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THE Guardian
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

What can stop scalpers?

📅 November 29, 2020   👤 Nelson Espinal

The Playstation 5 and the Xbox Series X are sold out on all major retailers due to scalpers buying a large chunk of the stock. A battle between the customer and resellers is emerging with the government and retailers caught in the middle.

The economics of supply and demand are the cornerstones for the process of scalping. Scalpers focus on obtaining as much of the supply as possible in order to control the market for a specific product.

Over the Black Friday shopping extravaganza, gamers were left unable to purchase the newly released Playstation 5 and the Xbox Series X. Scalpers are the root cause of the issues with purchasing the console because they are trying to obtain as many consoles as possible. This left the people who will actually play the video game consoles unable to get their hands on a unit.

While gamers are currently feeling the effects of scalping, the concept of scalping traces back to concept tickets. These scalpers waited in line to buy tickets in bulk and sold them in the parking lot of the event for profit.

Then the internet came and shook the secondary markets as a whole. Sites like StubHub allowed people to sell their tickets online from the comfort of their homes. David E. Harrington published a study on HeinOnline addressing the evolution of the ticket reselling market after the internet.

"Secondary ticket markets have become increasingly competitive over time because of innovations like online resale market-places and ticket aggregators made possible by the internet," the study states. "The increase in competition has squeezed out most of the profits that used to be gouged from the ill-informed consumers buying from sellers with market power."

The market evolved from an informal, word-of-mouth process into one that bestows more power to the customer when it comes to pricing. Customers were more informed about the going rate for tickets so they would not be ripped off as easily.

A John Muir College sophomore recognizes the importance of doing research when looking for a product. She cross-checks various websites and makes sure she is not going to pay an obscene amount given the market.

"I check on a variety of websites when I'm looking for tickets or some shoes for resale," she said. "I make sure I am getting the best deal which means putting in the time to look around the marketplace so I don't get ripped off. I know the prices are going to be higher than the retail ones, but I want to make sure I am not paying more than the demand would indicate."

Still, the scalpers had the supply of tickets that naturally generated profits. In order to get a ticket, customers had to go through the scalpers which makes the business flow. While not able to rip people off, the scalpers remained influential in the market.

"Our long answer is that the internet has made secondary ticket markets more competitive by moving most of the trading from parking lots to online resale market-places where consumers can more easily compare the ticket deals offered by different sellers," said Harrington in his study.

The scalpers harbor the supply from the consumer, centralizing the market into the scalpers' hands. In wake of the new generation of video game consoles, the scalpers bought over the need to obtain supply into the video game market.

The recent release of the Playstation 5 and the Xbox Series X on Nov. 12 marked a new generation of video game consoles. The previous generation, which was released in November 2013, lasted seven years with the Playstation 4 and Xbox One debuting with ample stock at release. This new generation cannot say the same as pre-orders for the new consoles ran out quickly with the consoles remaining sold out a few weeks after launch.

The first wave of pre-orders came in late September. Scalpers ordered multiple consoles as a way of accumulating stock in order to resell them later. The consoles they ordered led to fewer being available for other customers that wanted a gaming system.

These scalpers used various techniques. The two most common ones were the use of bots and manually purchasing the consoles.

The use of bots is more common in the world of scalping due to their ease of use. The bots hold a place in line so that the scalpers can purchase various items before they sell out.

The manual method relies on the scalper to manually hold a place in line and hope to purchase as many units they can before they sell out. With various retailers having pre-orders, the manual method remains viable when scalping the consoles.

Through the accumulation of consoles, the scalpers hold the power of supply with demand being high for the consoles. Those that missed out on buying the console are left turning to these scalpers to pay their demands or kick rocks.

A group recently claimed to have sold 3,500 PS5's with the majority secured through the manual way of purchase. Their prices went anywhere from a hundred to two hundred dollars above the retail price of five hundred dollars.

Roger Revelle College junior Trung Hieu did not give in to the demands from scalpers. His love for gaming was enough to look up the resell prices, but he figured patience was the best route.

"I really wanted to get a PS5 on launch day, but I couldn't manage to get one," Hieu said. "I tried to pre-order and when they released, but it wasn't happening. I saw them on Ebay for 800 dollars and I just decided it was too much for me. I got a PS4 on launch day and I didn't want to miss out on this generation. It really sucks that these people buy a bunch of them and take them away from people that are actually going to use them."

In an attempt to regulate secondary markets so that what happened to Hieu would not be a regular occurence, state governments passed a series of legislation in an attempt to control the scalpers. The focus was strictly on ticket scalpers. Eric Schroeder and John Fisher discussed such legislation in their article "A Brief Overview on Ticket Scalping Laws, Secondary Ticket Markets, and the StubHub Effect." Both compiled the bounds of the law when it comes to tickets for an event.

"The current trend in ticket scalping regulation is toward leniency and acceptance of the practice. This movement has taken hold in Congress where The Ticket Act (H.R. 950) seeks "to prohibit restrictions on the resale of event tickets sold in interstate commerce as an unfair or deceptive act or practice."

The Ticket Act provides a blueprint for states to generate some sort of restrictions on the secondary market.

