda Center, and Lukas Dostal stopped 25 of 27 shots on goal by the visitors.

The Ducks, whose previous Stanley Cup series win was in 2017, will next play the winner of the series between the Vegas Golden Knights and the Utah Mammoth. The Knights lead three games to two.

Lakers 98, Rockets 78: LeBron James put the team on his back in Houston on Friday night and led the Los Angeles Lakers to a 98-78 win over the Houston Rockets and a triumph in the first round of the NBA playoffs.

James scored 29 points for the Lake Show, granted seven rebounds and had 18 assists. Rui Hachimura added 21 points and Austin Reaves contributed 15. Deandre Ayton only scored seven but grabbed a key 16 rebounds.

The Lakers won the series four games to two and now advance to the next round against the top-seeded Oklahoma Thunder team in Oklahoma City in Oklahoma on Tuesday.

The★Tribune

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'Guide to Love & Murder'

Continued from page 5

upbeat: his immense vocal talents aside, his affable Monty is an endearing antihero that the audience can't help rooting for – and asides to the viewer draw you in, like a co-conspirator. His musical numbers such as "Poison In My Pocket" and "Sibella" are stand-out, while "Stop! Wait! What!?" is raucous fun.

McCleary's deceptively shallow Sibella is breathtaking and enchanting, and her own pieces, such as "I Don't Know What I'd Do" and "That Horrible Woman" (a thrilling performance with Dosier's remarkable Phoebe) are excellent.

For Dosier, the character of gentle Phoebe is a distinct pivot from

other recent Golden West productions where she has made her mark (such as the excellent and searing "Eight Seconds"), and she makes full use of this opportunity to put her equally formidable, sonorous talents on full display.

Megan Cherry is, as always, a delight as the inciting Miss Shingle, and Saffron Brauer stands out in her dual roles, particularly as the acerbic Lady Eugenia.

But while it may be Ackerman's devilish charm that drives the story, the soul is all Jay Harbison.

The humor of the increasingly diabolical ways that the family members meet their ends is only amplified by Harbison's colorful and distinct performances for each. While no actor may want to figuratively "die" on stage, never has an audience been so eager and so thrilled to see an actor perish repeatedly.

A hilarious, fast-paced production with unforgettable performances and musical numbers (and only playing for one more weekend!), "A Gentleman's

Guide to Love & Murder" is a delightful distraction, no matter how dark (or light) your sense of humor.

Just don't get any ideas.

"A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder" Now playing through May 3, at the Golden West College Mainstage Theater, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, CA 92647. Tickets available through the box office at 714-895-8150, x1 or at www.gwctheater.com.

Sports Retorts: Bad April

Continued from page 6

models for teenage kids? Even the Anaheim Colonists could be fall under criticism. Colonization, historically, has been exploitive.

Sigh. Things can be taken to extremes. But it's not like there's some high schools somewhere with a mascot of the Central

High Bank Robbers or the West-side Prep River Polluters.

We should take team mascots in the proper spirit. Let's judge them by their intentions, not by the suspicions we project on them.

Hey, that's not a bad name. Here come the The Riverdale High Good Intentions!

Retorts: Care about others

Continued from page 3

the Seven Years War, but the habits we adopt and nurture in the neighborhood can shape the impulses of a society.

If you care not a biscuit about other people in small ways,

there's a good chance you won't mind if your city, nation, etc. doesn't care about playing fair on the larger scale.

To put it another way, if you want a better, kinder world ... turn down the music.

Strawberry Ball royalty

Continued from page 3

day through Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Only cash or check will be accepted.

For more information about the H. Louis Lake Senior Center, visit www.ggcity.org/senior-center.

Seat safety for your kids

Continued from page 3

a better chance of surviving a crash," Deputy Chief Weber said. "We want every trip – short or long – to end safely, so please buckle up, every time."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2023, 10,484 people killed in crashes in the U.S. were not wearing a seat belt. In California, there were 780 unrestrained people killed in crashes that same year, including 24 children. Additionally, unrestrained child fatalities in California increased by 4.3 percent from 2022 to 2023.

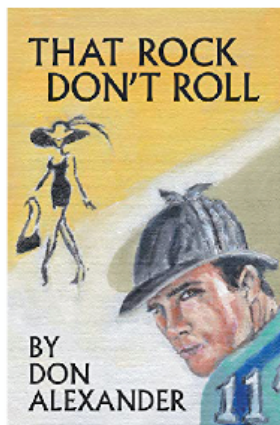
California law requires all chil-

dren under 2 years old to ride in a rear-facing car seat, unless the child is 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall. Once a child reaches these milestones, all children under the age of 8 years are still required to be secured in a car seat or booster seat.

Children under the age of 8 may not ride in the front seat unless the vehicle is not equipped with a rear, forward-facing seat. Children 8 and older, or who are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall, may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be wearing a properly fitted safety belt.

Some serious fun

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That Rock Don't Roll

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- The Orange County Tribune

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Don Alexander has been a sports columnist, a sports broadcaster, talk show host and a college instructor. This is his first novel.



Who helped eradicate the plague of polio?
Garden Grove Rotary

Who sponsors a defibrillator program to save lives when heart attacks strike?
Garden Grove Rotary

Who recognizes 6th grade students for achievement in academics and scholarship?
Garden Grove Rotary

Who sponsors and contributes to training high school students on leadership and citizenship?
Garden Grove Rotary.

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Women's flag football is taking some big steps

Continued from page 6

cited for the generations to come that are going to play the sport.”

The Fiesta Bowl tournament was more evidence that one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S isn't slowing down anytime soon. There were eight teams in attendance — Arizona State, Alabama State, Georgia, UCF, Florida, Grand Canyon, Charlotte and USC.

UCF beat Florida 19-7 to win

the tournament title, which was televised on ESPNU. The Fiesta Bowl's Scott Leightman said that roughly 1,500 free tickets were redeemed for spectators at the two-day event.

Fiesta Bowl executive director Erik Moses said the tournament went so well that he expects the field to expand in the coming years to 12 or 16 teams. He added that sponsors for the event — such as Oakley — were easy to find.

“It is easy to say that women's sport is having a moment,” Moses said. “But we're more interested in making sure that this is a movement and not just a moment.”

Bourguet raved about the experience, saying it was easily the most impressive women's flag football event that they've experienced. There was a dedicated media day, gifts for the athletes, food trucks set up outside the venue and a DJ pumping music over two fields as

the games were played.

Out of the eight schools, only Alabama State currently offers scholarships while the other seven are classified as club sports. That could change in a hurry: Flag football has been added to the NCAA's Emerging Sports for Women program and Nebraska recently announced women's flag would become a varsity sport there.

Georgia coach Caroline Caplinger said she expects the rapid transformation to continue. Her full-time job is working for RCX Sports, which runs NFL FLAG and helps conduct clinics and showcases around the country, including in Pittsburgh last week during the NFL draft.

She said there are now nearly 100 NCAA Division I club teams in the country, which is up from about 10 in 2019. NFL FLAG's research says that 4.1 million girls from ages 6-17 played flag football last season — up from 2.9 million in 2022.

More than 68,800 girls played high school flag football in 2024, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations' latest participation survey. That's a 60% increase over 2023. “I definitely foresee by 2028 that one, or a couple, Power 4 conferences deciding to make this a varsity sport,” Caplinger said.

“I know it's on track to become a championship status. It's really grabbing the attention of colleges, at the Division I, II, III and NAIA level. It's a rapid-fire transition and spreading across the country. “I definitely see this sport, that within the next five years, this sport having a true NCAA championship.”

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