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AMERICA'S PASTIME

## BASEBALL IS BACK IN THE BAY AREA



PHOTOS BY JOSE CARLOS FAJARDO — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

San Francisco Giants pitcher Sergio Romo autographs a baseball for a young fan before the preseason showdown at the Coliseum in Oakland on Sunday. The San Francisco Giants defeated the Oakland Athletics 9-5.

### Giants, A's provide a preview of the sport's new speeded-up play

By Jason Mastrodonato  
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**OAKLAND »** Baseball made its return to the Bay Area on Sunday, accompanied by sunshine, chaos and a little more than 11,000 paying customers at the decrepit Oakland Coliseum.

For the record, the Giants beat the A's 9-5 in the first game of the annual Bay Bridge Series.

There will be another game tonight, at the Giants' ballpark, with a bigger crowd and a special moment. Sergio Romo, a key member of the Giants' three championship teams last decade, is scheduled to pitch and then retire.

Sunday was a weird one. The umpires, now busy tracking such things as the number of seconds before a pitcher throws the ball, lost track of the most essential thing — outs! — in the sixth inning. With a runner on first base, A's infielder Tony Kemp fielded a throw from third and touched second for



Oakland Athletics' Jordan Diaz reaches for the ball as San Francisco Giants' Casey Schmitt slides safely into second base in the seventh inning of their Sunday preseason game.

a force out but never made the attempt to turn a double play and instead ran off the field. His teammates followed.

The Giants followed, too, coming out of their dugout to take their places on the infield dirt. Ultimately, order was restored and the inning resumed with two outs, the Giants batting, and the A's back in the field.

The play was choppy, too. That's baseball in March for

you. At least it was fast, relatively speaking. The game was played in three hours and one minute, less time than an average game last season, and this wasn't an average game. There were 14 runs, 15 hits, nine walks and 28 strikeouts.

The Giants dropped a fly ball in center field, fumbled the relay at shortstop and later threw a routine ground ball into the outfield. But they hit two home

runs and stole three bases to please an Oakland Coliseum crowd that was more orange and black and green and gold.

That shouldn't have come as a surprise to anyone. The A's had the worst attendance in baseball last season (9,973) when they went 60-102. This offseason they traded their best player, Sean Murphy, and made only a handful of small signings.

Without a long-term stadium plan to fuel spending, they'll enter opening day with a payroll of about \$60 million, lowest in the majors, and having won just 10 games in spring training. No other Cactus League team won fewer.

Asked before Sunday's game if he was tired of answering questions about the A's being perennially overlooked, general manager David Forst smiled and said, "I'm not sick of the question. I think we'll surprise people."

They'll have to do it with

BASEBALL » PAGE 6

UNLIKELY ALLIANCE

## YIMBYs support slow-build measure

As catastrophic wildfires, floods expose millions to danger, bill would curb housing in risky areas

By Ethan Varian  
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Over the past half-century, new housing has spread into ever more far-flung parts of California — from luxury estates perched on remote hill-sides to tightly packed subdivisions stretched over rural flatlands.

The sprawl has allowed people to live closer to nature and buy homes in more affordable parts of the state where it's cheaper and easier to build. But it's also left millions vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires and flooding.

And as destructive natural disasters have become more frequent in recent years, state and local officials have felt increasing pressure: How does California find ways to ease a dire housing shortage without ignoring the harsh reality of climate change?

Now, an unlikely coalition of environmentalists and housing advocates is backing a bill that seeks to slow growth in many parts of the state at high risk of fires and floods while encouraging more multifamily housing in existing population centers.

The proposal wouldn't outright ban new housing in regions at risk of fires and floods — or prevent people in those areas from rebuilding their homes after disaster strikes. But advocates say it would rein in the kind of large master-planned developments that in recent decades have popped up in the Oakland hills, Tassajara Valley in Contra Costa County, and Morgan Hill and Gilroy in the South Bay.

Chris Ward, a Democratic Assemblymember from San Diego who introduced the legislation, Assembly Bill 68, said the goal is "to try and limit, and as a last resort suspend, further sprawl into areas that are putting families in harm's way."

Since 2018, devastating wildfires in Lake Tahoe, Wine Country, the Sacramento Valley, the Santa Cruz Mountains and other parts of the state have burned thousands of homes and killed dozens of people. And this year, severe flooding has hit the San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast, damaging hundreds of homes in the Monterey County farm town of Pajaro.

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ANTIOCH

## Amid FBI probe, police department refuses to release use of force records

By Nate Gartrell  
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In the shadow of an FBI investigation into Antioch police use of force and other suspected misdeeds, the city is refusing to release records of a dozen cases that would shed more light on the force officers use on residents.

The city's decision this month to withhold the cases comes as the state continues to expand police transparency rules and with the FBI and county prosecutors probing alleged civil rights violations for on-duty uses of force, including when police dogs have been sicced on people.

Of the 12 cases withheld, four involve police K9s causing an injury, including a man who suffered "obvious disfigurement" in 2016, and eight others concern officers who left suspects unconscious through use of a controversial neck hold technique that has since been banned statewide. In each case, the city insists the injuries are not serious enough to warrant disclosure.

The refusal came in response to a request by the California Reporting Project, an alliance of various news organizations that has spent years fighting for public records on police misconduct and use of force across the state.

RECORDS » PAGE 7

CULTURE WARS

## LGBTQ+ kids in the crosshairs as a surge of bills targeting gender identity reaches a record high

By Elissa Miolene  
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For most of junior year, 16-year-old Ace Roman's mornings have started inside the "Fit Closet" — a wardrobe in the parking lot of Skyline High School.

Roman, who identifies as nonbinary, would try on men's pants, women's skirts and everything in between, experimenting with whatever felt best that day. Roman's friends would do the same, with many pulling on clothing they never would have felt comfortable wearing at home.

The Fit Closet, designed by Oakland nonprofit Youth Together, was created to help students explore their gender identity in a safe, comfortable space. But across the country, a record number of bills targeting LGBTQ+ youth has put programs like the Fit Closet at risk. There have been bills banning trans girls

LGBTQ+ » PAGE 6



ARIC CRABB — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Skyline High School students Ace Roman, left, Katoo Tafengamonu, center, and Anthony Brown look over clothing at the Fit Closet on the campus of the Oakland school on Tuesday.

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