The state level remains reluctant to pass any sort of restrictions consistent with the Ticket Act. Each state possesses different types of restrictions with varying levels of punishment and application. From where scalpers can sell and how the tickets can be priced, there are levels to the type of restrictions states implement.

"Instead, many states, such as Missouri, Minnesota, and Connecticut, have recently repealed their prohibition against scalping. Additionally, state bills attempting to regulate the secondary ticket market further are generally unsuccessful as recently occurred in Colorado, North Carolina, and Arkansas."

The federal legislation still remains in the process of being passed. Companies like StubHub and Ticketmaster use lobbying to delay and challenge such legislation becoming federal. The companies and scalpers use their resources in order to keep the booming resell industry as unregulated as it is currently.

The product side of scalping remains unregulated with less discourse happening on a legislative level.

Gaming consoles are receiving more attention currently, but shoes and clothing have faced similar problems: scalpers will buy the most sought after items and give the actual customers less of a chance. With various methods of scalping, the stores end up playing whack-a-mole when trying to stop the scalpers. Since the government is not stepping in, the customer and retailers will not get more control of the market until the next technological shift.

*Photo by **Kerde Severin** from **Pexels***

A Façade of Peace

🗓 November 29, 2020   👤 Sparky Mitra

How subjugation of a people never seems to be a dealbreaker between international powers hungry for economic and political gain.

An alliance between royals means nothing to the people. An exchange of crown jewels seldom enriches the masses. Starting in August 2020, the powerful leaders of Israel, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and the United States struck deals to fully renew economic operations. Throughout the years, many of us have been quick to applaud any normalization between Arab nations and Israel. In the struggle for guaranteed citizenship for Palestinians, the Arab world without fail addressed Palestinian concerns before inserting addendums in self-interest. This time, Arab leaders' intentions were different. This time, not a word was exchanged on relations between Israel and Palestine. This time, riches preceded lives. The time has come for us to determine our priorities. As fellow human beings being afforded liberties that many are not, our duty is to protect the basic rights of the world's most destitute citizens. It is our duty to examine charters that circumvent addressing humanitarian disasters. It is our responsibility to investigate proposed peace plans and subsequently take action if we sense any ulterior motives. We must avoid complacency and hold world leaders accountable when their agreements undermine the needs of the oppressed populations they claim to support.

Many have praised the treaty, officially the Abrahamic Accords Peace Agreement, between Israel and UAE. But based on international power dynamics throughout history, the deal demands inspection: did any part of this treaty work to give the powerless a voice? This entire document addresses the humanitarian crisis faced by Palestinians twice, while mentions of "trade" and "innovation" exceed a dozen. While it is improper to call a business deal by another name, it is also blatantly wrong to call it a peace agreement. While sovereigns of countries like UAE and Bahrain claim they still support Palestine, they went into the Abrahamic Accords without negotiations with Israel on the Palestinians' demands. In fact, such deals are reminiscent of declarations made by the U.S. while the nation's leaders were working with the British Raj. President FDR was often the first to condemn cruel British colonialism in India. Yet, it was never a dealbreaker. The deprivation of self-determination never ended the British-American alliance. Prime Minister Winston Churchill's constant racist addressal of Indians as a nation of "barbarians" incapable of handling democracy was never quite wrong enough to end discussions between the two superpowers. The unalienable right of freedom came second to the economic and political concerns of the Allied Powers. Just as sovereignty of the Indian populace should have come first then, the sovereignty of the Palestinian populace should come first now. We hailed and continue to praise these partnerships between wealthy nations as exemplary demonstrations of justice, when in fact, true action is inevitably stalled.

Conflating business endeavors with diplomatic ones only diminishes the importance of humanitarian action. Looking back, we can begin to notice that true efforts at normalizing relations such as the Arab Peace Initiative have been placed on the back burner by money-hungry monarchs' and leaders' economic dealings. We can begin to realize the infinite parallels between the Abrahamic Accords and other such power grabs. Within these parallels, we can find how the suffering of the oppressed is often overshadowed by a deal boasting feigned harmony. In fact, one prime example can be seen when the British Raj officially gained control of India after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. On its face, the Crown was saving religious Hindus and Muslims from persecution and tyranny by the East India Company. The imperialist regime was supposedly 'saving' sepoys from forced consumption of the lard of animals that were deemed inedible by their respective religions. While they offered Indians this small victory, in return the Crown took the citizens' land, livelihood, and liberty. Similarly, while the Israeli government temporarily suspended illegal settlements to solidify economically beneficial deals, they vowed to continue taking the Palestinian people's land once Israel's meaningless treaties were signed. A heroic diplomatic endeavor involves permanent compromise, not temporary concessions. Instead of suspending all cruel business in India and allowing her citizens to self-determine, the Crown took over, offering 'a new day, a new light'. That is almost as preposterous as a modern country changing the name of slaves to unpaid interns if their malpractice was ever revealed. That is as preposterous as calling an economic negotiation a peace treaty.

When the British Raj had finally established itself as the powerful despot of South Asia, the great colonizer committed its own atrocities including the Amritsar Massacre and the Bengal Famine. With the ball in Israel's court, there is no guarantee on the protection of Palestinian lives. With no concessions being made from either party regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the main reason for strained relations between Israel and Arab countries is left completely off of the table. We, as a country, claim to be the flag-bearers of democracy. But why then, are we complacent when an entire group is disenfranchised by their government? Why do we continue to mediate these deals which, in effect, bear little significance to the common man? Why do we display these empty agreements like dictators who display their empty badges of honor?

