Fresno shuts door on Cabrillo’s run

By ANDREW RICH

FRESNO — There is a reason the Fresno City College men’s basketball team has been so successful for so long. Cabrillo College found out why Saturday night in the teams’ California Community Colleges Athletic Association state Final Eight game.

The Rams put pressure on the Seahawks for all 40 minutes and pulled out a 70-64 victory in a very physical game at raucous Fresno City gym.

The win advances Fresno [31-3] to the State Final Four next weekend at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento.

“The physicality had a huge impact,” Cabrillo coach Tony Marcoopulos said.

“The refs can’t call every foul, and they probably only called half, but we knew it would be like that going in.”

Despite the physical play, 19 turnovers.

SEE CABRILLO ON D2

CABRILLO

Continued from D1

by Cabrillo and a scarcity of whistles from the officials, the Seahawks stayed close and had multiple chances late in the game to take a lead.

Tyler Velasquez had a good look at a layup with 2:15 to play roll off the rim with Cabrillo down 63-62.

Then with 30 seconds to play and the Seahawks down 65-62, Aaron Short skipped a pass across the court to a wide-open Dalton Noble, who already had hit two second-half 3-pointers. But Noble saw his 3 attempt bounce off the rim.

“Down the stretch, we had our chances. Dalton had a wide-open look at the 3 and Tyler had the opportunity on a layup,” Marcoopulos said.

Fresno City knocked down five of six free throws in the last minute to help put the game away.

The Rams’ pressure defense also took Cabrillo’s leading scorer, Short, mostly out of the game. Short was held to seven points, eight off his average of 15.

“He struggled to find his rhythm, but he was still able to create opportunities for others,” Marcoopulos said.

Fresno will be joined at the state championships by Yuba, which defeated Santa Rosa 73-70 Saturday, as the NorCal representatives. The Southern California teams will include Antelope Valley and either Citrus or San Bernardino.

The Seahawks finish the year 27-4, which includes last Wednesday’s upset of City College of San Francisco, the top-ranked team in the NorCal bracket.

“We had a great year, and I am real proud of the guys,” said Marcoopulos. “It’s a great group.”