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FALL BNP PARIBAS OPEN

## LOW ATTENDANCE BUT HIGH HOPES



Fans of BNP Paribas Open men's champion, Cameron Norrie of Great Britain, get autographs after he defeated Nikoloz Basilashvili in Indian Wells on Sunday. PHOTOS BY TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

### Seen as dress rehearsal for the March 2022 event

**Andrew L. John**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

While attendance was down significantly for the fall edition of the BNP Paribas Open which wrapped up Sunday, tournament officials say they view it as a success to have even pulled off the tournament and are viewing it as a dress rehearsal for the main event in March.

In an effort to prevent the sport from going two full seasons without the event that tour players — both men and women — have voted as their favorite, a massive collaborative effort went into making the fall 2021 event happen.

A failure to host the event in both 2020 and 2021 would have been devastating, BNP Paribas

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Crowds cheer during the women's final at the BNP Paribas in Indian Wells on Sunday.

MORE INSIDE PAGE 4A



### Mountain lion captured in Palm Springs neighborhood

A mountain lion is seen Monday before being tranquilized and removed from the Sunrise Palms community. COURTESY OF PALM SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT

USA TODAY

### Next two weeks are crunch time for Biden

President Joe Biden is entering a crucial two weeks for his agenda, racing to conclude contentious congressional negotiations ahead of both domestic deadlines and a chance to showcase his administration's accomplishments at two European summits. 15A

### Ballots go out in Indio for vote on tax extension

Registered voters in Indio should expect to see a ballot in their mailboxes this week to vote on whether to extend the city's current 1% sales tax in a special election on Nov. 2. 3A

## County releases new redistricting proposals after complaints

**Tom Coulter**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

With redistricting underway for the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, activist groups are pressing the county to consider creating at least one, if not more, majority-Latino districts. The groups are reminding county officials that they must consider federal voting laws as they finalize the process — or potentially face legal action.

The board of supervisors — which has the ultimate say in approving the new maps — is tasked with redrawing Riverside County's five supervisorial districts equally to reflect the county's 10.4% population growth over the last 10 years. The process occurs concurrently as the California Citizens Redistricting Commission focuses on redistricting for congressional and legislative maps.

But before the county's board approves new maps in early December, three activist groups have highlighted the redistricting requirements laid out by state and federal law, including Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which prohibits any voting practices that could dilute a racial group's electoral power.

The four maps released by the county a few weeks ago did not include enough data to properly account for that section of the Voting Rights Act, according to separate letters submitted to the county by the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

Specifically, the initial maps did not include data on the citizen voting-age populations for each re-

See REDISTRICTING, Page 6A

## New Desert X documentary showcases 2021 art exhibition

**Brian Blueskye**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A new film about the outdoor arts biennial Desert X pulls back the curtain on the behind-the-scenes discussions between artists and curators responsible for the installations dealing with questions about land rights ownership and stewardship, migration, and social justice.

Directed by Dylan Robertson and produced by Zoe Lukov, "Desert X 2021-the Film" is part of KCET's TV series "Artbound." A 24-hour online preview will be available starting at noon on Oct. 29 at desertx.org. It also will be shown on KCET at 9 p.m. on Nov. 3; 8 p.m. on Nov. 5 on PBS SoCal; and 10 p.m. on Nov. 9 on Link TV.

About 100 people watched a preview screening of the 60-minute film on Sunday night at the Rancho Mirage Amphitheater.

The 2021 exhibition was planned to start in February but was postponed to the following month due to a surge of COVID-19 cases. Lukov, who is also a member of the Desert X board, told The Desert Sun before the screening on Sunday the documentary was made to reach audiences who couldn't travel to the exhibition and make it more accessible.

"It was because of COVID that we made it, but in the end this is something that we would hope to continue because it was another layer of artists telling these stories and talking about these projects," Lukov said.

According to Desert X, the 2021 exhibition logged 650,000 audience visits to 10 art installations over nine weeks last spring.

"They were already engaging with these issues (before 2020) and I think that with an audience we were ready to receive and hear it this year," Lukov

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# Santa Barbara fire contained, residents head back home

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA BARBARA – Residents who fled the Alisal Fire west of Santa Barbara have been allowed to return home.

All evacuation orders and warnings were canceled Sunday afternoon.

The fire was 80% contained Monday morning and its size was holding at about 27 square miles.

The fire erupted in the Santa Ynez Mountains during high winds on Oct. 11. The cause remains under investigation.

In the Sierra Nevada, the KNP complex fire was 55% contained and no forward movement was expected Monday, according to the daily status report.

A cold front passed through California overnight,

bringing some precipitation. The cooler air mass and much higher humidity were expected to persist in the KNP area.

Kings Canyon National Park was scheduled to re-open Monday, but developed areas of Sequoia National Park remain closed. Closures of Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument remain in effect.

The KNP Complex has been burning since Sept. 9, when lightning ignited two fires that later merged.