We have been led to believe that these accords symbolize the epitome of true diplomacy. In reality, they are collectively a glorified business deal. It is our job as beneficiaries of a self-governing nation to listen to the masses. While the wealthiest among us settle deals for monetary gain, "We the People" unionize for our fair share. It is our job to do the same for our oppressed counterparts around the world. With a greater understanding of the needs of the people, we can vouch for meaningful discussion. With greater knowledge, we can demand our representatives to draft conditions and priorities. With our voice, we can demand the powerful to broker peace first, business second.

Art by Angela Liang for the UC San Diego Guardian

THE GUARDIAN
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Album Review: Kali Uchis's "Sin Miedo (del Amor y Otros Demonios)∞"

📅 November 29, 2020   👤 Elias Roman

"Sin Miedo" is an ebbing collage of Latin music, drawing inspiration from the '90s and 2000s.

Kali Uchis exploded onto the scene collaborating with Tyler, the Creator on hit songs like "See You Again" and "After the Storm," and people were intrigued by her unique voice and style. Her success only increased with the release of her first studio album "Isolation." The smooth rhythm and blues album featured collaborations with the likes of Steve Lacy, Jorja Smith, and Reykon, a record that showed Uchis's knack for building an aesthetically and sonically cohesive project. This talent has carried over to 2020's "Sin Miedo (del Amor y Otros Demonios)∞," a project that sees Uchis blend the R&B crooning she's known for with reggaeton's hard-hitting dembow.

The album begins with the slow and harmonious "la luna enamorada," on which Uchis sings about the moon. The Colombian-American singer has flirted with Latin-influenced music before, collaborating with Reykon on "Nuestro Planeta" off of "Isolation" and her

2019 single "Solita." The slow-paced cumbia instrumental that underlies "la luna enamorada" gives it this Latin flair, one that is weaved throughout the project as a whole. Almost immediately after the intro track, the listener is hit with the fast-paced, hi-hat heavy trap song "¡aqui yo mando!" featuring Rico Nasty. In this song, Uchis sings about being the one who wears the pants in the relationship, and letting her lover know that he's at her service — not the other way around. The track sees Uchis and Nasty relish in their independence: "I'm in charge here / if you want with me, get used to it." She's making it known that she won't tolerate being treated with anything less than the reverence and respect she deserves. Nasty's feature is a standout, delivering her lines in a steady rhythmic manner that follows the ebb and flow of the instrumental. She even ventures to try her hand at Spanish, easily making for one of Rico Nasty's most memorable verses.

Kali Uchis delivers the perfect long-distance relationship song with "telepatia." Crooning over a smooth synth with the playful line "La luna está llena, y mi cama vacía" (the moon is full, but my bed is empty). Uchis's songwriting is on full display in this track, expressing both physical and emotional desires through lines like "Quien lo diria / que se podría / hacer el amor por telepatia." Her delivery on this song is reminiscent of the "Isolation" era, but not in a regressive manner. It's clear that Uchis is able to draw on what's worked for her in the past without being stagnated or held back by the sounds of her previous projects.

The track "te pongo mal(prendelo)" sounds like a reggaeton hit from the early 2000s in all the best ways. A pulsating dembow backs Uchis's melodic singing as she talks about seducing a lover. The track is exciting from the beginning, but it really picks up when Randy Nota Loca performs his verse. A reggaeton veteran, Randy sounds at home on this song as he goads the girl he's involved with to get creative. The verse is marked by a back-and-forth between Randy and Uchis, making for a playful and memorable verse. The fourth verse sees Jowell (the second half of Jowell y Randy) spit a rhythmic verse about the things this girl makes him think about. "Te pongo mal" is a fun and sexy track that really lets Uchis's beat-picking and versatility shine.

Despite the many standout tracks on "Sin Miedo," it is not a perfect album. I found the second track "fue mejor" to have a promising beginning, but ultimately, it culminates with a forgettable verse from PARTYNEXTDOOR. There are no real bad songs on the project, but there is a notable gap in quality between songs like "te pongo mal" and "¡aqui yo mando!" compared to cuts like "vaya con dios." It's an exciting project that shows off Uchis's ability to perform in Spanish, as well as her ear for instrumentals. Aesthetically, the project draws inspiration from late '90s and 2000s fashion, and it does a good job of reflecting that sonically. It's an exciting step in Kali Uchis's career, and I can't wait to see what comes next.

Grade: B

Release Date: November 18, 2020

Image courtesy of Pitchfork.

TV Review: "The Queen's Gambit"

📅 November 29, 2020   👤 Hanaa Moosavi

You don't need to know the game to enjoy this show about competitive chess.

Oct. 23, 2020 marked the release of yet another Netflix original limited series, titled "The Queen's Gambit." Starring favored actors Anya Taylor-Joy and Thomas Brodie-Sangster, "The Queen's Gambit" follows a young orphan through her journey of discovering the world of competitive chess as a woman. With its use of visual effects and 1960s production design, "The Queen's Gambit" has risen to the top of many watchlists.

