Seahawks headed to postseason

Cabrillo ties for second in conference with win

By Jim Seimas

Aptos — You could say the Cabrillo College baseball team came through in a pinch. Pinch runner Jake Bergman and pinch hitter Jason Sheppardson teamed up to produce the game-winning run in the bottom of the ninth, as the Seahawks rallied twice from deficits before beating defending conference champion Canada 9-7 in the teams' regular-season finale.

Sheppardson hit a sacrifice fly with the bases loaded and one out, driving home the speedy Bergman from third base.

The Seahawks scored from the dugout to create two mini double-plays—one on home plate and another near the pitcher's mound. They had plenty to celebrate after the see-saw victory. Foremost among them: their first postseason appearance since 2001.

"That was a rush," Bergman said. "I'm just glad I got to contribute."

Cabrillo will find out its NorCal playoffs fate Sunday.

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Canada College's Allen Stiles is tagged out by Cabrillo College catcher Jaks Obmann on Thursday as Stiles tried to score from second base on a base hit.

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NorCal playoffs seeding Sunday.

Canada [21-13, 15-5] and Cabrillo tied for second place.

"Second place is better than third place," Seahawks third baseman Justin Schieff said. "Yeah, first place was on the line, but we're not too worried about it. We swept Ohlone. We know we're the best team in conference."

After the players celebrated, fans came onto the field to take a team photo of the Seahawks. Most of the players had their index fingers extended before a few hesitated, unsure of their final place.

"We're No. 1,? asked a player.

"No, we're No. 2," others clarified.

"Yeah, we're No. 2," several players clarified, as the whole group held up two fingers, flashing ear-to-ear grins.

Because Ohlone secured the title, it was one of those games where heart and effort meant more than the final score. Heading home with a postseason berth in their pockets, Canada players held their heads high after the contest.

"We played our hearts out the whole time," Colin outfielder Allen Stiles said. "We're a little (sad) we brought ourselves to this point. We had the conference lead pretty much all season. But it was a good game. It was a playoff atmosphere. Our hearts were pounding and this is the loudest we've been all year."

Cabrillo starter Cedar Morgan threw five innings, allowing Canada to take a 5-0 lead in the fourth.

Cabrillo's offense produced a three-run burst in the fourth and added a monster two-out rally in the seventh, when it scored four times.

The Seahawks led 7-5 entering the eighth, getting struggling middle reliever Josh Rodriguez off the hook for the loss.

But Rodriguez allowed a solo home run to Christopher Pike—just the second home run this season at Cabrillo's spacious park—in the eighth to tie the score.

The wind-aided ball cleared the 385-foot mark in left centerfield.

"The wind was like this twice a year," Seahawks coach Bob Kittle said, noting Rodriguez is one of the top pitchers on the team. "He just left the ball up a little today. But he's the reason we're in this spot. Without him, we wouldn't be going to the playoffs. He's been great every time we've gone to him this year."

And we're going to him again in the playoffs.

Cabrillo closer Pat Mennens wound up getting the win.