

PARIS  OLYMPICS



TIM MCKENNA AFP/Getty Images

A **SURFER** skims down a huge wave at Teahupo'o, which has fascinated and terrified elite ocean athletes since the 1980s.

Barreling toward danger on the world's 'heaviest wave'

Three Californians on the U.S. surf team will compete at Tahiti's massive Teahupo'o, where safety is a concern

BY JACK DOLAN

The world's "heaviest wave" is born near the South Pole, where fierce storms pound the ocean's surface like angry fists, sending pulses of energy racing north, unimpeded, for thousands of miles. That force is all but invisible until it suddenly rides up a steep, smooth ramp on the ocean floor, curls into a spectacular barrel — more like a slab of concrete than water — and slams, with astonishing fury, into a razor-sharp coral reef on the southern tip of Tahiti.

Locals call the wave Teahupo'o, which loosely translates to "wall of skulls." It has fascinated and terrified the world's elite ocean athletes since it was first surfed in the 1980s.

In the coming days, Teahupo'o (commonly pronounced "cho-poo"), just offshore of its namesake [See **Surfing**, A7]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

PEOPLE walk past a mural in San Clemente featuring U.S. Olympic surfers Caroline Marks, left, and Kolohe Andino.

Harris unites allies; voters, not yet

VP has hit her stride since early stumbles, Democrats say. But in polls, many still don't know or support her.

BY NOAH BIERMAN

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris looked peeved and exhausted from the weight of expectations as she stood at a hotel meeting room three years ago, flags and a foggy Mexico City skyline behind her.

She gestured dutifully and gazed at her notes as she recited Biden administration talking points about "the capacity of people" and "the interconnection between the United States and Mexico when it comes to our economies."

The two-day mission had the normal and fairly boring trappings of a vice presidential trip — meet-and-greets with leaders of Guatemala and Mexico, a tour of female engineering projects at a university, some modest pacts and promises.

"Do I declare this trip a success? Yes, I do," Harris said from the lectern, not entirely convincingly. "It is a success, in terms of the pathway that is about progress. We have been successful in making progress."

In Washington, her awkward comments a day earlier about the border and her admonitions to migrants to stay home were sparking a conflagration that riled her allies, validated her detractors and established her reputation for everyone in between.

"It's blowing up," her communications director at the time, Ashley Etienne, recalled thinking, as she went into crisis-control mode in Washington.

It would take three years, and a pair of unlikely historic national events — the overturning of a national right to abortion and President Biden's late withdrawal from his reelection campaign — to convince Democrats that Harris had the political skills to compete for the presidency.

Her allies say Harris has grown politically in the meantime, taken advantage of circumstances that played to her strengths and [See **Harris**, A8]

After NBA loss, media boss faces tough questions

BY MEG JAMES

David Zaslav didn't expect it to be this difficult.

Two and a half years ago, the veteran TV executive brimmed with confidence and pride that a guy from Brooklyn, who elbowed his way into entertainment

through the not-so-glamorous job negotiating cable distribution deals, was being handed the keys to "the best brands in entertainment."

But since the April 2022 merger that created Warner Bros. Discovery, its marquee brands — HBO, CNN, TNT, Food Network and the

Warner Bros. film and TV studio — have slipped in scale and ambition. The latest blow came this week when the National Basketball Assn. formally rejected Warner Bros. Discovery's last-ditch effort to stay in the game.

After 35 years of broadcasting basketball, the com-

pany's TNT channel is getting benched. Instead, the NBA picked Walt Disney Co.'s ESPN, NBCUniversal and Amazon Prime Video as its broadcast partners, beginning with the 2025 season.

"The NBA was one of the crown jewels, something that defined TNT," said

Stephen Galloway, dean of Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts. "It's a watershed moment when you lose something like this."

Warner Bros. Discovery reacted angrily after the league rebuffed its effort to match Amazon's package. [See **Zaslav**, A12]

Former trans kid emerges as right-wing hero

Californian tells story of regret as leader of 'detransition' movement

BY MACKENZIE MAYS

Wearing pigtails, a pleated skirt and a furry heart-shaped purse, Chloe Cole bounced up the steps of the California state Capitol this spring, leaned into a microphone and insisted that transgender children don't exist.

For the dainty young Californian, to erase transgender children is to erase a part of her past.

Cole, now 20, has said publicly and in court documents that she first began questioning her gender identity when she was 12. She left a letter on the dining room table telling her family that she was a boy. She wanted a new name, like Ky or Chi, and a more comfortable life.

With the blessing of her parents, who sought the advice of physicians and mental health experts, the self- [See **'Detransition,'** A9]



JOSE LUIS VILLEGAS For The Times

CHLOE COLE, 20, opposes treatment for others that she received, including a mastectomy at age 15.

Strike kills 11 in Golan Heights

Rocket hits soccer field, raising fears of broader regional war. Israel blames Hezbollah, which denies a role. **WORLD, A4**

Huge Park fire doubles in size

Largest blaze in state this year explodes to over 348,000 acres amid destruction and evacuations. **CALIFORNIA, B3**

Weather
Partly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 83/60. **B10**



INTO THE FOLD

The L.A. Times Food team searched the Southland to find its most fantastic tacos. See their picks in a special section in today's paper. **SECTION T**

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