Although the show does not explicitly explain the rules of chess to the audience, the producers do display the game in adventurous ways. To project Harmon's visualizations of chess plays, VFX projections of a chess set were cast to the top of different shots. These visual representations provide more information to the audience, as it allows Harmom's daydreams to break out of their phantom genius and be displayed on screen. The use of VFX also symbolizes the manifestation of Harmon's drug addiction in her consciousness and how the first chess board she ever used was a comfort to her. The board used in the VFX was modeled after the chess board she played on with her first teacher, the same board that she

first won on and found her love for chess with. "[Harmon] learned in the basement and that's where she would go back to if she had a conflicting moment," VFX supervisor Arissa Blasingame said in Variety's article covering the show. It is clear that when faced with new territories, such as chess tournaments across state lines or across oceans, she is still able to visualize chess plays on a board she is familiar with.

Upon its release, "The Queen's Gambit" made waves in production and costume design. With the backdrop of the plot being the sixties, it was obvious the show's aesthetic required poodle skirts, light makeup with red lips, saddle oxford shoes, pops of neon colors, etc. The Brooklyn Museum released an exhibition highlighting the artistry behind the costume design of the show; Gabriele Binder, the costume designer for "The Queen's Gambit," revealed at the exhibition that Harmon's costumes are "meant to reflect the growing sophistication and self-assurance of [Harmon]." The audience watches as Harmon grows more comfortable with her identity, as marvelously displayed when Harmon walks through the halls of her highschool and tells her bully to "f[***] off." The costumes she wears changes from poodle skirts to turtleneck dresses and heels, mimicking her growth into sophistication. With production quality of this caliber, it is hard not to fall in love with the limited series.

Unfortunately, a major drawback for the show is the lack of necessity for the narrative. Although there is not much media coverage of chess, fictional or nonfictional, a story about a white woman discovering the world of the male-dominated sport of competitive chess is lackluster. There are many stories and television shows that are about white women, including "The Crown," "Unbelievable," "New Girl," "The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt," and "The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina." Even "Orange is the New Black" is a show with many star actors of women of color but a white woman lead actor. It's apparent that narratives focusing on white women are slowly becoming overused and that viewers are not as interested in watching them. The film industry cannot appease the lack of femme faces in the film industry without including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color voices; however, it appears that is what they are trying to do.

The story of "The Queen's Gambit" is based on the novel "The Queen's Gambit" by Walter Tevis, and although the narrative is fictional, many characters and events are inspired by Tevis' life. "The Queen's Gambit" could have easily cast any woman to be Beth but ultimately chose Anya Taylor-Joy, a white-passing Argentinian actor. There was a massive missed opportunity to arm a better main character with Tevis' narrative than a white woman. One of these characters is Jolene. Acted by Moses Ingram, Jolene is a young black woman living in the foster care system in the 1960s. She isn't given a last name and is barely mentioned in the plot except for aiding young Harmon in the foster home and helping older Harmon through

her drug and alcohol addiction.

There were only glimpses of Jolene's life on screen. She quips about how the foster home treats her poorly and confesses to Harmon about her discovery of racism and new hardships outside the foster home. Although only briefly mentioned, these moments were so rich in uncharted screenplay territory that we as viewers wish for more expansion on Jolene and her whereabouts within the show. The use of a BIPOC narrative that is only mentioned in moments of lag or necessity acts as a slap in the face to BIPOC audience members. Her narrative should have either been the main exploration of the plot or omitted from the show altogether. It is time the media industry recognizes narratives casting just white actors and shows picking up white narratives are growing repetitive and unexciting. It's time BIPOC actors and narratives are recognized for their talent.

Grade: B+
Created By: Scott Frank, Allan Scott
Starring: Anya Taylor-Joy, Thomas Brodie-Sangster, Marielle Heller
Release Date: October 23, 2020
Rated: Rated TV-MA

Image courtesy of About Netflix.

THE Guardian

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

San Diego County Judge Rules COVID-19 Outbreak Spots Can Be Kept Secret

📅 November 29, 2020   👤 Jose Chavez

A local San Diego judge released a tentative ruling on Oct. 23 granting that COVID-19 hotspots could remain undisclosed in spite of efforts put forth by petitioners from the Voice of San Diego, KPBS Public Broadcast, and The San Diego Union-Tribune. While the claimants argued that obtaining formal details of cases is imperative to contact-tracing in San Diego, the county made the case that full disclosure will negatively impact open communication in local communities.

The ruling was finalized on Nov. 19 by San Diego County Judicial Officer Joel R. Wohlfeil, who said that "cases" and "outbreaks" as defined by the California Code of Regulations are confidential and thus are protected from disclosure by local health officers. This means that such information cannot be disclosed unless consent is provided.

Judge Wohlfeil acknowledged the petitioners' concerns at the end of the ruling, but felt that it was at the county's discretion to choose to release the information.

"Reputable news organizations, such as the petitioners in this action, should be permitted to investigate and inform public opinion... However, given the express exemption in particular, [the county] is entitled to withhold the requested information," Wohlfeil said.

