

# THE CORONADO NEWS

ONLINE 24/7 @ THECORONADONEWS.COM • FRIDAY, MAR. 13, 2026 • VOLUME 4, NUMBER 04

## Coronado's parking requirements — where Nicky Rottens feels like there is an imbalance

The owner of Nicky Rottens, Simon Guindi, believes a recent assembly bill frees him from his parking responsibilities, but the city does not agree

**BY MADELINE YANG**  
The Coronado News

Nicky Rottens restaurant failed to shed its controversial requirements for off-site parking last week when the City Council unanimously denied an appeal from the Coronado Ferry Landing business.

According to a city staff report, in 2012, the council granted Nicky Rottens a 500-square-foot expansion. In exchange for extra dining space, the restaurant was required to provide five off-site parking spots behind Coronado Hardware Glass and Paint.

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The new owner of Nicky Rottens Bar and Burger Joint, Simon Guindi, bought the restaurant in 2023 and has big plans to change the interior and the experience of the bar.

Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

The Little Club sign glowing. on Feb. 25, 2026. Photo by Michelle Armas.



## The final days of The Little Club... and a fading Americana

**BY MICHELLE ARMAS**  
The Coronado News

Last year, a new owner purchased the building where a storied Coronado dive bar had done business for more than a half-century, prompting a buzz of speculation in the community: Would The Little Club close forever?

A few days ago, Tim Turner, one of the current owners, put a definitive – and, to some, unfortunate – end to the rumors: 54 years after it began, The Little Club will shut its doors on Orange Avenue for the final time at the end of March.

The upscale dive bar, already a historic icon on the island, now represents the fading of a classic Americana, an era when the bartenders knew your order and charm trumped money. As the rest of Coronado leaned into tourist-focused commercialization, The Little Club remained a defiant bastion of neighborliness.

Now, longtime patrons – sailors, retirees, neighborhood characters – are mourning the loss of a tavern as if a good friend has passed away. Gary Altstadt, a regular for over a decade, said, “This is my Cheers...” referring to the sitcom from the '80s. “Everybody knows



» Continued on Page 8

Two regulars drink at the bar of The Little Club on Wednesday, March 4, 2025. Photo by Michelle Armas.

## Club Coronado promises a local nightclub experience without the late hours

Dance the evening away in the heart of Coronado

**BY JULIETA SOTO**  
The Coronado News

The pop beat of Alexandra Stan's “Mr. Saxobeat” invites dancers to shake, shuffle and sing along in a euphoric atmosphere on Orange Avenue.

Neon lasers and glow sticks illuminate the faces of the approximately 100 partygoers while Coronado business owner Marilyn Klisser watches proudly.

“That’s a moment where I remember looking at everybody dancing and having so much fun, but that’s kind of happening throughout the entire night,” she says.

Every month since December, Klisser has hosted an early dance

party known as Club Coronado, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., welcoming people ranging from 30 to 80 years. The next event is scheduled for March 19 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) hall at 557 Orange Ave.

Klisser organizes the event through Salon On First on Eventbrite with online tickets beginning at \$25.

“People are dancing the whole time and having fun and socializing and mingling,” says Klisser.

“A lot of people are just really grateful for having somewhere to go dance in Coronado,” added Klisser. “And they can be in bed by 9 p.m.”

### Dance enthusiast

Klisser describes Club Coronado as a place where people can experience next level fun in a dance club style without needing to go over the

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## this week

### 14 • Saturday

From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., women-owned small businesses will have vendors set up at the Coronado Ferry Landing for community members to shop hand-crafted goods.

### 14 • Saturday

Coronado's VFW post is hosting a St. Patrick's Day dinner on March 14 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Enjoy a traditional corned beef and cabbage dinner with potatoes, carrots, rye bread and dessert. Tickets are \$25 and are available from the post bartender.

### 15 • Sunday

Coronado Aquatics is hosting group swim lessons in a wide variety of classes including parent and tot, preschool, youth, advanced, swim team prep, junior guards prep, teen and adult, and private lessons. Registration opens online at [tinyurl.com/coronadoswim](http://tinyurl.com/coronadoswim) on the 15th of each month at 12 p.m. for residents, and on the 22nd of each month at 12 p.m. for non-residents. In-person and phone registration opens on March 23.

### 18 • Wednesday

Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney will discuss and sign her new book, "Lake Effect," in conversation with Madhushree Ghosh in the Winn Room of the Coronado public Library at 7 p.m.

## CONTACT US

For news tips, story submissions and letters to the editor, contact Editor **Sofie Fransen** at [sofie@thecoronadonews.com](mailto:sofie@thecoronadonews.com) or 619-990-8465.

To advertise contact Ad Executive **Braeden Stegman** at [braeden@numbersix.com](mailto:braeden@numbersix.com)



**American soccer legend Landon Donovan will discuss his memoir at the Coronado Public Library on April 11.** Photo provided by the Coronado Public Library.

## SOMETHING TO DO

# Soccer legend Landon Donovan to discuss memoir

Coronado News staff

Southern California native Landon Donovan, a retired American soccer player, will discuss his memoir on April 11.

At 5:30 p.m. at the Coronado Performing Arts Center, Donovan will present "Landon Donovan: A Memoir," which is an unfiltered account of his career, battle with mental health and search for peace beyond the game.

A six-time MLS Cup champion and four-time U.S. Soccer Player of the Year, Donovan remains the

all-time assists leader for the U.S. Men's National Team and is tied for the most international goals scored by an American man. His five World Cup goals make him the highest-scoring American male player in tournament history, and Major League Soccer honored his legacy by naming its MVP award after him.

Registration for the event at [adventuresbythebook.com](http://adventuresbythebook.com) includes a signed book for \$29.95 or admission only with no book for \$10. The event is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Coronado Public Library.

## PET OF THE WEEK

# Meet Nugget

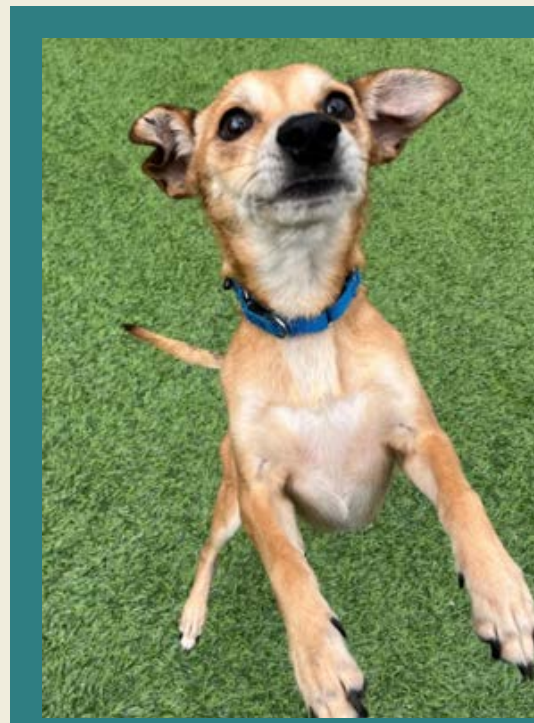
PAWS of Coronado

Nugget, a mixed-breed dog, is up for adoption at PAWS of Coronado.

