Seven isn't lucky for Seahawks

Cabrillo, with only 7 players, trying to break through seven-win ceiling of past 3 years

By ANDREW MATHESON

APTS - Seven. It's the total wins the Cabrillo College women's basketball team has compiled in each of the last three seasons, a victory ceiling that has proven difficult for the Seahawks to break through.

The number has surfaced again this season, too.

The Seahawks compiled seven wins during nonconference play alone this year - the best start for the program under fifth-year head coach Kristy Netto. But, ominously, the team is expected to be short-handed for the remainder of the 2011-12 campaign, mostly due to injury. Only seven players remain from a roster of 11 names at the beginning of the season, leaving just two substitutes for the remaining 12 games through the Coast Conference South Division slate.

No matter.

"We've stayed positive," sophomore forward Laura Johnston said. "We're not going to dwell on it and let it affect us."

While a lack of bodies would be cause enough for many teams to fold the remainder of the year, the Seahawks [7-5] have instead rallied around each other and plan to build upon their solid start.

They can surpass their win ceiling of the last three years with a victory in their conference opener at 7 tonight against Hartnell.

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"They've got a lot of heart and they play extremely well together," Netto said.

The coach noted her team's performance at the Monterey Peninsula Tournament, where it finished in third place after defeating Mendocino 66-54 behind double-double outputs from both Isabel Concha-Foley and Johnston. The Seahawks played with just seven players, five of whom are sophomores, in each of those tournament games at MPC.

"They've seen what we can do," Netto added. "They're sticking together, and it's great."

That bit of confidence perhaps took root after a recent game against Merced, when a short-handed Seahawks team won in overtime.

"It was like, "All right. We can play this game,"" Netto said even Annabelle Bokov, listed as a 5-foot-5 guard, has positioned herself in the post for the Seahawks this season.

"She's very good at blocking out," Netto said. "She has the heart of a 5-9 player. It's all about position. It's not all about height."

The Seahawks aren't without any centers, though. Concha-Foley (5-foot-10) and fellow sophomore post Maddie Pasquin (6-foot-3) are able to occupy the paint, while guard Crista Locatelli provides both scoring and leadership.

The 5-foot-5 sophomore blew out her right knee two years ago and her left knee last year, but she's back healthy for the Seahawks this season.

"It's all mental. I feel strong," said Locatelli, who feels the team's 7-5 start only provides more confidence going forward. "I think our conditioning is up and we're more prepared. Everybody's stepping up, everybody's filling in. It is a big part, but everybody is filling in." Netto said Locatelli and Johnston have been "huge" in the team's success to date.

"It'd be great if we had 10, 12 players. But they all know what we need to do," Netto said. "Everyone has their role. Everyone knows what they're doing and it works." Johnston, who is currently fourth in the division in scoring with 17.6 points per game, noted the Seahawks' offseason workout regimen not only allowed the team to get in better shape - the players worked out six days a week - but also provided a tighter knit feel on the squad.

Both aspects will be called upon this season, especially when the Seahawks square off against conference powers Ohlone and De Anza and Mission, each of which advanced to the NorCal playoffs a year ago.

"We have nothing to lose," Johnston said. "We've got to make the best of it."