Drought in the West tied to climate change is making wildfires harder to fight. Scientists say climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

## CALIFORNIA LOTTERY

<b>Mega Millions/Friday</b>	
Numbers	3, 20, 31, 34, 65
Meganumber	18
Jackpot	\$84 million
<b>Tuesday's jackpot estimate (drawing: 7:57 p.m.)</b>	<b>\$94 million</b>
<b>SuperLotto Plus/Saturday</b>	
Numbers	1, 35, 36, 43, 44
Meganumber	3
Jackpot	\$26 million
<b>Wednesday's jackpot estimate (drawing: 7:57 p.m.)</b>	<b>\$27 million</b>
<b>Powerball/Monday</b>	
Monday's draw occurred past press time.	
Look for Monday's numbers in the Wednesday paper.	
Lottery information: Riverside offices: (800) 568-8379	
On the Web: www.calottery.com.	

## BNP

Continued from Page 1A

USA chief executive officer Jean-Yves Fillion said.

"It's not so much money-wise," Fillion said, "but canceling the tournament two years in a row would not have been a good thing for many reasons. Twenty-two was already a disappointing experience. We were the very first visible, large sports event to cancel."

The BNP Paribas Open was first canceled in March 2020 during the first few weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In December 2020, tournament officials determined the event was not ready to return in March 2021, in part because of California public health guidelines that restricted large gatherings were still in place. It also was unclear if it could get back on the tennis calendar this fall.

Philippe Dore, the tournament's marketing director, said that re-scheduling the event from March to October was "a monumental undertaking that could not have been possible without the support, hard work and cooperation of so many."

"It was truly a collaborative effort among our team here at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, the WTA and ATP Tours, our sponsors and partners and so many more people and organizations who worked tirelessly to make this event happen," Dore said.

The re-scheduled tournament concluded Sunday, with Great Britain's Cameron Norrie winning the men's title and Spain's Paula Badosa claiming the women's title.

When receiving their trophies players thanked tournament director Tommy Hass, BNP Paribas and all of those who worked to make the event happen. They acknowledged that holding this tournament wasn't a given.

"I know it's been very tough times," Badosa said as she accepted her trophy, "so I really appreciate all that you've done."

Finalist Victoria Azarenka, a two-time singles champion at Indian Wells, echoed those sentiments.

"Thank you for making this tournament happen," she said to tournament officials as she accepted her trophy. "I know how challenging it's been to organize everything, so we really appreciate everybody who made this tournament happen."

"We'll see you soon, in March next year," Azarenka added, "but for this year, it's been special to come back after two and a half years to the desert and play in front of you guys. Thank you for that."

### A rehearsal for the March 2022 event?

BNP Paribas Open officials are expecting to host the



People wave their arms and make noise for a chance to get an autographed tennis ball from Cameron Norrie after he defeated Grigor Dimitrov in their semifinal match at the BNP Paribas in Indian Wells, Calif., on Saturday. TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

tournament again in March, fewer than five months from now. The tournament will automatically be on the tennis calendar, barring unforeseen circumstances.

A record crowd of 475,372 entered the gates at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in 2019. Attendance for the autumn edition of the March classic was approximately 50% of the 2019 high, tournament officials said.

Tournament officials were not expecting anywhere near the record attendance of two years ago for a number of reasons.

For one, proof of vaccination against COVID-19 was required for all spectators, vendors, ball kids, volunteers and media covering the event. Organizers understood that it would exclude children under 12, who are not eligible for the vaccine, and presumably cut out some families. Requiring vaccinations was, however, essential to holding the tournament, organizers said.

Several of the sport's biggest stars — Serena Williams, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Naomi Osaka — also did not play in the event. It was the first time since 2000 that none of those Grand Slam champions, each of whom has won titles at Indian Wells, were included in the draw.

With tennis not being a team sport, having the biggest names in the game is important. Federer, Nadal and Williams cited injuries as their reasons for missing the tournament and Djokovic and Osaka alluded to needing time away from the sport after a long season that included a stop at the Tokyo Olympics.

Another factor contributing to lower attendance is the seasonal residents who are typically in the the Coachella Valley in March have yet to return. Many part-time residents live in the valley fewer than five months to avoid paying state taxes in California, noted Joe Wallace of Coachella Valley Economic Partnership. Many, if not all, of those factors, are expected to

change when the tournament returns in a few months.

Another possible issue that could affect the future of the tournament is the BNP Paribas Open sponsorship, which expires in 2023.

Fillion said that he expects the sponsorship to remain for years to come, and not just for the benefits it brings to his company. He said that he cherishes the ability to play a role in the valley community and the opportunities to support tennis in the valley and beyond.

That relationship will be vital to the tournament moving forward.

And unlike the LPGA event that announced earlier in October that it will move from its longtime home in the Coachella Valley to Houston in 2023, the BNP Paribas Open is owned by a billionaire in Larry Ellison who has pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into facilities at Indian Wells.

Still, a committed sponsorship is vital to the health of the tournament and, as was the case this year, important to getting the event back on the tennis calendar at a time when it otherwise may have gone three years, from 2019 to 2022, without an event.

"The volunteers, the hospitality people, the ball kids," Fillion said. "The security guard team, the testing team, they all joined with pretty much no notice to make this tournament happen. I think if there is anything that is wonderful evidence that this tournament will go forward and be constantly evolving, it think that's it."

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