The conflict arose in April 2020 when the Voice of San Diego, KPBS, and the SDUT submitted separate requests seeking documents related to the identities of victims of the virus and specific locations of the outbreak from San Diego County. Initially, the county didn't act on the first few requests, but eventually produced a spreadsheet containing the requested information except the names and addresses of the location outbreaks.

In response to this, petitioners filed a stipulation — a condition specified as part of a legal agreement before a pending hearing — against San Diego County. They contended that the only information they desired was omitted from the spreadsheet and that access to information concerning how businesses are conducted is a fundamental right of every person in the state. They also said that such information is necessary to verify confirmed outbreak numbers put forth by the county.

"Without this data, the public remains in the dark about the efficacy, and veracity, of the county's regular news releases regarding the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic within this region," the petitioners argued in the reply brief.

In response, the county cited the California Code of Regulations in arguing that information regarding outbreaks cannot be released without the "written consent of the individual to whom the information pertains." Additionally, they said that releasing outbreak information would disincentivize businesses to be forthcoming when self-reporting their outbreaks.

Sarah K. Sweeney, the San Diego County Communication Officer of the Health & Human Services Agency, said in an official statement that releasing the information would hamper both local businesses and the work of public health officials.

"Many people [that] investigators speak with are fearful that providing the name of the location where they were potentially infected [would have] negative effects on that location whether it be a church, a restaurant, or a place of business," Sweeney said. "Releasing the names of these locations and the addresses will have a chilling effect on the open communication necessary to ensure the Public Health Officer is able to effectively combat active outbreaks."

With the two claims undisputed by the petitioners, Wohlfeil ruled that the county is excused from providing the un-redacted location information as well as the identities of those who fell victim to COVID-19.

In an interview with The UCSD Guardian, Eleanor Roosevelt College first year Tyrone Neal voiced his initial thoughts that the ruling was made correctly.

"Honestly, I don't see the grounds on which the media can make those demands because it does involve sensitive information," Neal said. "I'd say it was the right decision by the judge because ruling any differently could affect many other situations involving the media and the deceased, potentially working against the families trying to protect their deceased relative's privacy."

On the other hand, Cameron Thomas, a John Muir College second year and an employee of UCSD Housing, Dining, & Hospitality, voiced his opposition to the ruling.

"Even though there are negatives, it is in my opinion that the public has a right to this information," Thomas said. "Due to the demand to return to normalcy, communities need to be accountable for their role in spreading COVID-19. If these matters were made public, news outlets would be able to present data on which areas need to be improved as well as informing people [as to] where 'COVID dense' populations reside."

UC San Diego's Return to Learn initiative emphasizes a push for campus wide compliance with biweekly testing and other strategies to curb the spread of the virus, like wastewater detection and strict social distancing measures. The early detection system in place identified COVID-19 in the wastewater outflow in the five campus areas from 11 a.m. on Nov. 22 to 1 p.m. on Nov. 23. The university disclosed the five specific locations of the outbreak, ranging from the Seventh East Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4 to Viento of Nuevo West.

UCSD students living on campus are provided quarantine or isolation housing if they have been potentially exposed to the virus. Those who are interested in learning more about campus safety guidelines are encouraged to visit the Return to Learn program's website.

Photo taken by Bill Oxford for Unsplash

This article was updated on Nov. 29 at 3:16PM to clarify that the ruling was finalized on Nov. 19

THE GUARDIAN
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

UCSD Study Examines Loneliness and its Impacts Across Different Ages

☐ November 29, 2020   👤 Lindsey Choo

A recent UC San Diego study on loneliness and its impact on different age groups has revealed that loneliness is the highest in the 20s, peaks again in the 40s, and is at the lowest in the 60s. The study, which was published online in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry on Nov. 10, conducted research through a large web-based survey of 2,843 participants of ages 20 to 69 from across the United States.

The research design identified loneliness as a serious public health problem due to its effects on health, well-being, and longevity, and the study sought to examine age-related differences in risk and protective factors for loneliness. To measure loneliness, participants completed the four-point UCLA Loneliness Scale, the San Diego Wisdom Scale, and other scales measuring psychosocial variables.

After the month-long survey, researchers found that there were several potentially modifiable targets related to loneliness, including several important aspects of wisdom and social self-efficacy. Due to different predictors across the age range, the study concluded that there is a need for a personalized and nuanced prioritization of prevention and intervention of loneliness using the above targets.

In an interview with The UCSD Guardian, Tanya T. Nguyen, Ph.D., Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the UCSD School of Medicine and co-author of the study, noted that compassion was one of the most important targets to prevent loneliness, as it affected social self-efficacy.

"Our research suggests that prosocial behaviors, or compassion, in other words, could be one of the strongest protective factors for loneliness," Nguyen said. "We see this across the lifespan, especially so in older adults, but I still think it can be very meaningful for younger adults. So [this includes] participating in activities that give back to the community in some way, reaching out to others. I think that the more we reach out in service of helping others will also help our own sense of well-being."

The study also concluded that across all decades, loneliness was associated with not having a spouse or partner, sleep disturbance, lower prosocial behaviors, and smaller social networks. With the exception of people in the 60s, lower social self-efficacy and higher anxiety contributed to higher levels of loneliness.

Loneliness by Age

The mean loneliness scores per age bracket using the 4-item version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale. The possible range of scores that an individual may receive is 4-18, where higher scores indicate more loneliness.

