

A PATH FORWARD STEVEN P. DINKIN

Ethics in sports go beyond winning and losing

With the Super Bowl next weekend, most Americans have a case of football fever. A record 200.5 million adults plan to tune in to the big game this year, according to the National Retail Federation.

As for me, I've been thinking a lot about women's tennis — and not because my Green Bay Packers were eliminated many weekends ago.

Two of the sport's top athletes, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova, recently wrote an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* about the Women's Tennis Association and a decision by tour officials to stage the WTA Finals in Saudi Arabia. The irony is jarring: In Saudi Arabia, women are not seen or treated as equal to men.

You may recall the fanfare a couple of years ago when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia was lauded for liberating

Saudi women, allowing them to drive and loosening the grip of their male guardians. Bin Salman called the new personal status law a “major qualitative leap” in women's rights, according to Megan Stack, a *New York Times* opinion writer.

But as Stack explained, “The changes are crafted to avoid discomfiting men: The government will no longer legally force men to keep the women of their household under heightened control — but it won't force men to emancipate women, either. The paternalistic role of the male guardian remains fully encoded in the law — with control over women passing among fathers, husbands, uncles, brothers and even sons in a prescribed order of importance.”

To Evert and Navratilova, Saudi Arabia's unfitness to host the WTA Finals goes beyond the country's guardianship laws to

its criminalization of the LGBTQ community (“to the point of possible death sentences”) and long-term record on human rights and basic freedoms (“a matter of international concern for decades”).

The pair wrote, “Tennis as we have played it is not just a sport but an ethic. It embodies a code of decency and respect among athletes and among people generally.”

The notion that ethics and sports are intertwined is foundational to a course that the National Conflict Resolution Center developed for high school athletes and other students working as teams.

In the ART and Science of High Performance Teams, we talk about the moral systems that guide our actions and the way personal values can affect our behavior and decision making.

Students learn that when

values are aligned, purpose and performance improve. It creates a sense of belonging, and a willingness to take a stand in support of others if they see or hear something harmful.

NCRC developed the workshop in response to an incident that occurred a few years ago, when members and supporters of a predominantly White high school basketball team threw tortillas at their Latino opponents.

Their hard-fought victory was marred by an unfortunate ethical lapse. The school district made a commitment to cultural change, requiring that all student athletes complete the ASHPT training.

While sports talk is most often about the outcome of a game or performance of a player, we notice when the “code of decency and respect,” as Evert and Navratilova called it, is violated. Kansas City Chiefs quar-

terback Patrick Mahomes is usually seen hugging or shaking hands with players from the opposing team, post-game — behavior we've come to expect, across sports.

But Mahomes' temper got the best of him during a couple of tough games at the end of the regular season.

One week, he berated referees; another week, he chided his offensive line. Social media lit up, calling Mahomes “a spoiled rotten crybaby.” His teammate, Travis Kelce, was scorned for throwing a helmet in a moment of frustration. We were surprised and taken aback by their disrespectful actions.

Not to pick on the Chiefs: There have been other incidents of bad behavior on and off the field this year. Carolina Panthers owner David Pepper was caught on video throwing his drink in the direction of Jack-

sonville Jaguars' fans. He later expressed regret for his action and respect for the NFL's code of conduct. The league fined Pepper \$300,000.

So, props to Evert and Navratilova for their leadership on behalf of women's tennis. It stands out — especially at a time when we seem to have a shortage of people to admire in our country.

No doubt that makes it easier for us to forgive an ethical lapse that occurs in the heat of a game.

But staging the WTA Finals in Saudi Arabia? That would be unforgivable.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com.

FORUM

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concerns his challengers raised about the city allowing high-rise housing before infrastructure is in place to support it.

“I think we should have the infrastructure in place before we add density, but I also think we need to keep adding housing and not expect to wait until we have perfect infrastructure — because we're years away from getting there,” he said.

On the city encampment ban spearheaded last summer by Whitburn,

Cusack said it's wrong to criminalize homelessness. She also criticized the city's official designated camping sites, contending actual housing is necessary.

“We need roofs over their heads, not tents,” she said. “We need to allow them to go into shelters voluntarily, not under threat of police.”

Whitburn agreed that permanent housing must be the long-term solution, but he said short-term answers are also crucial.

“I've seen far too many body bags of people who had been experiencing homelessness and overdosed,” he said. “The status quo is

simply not OK.”

Jones, who said he dealt with harassment from homeless people when he owned a small business downtown, agreed with Whitburn. Callen said she wants a detailed audit of the millions San Diego already spends on homelessness.

Whitburn's challengers also attacked his support for protected bike lanes.

Jones said bike commuting is impractical and that he strongly opposes removing street parking spaces to create bike lanes. Callen said the money spent on bike lanes could have helped address bigger problems, like

the clogged and failing flood control channels whose failures led to damaging flood-swath with the Jan. 22 storm.