Staff members at the non-profit, which provides adoption and rehabilitation services to animals, said that Nugget is playful and affectionate.

Those interested in adoption can visit [www.pawsofcoronado.org](http://www.pawsofcoronado.org). Fostering, donating and volunteering are other ways to support the organization.

All animals at PAWS are spayed/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated and up to date on flea prevention. Adoptions are by appointment only. If you are interested in adopting Nugget or other pets, please visit [pawsofcoronado.org](http://pawsofcoronado.org).



Call us at:  
(619)  
435-8247

Meet Nugget, the pet of the week. He's at PAWS of Coronado and is looking for his forever home. See all adoptable animals: Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, and tap on the link. Graphic/photo provided by PAWS of Coronado.



# New Year, Healthier You

Are you ready to take steps toward losing weight and improving your health this year?

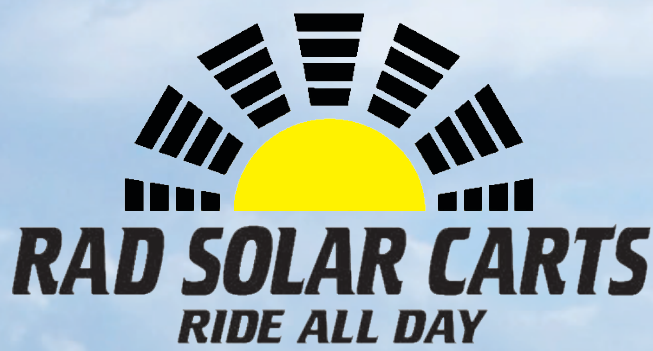
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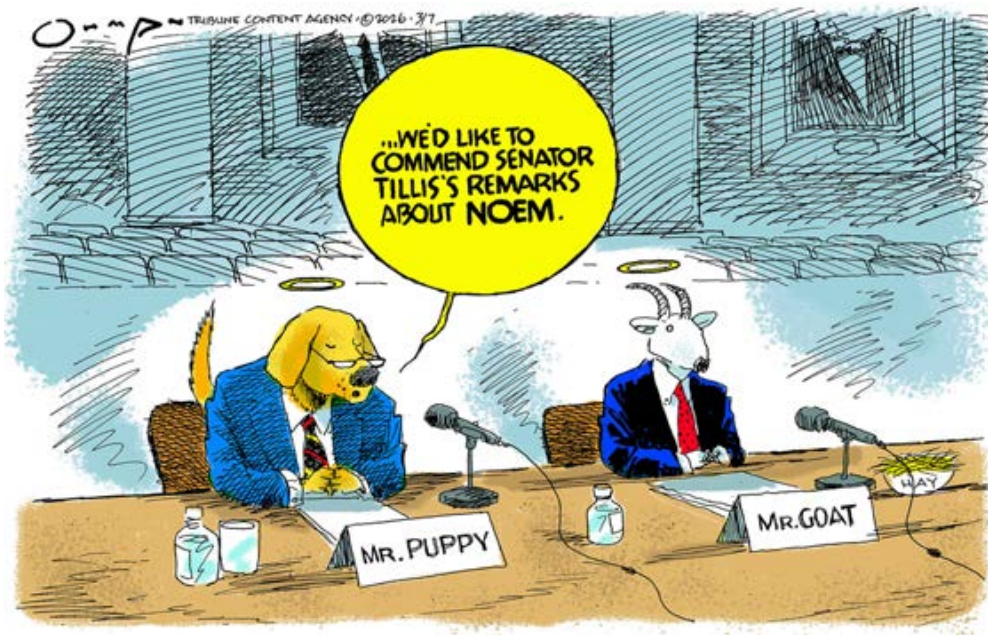
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# OPINION

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**How to be a part of The Coronado News:**

- Submit a news tip
- Capture a cool photo of Coronado and send it in for publication consideration
- Respond to an editorial or a news story by writing a letter to the editor

\*\*\*All submissions can be sent to [newsroom@thecoronadonews.com](mailto:newsroom@thecoronadonews.com)\*\*\*



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# CORONADO

## Coronado public schools are considering joining a new association for small districts

The board planned additional public discussion on March 12 for a change that saves thousands annually

**BY JULIETA SOTO**  
The Coronado News

Coronado Unified School District trustees are considering a new program to house board policies as a cost-cutting measure amid major changes in the city's public education system.

If on March 12 the board votes to pay for a new membership and board policy program, hundreds of current policies would be replaced with approximately 70 policies aligned with current state and federal law.

District staff recommended the board approve a new agreement for the 2026-27 school year. This agreement would include membership, legislative advocacy in Sacramento focused on protecting local property tax revenue, board policy services and governance educational resources for trustees.

The board discussed a new membership and policy program after a presentation highlighting thousands of dollars in potential savings by switching to the Small School Districts' Association during a special board meeting on March 3.

Kami McElligott, executive assistant to the superintendent and board, told trustees the district would not be transferring every policy it currently has if it decides on the new policy program. She said any current board



Attendees at a Coronado Unified School District meeting listen to district leaders. File photo.

policies could become governance protocols if the board decides to move forward.

"We're seeking guidance this evening," said Superintendent Karl Mueller. "Any direction provided by the governing board tonight would be followed by subsequent action at a future board meeting."

These considerations come in the months before CUSD becomes a basic aid school district, or locally funded through property taxes, and plans a decrease in its enrollment as early as next year to 2,500 which payment projections are based on.

The board's discussion supported switching to a new association to help with its process of regularly updating policies. But trustees want further examination of district-specific

policies and the new program before a decision is made.

"This is something that we could try on," said Mueller. "We're not making a commitment forevermore. We could give this a few-year trial period, see if this is more aligned with our desires for streamlining board policies."

### Association, program cost

The district's governing board policy manual is available online through the California School Boards Association's GAMUT site.

The district's manual lists more than 700 board policies, bylaws, administrative regulations and exhibits.

According to McElligott, CUSD currently pays the state association

\$18,287 a year. With SSDA, the district would pay \$5,200, saving approximately \$13,000 annually.