Source: Nguyen, et al. "Predictors of Loneliness by Age Decade".   Graphic by the UCSD Guardian Data Viz team
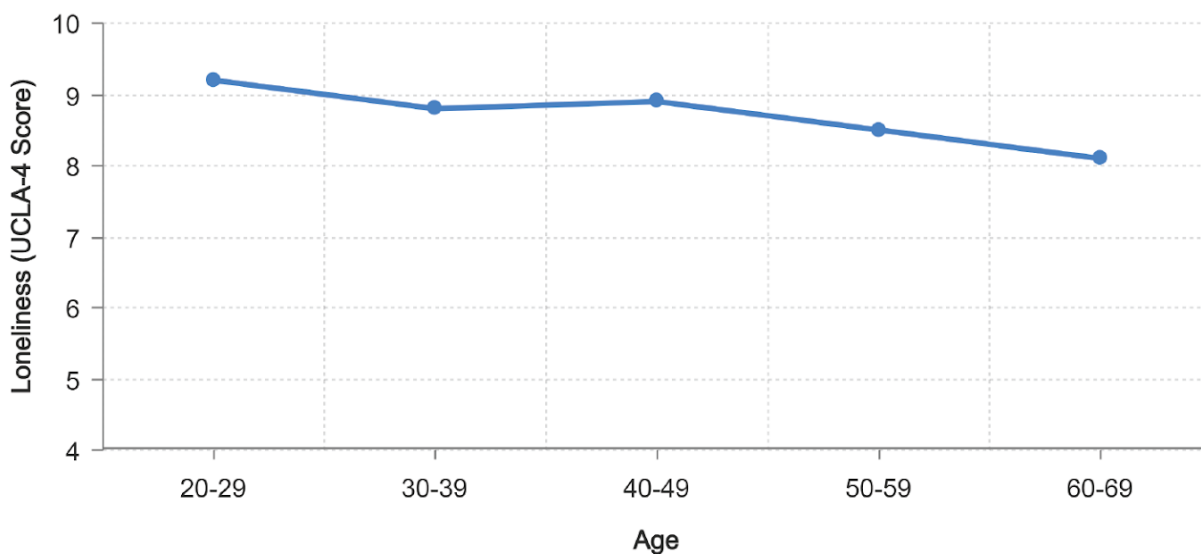
When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic's impact among people in their 20s, which includes approximately 63 percent of UCSD students according to the latest available data, Senior Associate Dean for Healthy Aging and Senior Care at the UCSD School of Medicine and co-author of the study Dilip Jeste, MD, said that while the pandemic might have worsened levels of loneliness, the problem of loneliness is not a new one.

"There's kind of been a pandemic of loneliness going on for the last 20 years, which is causing increased rates of suicide, increased deaths from opioid abuse, and the reason this has been going on for the last 20 years is not clear, but through many factors of globalization and really rapid growth of technology," Jeste said.

Jeste went on to discuss the potential negative effects of globalization and the expansion of technology, especially for young adults.

"Globalization and technology is good, but there are some adverse effects," Jeste said. "Competition has increased, because you're now not just competing with local people but with people from anywhere in the world. Because of the rapid growth in technology and increased communication, there is an information overload, which is causing more stress. There is this constant feeling that we are behind."

Both Nguyen and Jeste noted that the growth of social media has helped to connect people and increase accessibility which can help loneliness and increase social self-efficacy, but may also be weaponized for cyberbullying.

While on-campus student health-and-wellbeing services like the UCSD Counseling and Psychological Services have been established since the late 1960s, Jeste also emphasized the importance of preventive approaches starting in K–12 schools and echoed Nguyen's sentiment on compassion.

"I think the issue is that we need to focus our education not strictly on the subjects that we study, but also on the soft skills of thriving in life, the skills that are a part of wisdom," Jeste said.

Jeste listed various important components of wisdom that should be taught in schools.

"Things like self-reflection, the ability to think about yourself," Jeste said. "Secondly, emotional regulation, control over your emotions. Third, and very importantly, is compassion. Empathy and compassion, trying to understand other people, why they are being so, and how to help them. Compassion also includes self-compassion, [as] we sometimes tend to be overly self-critical. Another component of wisdom is accepting diversity of perspectives and values. That acceptance is not there often."

UCSD CAPS is fully operational as of Fall Quarter 2020, with its central office and urgent care, located at Galbraith Hall 190 in Roger Revelle College, open during regular hours. CAPS provides individual, group, couples, and family psychotherapy to registered undergraduate and graduate students, as well as a variety of wellness programs like the Triton Flourish Program.

Visual created by The UCSD Guardian Data Viz team

Photo taken by Kristina Tripkovic from Unsplash

Q&A with Men's Basketball Coach Eric Olen on Pandemic Practices, the Big West, and Season Goals

📅 November 29, 2020   👤 Praveen Nair

Coming off of a 30–1 season in which they were a top seed in a canceled NCAA Division II tournament, UC San Diego's men's basketball team will open its inaugural season in the Big West and Division I on Jan. 1. With the pandemic complicating the runup to the biggest season in the team's history, The UCSD Guardian sat down with head coach Eric Olen over Zoom on Nov. 25 to talk about his team's past and future. The following transcript has been lightly edited for readability and length.

