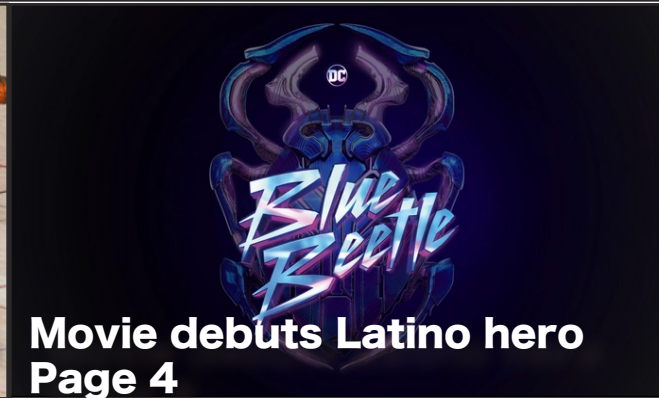




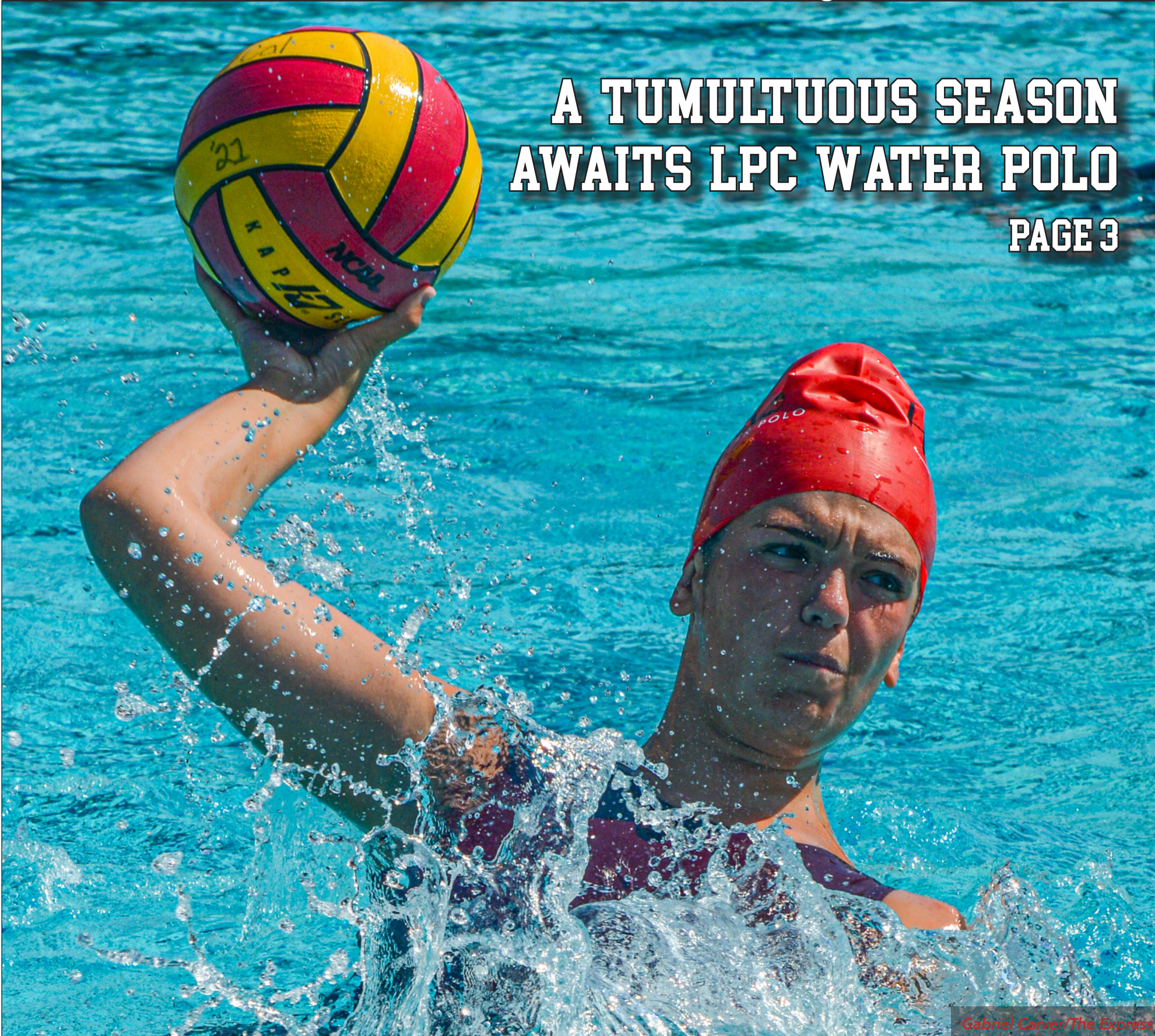
Las Positas remembers 9/11
Page 2



Getting ready for the season
Page 4



Movie debuts Latino hero
Page 4



A TUMULTUOUS SEASON AWAITS LPC WATER POLO PAGE 3

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Expert recalls the events leading to 9/11