Karen Mix, a director with the Small School Districts' Association (SSDA), said the association includes school districts with enrollment of 2,500 or less but it also has partners with a 2,500 to 5,000 enrollment range.

According to Mueller, the district's five-year projections on enrollment could drop to 2,500 if the board decides to change its policy on how it accepts students living outside the district boundaries, down from approximately 2,800 now.

Mix said the association's program includes approximately 70 policies that are required by state law.

According to Mix, the website would include an artificial intelligence powered chat bot to answer questions.

Board President Renee Cavanaugh highlighted the simplicity of the language.

Trustee Scot Youngblood asked about the hundreds of policies that would not appear in the new program but have been adopted by the district, adding he was fine with it going away.

"At some point ... these items were added because there was a problem," he said.

McElligott said existing policies could be added into governance protocols.

Mueller said CUSD could establish internal practices leaving board policies as solely those required by the state of California.

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# CORONADO

## MOUTHFUL!

# Jolie, as generous as it is pretty

Welcome back to Mouthful! with Michelle, a review column exploring the eateries shaping Coronado's food scene

BY MICHELLE ARMAS

The Coronado News

Jolie, located on the ferry end of Orange Avenue, is generous in all the ways you might not expect. Self-identified as French-California coastal, Jolie — meaning “pretty” in French — is Chef Jason Witzl’s fifth concept. It began as a butchery with a six-item menu: oysters, crudo, scallops and a few salads. Executive Chef Jack Lee said the original intent was a simple spot for a bite and a glass of wine, but when local diners began ordering the entire menu, Jolie truly came to fruition.

The ambience is rather unassuming for a fine-dining restaurant. Grey hexagonal designs line pale walls. Metal rails hang on the ceiling, suggesting a garage door once operated there. Evading a traditional wine cellar, bottles sit on a simple metal rack. Some might mistake this industrial deconstruction for a lack of intention; others may find the stripped-back interior as a juxtaposition to the colorful dishes. If I were to make one request, it would be to keep the minimalism, but add mood lighting for coziness.

The menu is diverse: Steak frittes, shrimp and melon and grilled prawns, to name a few. After receiving a generous pour of red wine from Bordeaux, I asked the server about her favorites and the menu’s inspiration. She answered as best she could but admitted the executive chef — who happened to be in the back that day — could describe the vision more articulately.

It turned out Lee was thrilled to talk, so much so he even politely asked if he could sit down. He made me feel like I was talking to an old friend: kind, hospitable and generous. He walked through each item, humbly praising Witzl, his mentor of eight years who launched Long Beach concepts including: Ellie’s, Lupe’s de la Mar and Ginger’s. He also won Chef of the Year at the San Diego Food and Wine Festival for his shrimp and melon salad.

Lee told me that Jolie sources menu items from various factions



Jolie served a Peruvian Scallop in Coronado on March 4, 2026. Photo by Michelle Armas.



Shrimp and Melon dish served at Jolie in Coronado on March 4, 2026. Photo by Michelle Armas.

of the world: wagyu is from Creekstone Farms in Kansas; the salmon is wild-caught from Alaska; and the tiger prawns are imported from Nigeria. The sourcing may not be local, but the quality is crème de la crème.

The dish I was tasting at that moment was one of Lee’s favorites: Loup de Mer — literally meaning “wolf of the sea,” but in reality a type of European seabass. It was plated on a plain ceramic with a drizzle of red and green sauces swirled on and around. The seabass was light and delicate, as if just caught. It was coated with a

cornbread crust — more subtle than a typical panko crust — and a caper and herb gremolata.

Gremolata is a Mediterranean take on Argentine chimichurri; it was citrusy and fresh, balancing the gritty cornbread. The soft crunch added texture, and the chili oil sparked a fire on my lips. The dish felt familiar yet innovative; I knew the zesty spice, but marrying it with chimichurri-style herbs and a subtle cornbread shell was a revelation. Perhaps, the chefs, rather than a calculated approach, have a more playful one to their cooking. Before I could finish my last

bite, another dish arrived — complementary. An amuse-bouche of sorts. And on the table before I could even protest, a luscious Peruvian scallop crudo sat before me, elevated on an ombré seashell floating atop a metallic bowl of ice. The scallop was cold and mildly sweet on my tongue. The chili oil paired with the stone fruit mignonette — a cut-up stone fruit — awakened my tastebuds with another citrus and spice pair.

(A brief aside: As I evolve in this column, I am still deciding whether I want to maintain anonymity as a diner or embrace these moments of direct connection with the kitchen. While I always pay for my selections to uphold journalistic ethics, when complimentary dishes are provided, they do not influence the objectivity of my review.)

Then came a second unprompted course from the chef: the 2023 award-winner of the San Diego Food & Wine Festival — the shrimp and melon. The ingredients themselves felt abundant; it was as if the chef had no inhibitions when it came to mixing different flavors. On the ash-gray plate sat a layer of crème fraîche, acting as a vehicle for the zippy and playful fruits and fruits de mer. Chunks of juicy orange cantaloupe and crisp cucumber were tossed with cuts of chilled, tender shrimp, all dressed in a citrusy vinaigrette. Shreds of mint crowned the top to complete the bright, airy profile, while crispy quinoa ever so slightly grounded the dish. Together with the crème fraîche, it evoked dreams of a Mediterranean summer. Immaculate.

Finally, dessert. The only offering on the menu is a vanilla ice cream topped with pistachios, an olive oil drizzle, and a light sprinkle of salt. The dry crunch of the pistachios was glossed with robust golden olive oil. The salt pulled the sweetness to the forefront. It all left me feeling fed.

Jolie is located at 126 Orange Ave. Unit B, Coronado, CA 92118. It is open Wednesday through Sunday 4 – 9 p.m.

Contact: michelle@thecoronadonews.com

## Club Coronado promises a local nightclub experience without the late hours

» Continued from Page 1

bridge or interfere with Saturday morning plans.

She had the idea for approximately two years before attending a local gala.

“Everybody was dancing so hard and it just made me realize, ‘Okay, I have to do this because once-a-year dancing like that is just not enough,’” recalls Klisser, a salsa instructor for over two decades. “Especially because of how good dancing is for the body.”

“I also really miss the days of going out to the clubs when I was younger, just the regular dance music and dancing all night,” said Klisser. “The high energy of being on a dance floor with the lights, the music and everybody dancing all together. And I want to go out dancing, but I don’t want to be out till two o’clock in the morning anymore. ... So I decided to start out with a monthly event.”