After having one of the best seasons in school history last year, what was it like not having the opportunity to move into the postseason, and what was your message to your players?

It was disappointing. I think we were all excited about the opportunity to see what an NCAA tournament would look like for that group. We felt like we were capable of going pretty far and having success, based on the level that we played at and the kind of team we felt like we had. So it was disappointing to not get the opportunity to find out, and I think we'll always

have that "what if" feeling.

But my message to them was more of a congratulations and thank you for the time that we did have because it was a special group, and they accomplished everything they could possibly accomplish and some things were out of our control. [I was] really proud and thankful for all the work that they put in, and to the seniors that helped build the program to the level that we got it to. It was mixed emotions for sure, and a difficult finish to what was an otherwise pretty great season.

How has the pandemic interfered with your team apart from the lack of games, such as conditioning, strategy, or recruiting?

Everything has changed. From that day when we found out the tournament was cancelled, finals went online, [after] spring quarter everyone went home, I didn't see the players in person for what ended up being six or seven months. They had varied conditions in which to try to work on their game and their fitness, so depending on where they were and what they had access to, it was a pretty wide range of things for them. And all of that was a constant challenge trying to stay connected via Zoom meetings and all those things that we've all been doing for the last eight or nine months.

We have all those same challenges that everyone had and then we were fortunate to be in a situation where we were able to create a safe environment for them to come back. We spent a lot of time practicing in masks and staying socially distant and, you know, you run out of shooting drills with no defense and different things to do if you're trying to stay six feet apart and play basketball. We're fortunate to progress and have the resources to again have the testing and the environment to keep them safe enough to progress to real practice, and so that's been nice, to give them the opportunity to really compete and shake some of the rust off. So, it's an ongoing challenge, but we're just taking it day by day.

What does a socially distanced basketball practice look like?

So initially that's where we started; when we first returned we started with everyone staying six feet apart and wearing their masks the whole time. We did that for several weeks before we progressed in early November to full-contact practice, where they've taken their masks off, but we've increased our testing to do that. We've created a cohort, so to speak, where there are only certain players, coaches, athletic training, or strength conditioning people allowed in the arena while their masks are off.

Each time we progress the protocols change for exactly what we're doing, and then we try to execute those to create a safe environment. So guys that come in are wearing their masks, they go to their chair where they sit down and change, and up until they literally walk out onto the court their masks are on. Then they take them off, we practice, they go sit down, the masks are back on. So other than the actual practice, they're still keeping their masks on all the time. But we're at real practice now. So that part has been good — our enthusiasm to practice is at an all-time high. So that part's nice.

Moving to the Big West, have you had to do a lot of research about the new set of conference opponents you have, and what has that process looked like?

We watched some film — that was one of the things we did with the time in the offseason. We were able to watch quite a bit of film on some of those opponents, and we've played some of them; we had a closed door scrimmage with Long Beach State, we played an exhibition with Irvine, we've had other past exhibitions, so there's a little familiarity. But it will definitely be a big change for us from a preparation standpoint.

I spent as a coach — and I don't want to do the math or say it out loud — but I think it was 16 years in the CCAA, so just some of the little things you take for granted like staying in the hotel, knowing how to get to places, those little logistical things that become second nature after you've done it for a few years will all be new for us and for the players, so that part will be an adjustment.

But everything is so different this year with the schedule and playing the same team back-to-back, and it's all kind of brand new, a different scenario for everyone. Hopefully that'll make it a little easier since everything will be so new for us.

We were able to add an additional coach in the offseason to our staff who has some experience in the Big West, and I think that will be really valuable for us. We also had our players watch film too, since they don't get to play in a game when we couldn't get in the gym. We were watching film as a group and having the players dive into a little more of the coaches' side of scouting reports and talking about some of the players. We're just trying to prepare any way we can for something that's basically brand new for us.

How do you feel about the postseason moratorium you'll be under for the next four years, and how do you keep the team motivated despite that?

For us our ultimate goal is always that we're trying to reach our best basketball in terms of

our progression and development, and we feel like the results will take care of themselves from there. Obviously, we want to play in the postseason and we're not eligible for the NCAA Tournament or the Big West tournament. But there are other postseason basketball tournaments that are played that we are eligible for — the CBI [College Basketball Invitational] and the CIT [CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament] are potential tournaments we could play in. Obviously, again, this is a different year and I don't know that those tournaments will happen in this season, but in the future those would certainly be things that we would identify as events we'd like to qualify for and earn an opportunity to participate in.

It must be sort of bizarre to go from 30–1 and a 1 seed in the national tournament to being the underdogs and having to face much more competition. How do you manage that transition both on and off the court?

I think that will be one of the big things for all of us, that transition from the level of success that we were having to the potential to not have success at that level, and how we deal with the disappointment, how we respond to the adversity if and when that comes up. I think it's a big challenge, and so that's something that mentally will be part of our progression.

The players in the program haven't been around, but my first couple years as the head coach here, we weren't quite at that level in terms of where we fell in the CCAA, and we certainly weren't relevant nationally. So we had to progress, get better, and build things, and we had a good young core that we were able to build around and develop. They got opportunities early to play a lot as young guys, and then they got better together, and I think we have the start of that now. We have some young guys that I think are going to make an impact and we have a nice balance with some older guys. I like our group and it's something that we're going to hopefully build and climb the ladder all over again.

