The Seahawks unravel
Team’s state title dreams disappear on first day of tournament

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REDDING — The bad beginning turned into an even worse ending as the Cabrillo College women’s volleyball team rallied its nightmarish from the 2010 state championships Saturday.


The second loss at the knockel of the Seahawks out of the race for the title and sent them home after the first day of play. It is the second time in two years that the Seahawks have gone home on the first day of the state championship tournament.

“We were not mentally pre-

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pared,” said Cabrillo coach Gabby Houston-Neville. “You can’t put heart into a player.”

The Seahawks, the top-seeded NorCal team, finished the season 29-3.

“We just fell apart passing wise,” said Brooke Carroll, the team’s setter. “We couldn’t get our offense going.”

Carroll, a San Lorenzo Valley High graduate, is one of six sophomores on the team who graduate this year. Hitters Sierra Clark, Port Bozzo, Summer Mitchell and Alexa Mondragon, as well as libero Ashley Pittman, will also be graduating. The women leave knowing they were part of the school’s five consecutive Coast Conference championships, including a perfect 10-0 record in conference play this season. Together, they won the NorCal championships for the second straight year, earning a No. 2 ranking in the CCCAA state standings and the top spot from the North for the weekend’s tournament.

All the accolades didn’t mean much after the loss to the Bear Cubs [93].

Clark couldn’t speak after the final point fell. She just sat on the team sidelines, shaking her head and staring into space.

“I’m not going to tell you that you played the best volleyball of your life, because in your heart you know you didn’t,” Houston-Neville told the team following the loss. She had to wipe tears from her eyes.

Bozzo and freshman Kaitlyn Shenn led the team with 11 kills apiece in the final match and Clark added six. Carroll finished with 34 assists and Pittman made 29 digs.

Cabrillo had more to hold its head up about in the match against SoCal No. 2 El Camino.

In particular, the strong serving of freshman Jordan Cotton, an Aptos High graduate, in Game 4 against the Warriors gave Cabrillo a 25-23 win and forced a decisive Game 5.

Cotton came to the line with the Seahawks down 24-20. She served six consecutive points during a period that saw teammates Sierra Clark tally three kills and a block to keep the rally alive and give Cabrillo a 25-23 lead.

“I’ve been jump serving since seventh or eighth grade,” Cotton said. “Serving is the biggest strategy of the team. I just wanted to win so bad and we brought it back.”

During her serves, El Camino called not just one timeout to break her streak, but two.

It didn’t bother Cotton.

“You just take it on,” Cotton said of the pressure in her routine. “You have to go back out and, especially after a timeout, hit that first one.”

Bozzo earned the final kill of the game for the ‘Hawks, sending the ball untouched into the back row after a long volley.

Bozzo, a sophomore from Salinas, finished the match with 17 kills, while Clark led the team with 18 in a balanced attack.

There wasn’t much energy left after the final minutes of Game 4. The Seahawks kept it close, hanging on 98 after the teams switched sides midway through the game, but a 3-point streak was too much for Cabrillo to overcome.

“Our energy dropped in intensity,” said Summer Mitchell, who finished the match with 14 kills. “We were afraid. OK, not afraid, but just getting into it, deciding what they were like in the third and fourth games.”

The Warriors [26-2] face defending champion and SoCal No. 1 seed L.A. Pierce [31-0] at 10 a.m. today.