Klisser says the first club event, in December, was at the Coronado Fire Station. In January and February, the event was moved to its current location.

Klisser says past events featured DJ Tee Lynn and DJ Mo Lyon.

“I think it’s growing and I think it’s getting better and better every time,” she adds.

Klisser says purchasing tickets ahead of time facilitates the check-in on the day of the event. Because of the bar, customers must be 21 or over.

“It’s really an incredible mix of ages and types of people,” Klisser notes. “And everybody is just shar-



Patrons dance during a Club Coronado event on Feb. 11 in Coronado. Photo by Celeste Vertiz.

Provided by Marilyn Klisser.

ing this super positive energy on the dance floor.”

Klisser has been a hair stylist in Coronado since 2012 and owner of Salon On First since 2019. She and her husband also own South Park Yoga and Wellness, according to the studio’s website.

“Every single time I’ve thought, ‘Okay, I’m so happy I’m doing this,’” said Klisser.

“I guess I just love the idea of sharing events and

ideas with the community that can spread positivity and happiness and joy, because we all need that in the world right now, especially,” Klisser said.

Visit Club Coronado’s Instagram page to learn more at: <https://www.instagram.com/clubcoronadodanceparty>.

Contact: julieta@thecoronadonews.com

# ARE YOU EXPERIENCING TAXES & FEES FATIGUE?

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THANKFULLY, SOME OF THE ABOVE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN SOUNDLY REJECTED.

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# CORONADO

## KMAC Foundation to host sailing training this spring

Coronado News staff

The KMAC Foundation's Accessible Sailing fleet will host six volunteer sailing and training sessions this spring at the Coronado Yacht Club at 1631 Strand Way.

The KMAC Foundation for Accessible Sailing in Coronado uses specially adapted sailboats and provides therapeutic, recreational and other sailing opportunities for people with

disabilities to enhance their mobility, well-being and independence.

Upcoming trainings will run on March 14, March 28, April 11, April 18, May 16 and May 30 from 11 to 3 p.m.

From April 24 to April 26, the 14th annual KMAC Memorial Regatta and Hansa Championship of the Americas will take place at the Coronado Yacht Club.

For more information visit <https://kmacfoundation.com/>.



Kai McDonald and his dad, Steve, have been racing together through the KMAC Foundation for a few years. Additional trainings through the foundation are scheduled for this spring. *File photo.*

## The final days of The Little Club...and a fading Americana

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everyone here. It's the worst thing that could happen to Coronado."

Another regular, Bill Rogers, put it more succinctly: "It f\*\*\*\*\* sucks. It's criminal. The other dive bars just don't have the same charm."

Throughout the '70s, '80s, and '90s, Turner spent his childhood shadowing his grandmother at the beloved saloon on the Ferry Landing side of the island. At 6 years old, when the bar opened at 6 a.m., he was already a witness to the morning rush.

"I remember going in with her while she did the books," Turner recalls. "At 7:30 or 8:00 a.m., I'd see all these sailors lined up; in those days, they could drink in uniform before starting their shift on North Island."

The Little Club originally opened in 1966, but Turner's grandmother, Barbara Roswell, bought it in 1972, a couple of years after her divorce. Then in her late 40s, Roswell hosted yearly Thanksgiving dinners for the sailors who were far from home – and anyone else who didn't have a place to go. From then on, it was a place with serious regulars, some of whom went in every night.

Grandma Roswell died in 1999. Turner was 18, and the bar was passed down to his mother, Liz Baker, and uncle, Charles Roswell. But they had little emotional investment and, by default, let the bartenders run the show. Turner, because of his adoration for the place, eventually bought a share six years ago.

For decades, the family leased the



Laurie Joyce at The Little Club serving drinks at The Little Club on Feb. 25, 2026. *Photo by Michelle Armas.*

space from building owner Virginia "Ginny" Darbin, who lived to be 100, according to Turner. After her passing, the land entered a trust which placed it on the market in February 2024, setting the current closure in motion.

But Turner says he didn't go down without a fight. His first attempt to save the Little Club was to buy the building, but he was outbid by Juan Jose Arellano in May 2025. (Arellano did not respond to a request for comment from The Coronado News.) Turner then spent a year reaching out to see if the bar could stay, with no luck.

"Two months ago, they served us our 60 days (notice)," Turner said. "Long-term, there was never an op-

tion for us. Even a month-to-month extension would have only given us maybe six months."

With the end certain, Turner added, "I made the decision that this is going to be our last month. This chapter is closed."

At least for a few weeks, however, the Little Club lives on with its stained glass and low-light lamps. According to Turner, it used to actually be "little" until they expanded the back where a pool table sits. Even on a Tuesday night, the bar is lined with customers sipping beers or cocktails. Men and women are laughing, the jukebox is playing, young sailors are playing 8-ball.

You might be met with Ernie Valdez, the general manager and bar-

tender of 35 years. Or Laurie Joyce, who some customers call a "national treasure" who has been there 25 years.

Joyce has upheld Turner's grandma's tradition of hosting Thanksgiving every year to over 100 people, and every Mother's Day receives about a half-dozen bouquets of flowers from sailors.

"It's extremely sad. We are home to the Navy, we are home to the tourists, and we are home to the locals," she said. "I've met some of my best friends here."

When asked if she will be involved if another Little Club opens, Joyce said with a laugh: "Absolutely, because I have to make sure things are getting clean."

In fact, Turner said he's holding out hope and looking for a new home for the bar in Coronado or Imperial Beach. "The Little Club is bigger than its location," he said. "We want to thank the community for all the support and outpouring of love. People have come up to me crying. While this chapter is closing, hopefully there will be another."

Late in the evening, an Irishman named Peter Smith approached a reporter like an apparition and said, "Everything has to come to an end eventually."

"Slán go fóill," he added, meaning "see you later" in Gaelic. Then he disappeared into a silhouette under street lamps and walked away.

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## Coronado's parking requirements — where Nicky Rottens feels like there is an imbalance

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Because of this, the owners of Nicky Rottens back then signed an agreement with the hardware store and the city to provide parking.

However, in 2023, Assembly Bill 2097 (AB 2097) went into effect prohibiting public agencies from enforcing minimum parking requirements on developments located within a half-mile of major transit stops.

That is also when Simon Guindi took over the restaurant. Guindi, 41, has been a Coronado local for the last 40 years.

Coronado Ferry Landing is within a half-mile of Nicky Rottens. The city has argued that the landing does not qualify as a major transit stop, but Guindi contended in his appeal that it should. After his position was rejected by the City Council, he said he wasn't done trying to fight this.

"I am very discouraged as a local business owner," Guindi told The Coronado News. "But right now, I'm not going to give up."

