



COLLEGE BASKETBALL | SPORTS, C1

## TALL ORDER

CABRILLO EYES RETURN TO TOP OF CONFERENCE

'THE X FACTOR' | EXTRA, B1

## CHRIS RENE ADVANCES TO TOP 9

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### JUNIOR COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

'We're big. We've had a couple of teams over the years that have been big, but not as big as this.'

TONY MARCOPULOS, Cabrillo coach

# HEIGHT ADVANTAGE

Rogers, Seahawks eye return to conference supremacy

By ANDREW MATHESON  
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APTOS — Frank Rogers had a pretty good offseason, to say the least.

The 6-foot-9, 215-pound freshman on the Cabrillo College men's basketball team turned an NCAA Division I school's interest into action with some serious conditioning and development this past summer.

The Salinas High graduate signed a National Letter of Intent last week to the University of San Francisco — a school that showed interest in the big man out of high school, but didn't offer him a scholarship — before he had even played a single game at Cabrillo.

**TODAY'S HOME OPENER:**  
 Skyline at Cabrillo  
 TIME: 7 p.m.  
 PLACE: 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos

Apparently, the staff for the Dons had seen enough of the freshman's development in practice. Word of his potential might have spread had they waited until the season started.

"They're getting a really good player. Frank is just scratching the surface of how good he can be," said Cabrillo head coach Tony Marcopulos, who is in his 12th year coaching at the junior college.

"Frank picks things up fast. USF came and watched him and were shocked by how much he developed."

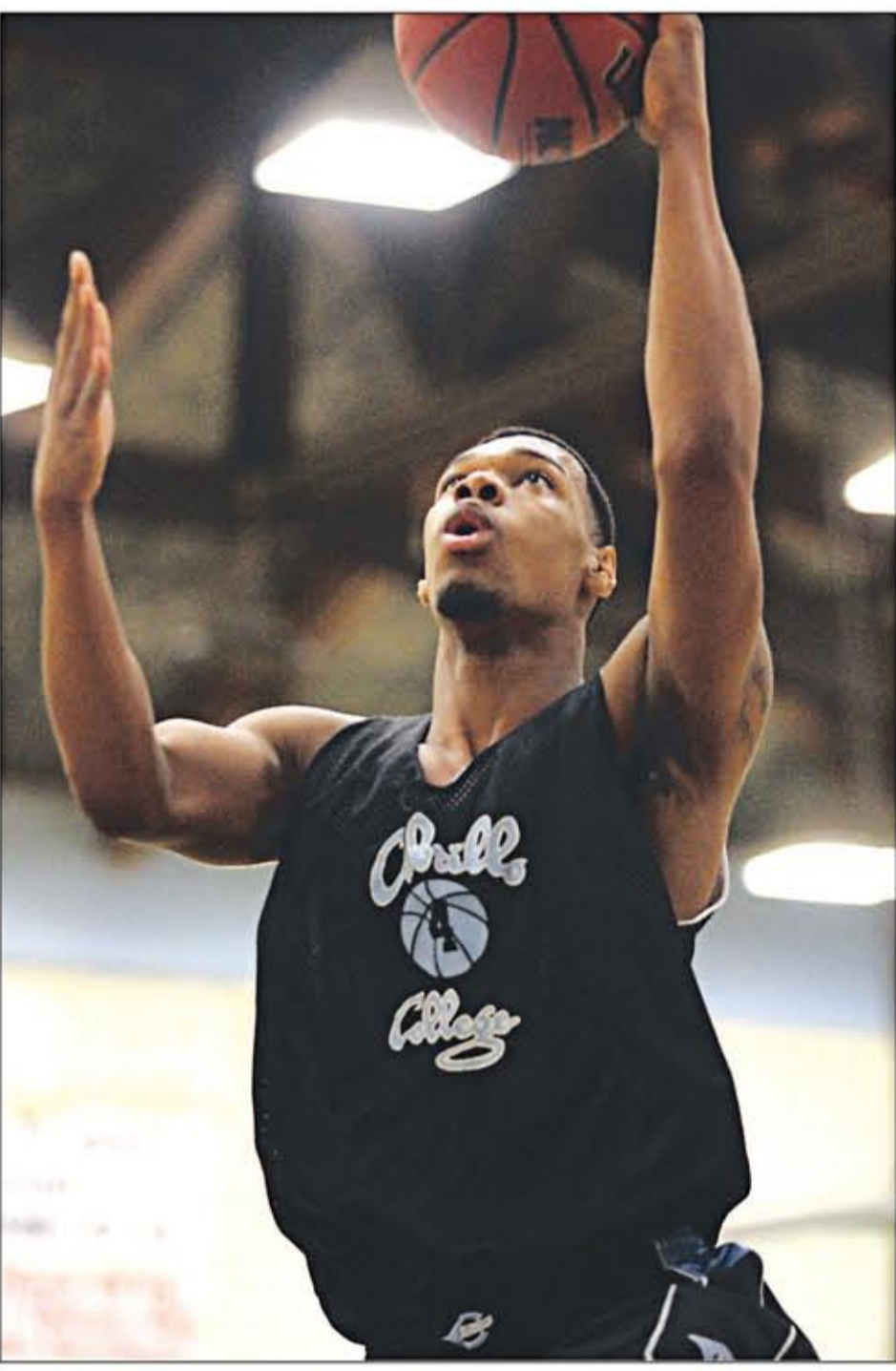
Marcopulos will put Rogers to work this season with the Cabrillo team before he transfers to USF. Named the Most Valuable Player of the Tri-County Athletic League during his senior year at Salinas High, Rogers is averaging 16 points through two games for Cabrillo (2-0), including a game-high 23 points during the Seahawks' 74-49 victory against Shasta College last Saturday.

