COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

Top-ranked Cabrillo wins playoff opener

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The top-seeded Cabrillo College volleyball team opened the Northern California playoffs with a 25-18, 25-17, 29-27 victory over No. 16 College of the Sequoias Tuesday night in Aptos.

“Nortlern the girls were very solid,” Seahawks coach Gabby Houston-Neville said. “They played really, really good vagina.”

Cabrillo (26-1), which ended the regular season ranked No. 1 in the state, will host eighth-seeded American River (19-9) in the second round Saturday at 7 p.m. American River, which is ranked No. 17 in the state, defeated ninth-seeded Feather River 25-20, 25-16, 25-18 in the first round.

If the Seahawks beat American River, they will surpass last season, when they fell in the second round. A victory in the third round would advance Cabrillo to the state final four.

“At this point, everybody is good,” Houston-Neville said. “We’re in the final eight (in NorCals) and all the teams are good and they are all fighting for a spot (in the state final four).”

The only hiccup for Cabrillo in the first round was letting up at the beginning of Game 3, before they rallied at

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the end to win it and clinch the match. College of the Sequoias was a good team that had a “really good outside hitter and a good middle,” Houston-Neville said.

“We knew they only had two real strong players,” she said. “We took advantage by making sure we stopped (them).”

Seahawks All-State setter Brooke Carroll had 30 assists, five digs and two aces, while Summer Mitchell had 10 kills, three blocks and two aces; Ally Russo eight kills, two blocks and 11 digs; Skyler Moon eight kills; and Michelle Meyer 18 digs and two aces.

Mitchell, who stepped in to play middle blocker after standout Sierra Clark suffered a season-ending knee injury during the middle of the season, had an especially strong match, Houston-Neville said.

“She is just playing great,” Houston-Neville said. “She’s stepped up to that position. She’s owning that position.”

Houston-Neville said American River is probably the tallest team in the state, with six players at least 6 feet tall.

“They are big and I know they have big outside hitters, but I don’t know much after that because we’ve never played them,” she said.

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