By Tim Brady
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On Sept. 11, Harold K. Strunk, Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), a retired captain of the United States Navy, spoke during the annual Veterans First 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony.

The small auditorium on campus was filled with a mixed crowd of college staff, veteran students, Veterans of Foreign Wars members from the local community and even students who weren't alive for 9/11. All seemed eager to hear the stories of the retired captain, who gave a detailed speech on what preceded the attack that changed this country—and the world—forever.

Strunk wasted no time. "The trail to 9/11 leads from Afghanistan to Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Pakistan, Egypt, Malta, Germany, Malaysia and then to the United States. What happened on 9/11 didn't just happen on that day. It was several years in the making. Let me tell you about it," he said.

As he continued, the audience was increasingly focused on the journey Strunk led.

He recalled that in 1973 Ambassador Cleo Noel, his deputy George Moore and Belgian Ambassador Guy Eid, who had been captured by the Black September Faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Khartoum, Sudan.

The militants demanded the release of a host of individuals, Robert Kennedy's assassin Sirhan Sirhan, terrorist Abu Daoud, all Palestinians being held in Israel and Jordan, and all members of the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany.

No such releases happened, with the U.S. standing on the policy that it does not negotiate with terrorists. All three men were subsequently executed by the militants.

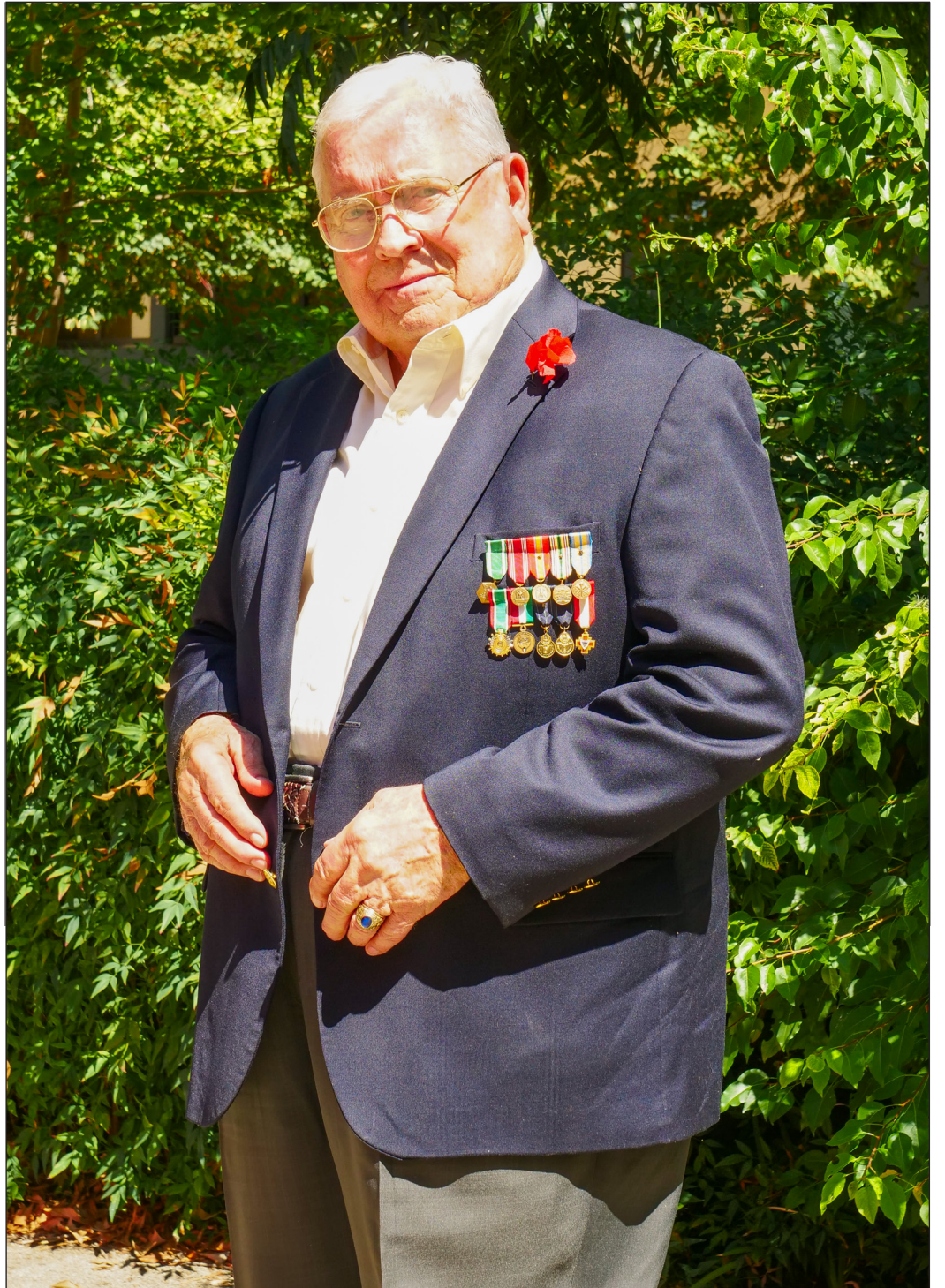
Strunk spared no details. Following a bloody scene in Cairo of the assassination of Anwar Sadaat and about 100 others, he spoke of arriving the next day to a scene that had not been cleaned in any way.