Cusack said she supports the concept of bike lanes and trying to shift commuters out of their cars, but she said local planning of such lanes has been haphazard.

The challengers also criticized Whitburn for supporting large housing projects near trolley and major bus lines, contending the residents in those developments will use cars, not transit.

“Who's going to walk a mile to the bus when there's somebody sitting on the bus acting crazy?” Jones said.

Callen said she doubted that many people who work at City Hall use transit and that it would therefore be hypocritical to expect that of other people.

Cusack said San Diego's transit system isn't yet developed enough to be a factor in where housing is built.

Whitburn, who chairs the Metropolitan Transit System board of directors, agreed that local transit needs to improve but said the answer is to focus on it instead of giving up. “It has a vital role in our community, and we need to improve it,” he said.

Whitburn, Cusack and Callen are Democrats, while

Jones is a Republican. Whitburn and Jones live downtown, while Cusack and Callen live in North Park.

The top two finishers in the March 5 primary will advance to a November runoff. That's true even if one of the candidates gets more than 50 percent of the vote in March.

The forum was held Wednesday at the First Unitarian Church in Hillcrest. The League of Women Voters and Neighbors for a Better San Diego sponsored the forum.

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SMOLENS

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Nor should it discourage long-range changes on a broader scale that can help slow, stop, or even reverse global warming.

Many years of dire predictions about the future of a warming Earth have led some people to believe nothing can be done, so why try?

In the last couple of years, climate experts, academics and others have sought to shift the conversation away from such demoralizing talk, while not sugarcoating the consequences if important and often difficult moves are not made.

Business as usual won't cut it, whether it's the penchant for putting off infrastructure or not making serious reductions in carbon emissions that exacerbate climate change.

Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann told *The Associated Press* that “doomism” has become

more of a threat than denialism, and he believes that some people, trade associations and companies that denied climate change are encouraging people who say it is too late.

He said scientists used to think Earth would be committed to decades of future warming even after people stopped sending more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than nature takes out. But newer analyses in recent years show it will only take a few years after net zero emissions for carbon levels in the air to start to go down because of carbon being sucked up by the oceans and forests, according to Mann.

Doomism “is definitely a thing,” said Wooster (Ohio) College psychology professor Susan Clayton, who studies climate change anxiety. “It's a way of saying, ‘I don't have to go to the effort of making changes because there's nothing I can do anyway.’”

Jennifer Francis, a scientist at Woodwell Climate Research Center in Massachusetts, acknowledged

the obvious to AP: “Everybody knows it's going to get worse.”

But, Francis added, “We can do a lot to make it less bad than the worst-case scenario.”

Hannah Ritchie, a senior researcher in the Program on Global Development at the University of Oxford, is the author of a book called “Not the End of the World.”

“It seems like we've been battling climate change for decades and made no progress,” Ritchie told *The New York Times*. “I want to push back on that.”

Ritchie said the global temperature is on track to increase between 2.5 to 3 degrees Celsius. “That is catastrophic,” Ritchie said. But the Scottish researcher said that's lower than projections a decade ago.

“Part of why I have optimism is . . . We've chopped a degree off our trajectory based on solutions that we've implemented, but that's not enough,” Ritchie said.

Economics more than politics may be the key to

whether that trend continues. People will go to what's cheaper and more efficient. It's worth noting that Texas, a Republican state if there ever was one, generates more wind and solar power than any other state, including deep-blue California, and it's not even close, as the Texas Monthly pointed out.

People often contend that state and local climate efforts won't change things if the rest of the world doesn't go along. But much of the world is.

“In the last decade, China has gone from being an outlier to a world leader in the development of technology aimed at tackling climate change,” according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “In June, non-fossil fuel energy sources exceeded 50 percent of China's total electricity generation capacity for the first time.”

Going on offense to combat climate change is hard. So is defending against it. Building culverts is one thing. Rerouting rail lines away from collapsing

coastal bluffs and, someday, moving entire neighborhoods off the seashore are quite another.

It can be hard to get your head around some of what may need to be done, or what may happen regardless, in the climate-changed future.

The threat is a lot bigger than when the phrase “think globally, act locally” was coined more than a century ago. The slogan seems almost quaint these days, but it still applies. Actions big and small are needed. After all, 2023 was the hottest year on record. And this year is predicted to be even hotter.

What they said
Ron Nehring (@RonNehring), former chair of the San Diego and California Republican parties, on X.
“Some conservative influencers, after spending January attacking MLK, now set their sights on Taylor Swift. Heck of a way to start the year, guys. Brilliant.”

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KAISER

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recorded 3,173 in the same time span with Orange County logging 2,116. Given that Orange and San Diego counties are each home to about 3 million residents, the per-capita rate of *Candida auris* transmission in Orange appears to have recently been much greater.

Nonetheless, the region's monthly communicable disease reports show that this fungus is becoming more prevalent. A total of 99 cases were reported in 2023, compared to 57 in 2022.