If Guindi had prevailed, Nicky Rottens would have been freed of the responsibility for those parking spots.

But, he said the appeal was less about being freed from the parking, and more about being treated fairly under the law. "All we were seeking was guidance from the city on whether or not the law applied," he said.

"I am trying to explain to everyone that I'm a new owner with a new vision for the corner restaurant ... Many people are not aware that the ownership changed completely and

the old owners have nothing to do with my venture."

Guindi complained that city staff won't give clear responses or return emails.

"We're not asking for special treatment, we're just trying to exercise the same rights under the law that everyone else has and it's tough to get a response," he added.

Guindi appealed the parking requirements in February 2025, citing AB 2097 and his business' proximity to the Ferry Landing.

In response, the city said AB 2097 applies only to new development, and since Nicky Rottens has been there for years, the restaurant was not relieved from parking requirements.

While Guindi wanted the city to deem the ferry terminal as a major transit stop – which would put AB 2097 in effect for his business – city staffers decided that the distinction was not relevant to Guindi's appeal because his renovation plans don't qualify as a new development project.

Staff urged members of the council on March 3 to deny the appeal because they believed the restaurant didn't qualify under the assembly bill.

Former Coronado Mayor Richard Bailey appeared at the meeting and argued the opposite on behalf of Guindi. He cited a technical advisory from the California Department of Housing and Community Development that states the bill does not only apply to new projects.



Former mayor Richard Bailey spoke on behalf of Nicky Rottens to try and release them from their parking requirements.

Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

The advisory reads that "in addition to new construction, AB 2097 also applies to changes of use in existing buildings or structures, including the creation or expansion of qualifying uses."

Guindi said he plans to change the concept of his business to a more neighborhood-friendly sports bar and restaurant. He wants to change out the interior and the entire experience of the bar.

However, all council members agreed that Nicky Rottens does not qualify to be exempt from its parking requirements.

"We're looking at one thing: Is this a new development? And it's not," Council member Kelly Purvis explained. "It's been there for over a decade. We have a deal with them – it's a fair deal, I think."

Council member Carrie Anne Downey said that despite Guindi's claim about a new concept for the

restaurant, she does not see any change of use.

Downey added that in 2012 Nicky Rottens changed its liquor license in order to turn the bar into a family-friendly restaurant.

"I'm not seeing any new development happening here. It's the exact same wording we used in 2012," Downey said.

The question of whether the ferry landing constitutes a "major transit stop" also proved contentious.

Bailey argued that a letter from CalTrans in May of 2025 "confirms that the state recognizes the ferry terminal as a major transit stop."

According to emails obtained by The Coronado News exchanged between Guindi and the city, the city stated they do not believe the island has a qualifying major transit stop.

Contact: [madeline@thecoronadonews.com](mailto:madeline@thecoronadonews.com)

# CORONADO



The 2026 Coronado Island Film Festival is scheduled for Nov. 4 to Nov. 8. Photo provided by the Coronado Island Film Festival.

## Coronado Island Film Festival announces theme, badges

Coronado News staff

Entering its 11th year, the Coronado Island Film Festival has unveiled its 2026 brand creative and announced the sale of badges for the year.

This year's creative reflects the festival ethos: "Where the Art and Science of Cinema Converge." Festival organizers said the theme captures Coronado island culture, honors storytelling, and celebrates the festival's fun, social, and community-driven

spirit.

Last year's event featured 27 San Diego premiers spanning U.S. and international features, documentaries, animation and shorts. The festival also honored the talent and creative genius of costume designer Deborah L. Scott ("Avatar: Fire & Ash") and Delroy Lindo ("Sinners") at the 2025 Leonard Maltin Industry Tribute Gala.

"Cinema has always reflected who we are and who we're becoming," said Merridee Book, CEO and artis-

tic director of the festival. "In 2026, we're leaning into that spirit with confidence and imagination, creating a space where filmmakers, industry creatives and audiences come together to celebrate bold storytelling, meaningful dialogue, and the undeniable magic of the movie-going experience."

Badges for the 2026 festival are on sale, and film submissions and the Writers Competition are open. For more information visit coronadofilmfest.com.



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# MILITARY

## US detainees in Iran risk becoming collateral damage in war, families and supporters fear

Associated Press

Families and supporters of Americans detained in Iran say their loved ones face new dangers during the intensifying war, including the risk of becoming unintended casualties of Israeli and American bombardment or victims of retaliation from Iran's repressive regime.

"For Americans imprisoned in Iran, this is about as terrifying a moment as it gets," said Siamak Namazi, an Iranian American who was detained for nearly eight years before being released as part of a deal with the U.S. in 2023. "What these families are facing now is days of war with no clear end in sight."

The U.S. government would not confirm how many Americans are being held in Iran, but the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, a hostage advocacy organization, said there are six and that they face "unprecedented danger" because of the military conflict.

The known cases include a reporter formerly based in Washington and a Jewish Iranian American from New York who traveled to Iran last year for family reasons and hasn't been permitted to return to the U.S.

At least two of the known detainees are housed in Evin Prison, the notorious Tehran penitentiary where Namazi was held, according to representatives for the individuals. The high-security facility holds many of the Islamic Republic's political prisoners and has been the target of past Israeli bombardment.

Kamran Hekmati, a 61-year-old from Long Island detained at Evin, spoke with his wife on Monday, a few days into the war, to assure her that he was safe for now, according to Shohreh Nowfar, his cousin.

But the family worries his condition could quickly deteriorate because he hasn't been receiving regular treatments for his bladder cancer in the months since he was detained, she said.

"It's an uncertain time in an uncertain country," said Nowfar, a Los Angeles resident.

### Trump administration calls for detainees' release

Ryan Fayhee, a lawyer for Reza Valizadeh, an Iranian American reporter also detained at Evin, said he's stressed the urgency of the moment in his regular talks with White House



This undated photo provided by the Hekmati family shows Kamran Hekmati. Hekmati Family via AP.

and State Department officials.

Israel's military has taken to social media in recent days to warn residents living near the prison that they should evacuate amid the continuing airstrikes. The families of other foreign nationals imprisoned at Evin have told European news outlets that bombs have been hitting close enough to the detention center to blow out windows.

"It's my job to let the administration and the Israeli government know that there are innocent American citizens within that prison," Fayhee said. "They should take great care with this military action to avoid any unfortunate collateral damage."

White House and State Department officials declined to respond to specific questions about the status of the detainees out of concern for their safety and security, but called on Iran to immediately release them.