The audience seemed to hang on every word as he spoke calmly about a situation that was anything but calm—and far from ordinary.

The captain finished his presentation by telling how Osama Bin Laden started Al-Qaeda, which led to the fateful day of Sept. 11, 2001, a day that not only changed the lives of many then but also altered the course of many other lives for years to come.

The mood of the room seemed to change, with some reflecting on where they were that day, others trying to imagine the horrors of living through a day that they were too young to recall—or not yet born. A few people who put their heads down, maybe remembering a loved one or a friend or recalling some of their own stories from that time.

The speech was followed up with lunch being provided by the Las Positas Veterans First program, who hosted the event. Those



GABRIEL CARVER/EXPRESS

Harold K. Strunk, a retired captain of the U.S. Navy headlined the LPC Veterans First 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. He detailed the events leading up to 9/11, allowing audience members to reflect on what happened on 9/11.

who attended were able to interact with the captain and with younger students and get their perspective on what 9/11 means to them.

One student, Sam Waqa, said he attended "because [these events are] deep rooted in our history. They had a guest speaker who had served, and I just really wanted to see him talk about what had happened."

It wasn't just a passing curiosity for Waqa. He also had a deeper connection—his aunt served in Afghanistan as a translator for the

U.S. military, and he wanted to learn more about those experiences.

Strunk stayed for lunch and answered questions from anyone who wanted to stop by his table.

The Veterans Center organized the day of remembrance to honor the lives that were lost that day. The ongoing annual events are designed to help Las Positas and the county as a whole continue to fulfill the promise, "We will never forget."

THE EXPRESS
PODCAST NETWORK

Men's water polo team faces uncertain future

Justin Gomes

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It is supposed to be a game circled on the calendar: Wednesday, Sept. 27. That's when the men's water polo powerhouse West Valley Vikings is scheduled to come to Livermore. The same school that destroyed the Hawks 20-1 in the playoffs last season.

If nothing else, a visit from West Valley is a chance for the Hawks to measure themselves. The Vikings, a formidable program that the Las Positas men have yet to beat since the program launched in 2015. The Vikings are coming off a heartbreaking double-overtime defeat in the state championship game, nearly dethroning the dynasty of Golden West College (which now has won six straight state titles). So West Valley comes to Las Positas on a mission.

But this won't be a day of revenge for the Hawks. Or even a test for where they stand against the best. At this point, Las Positas men's water polo is just hoping the game happens.

The 2023-24 season might be in jeopardy.

After finishing with a 19-16 record and making the NorCal playoffs for the first time in school history, the Hawks are desperate to simply field a team.

"We went from being a playoff-caliber team to not sure if we're going to have a season," said Jason Craighead, coach of the men's water polo team and steward of the school's water sports program. "We're looking small. We're kind of struggling with numbers right now. They are a great group."

The Hawks were prepared for a turnover as 10 of the 17 players on the roster from last season's historic teams were sophomores. That included the Hawks' top

scorer in Kyle Young, who led the state in assists, and starting goalie Quentin Perry. Of the 11 players who started games last season, only four were freshmen.

