



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Bonita Unified Diver Prepares to Make a Splash at Harvard, 2026 Asian Games

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – San Dimas High School junior Jacqueline Chen first displayed her athletic prowess at nine years old, when she took a 15-foot dive off a cliff in Cancun, Mexico. Since then, her athleticism has taken her across the globe to international competitions, where she has won numerous medals. Soon she will make another big jump, to the Ivy League, after verbally committing to Harvard University.

It has been a whirlwind year for Chen, who recently qualified, along with her sister, San Dimas freshman Barbara Chen, for the 2026 Asian Games, where they will represent Chinese Taipei. The Chen sisters earned a bronze medal in the Women's Synchronized 3M Final competition at the Asian Aquatics Championships, held in India in September.

"It still feels unreal that I'll be attending one of the top universities in the world," Chen said. "I'm incredibly excited for what's ahead and for the endless opportunities waiting for me, both academically and in my athletic career."

Since summer began, Chen has been considering recruitment trip offers from nearly a dozen elite universities, including Harvard, Yale, Cornell, UPenn, Duke, USC, Brown, and the Air Force. Each school invited Chen to tour its campus, meet its diving coach, and spend time exploring its programs.

Chen and her family visited Harvard on a Class of 2031 recruiting trip in September. Chen stayed in the dorms with the swim and dive team and experienced life as a Harvard student. She made enough of an impression that, at the beginning of October, the diving coach reached out to Chen directly and made her a verbal offer. It was the moment Chen has been waiting for her entire life, according to her mother, Miao Chen.

"Harvard really wanted Jacqueline to visit, and they were very impressed by her," Miao Chen said. "On these visits, the school wants to see a student's personality, and how social they are with potential teammates and classmates. Jacqueline said yes right away."

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Before Chen embarks to Harvard, she and her sister Barbara will be making history as the first divers to represent Chinese Taipei at the 2026 Asian Games in 20 years, building on their recent achievement as the first Chinese Taipei divers in many years to medal at the Asian Aquatic Championships. The Asian Games will run from Sept. 26 to Oct. 4, 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

"I'm extremely excited and honored to represent Chinese Taipei in the 2026 Asian Games," Chen said. "It's one of the biggest competitions, and I'm truly grateful that I qualified. Even though the level will be very high, I just want to go there, give it everything I have, and enjoy the experience."

Meanwhile, Chen said she is enjoying her time at San Dimas High School, where she had a spectacular 2025 season as the sole member of the diving team – taking first place in the CIF-Southern Section Div. 3 Championship in April and earning a third-place medal at the CIF State Diving Championships in May.

Despite her demanding practice and competition schedule, Chen, who has a 4.2 GPA, works just as hard on her academics. Her favorite classes are Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. History and art. Currently, Chen is also taking AP Environmental Science, Pre-Calculus, and English 11.

Chen spends much of her free time volunteering for the Arrow Dive Club in El Monte, where she assists her head coach and trainer Deliang Li with younger divers during competitions, leads their warmup exercises, and supports them through their events.

PHOTOS

BUSD_CHEN1: San Dimas High School junior Jacqueline Chen has verbally committed to attend Harvard University and join their Swim & Dive team, starting in the 2027-28 school year. Chen, who has won numerous medals in international diving competitions, and her younger sister Barbara, a San Dimas High freshman, will represent Chinese Taipei at the 2026 Asian Games in Japan.

BUSD_CHEN2: San Dimas High School junior Jacqueline Chen (right) and her sister, San Dimas High freshman Barbara Chen, show off the bronze medal they won in the Women's 3M Synchronized Diving competition at the 2025 Asian Aquatic Championships, held in India, which qualifies them to participate in the 2026 Asian Games in Japan, representing Chinese Taipei.

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