Shah attributed San Diego County's comparatively good trend to widespread participation in screening protocols and spot checks performed at local hospitals, skilled nursing centers and other locations frequented by medically fragile residents.

“We've had these great partnerships between our county infection control program and our health care facilities,” she said.

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PAY

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raises from the board when the district's bargaining units do.

Historically, pay for superintendents is not tied to performance or district size. But small rural school districts tend to pay their leaders less than urban ones.

Compensation includes not just regular salary but also other kinds of pay boosts that factor into leaders' paychecks, such as monthly auto and expense allowances, stipends, bonuses and payouts of unused vacation days.

For example, county Superintendent Gothold received \$361,312 in regular pay and \$32,614 in other pay, which includes an additional monthly health and welfare contribution, an annual doctoral stipend, a monthly car allowance and vacation payout, a county office spokesperson said. The spokesperson declined to comment further.

James-Ward received a \$21,658 vacation payout and auto allowance of \$6,667 in 2022, on top of an extra year's salary, said current San Dieguito Superintendent Anne Staffieri.

In Cajon Valley, Miyashiro's regular pay totaled

\$359,788, and he was also paid an additional \$70,177 in other compensation. Currently, he gets \$1,100 a month in allowances for his car and general expenses under his contract. He also gets 34 paid vacation days a year and 12 personal days and is paid at the end of every school year for any unused vacation days.

Miyashiro's pay has risen since 2022; most recently, in November, the Cajon Valley board voted to give him a 7 percent raise and 2 percent bonus because employee unions were also getting similar raises. Now his base salary, without any additional pay, is \$407,922.

Miyashiro noted he's one of the longest-running superintendents in the county, having served in his position for 11 years. Under his leadership, he said, the district has won national recognition and accolades, as well as million-dollar grants for its World of Work program, which exposes students to potential careers from an early age. He also led his district's early reopening during the pandemic and pointed to district efforts helping some students' families get out of Afghanistan as the U.S. was leaving the country.

In San Dieguito, the school board fired James-

Ward after months of controversy surrounding comments she made linking Asian student academic performance to an influx of wealthy Chinese immigrant families. She apologized for the comments and said her critics took her words out of context. She also accused the board of retaliating against her for having accused a trustee of harassment and having voiced concerns about its redistricting decisions.

Transparent California publishes the most comprehensive public employee pay data available for the state. However, it does not include data for many char-

ter schools in San Diego County, which are independent schools funded with public dollars.

That's partly because Transparent California has limited resources, the organization has said; charter schools are also less likely to respond to the organization's requests for pay data and have the data on hand.

While charter school pay data is hard to come by, some charter school or charter school management CEOs receive pay that far exceeds that of most school district superintendents.

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SETTLE

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conducted was the city's massive monetary losses in revenue from franchisees, permittees and lessees,” the lawsuit said.

The complaint said the city relied on improper audit procedures, tolerated unwarranted delays in audits and failed to audit all of its business operators, and that she was fired for refusing to violate rules that govern audits.

The Treasurer's Office is responsible for managing

various fees and permits, including those for short-term vacation rentals, cannabis licenses, parking services, delinquent accounts and others.

In her lawsuit, Boulton-Hunyady said she repeatedly received positive performance reviews and was promoted multiple times. She was twice recognized by the city as an “outstanding employee” and for her “exceptional job performance,” the complaint said.

Among other highlights, the lawsuit said her review of one unnamed franchisee

showed the city was owed more than \$3 million in uncollected fees. She found a different franchise operator that was not identified owed the city \$584,000 for four years ending in 2020, the suit said.

“Another audit revealed that another city franchisee owed the city franchise fees of \$248,545.87, which included \$37,329 in prior audit findings that were never invoiced and disallowed credits and two years went unaudited,” the legal complaint asserted.

On at least two occasions, Boulton-Hunyady's super-

visors changed her findings and directed her to sign off on the changes even though they did not comport with auditing practices, the lawsuit said.

Boulton-Hunyady refused to sign off on the two edited recommendations because to do so would have violated the city's generally accepted accounting/audit standards and the audit standards required by the Federal Government Accountability Office, *Yellow Book*,” it said.

The “Yellow Book” is the U.S. Government Accountability Office's volume of

established auditing practices.

Allegations that local public officials have retaliated against workers who have raised concern about their offices' practices are not new. Late last year, a SANDAG finance official sued the regional planning agency for retaliation after she was fired. She said she had raised questions about her bosses' handling of a faulty toll-collecting system.

Two years ago, a former deputy San Diego city attorney won almost \$6 million in damages and fees in a

wrongful termination case she filed against the city, saying she had been fired on a pretext after refusing to prosecute cases she felt were politically motivated.

And in 2021, the city of San Diego agreed to pay a former Public Utilities Department deputy director \$125,000 plus six months' pay after she was terminated. She had accused her supervisors of diverting more than \$1 million from the water fund to pay unrelated expenses.

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