"President Trump has been clear that he wants every American wrongfully detained to be returned home safe and sound, and that there will be dire consequences for regimes who treat Americans as political pawns," said Anna Kelly, a White House spokesperson.

Valizadeh is among at least 15 reporters currently jailed in Iran, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The 50-year-old fled the country in 2009 after reporting on its pro-democracy protests, according to a petition his lawyers submitted to the United Nations in January.

Valizadeh obtained U.S. citizenship in 2022 while working in Washington for Radio Farda, the Persian-language

arm of Radio Free Europe, which receives U.S. government funding.

He was detained in 2024 after returning to Iran to visit his elderly parents and sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges that he was collaborating with the U.S. government.

The U.S. has since officially designated Valizadeh as wrongfully detained, a classification that moves a case under the supervision of the State Department's special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, the government's chief hostage negotiator.

### Americans imprisoned on dubious charges

Among the other Americans whose plight has become public is Afarin Mohajer, a California resident originally from Iran.

She was detained in September and charged with posting propaganda critical of the Islamic Republic on social media and insulting its Supreme Leader and Islam, according to her son Reza Zarrabi, a political activist who lives in Germany.

Zarrabi didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment this week, but he has told European media outlets that his mother isn't politically active and that he believes she was arrested to silence his outspoken opposition to the regime.

Hekmati's family, meanwhile, is convinced the New York City jewelry business owner is just the latest victim of Iran's "hostage diplomacy."

The country for decades has detained Americans in the hopes of securing the release of Iranians locked up in the U.S. or exacting concessions from Washington. Just last week, the U.S. sought to impose costs on Iran for hostage-taking, with the State

Department a day before the conflict began designating the country as a state sponsor of wrongful detention.

Nowfar said her cousin, Hekmati, left Iran after the 1979 revolution but has returned several times without issue.

Then in May, Iranian authorities stopped him at the airport, seized his passport and forbade him from leaving the country. He was eventually charged under an Iranian law that makes it illegal to have visited Israel within the past 10 years.

Hekmati's family maintains that his last trip to Israel was some 13 years ago for his son's Bar Mitzvah. They also dispute espionage-related charges that accuse him of having met with Mossad agents.

"They just wanted to have a hostage. An American hostage," Nowfar said.

There are also concerns that Hekmati's faith exposes him to further mistreatment, says Kieran Ramsey, the chief investigative officer at Global Reach, a nonprofit working on Hekmati's case.

"He's not only American, he's also Jewish — and we had had some concerns early on in this case of him" getting bullied, said Ramsey, who previously led the U.S. government's Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell.

As for Namazi, he sympathizes with families seeking solace, recalling a chaotic 2022 fire that killed at least eight inmates during his time at Evin.

"I remember the smoke, the confusion, and the total absence of reliable information," the 54-year-old Washington resident said. "For us prisoners it was terrifying. My mother says that night was one of the hardest she endured."



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## SPORTS

## CHS ROUNDUP

## Islander sporting events this week

**BY CADE MICHAELSON**  
The Coronado News

Each of Coronado's spring sports teams compete this week, with Islanders baseball having the busiest week, as they play three games. The track and swim teams finish the week off for the Islanders on Saturday.

**16 • Monday**

Islanders baseball gets the week started for Coronado athletics. JV and varsity are both playing Eastlake, with varsity on the road and JV at home. Both games start at 4 p.m.

Boys' volleyball is at home for a game against Cathedral. Games start at 4:30 and 6 p.m.

Islanders boys' lacrosse hits the road to face Carlsbad. Games start at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

**17 • Tuesday**

CHS beach volleyball starts its week at home against Mira Mesa. The game starts at 3:30 p.m.

The Islanders boys' tennis team is also at home for its first match of the week, against Mission Bay. The match starts at 3:30 p.m.

Varsity softball plays against Santa Fe Christian. The game is at home, starting at 4 p.m.

JV girls' lacrosse is the only Coronado team on the road today, with a 5:30 matchup against Helix.

Boys' varsity golf is playing at home against Mission Bay, starting at 3 p.m.

**18 • Wednesday**

Coronado baseball plays its second game of the week, this time against Granite Hills. JV is on the road, varsity is at home. First pitch for both games is at 4 p.m.

Varsity golf plays back to back days; they're at Country Club Rancho Bernardo to face Westview at 4 p.m.

Islanders girls' lacrosse ends the night for Coronado with a home game against San Marcos. JV starts at 5:30, varsity follows at 7 p.m.

**19 • Thursday**

CHS tennis plays its second match of the week against San Diego High at 3:30 p.m. The match is at Coronado.

Beach volleyball is on the road at Canyon Hills for a 4 p.m. game.

The CHS track team is at Kearny for its first league meet of the season. Events start at 4 p.m.

Freshman baseball is on the road, facing Patrick Henry. First pitch is at 4:30 p.m.

Varsity lacrosse closes the night with a home game against Regis Jesuit, starting at 7 p.m.

**20 • Friday**

Islanders baseball plays its third and final game of the week against San Ysidro. JV is at home, varsity on the road. First pitch is at 4 p.m. for both games.

Boys' volleyball is at home against Eastlake. Games are at 4:30 and 6 p.m.

Contact: cade@thecoronadonews.com

# Alex Cade: 25 years, over 300 wins, and a life in lacrosse

**BY CADE MICHAELSON**  
The Coronado News

He was new to private school, and the bullying was getting out of hand. This time, nine-year-old Alex Cade decided to fight back – to stand up for himself, prompting a physical altercation between him and a classmate. When one of the teachers monitoring recess saw this, he pulled Cade into his office, who assumed he was in trouble.

Instead of a dreaded punishment, however, the teacher saw Alex's toughness and potential. He asked the new kid to play on the school lacrosse team – an invitation that changed a boy's life.

"His name was Temple Grassi and he was an All-American midfielder at University of North Carolina," Cade said, sharing his story via email. "He mentored me and put me on a great path for success while in school. He came to my college games with my other high school coaches my entire time in college."

Cade's foray into lacrosse began at Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland, a private school for boys grades 3-12. Little did he know, it would lead to a successful collegiate, professional and coaching career – at Coronado High School – as well as the founding of a sports business that he runs today, Adrenaline Lacrosse, based in San Diego.

At Landon, Cade played goalkeeper under Robinson Bordley, who was inducted into the USA Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2020.

After high school, Cade played at the University of Notre Dame under head coach Kevin Corrigan, who remains in that position today for the Fighting Irish and was recently inducted into the Intercollegiate Men's Lacrosse Coaches Association.

"I had some great coaches at every level that I learned a lot from and respected," Cade said. "I wanted to follow in their footsteps."

