Cabrillo handles SJCC, sets up showdown

Clash with powerful De Anza set for Wednesday

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CARPINTERIA, Calif. —— The Cabrillo College basketball team forced 23 turnovers on defense and led from start to finish en route to its 73-45 victory over visiting San Jose City College Friday night in Coast Conference South game.

But it was Tyler Velasquez who set

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the pace of play for the Seahawks.

Velasquez contributed heavily on both sides of the ball with a game-high 18 points to go along with nine assists and two steals. “We go as Velasquez goes, and when he has a good night, we have a good night,” said Cabrillo coach Tony Marcellus about his sopho- more point guard. “Tonight was probably the best game he has played since he’s been here at Cabrillo. Defensively and offensively, if we didn’t miss so many layups, he may have had about five or six more assists.”

Velasquez scored 16 of his 18 points in the first half and dished out six of his nine assists in the second half.

Cabrillo (18-3 overall, 10-2) jumped on SJCC’s 1-3-1 zone defense from the beginning, opening the game with a 16-0 run. While the Seahawks were nailing 3-pointers, the Jaguars had trouble even getting an open look.

Cabrillo finished with nine in the first half — Velasquez made four of them — and went into halftime up 32-16. The Seahawks finished with nine in the victory.

“I wanted to get my teammates involved; that’s how it’s always been that’s how it’s going to be for me,” Velasquez said. “I try to get them going, then get myself going. Fortunately, they left me open a lot more in the first half, so I took my open shots and they went down.”

SJCC didn’t get its first field goal until the six-minute mark, when Fabian Sebastian converted a layup.

The Seahawks played a 1-3-1 zone defense throughout the game and had 17 steals. Thomas Pierce led all players with six.

The defense did not let up in the second half and never let the Jaguars within 13 points.

“The Jaguars used the free-throw line to keep themselves somewhat in the game. They went 13-15 from the char- rity stripe.”

On the few shots where the Seahawks’ jumpers didn’t fall, the team was right there to grab the rebounds. Cabrill- lo out-rebounded SJCC 27-35, making the most impact on the offensive glass, where it held a 15-5 margin over SJCC.

“IT was a hard-earned per- formance, everybody worked hard,” said sophomore guard Aaron Short who had 10 points and six rebounds. “Coach Tony has been stress- ing defense from Day 1 and how it wins championships and how our offense will come. We handled our assign- ments and got the job done.”

SJCC’s 27-50 (14 points) from Christopher Pender to lead the Jaguars, Fabian Sebastian added 11 and Keith Martin chipped in eight in the loss.

Frank Rogers and Justin Searle each added seven points for Cabrillo, while Pierce and Joe Saaren each made six.

Cabrillo has now won five straight games and will look to extend its winning streak next Wednesday when it travels to Cupertino to face De Anza at 7 p.m.

“They are a really tough team,” Short said. But if we take care of our assignments like we did this week, then we should be able to take care of them.”