



Kings beat Mavs for first time this season, 120-102 >>> SPORTS, C1



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Court halts gay weddings

By Herbert A. Sample and Gary Delsohn
BEE STAFF WRITERS

OAKLAND - In the first judicial defeat for San Francisco, the state Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the city to cease issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples and to return in the late spring to explain why previous licenses should have been issued.

The court's brief and unanimous ruling, using erudite but pointed language, was a rebuke to San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, who directed the county clerk on Feb. 12 to begin granting licenses to couples regardless of their gender.

Until the court rules on whether Newsom acted properly, the city was directed to apply state statutes regulating marriage "without regard to respondent's personal view of the constitutionality of such provisions, and to refrain from issuing marriage licenses or certificates not authorized by such provisions."

The court's seven justices, however, said the city or other same-gender marriage advocates could file a separate lawsuit in a trial court challenging the state's marriage laws under the state constitution. Late Thursday, San Francisco filed papers to do just that in Superior Court.

The justices said they will hold oral arguments on the city's actions, and not the constitutional question, in late May or June. Opponents of gay marriage hailed the ruling.

"This is what we asked the court to do," said Glen Lavy, senior lawyer at the Arizona-based Alliance Defense Fund, which had requested a halt to the licenses on behalf of three San Francisco residents. "I don't have a crystal ball, but I think it is very good for our side that we have a 7-0 order."

Another gay marriage critic, Randy Thomason of the Campaign for California Families, told a press conference on the Capitol steps, >>> RULING, page A18

INSIDE

Massachusetts lawmakers give preliminary approval to a measure banning same-sex marriages but allowing civil unions. >>> Page A18

Costs of drug plan hidden

Medicare official says he was told to keep quiet or he'd be fired.

By Tony Pugh
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS
WASHINGTON - The government's top expert on Medicare costs was warned that he would be fired if he told key lawmakers about a series of Bush administration cost estimates that could have torpedoed congressional passage of the White House-backed Medicare prescription-drug plan.

When the House of Representatives passed the controversial benefit by five votes last November, the White House was embracing an estimate by the Congressional Budget Office that it would cost \$395 billion in the first 10 years. But for months the administration's own analysts, headed by Richard Foster, the chief actuary for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, had concluded repeatedly that the drug benefit could cost over \$100 billion more than that.

Withholding the higher cost projections was important because the White House was facing a revolt from 13 conservative House Republicans who had vowed to vote against the Medicare drug bill if it cost more than \$400 billion.

>>> MEDICARE, page A12

Algebra standard softened

State lets districts apply for waivers so seniors can graduate.

By Bill Lindelof
BEE STAFF WRITER

Citing confusion among some school districts, the state Board of Education will waive the algebra requirement for some high school seniors this school year.

The waiver, which will be granted to districts on an individual basis, will allow seniors to receive their diplomas even though they haven't completed an Algebra 1 course. The deadline for districts to apply is April 2.

Thursday's decision by the state board was welcomed by some educators and attacked by others, including students, who said it sends the wrong message to young people who worked hard to meet the requirement.

Sacramento High School senior Sara Anderson passed Algebra 1 as an eighth-grader at Sutter Middle School. She reacted strongly to news that waivers could be granted.

"High schools have known for four years that the class of 2004 had to pass an algebra prof- >>> ALGEBRA, page A16

TRAIN EXPLOSIONS KILL 198 • MORE THAN 1,400 INJURED

Bombings rock Spain



Associated Press/Peter Dejong

Workers at Madrid's Atocha train station collect the bodies of blast victims. "March 11 now has its place in the history of infamy," says Prime Minister José Maria Aznar.

10 blasts strike during rush hour

By Todd Richissin
BALTIMORE SUN

MADRID, Spain - In one of the deadliest attacks in modern European history, 10 bombs exploded Thursday in this city's train system, blasting apart train cars filled with morning commuters, killing at least 198 people and injuring more than 1,400 others, many of them critically.

Another three bombs were detected and disposed of by police.

Authorities initially blamed the violence on Basque separatists in the militant group ETA, but a London-based Arabic newspaper said Thursday night it had been contacted on behalf of al-Qaida, which claimed responsibility for the attacks. Although Spain sent no troops to fight the war in Iraq, it publicly supported the invasion by the United States and Britain and later sent about 1,500 peacekeepers to the region.

Spain's interior ministry, responsible for internal security, said Thursday night that police searching a van in a parking lot near where the bombed trains originated found explosive deto- >>> SPAIN, back page, A20



Associated Press/J. Guillen

The deadliest of Madrid's bomb attacks Thursday struck the Atocha station, ripping apart the train cars.

Al-Qaida, Basque rebels suspected

By Sebastian Rotella and Tracy Wilkinson
LOS ANGELES TIMES

MADRID, Spain - The size and savagery of Thursday's synchronized train station bombings suggests a significant shift in tactics by Basque separatists - or the work of an entirely new player in Spain.

Spanish authorities are wrestling with competing theories over who was responsible for the attacks that killed nearly 200 people and wounded about 1,400 others. Swift to blame Basque ETA militants fighting to secede from Spain, top officials by the end of the day were forced to acknowledge that they were pursuing a more complex investigation.

Forensic evidence, including the type of explosives used, and the arrests in recent weeks of purported Basque terrorists armed with powerful bombs point to ETA as the prime suspects in Thursday's massacres, investigators said in interviews, echoing Interior Minister Angel Acebes.

ETA purportedly planned a Christmas Eve bombing at another Madrid train station, which >>> ATTACKS, back page, A20

INSIDE THE BEE

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S. Korean president impeached

In a historic first for South Korea, parliament impeaches President Roh Moo Hyun in a vote marked by scuffles and protests.

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Sac State's ex-hockey team probed

By Sam Stanton
BEE STAFF WRITER

Talk about thin ice: The captain of Sacramento State's hockey club was arrested last week on a grand theft charge, and the team itself was disbanded after administrators found that only three of its 28 members were students.

There's an investigation into whether a university official's name was forged on the team's roster, and school officials are trying to find out whether it's true that some players were recruited with the promise they could play without ever attending class.

Worst of all, the Hornet club apparently was ratted out by its archival: UC Davis.

"To be honest, it's very embarrassing," said Lou Camera, director of student activities for California State University, Sacramento.

School officials say the scandal is unprecedented in the school's history of sponsoring athletic clubs. The clubs are separate >>> HOCKEY, page A19