He found himself in Coronado after a group of Navy fathers recruited

*"I love and respect the community of Coronado. All walks of life show up on our field. I love the fact that it's a small school where we get the opportunity to develop and coach the kids who show up to play ... It's meaningful to me that we are building great young men, teammates and citizens as our priority."*

- Alex Cade

him to coach at the turn of the century. Now in his 25th season at the helm for Coronado High, Cade is third in California history in career victories, according to Lax Numbers. His Islander team won the CIF Championship in 2012, and Cade was named CIF coach of the year.

"I love and respect the community of Coronado," Cade said. "All walks

of life show up on our field. I love the fact that it's a small school where we get the opportunity to develop and coach the kids ... It's meaningful to me that we are building great young men, teammates and citizens as our priority."

Cade proceeded to play professional lacrosse after Notre Dame, primarily for the San Francisco Dragons, a now-defunct franchise that was once part of Major League Lacrosse. Cade played until he was 33, and since then has worked full-time as CEO of Adrenaline Lacrosse. His company manufactures equipment and apparel and also sponsors lacrosse events and teams such as the LaxDawgs, which Cade helps coach.

Despite not meeting directly through lacrosse, Cade's wife, Jada, also was a Division I player at William and Mary. Jada has coached at the Coronado Lacrosse Club, a program that develops young girls in the sport, for over 20 years.

Cade said his coaching philosophy today is almost opposite of what it was as a player.

"I was young when I started and made many mistakes in the quest for winning a championship," he explained. "Back then, I put that first. I had it all reversed. Perspective of time, empathy, humility as I got older taught me that each player is an individual with unique circumstances. The priority is taking each player in consideration, understanding their strengths, building upon them to create a collective will and atmosphere. Building them up as a cohesive team of great teammates and citizens ... The result is championships."

Cade added that success is a product of focus, work and tenacity.

"Prepare harder than anyone and trust your preparation on gameday so you can just compete," he said. "Surround yourself with great people who raise you up and not bring you down, and be relentless in your pursuits."

Contact: cade@thecoronadonews.com



**FILE -Los Angeles Chargers linebacker Khalil Mack (52) rushes during a NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025, in Arlington, Texas. AP Photo/Matt Patterson, File.**

## Star edge rusher Khalil Mack agrees to \$18 million, 1-year deal with the Chargers, AP source says

Associated Press

Three-time All-Pro pass rusher Khalil Mack is returning to the Los Angeles Chargers on a fully guaranteed \$18 million, one-year deal, a person with knowledge of the agreement told The Associated Press on March 7.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal hasn't been finalized.

The 35-year-old Mack had 5 1/2 sacks last season. He has 113 in 12 seasons.

Mack, the 2016 AP NFL Defensive Player of the Year, has made nine Pro Bowls, including three in his four seasons with the Chargers. Mack began his career with the Raiders and also played four seasons with the Bears.

The Chargers finished 11-6 last season and lost to the Patriots 16-3 in an AFC wild-card game.

## Chargers release Mekhi Becton and Will Dissly

Associated Press

The Los Angeles Chargers released guard Mekhi Becton and tight end Will Dissly on March 4, a week before the NFL's new league year begins.

The team also waived tackle Savion Washington.

Becton started 15 of 16 games after signing with the Bolts last offseason. His departure leaves the Bolts in need of a new starting right guard. The interior offensive line has another opening with the retirement of Bradley Bozeman.

Dissly started 11 of 26 games over the past two years after signing with the Bolts in 2024. He had 63 receptions for 594 yards and two touchdowns. He was third on the team in 2024 with a career-best 50 catches and had a career-high 481 yards to go with two touchdowns.

Washington signed as an undrafted free agent in last May. He spent last season on the PUP list.



**Los Angeles Chargers general manager Joe Hortiz. AP Photo/Michael Conroy.**

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**SPORTS**



**FILE - Miami Dolphins fullback Alec Ingold (30) runs onto the field during player introductions before an NFL football game against the New Orleans Saints, Nov. 30, 2025, in Miami Gardens, Fla. AP Photo/Doug Murray, File.**

**Chargers agree to terms with former Dolphins fullback Alec Ingold on a multiyear contract**

Associated Press

The Los Angeles Chargers agreed to terms with former Miami Dolphins fullback Alec Ingold on a multiyear contract, reuniting him with his former head coach Mike McDaniel.

Ingold played the last four years with the Dolphins, where he made the Pro Bowl during the 2023 season. He was a key part of the running game for Miami while playing in 68 games, including the postseason, and starting in 48.

The 29-year-old Ingold will look to serve in the same role for Jim Harbaugh and the Chargers, who hired McDaniel as their offensive coordinator in January. McDaniel was fired by the Dolphins after going 35-33 and 0-2 in the playoffs in four seasons as Miami's head coach.

The Chargers didn't announce

terms of the deal for Ingold, but ESPN reported it's for two years and worth up to \$7.5 million.

Ingold helped bolster a Dolphins offense in 2023 that led the NFL in total offense (401.3 net yards per game) and passing offense (265.5 net yards passing yards per game). Raheem Mostert rushed for 1,012 yards and a league-leading 18 touchdowns that season, and De'Von Achane ran for 800 yards and eight scores.

Ingold was signed by the Raiders in 2019 as an undrafted free agent out of Wisconsin, where he converted from linebacker to fullback. After three seasons with the Raiders, Ingold signed with the Dolphins as a free agent in 2022.

He has caught 75 passes for 611 yards and four touchdowns and rushed for 56 yards and two scores in 107 NFL regular-season games, including 58 starts.



**FILE - Washington Commanders center Tyler Biadasz during an NFL football game in Kansas City, Mo., on Monday, Oct. 27, 2025. AP Photo/Ed Zurga, File.**

**Chargers bolster Justin Herbert's protection with the signing of center Tyler Biadasz**

Associated Press

The Los Angeles Chargers signed center Tyler Biadasz on March 6, bringing in protection for quarterback Justin Herbert.

Biadasz spent the last two seasons with the Washington Commanders, starting all 31 regular-season games. He was a Pro Bowl selection in 2024. His seven career postseason starts

include the 2024 NFC Championship game.

A fourth-round selection by Dallas in 2020, he spent his first four seasons with the Cowboys. He started 53 of 61 games with them.

Biadasz started all 41 games of his three-year career at Wisconsin, where he earned first-team All-America and first-team All-Big Ten honors.

