This is kind of underdog, dark horse kind of team. ... I knew they were going to be good, but no one else kind of knew.'

GABBY HOUSTON
Cabrillo's volleyball coach

Tapping their potential

CABRILLO IS IN STATE TITLE TILT THANKS TO A COACH WHO MAKES THE MOST OF HER PLAYERS

By JULIE IAG
jag@sanctacruzsentinel.com

APTOSS — Gabby Houston arrived at the first practice for her Cabrillo College women's volleyball team in August unsure who would show up. Trying to coach the Mount Madonna School girls team and a club team in addition to the Seahawks last sea- son left her no time to recruit. So, she resolved to make the most out of whatever talent landed on her doorstep.

Among the newcomers:

- Sierra Clark and Brooke Carroll, two girls who came from a hot club and San Lorenzo Valley High program that went 1-11.

- Aleksia Mondragon, a hitter whose Watsonville High team made the section playoffs for the second time in six seasons history, only to lose in the first round.

- Michelle Meyer, an ath- letic student-transfer from both basketball and volley- ball — before she graduated in 2007.

Their credentials would have caused almost any coach to let out a heavy sigh and write off the season. Not Houston.

"I knew when I started working with the girls and had a set group, that's when I knew we had real good poten-

TITLES Continued from C1

Such an effort, "recalled Delosson, 6-1, a rough and tumble leftside hitter with the Cabrillo team that dominated in the Division II semifinals.

"We were not an outstanding team with any one player tak-

ing the stage. We were much more like the Giants, where everybody came together to win."

Sudden finish? It should. The doppelganger of that Cabrillo team boarded a bus today for Chaffey College in Rancho Cucamonga to Thurs-

day to play in the California Community College Athletic Association state championships.

This year's Seahawks (28-1) team, led by coach Gabby Houston, is ranked No. 1 in the state and in the NorCal region. It begins play Saturday at 2 p.m. against Los Angeles Pierce (27-1), ranked No. 3 in the state. On the other side of the bracket, Santa Rosa (28-1), the No. 2 NorCal team, takes on Solano No. 1 Cypress (34-4) at 4 p.m. The championship of the double-elimination tour- nament is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

Cabrillo is the only team of the four to have won a state title.