But as historic as their success was the exodus of players. In addition to the sophomores, the Hawks lost two more players due to what Craighead described as "life circumstances" and another three players due to ineligibility.

"It was a perfect storm," he said.

The Hawks still have its foundation in place. A few of last season's standout freshmen are back, according to Craighead.

Patrick Aiello was arguably the second-best player on the team as a freshman last season. He finished last season with 108 points (79 goals and 29 assists) along with 51 steals, second-most on the team. As a freshman, Zachary Ulrich was one of only five players to appear in every game. He finished with 28 goals (6th), 16 assists (7th) and 25 steals (7th). Both Aiello and Ulrich are expected to be among the team leaders for this upcoming season.

Ilya Krasnyy, the backup goalie as a freshman, appeared in 21 games and registered a 45.1 save percentage. The Hawks went 3-0 in the games he started. He's the starter now.

"He's really, really motivated," Craighead said.

One key loss appears to be Ryan Lichlyter, who started 24 of the 34 games he played as a freshman. His 54 goals were the fifth-most on the team. But the Hawks did land a freshman recruit in Vincent Vandersall. He played at Livermore High last season, scoring 42 goals on 115 shots.

The question now is how to fill out the roster around the core. The Hawks have been reaching out to former players with remaining eligibility as well as local high schools who might have former players looking for a college. They were even



ALAN LEWIS/THE EXPRESS

Quinton Perry, last year's goalie, is among the 14 players not returning for this year's season. In 2022, the Hawks men's water polo team made the playoffs. As the 2023 season begins, the team is rebuilding.

recruiting players from the athletic department's booth at Welcome Day.

Early in the season, the team awaiting eligibility reports for the roster. LPC was forced to pull out of the North vs. South Tournament at UC Merced on Aug. 25. The Hawks also pulled out of the Nyquist Invitational at West Valley College on Sept. 1. They'd played in the Nyquist in each of the tournament's last five years.

Craighead said he hopes to have a team ready for the Hawk Mini tournament versus Santa Rosa on Sept. 8. That's the only game on the schedule before big, bad West Valley comes to town.

The Vikings could very well be 11-0. It would've been the perfect opportunity to prove themselves and gauge where they are. But for the Hawks, at this point, they're just hoping it happens.

Reviving the women's water polo team: a season of hope

Omar Mir

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For the first time since 2018 the Las Positas College women's water polo team takes to the water a full season. Aside from an abbreviated season in 2021, another casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has not had enough players to compete.

But fall 2023 is different.

"We have a full roster. We actually have the most athletes that we've ever had on any team since the inception of our program for the women's side," Coach Kate Bennett said.

Numbers haven't been the only challenge the program has faced. This season has already seen struggles with eligibility and injury. Starter Jaymie Helm suffered a broken finger that prevented her from playing. Camryn Clendenen also suffered an undisclosed injury in the last game.

These injuries and a few eligibility delays gave the team no choice but to cancel one of its first games.

Even with these challenges, LPC participated in a mini tournament it hosted. Las Positas went on to defeat Santa Rosa 18-10. Makenzie Duffin led the team with 8 goals, followed by Monica Ureno with 5 goals. LPC went 1-1, suffering a 13-5 defeat against the Diablo Valley Vikings.

"We've only known each other for a week, so we were not prepared," Bennett said of the mini tournament played Sept 1.

This tournament served as a learning experience for the new players on the team. It was a taste of how tough the sport can really be. Bennett explained that the win was a "morale boost" for the inexperienced team. She hopes this will motivate them to work harder and get more victories under their belt.

The team is very new to the sport, with some still learning the basics of how to swim during a game. There are, however, a few players expected to lead the team, including Monica Ureno, Lilian White Erin Cain and Georgia Ruegsegger.

The team recently selected Ureno as the captain. She has been with the program since graduating from Foothill High School in 2020.

Bennet said Ureno has been with the program the longest and shows the attributes of a team captain: leadership, accountability, dedication and motivation.

"Monica Ureno knows the program, she knows the culture and she's perpetuating that in a very great way, and getting all the others on board," Bennett said.

The team is excited to get the season underway. They blast music every practice. The energy is palpable for the first time in five years. Fall 2023 is different.



GABRIEL CARVER/THE EXPRESS

Monica Ureno competes with her team in early September. Ureno was selected as the captain of the newly-developed team.

One team, one dream



The Las Positas men's basketball team seems to be off to a soaring start with nothing but high hopes for themselves and also for others. With a breaking even record in conference going 7-7 and an overall record of 19-12 last year, the Hawks are looking to change that this season.

