JC women's volleyball: Cabrillo sweeps again at NorCal Regionals

By JULIE JAG
Posted: 11/28/2010 12:10:06 PM PST

APTOS -- Cabrillo College's women's volleyball team had to shovel itself out of two vast deficits against visiting American River with a considerable size advantage on Saturday to keep its season alive.

Using 9-1 and 6-1 runs late in Games 2 and 3, the top-seeded Seahawks defeated the No. 8 Beavers 25-18, 25-16, 30-28 in the second round of their California Community College Athletic Association NorCal Championships.

Now the competition really gets tough.

"They were definitely the tallest team we've played, but they're not the best team we play," Cabrillo coach Gabby Houston said of the Beavers.

On Tuesday, Cabrillo hosts either No. 5 Sacramento City or No. 4 Delta College -- two teams it defeated earlier this season -- with a berth to the NorCal final and the state championships on the line.

It's hard enough to top a team three times, but the Hawks will also have to do it without the help of Sierra Clark. The 6-foot-2 middle, who was key in the previous meetings between the teams, recently suffered a season-ending knee surgery.

"The next go-round is going to be really intense," said Seahawks setter Brooke Carroll. "We're a really different team since we lost Sierra."

Houston said she isn't nervous about the matchup. Her team has gone 27-1 and is the top-ranked team in the state.

"We've been playing so long without [Clark] that I think this team is playing just as good," she said. "I feel really good now. They're ready for it."

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Despite doing its best to make the match exciting for the approximately 300 fans who came to watch Saturday, Cabrillo proved it was also ready for American River [19-9].

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"We're always looking to see where we can take advantage in their passing."

By Game 3, American River seemed to catch onto Cabrillo's game. The teams went point for much of the match until American River broke away to lead 19-14. This time, a couple of smart plays by Mitchell keyed a 6-1 run for the 20-20 tie. Then, the Hawks used defense and smart hits to escape without going to a fourth game.

"That team has a lot of ball control," said Beavers coach Ashlie Hain. "We have a lot of size, but they out-ball-controlled us."
American River's 6-3 outside Ashley Owen hit nine kills and its 6-4 middle Dakota Long-Mitchell made six blocks, though 5-9 Mariko Kawashima led the team with 12 kills.

For Cabrillo, 6-0 middle Skyler Moon made 13 kills and three blocks and Ally Russo added 12 kills and two blocks. Mitchell and Chloe Tushar hit eight kills apiece and Carroll finished with 48 assists. Michelle Meyer led the team with 20 digs.

Hain said she thinks Cabrillo has a good chance to reach the state final.

"I think they're the best team in NorCal for sure, if not in state," she said. "That defense will take them far."

### CCCAA NORCAL REGIONALS

Second round
No. 1 Cabrillo def. No. 8 American River
25-18, 25-16, 30-28
At Cabrillo College

ARC highlights -- Taylor Warmerdam 23 assists; Mariko Kawashima 12 kills, Alayne Goeb 23 digs, Ashley Owen 9 kills, Dakota Long-Mitchell 6 blocks.

Cabrillo highlights -- Michelle Meyer 20 digs; Brooke Carroll 48 assists, 3 aces, 10 digs; Stephanie Mahaley 9 kills, 2 blocks; Ally Russo 12 kills, 9 digs, 2 blocks; Chloe Tushar 8 kills 10 digs, 2 aces; Skyler Moon 13 kills, 3 blocks; Summer Mitchell 8 kills.

Records -- Cabrillo 27-1; ARC 19-9