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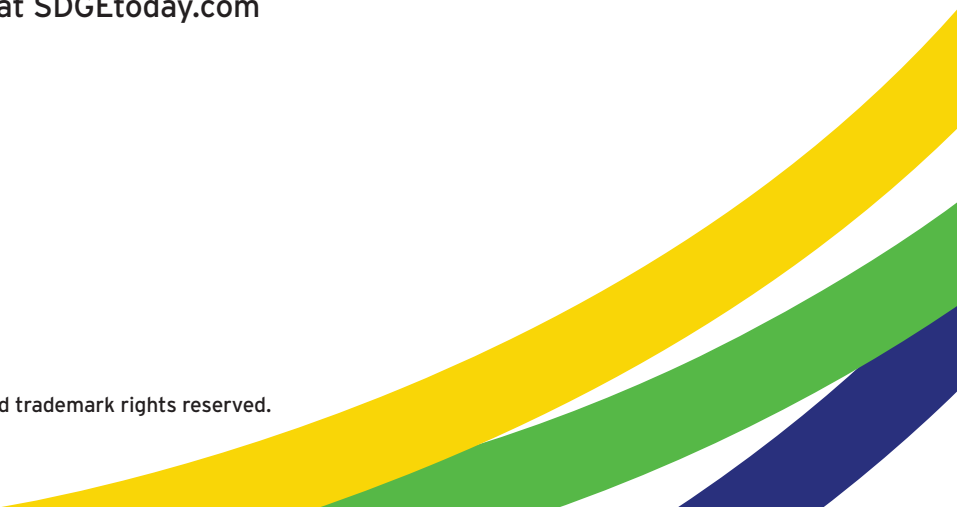
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## SPORTS

# LeBron James breaks Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's NBA record for career field goals

Associated Press

LeBron James surpassed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the most field goals in NBA history but his night ended with a disheartening loss and a sore left elbow.

James hit a turnaround 12-foot jumper over Zeke Nnaji with 12 seconds left in the first quarter of the Los Angeles Lakers' 120-113 loss to the Denver Nuggets on March 5 to surpass Abdul-Jabbar's mark.

"My name being mentioned with some of the greatest to ever play this game has always been humbling and pretty cool," James said. "It's a pretty cool thing. I grew up watching and reading, idolizing a lot of the greats. And if I ever was able to be a part of the NBA, I wanted to be in position where I could be named with some of the greats by doing something right."

The record-breaking bucket gave James 15,838 career field goals in his unprecedented 23rd NBA season. Abdul-Jabbar had 15,837 baskets when the skyhook-wielding big man ended his 20-year career in 1989 as the NBA's career scoring leader. Karl Malone is a distant third with 13,528 field goals.

James finished with 16 points on 7-of-11 shooting but it was his all-around game that kept the Lakers close after the Nuggets jumped out to a 16-3 lead in their wire-to-wire win. James had a team-high eight assists, three steals and a big block.

"He's been a complete player for 23 years," Lakers coach J.J. Redick said. "... He's just a phenomenal basketball player."

Nikola Jokic concurred, saying, "He's definitely a legendary player."

James passed Abdul-Jabbar to be-



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, goes up for a field goal to surpass Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's record of 15,837 to become the NBA's all-time leader in field goals as Denver Nuggets forward Zeke Nnaji defends in the first half of an NBA basketball game Thursday, March 5, 2026, in Denver.

AP Photo/David Zalubowski.

come the top scorer in NBA history in February 2023. James was already the top scorer in NBA playoff history, and he surpassed 50,000 career points in the regular season and postseason combined a year ago.

James has already attempted more field goals than any NBA player — 31,274 entering on March 5, including more than 7,500 3-pointers.

Abdul-Jabbar, the low-post virtuoso who made more than 50% of his shots in 19 straight seasons to start his career, attempted only 28,307 field goals — and just 18 of them were 3-pointers after the shot was introduced to the league midway through his career.

James hurt his left elbow on a layup that pulled Los Angeles to 110-106 with four minutes to go and left the game. He and Jokic banged into each other as James scored and James fell to the floor, bracing himself with his right arm but injuring his left. No foul was called and James said the officials told him the contact was "marginal."

"It's pretty sore right now. It feels like a funny bone situation," said

James, who returned with 2:05 left and the Lakers trailing by a point. The Lakers, however, never were able to overcome the Nuggets — or leapfrog them in the standings.

Asked if he was concerned about the severity of the injury, James said, "We'll see what happens over the next couple of days. Hopefully, I wake up tomorrow and it doesn't feel too much worse than it does now — or if it feels better, that would be great."

So, James wasn't really in the mood to look back over his career and relish making more baskets than anyone who ever played the game.

"I don't know, right now it doesn't hit me at all," James said. "Obviously, what I feel is my elbow and I feel the loss."

"Obviously, it's a pretty cool feat. But it's hard for me to kind of wrap my head around it and what it looks like. It's something, one, that I've never had a goal to have that record ... but it's a pretty cool feat, it's an unbelievable feat."

Abdul-Jabbar was a career 55.9% shooter, while James has hit 51.6% of

his shots.

James tied Abdul-Jabbar's record with his second basket of the game, an alley-oop dunk from Luka Doncic.

Now 41, James regularly sets NBA records for longevity and career achievements — most recently becoming the oldest player to get a triple-double last month.

Before tipoff, Redick compared his superstar to another iconic American virtuoso: the Boss.

"Yeah, I'm a big Bruce Springsteen fan, and I would probably say his early albums really, really get me going," Redick said. "There's a youthfulness to him, you know, in energy. 'Nebraska' is actually my favorite album of all time. And that's very different from what he had done that far in his career. And then you can kind of see the evolution of him as a singer-songwriter. And then he comes out with the greatest hits. And you're like, 'Wow, this is pretty good.'

"And then after that he comes out with 'The Rising,' which is one of the most important albums of the 2000s. So, you get to the end and you're like, 'Holy man, this guy's greatest hits are like insane.' And LeBron's greatest hits, right? He just keeps adding to them. He just plays and plays and plays and the greatest hits, he's got a hell of a catalog."

Even more history awaits James later in March, barring injury — and left elbow now willing: The Lakers' visit to the Nuggets was the 1,606th regular-season game of his career, putting him just five games behind Robert Parish (1,611) for the most in NBA history. James already holds the league's career record for playoff games with 292.

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Woodbridge is celebrating **45 years** of style and craftsmanship with a special Anniversary Sale. In honor of this milestone, **enjoy 10% off MSRP** on all sleeper sofas during the American Leather Sleeper Sale. It's the perfect time to add comfort, versatility, and timeless design to your home while celebrating 45 years of exceptional quality.



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**Woodbridge Interiors - Mission Valley**

1530 Camino De La Reina  
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 619-296-7500

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Our team of design experts can help you customize and create your dream home!