The Hawks have had their first practice already, and you can feel as if the energy has changed on the court for the better. Returners from last year's team include Joseph Mangonon, Nayveon Reed (that's me), CJ Ward and Jajuan Mitchell-Cox. All say that they have high hopes for the upcoming season as they try their best to keep the cultural structure from last year into this year's team, since they have to

lead this new team to their goal.

With so many new faces, the Hawks have added a lot of depth this year, adding a lot of transfers and freshmen coming into the program.

The first practice of the season was intense and hard for some players because of all the new basketball terminology. There were some players who understood the terminology right away, and others who struggled in the beginning.

Since I know right from wrong on the court, I can see which players are going to be really useful to the team this year.

I know this season is going to be different. I can feel it.

I'm not alone. One of our other return-



NAYVEON REED/EXPRESS

The Hawks basketball team prepares for the upcoming season at a recent practice.

ers, Joseph Mangonon, says he has high hopes for this upcoming season.

He said, "Last year was a great lead-in year for me. The culture is a lot different. We have a lot of guys who want to compete and a lot of guys who want to win. I'm

excited for what's to come this year."

We hope the Hawks can turn their season around from last year. During the first practice, Joseph and I saw a lot of good things coming, and we have nothing but high hopes for this next season.

Blue Beetle is the superhero Latinos needed

Daya Sanchez

@CZDAYAAA

A new superhero film hits theaters with a feel that will be familiar to all Hispanics. The first live action superhero film with a Latino lead, "Blue Beetle," recently made its debut in theaters on Aug. 18 and immersed the DC universe into Latin culture.

Jaime Reyes (Xolo Maridueno), 22, was the first member of his Mexican-American family to graduate from college, and he returns to his home in Palmyra City with a new degree and all the hope in the world. Jaime finds out his parents are losing their house and auto shop due to their area being gentrified by a tech firm,

Kord Industries, that is known for causing global conflicts.

Desperate for work, Jaime meets with Kord Industries, but instead of a job he is given an alien artifact known as the scarab. The scarab also contains an entity known as Khaji Da. After examining the scarab, Jaime finds himself wrapped in a suit, ultimately leading him to becoming Blue Beetle.

Palmyra City, where the film takes place, is the first Latin city in a superhero film ever. Many pop culture references are sprinkled throughout the film, such as bringing attention to beloved Latino icons Don Francisco from Sabado Gigante, critically acclaimed director Guillermo del Toro and even Chespirito's El

Chapulin Colorado.

The sound track is packed with Latin classics from artists such as Los Panchos, Luis Miguel, Selena, Calle 13 and even Soda Stereo. These references may not mean much to the average viewer, but Blue Beetle showcasing these elements truly is about more than just representation.

The film also doesn't shy away from real history with references made to the school of the Americas, which trained over 60,000 soldiers and police mostly from Latin America. This was later labeled a facility for dictators, assassins and torturers, which impacted Latin America.

Blue Beetle's original character was created in 1931 by Charles

Nicholas Wojtkoski but was later reimagined and given several new identities until Blue Beetle was officially redefined as a Mexican American in 2006.

A recent study from the University of Southern California found that out of 1,600 films released in the year 2022, only about 5.2% of speaking parts featured a Latino actor. This number is even lower behind the cameras.

So why is "Blue Beetle" a big deal? Latinos are a huge part of our nation's population and impact our country in many ways yet are rarely showcased within cinema.

Hispanic and Latino characters continue to perpetuate stereotypes when seen throughout

films, such as Latinos playing roles of criminals or extremely poor people struggling with immigration.

The University of Southern California also reports that more than one-third of lead Latino actors in 2019's biggest films were depicted as criminals. Latinos are still woefully underrepresented and all you can really point to is the animated films such as Encanto, Coco, and the Spider-Verse films featuring the Afro-Latino Miles Morales. Representation is extremely important and director Angel Manuel Soto described the film as a love letter to Latino culture.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Did you go to Welcome Back Week? What did you do during Welcome Back Week?



“ Yes, I went to the booths and got food. ”

– Heba Munad,
Computer Science



“ Yes, but I went straight to my classes. ”

– Rayla Lianko,
Biology



“ No, I stayed home and watched movies. ”

–Tadiwuanshe
Kwaramba,
Nursing



“ No, I did not. I was in class. ”

– Erin Greely,
Health Science



“ No, I looked at my phone and went home ”

– Providence Mavenga
Pre-Health