BASEBALL COMMENTARY

Vitello's mark yet to be seen in 2026

There wasn't much to manage as Giants were swept by Yankees

Dieter Kurtenbach
COLUMNIST

Back in the optimistic haze of spring training, San Francisco Giants first-year manager Tony Vitello made a folksy admission.

He said he'd "pay good money" to watch Rafael Devers and Robbie Ray ply their crafts.

It was a charming, baseball-guy quote and a sly nod to his lack of any professional baseball experience.

It doesn't read back so charming now.

No, the irony of that quote is thicker than the fog over Oracle Park on a Tuesday in June.

Because Giants are the ones paying Vitello more than good money — he's believed to be the highest-paid first-time manager in baseball history — and if the first three games of the season are any indication, they're paying him to just sit around and watch the Giants "work."

He's been bought a front-row seat to a disaster of a start.

It was just one game after the Opening Night debacle. It was just two games after a miserable one-hit dud on Friday.

And it was just one series after a brutal sweep, scoring just a single run across three games against an impressive Yankees team.

See **DIETER** on Page B8

THE SCORE
GIANTS-PADRES, LATE
Up next: Giants at Padres
When: Tuesday, 6:40 p.m.
TV/Radio: NBCBA/680
Online: For a recap of Monday's late Giants-Padres game, see **santacruzsentinel.com/sports**

Inside: St. John's coach Pitino signs new deal with contract extension, **NEWS+NOTES, B8.**

San Francisco Giants manager Tony Vitello walks to the dugout after making a pitching change during the sixth inning against the New York Yankees in San Francisco on Friday. **JEFF CHIU — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

2025-26 ALL-PCAL GIRLS BASKETBALL

HIGH-5s FOR QUINTET

Watsonville High's Leilani Yasin, who finished the season with four triple-doubles and 18 double-doubles, was named the PCAL Gabilan Division's Defensive Player of the Year. **RAUL EBIO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL**

Watsonville's Yasin-Espinoza, St. Francis' Whitmeyer, PCS's Buckley and Guth, Pajaro Valley's Contreras earn special honors at all-league voting

By Jim Seimas
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Watsonville High senior forward/center Leilani Yasin-Espinoza shined at both ends of the basketball court, but was honored as the Gabilan Division Defensive Player of the Year after leading the Wildcatz to a three-way tie for fourth place in the highest tier of the Pacific Coast Athletic League.

The Wildcatz (11-14 overall, 6-8 league) also qualified for the Central Coast Section Division I playoffs.

"A strong and important fixture in our program," Wildcatz coach Zachary Cook said. "She was the defensive pulse for our team. While she was a menacing presence near the paint, she was an underrated defender in the passing lanes."

Alisal senior wing Nayeli Gil Silva was named MVP after leading the Trojans (22-6, 13-1) to the division title, a spot in the prestigious CCS Open Division playoffs, and a berth in the CIF NorCal Regional playoffs.

Salinas senior guard Alice Uchida-Dohrmann was named Offensive POY for the runner-up Cowboys (19-7, 12-2), who advanced to the CCS D-I playoffs.

Yasin-Espinoza finished the season with four triple-doubles and 18 double-doubles. She averaged 14 points, 15.1 rebounds, 5.2 blocks, and 3.9 steals per game

Her blocks average ranked No. 1 in the CCS and No. 5 in California, according to maxpreps.com. Her rebounding average was third in the CCS and No. 19 in the state.

Yasin-Espinoza was also honored on the first team.

See **HOOPS** on Page B2

MORE ONLINE
Click on this story on **santacruzsentinel.com/sports** to view the complete All-PCAL girls basketball team.

NHL

Sharks among 6 teams vying for one wild card

By Curtis Pashelka
BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

SAN JOSE — The San Jose Sharks' chances at making the postseason appeared bleak just a few days ago.

The Sharks had lost five straight games, were struggling at both ends of the ice, had fallen into 12th place in the Western Conference, and were seven points out of a playoff spot with 13 games left to play.

But as they get set to face the St. Louis Blues on Monday to start a six-game homestand, the Sharks, thanks in part to the turtle race among middle-of-the-pack teams in the west, are still in the hunt for their first postseason appearance since 2019.

After gaining three of a possible four points in the final two stops of their three-game road trip, the Sharks are four points back of the Nashville Predators for the final playoff spot, with three games in hand.

See **SHARKS** on Page B3

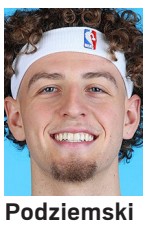
THE SCORE
SHARKS-BLUES, LATE
Up next: Ducks at Sharks
When: Wednesday, 6 p.m.
TV/Radio: TNT, truTV/SJSharks.com/listen
Online: For a recap of Monday's late Sharks-Blues game, see **santacruzsentinel.com/sports**

WARRIORS

Winning streak ends in Denver

By Joseph Dycus
BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

Something had to give at Ball Arena in Denver on Sunday night. The Warriors traveled to Colorado sporting a three-game winning streak, facing a Denver team that had run off five consecutive victories.



Podziemski

Despite trying to muck up the Nuggets' balletic Nikola Jokic-led attack with physical play, the Steph Curry-less Warriors ran out of steam down the stretch in an 116-93 loss.

The Warriors led at halftime, but the Nuggets took control in the third quarter when they outscored Golden State 40-21.

"We're playing a really solid half and then we just can't sustain it," Kerr told reporters after the game. "That's where you really feel the injuries. You need more depth."

Brandin Podziemski scored 23 points and made 5 of 8 3-pointers, while Kristaps Porzingis poured in 23 points and made 5 of 5 triples for his fifth game scoring at least 20 as a member of the Warriors.

De'Anthony Melton missed all five of his shots and went scoreless. Kerr later said that Melton's thumb is "banged up" and that is a major cause of his struggles.

Jokic put up 25 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists while Jamal Murray poured in 20 for Denver.

A scuffle broke out with 9:57 left in the second quarter after Zeke Nnaji fouled Gary Payton II to stop a fastbreak. LJ Cryer bumped into Jamal Murray, and then Melton, Payton and Nnaji began shoving one another after the inciting incident.

Melton, Payton and Nnaji were all assessed technical fouls. The fireworks did not end there for Payton, who was an integral part of a 19-2 Warriors run to begin the quarter.

See **WARRIORS** on Page B2

THE SCORE
NUGGETS 116, WARRIORS 93 (SUN.)
Up next: Spurs at Warriors
When: Wednesday, 7 p.m.
TV/Radio: NBCBA, ESPN/1490

SANTA CRUZ COAST ATHLETIC LEAGUE ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Noah Solano
Harbor baseball

Solano, a senior, finished a single shy of hitting for the cycle, drove in four runs, and scored twice in the Pirates' 16-1, five inning rout of visiting Del Mar on March 18.

Minami Wu
Mount Madonna
Beach volleyball

In addition to being a great athlete who always gives 110%, sophomore Minami Wu brings a great attitude to the courts," Hawks coach John Welch said. "She pushes herself out of her comfort zone in order to get better. She is kind to teammates and opponents, she tries new things, and she jumps in to help with things without being asked.

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