It's a different challenge than what we had last year. Last year the expectation was to win or have success on every single night, and with the other team, we're getting their best shot every time because we're circled on the calendar. I thought last year's team was fantastic in their maturity and approach, and they handled it all great. That was a big part of our success. And now we're on the other side of that, where we're the ones going in with a chip on our shoulder trying to knock everybody else off. So we'll just kind of approach it one game, one weekend at a time with the same opponent on each weekend, and see if we can make some noise and get better, but we're also taking kind of a long view of where we want to be, and building the program all over again in a sense.

What are your goals for the season — what will it take for you to conclude that it was a successful year?

When I look at our team every year I never circle a certain number of wins, or an accomplishment, or any kind of result that would define our season. We talk about getting better every day, the work ethic and approach that it takes to accomplish that, and focus on more of the process than the result. We feel like if we just keep working towards our best basketball, that the results will take care of themselves, and for us it's just how close can we get to our best basketball and we'll live with whatever results we end up with.

Photo courtesy of Derrick Tuskan / UC San Diego Athletics

THE GUARDIAN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Empty Stands, but Full Hearts: How UCSD Fans Can Stay Engaged in 2020–2021

📅 November 29, 2020   👤 Wesley Xiao

Sports are back at UC San Diego. Athletics have been on pause since before the Big West Conference announced the postponement of all fall sports. However, basketball, men's and women's, is set to go into full swing by the new year. The 2020–21 season will kick off with women's basketball, who open their season with their sole scheduled non-conference game of the season against California Baptist University on Dec. 21.

Fans, however, will not be returning with sports. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, San Diego County has prohibited in-person fans at sporting events. With COVID cases on the rise within the county and nationally, that restriction is likely to remain in place for some time. So how can fans stay engaged if they can't attend games? I sat down with Jessica Roswell, Assistant Athletic Director for marketing at UCSD Athletics, over Zoom to ask her that very question, and discuss what fans can expect from the season as well as the athletic department's plan for fan engagement. The following is a summary of that conversation.

How was this season planned?

The athletic department's original plan for this season was completed back in December of 2019. Since then, a lot has changed, and they've had to adjust. Their first major pivot came July 29, when the Big West cancelled fall sports; the second was when it was announced there would be no in-person fans. Because of this, many planned events, like tailgates and t-shirt giveaways, had to be scrapped and alternative avenues explored. Many planned events were moved to virtual.

What are some upcoming fan events?

There are two big fan events being planned. The first is Triton Madness on Dec. 10. Organized by Triton Tide, it is an event for students and fans to come together. Both basketball teams will be involved, and fans [will have] an intimate and fun opportunity to engage with players and other fans. Triton Madness takes the place of the Winter Whiteout game: a home basketball game that took place around week ten and was a chance to take a break from finals. It is the kickoff to the Cup of Cheer, a spirit competition between the colleges that will feature events and activities leading up to the Spirit Night games on Jan. 22.

The second big event is Blue and Gold Night. With the move to the Big West, UCSD has the opportunity to play new opponents and develop new rivalries. When looking at the other Big West schools, the most similar school, and most likely rival, happens to be UC Irvine, another UC school, with the same colors. Eventually, as UCSD and UCI play more often, a rivalry can begin to develop. The first Blue and Gold Night is set to take place Feb. 26.

The athletic department also plans on having several community-based events. Girls and women in sports will have a virtual event. The athletic department is also working with the Black Resource Center on virtual events to celebrate Black History Month.

How can people watch games?

People can watch home games on ESPN3. ESPN3 is available for free to anyone on the UCSD network. For off-campus students, they can access the network through the VPN — the same way we access library books from home. The athletic department plans on setting up workshops to help teach on- and off-campus students, alumni, and other Tritons fans how to access the games.

Will the broadcast feature anything new this season?

The athletic department finished building a new production studio for the ESPN3 broadcast. This is part of UCSD's transition to Division I and investment in improving its TV production capabilities. From watching basketball and volleyball on ESPN3 over the past few years, the broadcasts were relatively simple. I did not get any specifics on any new production features, but we might be in line for new transitions, some graphics, or even slow-motion. My fingers are crossed for some crazy Monday Night Football-level graphics.

How can I stay up-to-date on fan events?

A lot of the aforementioned events are still being planned. People should stay tuned to the UCSD Triton Tide and UCSD Tritons social media accounts for up-to-date announcements on fan events.

What will be waiting for fans when they come back to games?

There are a number of new pre-game and in-game experiences planned for when fans can return in-person. Before the games, people can attend Fan Fest, a tailgate-like event where they can get free food, get their face painted, participate in swag giveaways, and gather with other fans. Fan Fests are planned to extend throughout the year, so fans will have something to look forward to at the end of the week regardless of which sport is in season. There's plenty of new things in-game too. The athletic department has invested in improvements to the video board. They've looked at software that allows you as a fan to use #tritonfanzone and you'd show up on the video board.

Photo courtesy of Steven Calista / UC San Diego Athletics