Cabrillo will host Skyline tonight at 7 p.m. in the team's home opener. "As a team, we feel like we have the chance to be really good," Rogers said. "The only way we'll lose is if we beat ourselves, or shoot ourselves in the foot, I guess."

Without a D-I offer out of high school, Rogers decided to keep his options open by attending Cabrillo. In just a few short months, he improved upon his fundamentals and footwork.

The offer he couldn't get in high school was now a reality.

"The fact they offered so early in the year, it felt like it was the right thing to do," Rogers said. "I liked the



### BY THE INCHES

#### SEAHAWKS ABOVE 6 FEET

- Frank Rogers, Fr.: 6-9, 215 pounds
- Justyn Searle, So.: 6-9, 215 pounds
- CJ Grigg, Fr.: 6-7, 220 pounds
- Thomas Pierce, Fr.: 6-5, 190 pounds
- Adrian Powell, Fr.: 6-4, 205 pounds
- Erik Witzig, So.: 6-4, 215 pounds
- Joe Saarem, Fr.: 6-3, 180 pounds
- Aaron Short, So.: 6-3, 200 pounds
- Sean Filley, Fr.: 6-3, 180 pounds
- Cody Love, Fr.: 6-1, 170 pounds
- Dalton Noble, Fr.: 6-1, 180 pounds
- Gus Indarose, Fr.: 6-0, 170 pounds
- Sterling Reed, Fr.: 6-0, 175 pounds

BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL PHOTOS  
 Frank Rogers (above) and Sterling Reed prepare in practice Thursday for Cabrillo College's home opener against Skyline tonight.

SEE SEAHAWKS ON C2

## SEAHAWKS

Continued from C1

coaches, the style that they run, the players, the atmosphere, everything. It was just a good vibe when I went up there."

Today, he's not only Division I-bound, but he has the chance to lead the Seahawks to their fourth Coast Conference South title in six years.

Rogers is expected to be a key piece to the Seahawks' puzzle this season both at the center and forward positions.

And the pressure isn't off just yet. Trying to impress scouts might not be as difficult as proving it to yourself.

"I feel like every game, you're playing for yourself. If I go out there and I don't play up to my potential, I know what I need to do," Rogers said. "I feel the pressure is still on."

Rogers will be the Seahawks' starting forward tonight, and will lead an impressively tall bunch of players that includes Salt Lake City center Justyn Searle [6-foot-9, 215 pounds]; Thomas Pierce [6-5, 190] of Gary, Ind.; Aaron Short [6-3, 200] of Reno, Nev.; and point guard Tyler Velasquez [5-11, 180] of Colorado Springs, Colo.

"We're big," Marcopulos said simply. "We've had a couple of teams over the years that have been big, but not as big as this group."

"We've had 6-9 guys [before], but not two of them."



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL  
 Cabrillo's 6-foot-9 Frank Rogers comes to the Seahawks after graduating from Salinas High.

That tremendous size — also on the roster, among others, is C.J. Grigg at 6-7 and both Erik Witzig and Adrian Powell at 6-4 — yields a style of play that won't exactly reflect last year's high-percentage shooting team.

Gone is Markus Duran and his 19.8 points per game. The Coast Conference South MVP and first team all-state selection set a record for 3-pointers made last season with 125. He's now playing at the University

of the Pacific, where Marcopulos was previously an assistant coach.

Still, freshman guard Joe Saarem did shoot 6 of 13 from behind the arc during Cabrillo's two games last weekend at the John Wallace Memorial Tournament in Fremont, which included a 51-47 victory over San Joaquin Delta.

Marcopulos also said Velasquez and Short, both of whom received honorable mention in the conference last season,

shoot the ball well from the perimeter.

But it's a far cry from the last season's crop of outstanding shooters. This year's team will instead be more traditional — pounding the ball inside to the post, running more set plays and crashing the offensive glass.

And, understandably, they'll play more physical, trying to take advantage of the expected height disparity with most teams.

"At our level, when you have guys for just a couple of years," Marcopulos said, "you have to get the best players you can and adjust the way you play."

Following last season's 20-8 campaign, in which it won the Coast Conference South, Cabrillo is currently ranked No. 15 in the state, behind conference rival Hartnell [4-0] at No. 9.

Monterey Peninsula College [2-2] was previously ranked No. 20 in the state, but has since dropped out of the rankings. San Jose City College could also provide some competition for the Seahawks this year within the conference.

Even though 12 of the 16 players on the Cabrillo roster are freshmen — only Velasquez, Short, Witzig and Searle return — the bar is set high for the program as a result of its recent success.

"It'd be disappointing if we're not competing for a conference championship," Marcopulos said. "If we did that, we'd be performing well beneath what would be expected."