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JUNIOR COLLEGE GOLF

Seahawks feel due at NorCals

Cabrillo makes 5th straight appearance in tournament

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Some of the faces have changed, but the success hasn't.

With three freshmen among its starting six golfers, the Cabrillo College men's team will make its fifth straight appearance at the NorCal Championships today in Patterson.

Also known as the state championships qualifier, the top four teams will advance from Diablo Grande Golf Course.

Cabrillo hopes it will be one of the four. The Seahawks, under 10th-year coach Tom Pera, accomplished that feat in 2007 and '08.

Chabot, Reedley and Santa Rosa are the NorCal powers, Pera said.

The Seahawks think they can hang, Cabrillo golfer Neil Ostermann said. He said his team is due for some success.

"We didn't finish the season all that strong," said Ostermann, a sophomore out of Harbor High who has a

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78.1 stroke average this season. "We have couple of guys bound for a good round. I feel good about the team."

In 10 conference tournaments this season, the Seahawks won once [at their home course, Pajaro Valley], took second place four times, took third three times and finished in last place twice — in the first and last tournaments of the year.

Considering the way the Seahawks finished, it's understandable Cabrillo's players are counting on things to turn around.

Ostermann didn't play well in the regular-season finale. He had a good excuse though: He was a little drained after playing 224 holes in Palm Springs in a three-day span a week earlier.

Pera said Ostermann, who plays in the

No. 5 spot, can have a breakout performance at NorCal.

"He could be our most explosive player," Pera said. "He has a really great swing."

Also returning with NorCal experience is Adam Cho, also a Harbor High alum. Cho, the longest hitter on the team, plays out of the No. 2 spot and carries a 77.3 average.

No. 6 player Jordan Taylor, who has played just two tournaments as a late fill-in for injured Scott Abel, is the team's last sophomore.

The Seahawks' three freshmen are Lucas Dunne, a self-taught player who started swinging a club when he was 2, Aptos alum Eric Ichtertz, who hasn't shot higher than 78 all year, and Watsonville alum Kraig Mitchell, a former standout basketball player who has a solid short game, Pera said.

Dunne is the Seahawks' top player. The Las Lomas alum has a 75.3 average and a unique swing.

"It's not pretty," Pera said. "He winds up like he's a pitcher. He looks like [San Francisco Giants ace] Tim Lincecum. He unleashes at [the ball]."

His swing may not be golf-instructor certified, but it's yielding results, which is why Pera has pretty much left Dunne alone.

Ostermann calls Dunne, a 5-foot-11, 130-pounder, "Swing Door Luke."

"He turns back and turns through it," Ostermann said of Dunne's swing. "I love it. To me it looks simple. His style is definitely different."

Different is the theme for the Seahawks, especially after a bad showing in the conference finale. Moreover, the Seahawks are fueled by a bad showing at NorCal last year — ninth out of 11 teams.

Now, it's time to see if they really are due.

"If we can play the way we did during the middle [part of the season] and early last month, we have a real good opportunity to make it to state," Pera said.